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THE SPONSORSHIP EMAIL THAT WORKED

The email that got a reply in 21 days — and how to build the list to send it to

A free guide from Ferenc & Evelin
Travelling in our own vehicle since 2018



Read this page first. It is ninety seconds and it decides whether the rest works.

In 2018 we sent 700 emails to companies asking them to sponsor our travels. About 10% replied. About 10% of those became sponsors.

Seven sponsors from seven hundred emails. That is a working method and a brutal hit rate at the same time — and we only learned which parts mattered by getting 693 of them wrong.

What follows is the shape of the one that worked, with every move labelled, plus the much smaller ask we now send first, plus how to build the list you are going to send it to.

Three things before you use any of it.

1. The specifics are the whole thing. Every square bracket in these templates is a place where a real number, a real route or a real product goes. Sent generic, this is just another email to a shared inbox. Sent specific, it is a person a company can picture.

2. Delete anything you cannot say honestly. A shorter true email beats a longer padded one every single time. If you have no previous collaborations, delete that paragraph. Do not invent one. Marketing people check.

3. Send plain text. No images, no marketing template, no tracking pixel. It lands in the inbox rather than the promotions tab, and it reads like a human wrote it.

Part one — start smaller than you think

Before any real campaign, send this to your entire list. It asks for almost nothing, which is exactly why it works.

> **Subject:** A small sticker request from a fellow traveller
>
> Hi [Company] Team,
>
> I hope you're well. I'm a long-term traveller and a big fan of [Company]. My partner and I have completed [one line on your two best trips — where, and roughly how long]. We share the journey on [platform] as [@handle].
>
> I'm putting together a small collection of travel stickers to decorate our gear. If you happen to have a spare sticker you could pop in the post, that would make my day — and if there's ever a tiny extra like a patch, key ring or postcard floating around, we'd give it a proud home on our kit wall.
>
> Postal address:

> [Your name]
> [Your address]
>
> Either way, thanks for making great kit and inspiring folks like us to keep exploring.
>
> Warm regards,
> [Name]

Why this is the first email and not the last. A sticker costs a company nothing, so the answer is usually yes — and a yes gets you three things a cold pitch cannot: a named human being who has now replied to you once, a reason to write again that is not a pitch, and something physical to photograph.

Our vehicle crossed five continents covered in other people's logos. Every one of them started as a conversation, and several of those conversations started exactly here.

Part two — the email that got the sponsor

This is the long one, and it should be. A cold reader needs every move, in order.

> **Subject:** [The specific product you would buy from them]
>
> Hello,
>
> I'm [name], founder of [site].
>
> I'm about to order [specific product] from you, but I thought I'd reach out to you first.
>
> My partner and I are [what you are doing, in one sentence — full-time travel, a named route, a new vehicle or setup]. We're looking for brands to partner with as we start it.
>
> [Ambition: the single biggest thing you are going to do, one sentence.]
>
> A bit of background. We've already [two or three past trips, briefly]. You can see the routes here: [link to your travel journal, map or trips page].
>
> We document everything at [site] and write guides and gear reviews there. The site currently gets [exact figure — "between 4,000 and 5,000 page views a month"], mostly from [countries], and it's growing. I've attached the visitor report.
>
> We also have [number] followers on [platform]: [link].
>
> Our reach goes further than our own channels — [any publication, podcast, feature or guest article, with links. Two or three is plenty].

> So I'm wondering whether you'd be open to some kind of cooperation?
>
> If you were able to support us, we'd promote [Company] products continuously on the site and social media, and anywhere else we get exposure.
>
> We're not just casual bloggers looking for free products — we're looking to build long-term relationships with companies whose products we actually use.
>
> We've done a number of collaborations already. A few examples:
> [link] [link] [link]
>
> I've attached a photo of us and our [vehicle / setup]. Let me know what you think.
>
> Thank you for your time.
>
> Kind regards,
> [Name]
> [Title], [site]

THE NINE MOVES, AND WHY EACH ONE IS THERE

1. Say who you are in one line. A name and a thing you run. Not a paragraph about your passion for adventure.

2. Arrive as a customer, not as a supplicant. "I'm about to order this from you, but I thought I'd reach out first." This single sentence does more work than the rest of the email. You are a buyer who might become a partner, which is a completely different person from someone asking for a handout. It must be true — pick a product you would genuinely buy.

3. Say why now. A brand can act on "we are leaving in March". It cannot act on "someday".

4. Give them the ambition. One sentence on the biggest thing you are going to do. Marketing departments are buying a story, and this is the story.

5. Prove you have done this before. Two or three past trips, briefly, with a link to the route. This is the line between a traveller and a dreamer, and they can tell.

6. Give numbers, specifically. Monthly visits. Followers. Where your audience is. Say "between 23,000 and 27,000" rather than "lots of". **Never round upwards** — someone will check, and the whole email loses its credibility with the number.

