

TIPS FOR MAKING THE CASE FOR EMPLOYER SPONSORSHIP



EMORY
GOIZUETA
BUSINESS
SCHOOL

Stakeholder support is essential to your success at Goizueta Business School. As part of your MBA preparation, it's important to request support from your employer and discuss program expectations. While making such a request can be daunting, a well-crafted proposal can highlight benefits from investing in your development. There's no magic formula, but it's important to ask the right questions.

TIP #1 PLAN YOUR APPROACH

Begin with research. You'll need to know if there is an existing sponsorship program in place and how decisions are made. Seek official employee benefits information plus advice from colleagues who have navigated the sponsorship process. Even if your company doesn't have a formal tuition sponsorship program, discretionary funds may be available.

Past candidates have found success with a thorough written proposal. However, for some, a face-to-face discussion was the best way to ask for support. Whatever method you choose, the goal is to help your employer visualize the benefit you'll bring the organization in exchange for its support.



TIP #2 KNOW WHAT YOU NEED

Sponsorship can take different forms, so consider what meets your needs and your employer's ability. This may be an annual monetary amount, a percentage of tuition, or the full cost of attendance.

Employers may pay tuition directly to the university or reimburse a student after reporting acceptable grades.

Remember time off and/or schedule flexibility is a form of sponsorship.

Assessing the program schedule and tuition requirements as you build a sponsorship proposal will also help set clear expectations. Examine the class schedule, factor in travel time, and propose a plan for effectively managing your work responsibilities during the program. Your team and direct reports can also factor in to your proposal. Sharing existing responsibilities may be a growth opportunity for others in the organization.

While discussing tuition sponsorship, assess your commitment to the company. Consider whether you would be willing to remain with your employer after graduation in return for their support of your education.



TIP #3 HIGHLIGHT THEIR RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Your MBA experience will be one of personal growth, but your employer will also reap the benefits. Be sure to outline what you will bring back to the office after each class. Examine program offerings and add relevant examples to your proposal. Illustrate how growing your skills and knowledge will create measurable results that align with the organizational goals. Goizueta's key benefits include:

Curriculum – You will be exposed to core business disciplines and can explore others in greater detail. Foundational knowledge allows you to take a more strategic approach in addressing issues facing you and your employer. With this understanding, you can evaluate what's best for multiple business units and provide solutions to drive your organization forward.

Leadership & Decision-Making – Layered on top of business acumen are two critical components: leadership development and structured problem-solving. By incorporating an experiential leadership study, tested problem-solving methodologies, and a diverse set of teammates, the program will develop the “soft” skills prized in every organization.

A Broad, New Network – You will be surrounded by top performers in a wide range of industries and functional areas. Their varied experiences and perspectives will add to your classroom discussions and can be a resource as your organization faces its next challenge.



TIP #4

LEVERAGE THE CONNECTION

Plan to represent Goizueta Business School in your organization. We encourage you to bring learnings back to your team, use real-life business challenges as case studies in the classroom, and create opportunities for interaction between the school and your employer.

Your time in the classroom will affect your time in the office. You may find yourself sharing the interesting article your professor posted, participating more heavily in meetings, or connecting with colleagues across functions. These new conversations can lead to increased visibility and opportunities. Demonstrating aspects of your development can ensure your continued sponsorship or open the door to mid-program sponsorship or benefits.

For example, the Independent Study elective course offers a unique opportunity to deliver value to your organization and solicit additional sponsorship. A student may choose to design his or her own elective course around a business issue in their company. After identifying the key pain point and setting the scope of the project, the student works with the guidance of an experienced faculty member to arrive at a solution and presents it to the organization.

Securing sponsorship is often the result of a direct request with a supporting proposal outlining short- and long-term benefits to the organization. We hope these suggestions are helpful as you choose the best approach for you and your employer.