

Companies are busy. It may be hard to convince business owners to give time to your organization to talk about sexual violence. Below are some suggestions that may help you. You are the expert on your community, so please tailor these suggestions to the needs of your organization and community. Report your successes and lessons learned by emailing resources@nsvrc.org and we will share them with the field.

Choose the audience

The first step in approaching businesses is deciding who you want to talk to.

Step 1: Make a List...or Three

LIST 1: Companies and businesses with which you already have a relationship.

For example, if your organization has printing done, include your print vendor on the list. Write down organizations that have donated volunteer time or money to your organization in the past. Look to your Board of Directors, which might include prominent business people in your community or people who know them.

LIST 2: Well-known businesses in your community (they don't have to be chain stores; your locally-owned businesses are just as important and often more flexible) that you'd like to contact. Find out from your staff and their friends and family if your organization has any connections to these places. Maybe someone's aunt works for the local bank and would be willing to speak with her supervisor on behalf of your cause.

LIST 3: Local organizations that have business-related missions and members.

These organizations are usually composed of members that are civic-minded and have professional connections, both locally and nationally.

Some ideas:

- Rotary Club (www.rotary.org to find contact information on your local club)
- Lions Club (www.lionsclubs.org to find contact information on your local club)
- U.S. Small Business Association (SBA) (www.sba.gov to find information on your district office)
 - SBA en Español (www.sba.gov/espanol)
 - SBA's Office of Women's Business Ownership (Under the Local Resources tab on the sba.gov website)
 - SBA's Office of Native American Affairs (www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/naa/index.html)
- Chamber of Commerce (www.chamberofcommerce.com to search for your city's office)
- The Black Business Association (BBA) (www.bbala.org to learn more)
- Junior League (www.ajli.org to find your local league)
- League of Women Voters (www.lmv.org to find your local league)

Know of others? Let us know! Email suggestions to resources@nsvrc.org

Step 2: Narrow it down

Narrow down your lists, based on who you already know, who your own social contacts know in the business sector, and how much time and resources your staff has to do outreach.

Once you have chosen a few companies you plan to reach out to, decide who you will need to speak with at each one. If you already have a contact, use that person. Otherwise, you can use the company's website (if they have one) to obtain the name of the Human Resources or Employee Relations person to call. For small businesses, you may want to call the owner directly. If you are unsure, you can always call the receptionist and ask whom you should speak with (and then call back when you are fully prepared).

Plan your strategy

Now that you've created a prioritized contact list, you need to decide what you want to get out of the companies you approach.

Step 3: Choose your "ask"

Decide what you are asking the company to do for you. Before you call or meet with anyone, you need to be prepared. Briefly explain why you're there and where you are from. Keep it short. Bring materials about your organization and a sample of the SAAM poster and palm card. If you want to go into the business to do trainings on sexual violence or offer the Making a Difference Workshop, bring a copy of the slide show. Your organization is the expert on sexual violence; be confident in offering your services.

If you are requesting that the company distribute or post SAAM materials in their workplace, emphasize that it's free for them; you will supply the items. Give a sample for them to keep. Make the case, using the statistics and information in this SAAM packet, that it will save the business owner money in the long run to prevent sexual violence.

Write a short script to help you stay on track when you make your phone calls. Emphasize near the beginning of the conversation that you are not calling about donations, but rather about providing *free* information and services to the business. Highlight the benefits to employers of talking about this issue with staff.

Step 4: Assign Tasks

Decide which staff members or volunteers at your organization will reach out to each business on your list and how they will do so. If you're contacting someone you already have a relationship with and know they prefer email over the phone, send a brief email message. For new contacts, it is recommended that you call to make it more personal and build a relationship. You may also want to consider writing a formal letter and mailing it to the largest employers in your area, explaining your goal and what you need from them. Enclose sample materials. This allows you to cast a wider net if you have limited staff to make phone calls and visits.

After you've chosen your outreach tactics, be sure to create a timeline so that individuals have a deadline for their initial outreach efforts.

Reach Out

Now that you have the planning finished, it's time to call/email/visit the companies on your list.

Step 5: Make the sell

On the day of your visit or call, be professional and friendly. Don't be discouraged if you don't succeed on your first try. Establishing contact with any local business is a great first step; now they know who to call if they are in need of sexual violence information or services. Consider using the attached "menu" of things that a business owner may want to do to help with SAAM; this is a short, simple way to get them thinking about action steps.

Evaluate

Step 6: Write down what you learned

Whether or not you are able to get into your local workplaces with SAAM information and workshops, it is valuable to record what you tried and what did or did not work. Email your lessons learned to the NSVRC at resources@nsvrc.org; we will use this information in future recommendations. Your organization will be better prepared the next time you reach out to local businesses.

ACTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS:

Respect WORKS

How you can help

Want to help, but not sure how? There are many options. Here are some suggestions:

- Display Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) poster in community area
- Distribute free SAAM palm cards to each employee; stuff them in paychecks
- Hold a workshop about respect in your workplace
- Pass out flyers on a community workshop about respect to your staff
- Sponsor a community event to raise money for your local rape crisis center

Contact your local rape crisis center for information and materials to get involved. Together, we can prevent sexual violence in our workplaces. . .and communities.

(Insert your organization's contact information here)