

CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

Observations from the coalface



GEORGIA MCINTOSH
Co-Founder of *BePartnerReady.com*[®], asked five seasoned practitioners for their thoughts on the changing nature of corporate partnerships



JO BOOTH Relationship Manager, Corporate Partnerships, *The Smith Family Today*, the business sector needs the nonprofit sector. Cause, connection, alignment and impact are becoming absolutely vital to shareholders, employees and customers. If nonprofits are professional and partner with intent, beautiful things can happen.

If your nonprofit is considering corporate partnerships, first do your research. Can your nonprofit support and grow partnerships? If yes, then invest in this fundraising strategy. Don't just tack corporate partnerships on to a fundraiser's role. Invest in someone who can thoughtfully execute that strategy without having to keep changing 'fundraising hats' or switching gears.

The notion that nonprofits should operate on oxygen and kind hearts is so dispiriting not to mention naive. Nonprofits operate just like any other business: they have employees and require income and investment to achieve success.



LISA CHENG Executive Director, Marketing & Fundraising, *Lifeline Australia* In the coming decade I think partnerships will be driven more by consumer expectations and behaviours. We're already seeing how that

influences decision making, with research like the *Conscious Consumer Report*. Companies acting with more purpose — think Patagonia. I'm truly enjoying the current partnerships Lifeline has with Rebel and NRMA. Both are intrinsically aligned with our brand and values, delivering a powerful message on mental health and suicide prevention.

Corporate partners want to solve problems, so what problem are you solving? There's a free resource at *BePartnerReady.com*[®] where you capture your organisations' corporate partnerships intention — it's a great conversation starter with management



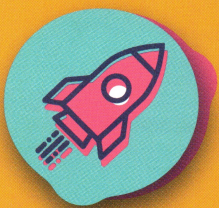
LYNDA INGLIS Partnerships Specialist, *Royal Flying Doctor Service (Queensland Section)*

I believe corporate partnerships will get deeper in the coming years, with more measurable impact, matched giving, paid volunteer days and choices for employees.

The cost-of-living crisis is impacting fundraising; however, marketing budgets seem steady if not increasing, and that's where partnerships are generally supported. It's a competitive market, but companies are aware of synergy and aligning themselves carefully with a cause partner.

My first partnership was over 15 years ago. I was working at Guide Dogs Victoria and had fortunately completed training

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Is your organisation **truly ready** to win more Corporate Partnerships?

Scan the QR code to calculate your Readiness score.



SCAN ME

with Hailey Cavill, which equipped me with the right tools and resources. I secured a partnership with Deloitte, who became a multi-year partner.

Ergon Energy Retail is the most enjoyable partnership I continue to work with. The team keeps stepping it up — their call centre staff are proud of helping keep the Flying Doctor flying by encouraging their customers to donate \$2 or \$5 per quarterly electricity bill to the RFDS, cumulatively contributing over \$1 million per annum. More than 70 employees also donate to the RFDS via Workplace Giving. They're offered paid volunteer days, and the team participate in regular Operational Base Tours to engage further with RFDS and see firsthand where their support goes.

One thing I've learned is when small companies, often start-ups, ask, "Can we use your logo to promote our product? We aren't sure how much we'll raise and can't offer a minimum guarantee", we need to be okay with saying "no". Nonprofits often underestimate their worth, but there are brilliant tools, like the brand valuation process that BePartnerReady.com® offers. As a starting point, I'd recommend any organisation interested in corporate partnerships to calculate their readiness score through BePartnerReady.com®. Ensure you have support from your leadership and board — they may need some training on corporate partnerships, so include them on the journey.

Corporate partnerships are not a 'cookie-cutter' approach. They must be bespoke to engage and support the brand strategy and corporate objectives, allowing the strategic alliance to thrive.



ANDREW FARINA Senior Corporate Partnerships Manager, Lighthouse Foundation

Over the next decade, the primary focus for nonprofits is expanding from traditional philanthropy and government funding models to a partner-centric approach.

Mutually beneficial partnerships are a sustainable option for the success of the nonprofit sector. A concerning trend is the tightening economic climate and ongoing market pressures.

I'm noticing corporates are more reticent to engage in long-term partnerships. Economic uncertainty is worrying for both nonprofits and partners alike.

Right now, I'm working on a significant partnership with a national construction company. They offered us a disused building during a time of unprecedented growth for our charity.

A common misconception: corporate partners are not a bottomless well of support! Too often we see corporations posting record profits while people are saying, "surely they can help out more". But nonprofits should respect that when the partnership is executed with a values-aligned partner, they will invest what they can. It's our job as partnership managers to continue to nurture the relationship so we're top of mind for our partners when growth opportunities arise.

Above all else, partnerships should be fun! If there's any chance for you to do good for the corporate partner, your organisation and your beneficiaries, go for it! It's a win-win-win!



VICKIE DAVY Founder & Director, PetRescue

In the next decade, I see Social Return on Investment (SROI) becoming integral to corporate financial statements, with shareholders and customers demanding evidence of community impact alongside profits.

My first corporate 'partner' for PetRescue was a company making t-shirts. We were inexperienced and excited at their offer of 20% from every t-shirt sold. Their predictions were in the millions of dollars, so we handed over our logo and it ended with us trying to sell their t-shirts. Lesson learned! After valuing our brand and assets (through BePartnerReady.com®) we don't give either away without an upfront minimum guarantee.

We've been incredibly fortunate to have had three genuine partners since. We've made wonderful apps with Pedigree, created an adopters' benefits program with Pet Circle and made TV commercials with Everyday Pet Insurance from Woolworths. My advice? Allocate a designated budget for professional development and establish it as mandatory for your team's growth. **F&P**



The BePartnerReady.com® program not only got me *ready* for corporate partnerships, it got me *winning* corporate partnerships. I've signed up 5 new partners since doing it – injecting **\$2.6m** of untied income and \$1m for anti-bullying campaigns. The program is world-class."

Janet Grima, CEO, Bully Zero