7. Attach the evidence, and repeat it in the body. Put the analytics screenshot on the email **and** write the headline figure in the text. Attachments get stripped by corporate filters. We nearly lost a deal to exactly this.

8. Borrow other people's credibility. A magazine piece, a podcast appearance, a guest article. Anything written about you by somebody who is not you is worth more than anything you write about yourself. If

you have none, delete the line — and then go and get one, because it is the highest-value thing you can do this year.

9. Pre-empt the obvious objection, and then prove it. They are thinking **another blogger wanting free stuff.** So you say you are not, and then you show three links. The sentence without the links is a claim. With them it is evidence.

THE SUBJECT LINE

It is the product they sell. Not "partnership opportunity", not "collaboration request", not your own name. The product. It is the only subject line in this document that a busy person opens.

Part three — the list you send it to

A hundred good rows beats a thousand scraped ones. Here is how we build one.

NICHE FIRST

Start with the companies that make the gear you already own and would buy again. Not "outdoor brands" — the specific categories your trip actually needs:

Recovery gear. Roof racks and storage. Power and solar. Fridges and cooking. Tents and sleeping. Water and filtration. Navigation. Cameras. Lighting. Tyres. Tools. Clothing. Insurance. Vehicle parts for your specific vehicle.

Your own kit list is the best prospect list in existence, because every item on it is a company you can write one honest sentence about.

THEN GO WIDE

Once the obvious ones are down, these are the sources that actually produce rows:

- **The brands your favourite travellers are already sponsored by.** Public, and it tells you the company says yes to people like you.
- **Trade shows and travel exhibitions in your region.** Look up who exhibits and who sponsors the event. An exhibitor list is a pre-qualified prospect list — these are companies with a marketing budget **this year**. If you can go in person, go: a thirty-second conversation at a stand beats twenty cold emails, and the follow-up writes itself.
- **The brands advertising in the magazines you read**, for the same reason.
- **Your own country's smaller importers and distributors**, who get asked far less often than the big names and who ship to you without customs trouble.
- **Adjacent categories nobody thinks of.** Insurance. Freight. Coffee. Water filters. Fitness. Phone accessories. Books and maps.

THE COLUMNS THAT MATTER

Put it in a spreadsheet, not a notebook. These are the only columns that earn their place at the start:

COLUMN	WHY
Company	
Category	So you can see where your list is thin
What you'd ask for	Product, cash, discount, or a cost split
The one honest sentence	Why **them**. If you can't write it, cut the row
Contact name and role	A person, not **info@**
Email	
Date sent	
Follow-up due	The column that converts
Outcome	Yes / no / later / no reply
Notes	What they said, what they asked for

Follow-up due is the one that makes money. A company that ignored your first email has not said no — and we have a case where the first email never arrived at all, and the deal only happened because the sender tried again.

Outcome matters because "no, not this year" is genuinely different from "no". It is a diary entry for next season, when the budget resets.

A NOTE ON QUALITY

It is tempting to pad to a hundred rows. Resist it slightly.

A company that does not sell anything you would use, in a category unrelated to your trip, in a country you are not going to, is not a prospect. It is a line that makes your spreadsheet look healthier than it is.

The list should be wide. But every row should be a company you could write one honest sentence about — because that sentence is the email.

Before you send a hundred emails

Every address this uses is one a company publishes about itself: a press contact, a marketing address, a named person on a team page. Write to **companies**, not to private individuals.

Even so — **the rules on unsolicited commercial email vary by country, and both yours and the recipient's can matter.** We are not lawyers and this is not legal advice. Look up what applies where you are and where you are writing, before the hundred emails rather than after. It takes an afternoon.

What this guide does not cover

Deliberately. These are the parts that took us years and 693 failed emails to work out:

- **Finding the person who decides**, rather than emailing a shared inbox. Almost nobody replies to **info@** , and there is a specific, cheap method for getting past it.
- **The follow-up sequence.** The first email is usually not the one that works. The second one is, and there is a right and a wrong way to send it.
- **The other two methods.** This guide is the wide net. There is a targeted approach that barely depends on your audience size at all — the best one we ever sent cited 1,600 email subscribers, not followers — and a third where brands write to **you**, which is what the first two turn into if you deliver properly.
- **Negotiating the deal** so that nobody is surprised six months later. What to agree, what to refuse, and the rights clause people skip that is worth more than the product.
- **Getting a sponsor's gear to you while you are moving**, which is genuinely difficult and has ended more arrangements than bad content ever has.
- **Turning one free product into income.** Six months into a sponsorship that started as free gear, a brand asked whether they could **buy** our photographs. 15-plus items licensed at $30 each, $390 confirmed in two months. Two years later the same brand was inviting us into paid campaigns. That ladder was sitting there the whole time and we were too slow to see it.

All of that is in **Get Sponsored to Travel** — 14 lessons and 6 fill-in templates, $29, with 30 days to decide it was worth it.

overlandsite.com/get-sponsored-to-travel-course/

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