

Reviewed 2nd March 2010

The need for a Corporate Engagement Policy

Ostomy Lifestyle is in a period of rapid expansion. We need continued investment so we can safeguard our core services and plan effectively for the future, whilst maintaining the high standards our service users have come to expect. Without corporate funding, Ostomy Lifestyle will find it very difficult or even impossible to maintain the services it provides at present, let alone improve them.

Ostomy Lifestyle believes that it can achieve more in partnership than it can on its own. We are keen to develop constructive relationships with external organisations and, when these organisations work in our area of interest (specifically providing services and products to people affected by stoma surgery) we will encourage innovation and improvements in the services these companies offer, and ensure we are kept up to date with new products and services as they are made available.

Companies increasingly seek returns on what they see as investment in charities, rather than charitable giving. In particular, they expect their funding of patient support organisations to be acknowledged publicly, particularly to those who may use their products, and quite often they or their public relations agencies expect the patient support organisations they fund to help promote their products.

It is therefore essential that there should be a policy about what companies may and may not expect from the charity in return for financial support. This policy is intended to fill that need. It accords with the Long Term Medical Conditions Alliance's policy, upon which it is based.

Key principles

The structure of any relationships will revolve around four key principles:

Transparency

It is important that any agreement with a company is not seen as an endorsement of their product or organisation. This will be achieved by making the relationship transparent to the public and staff in both organisations.

Equal partnership

It is important to form useful relationships with other organisations that are positive for our service users. An active working partnership, in the interests of everyone affected by stoma surgery, can enhance this relationship for both parties, and strengthen the task in hand.

Mutual benefit

In contrast to passive donations, Ostomy Lifestyle is aware that both parties should gain from this scheme.

Independence

It is important that the independence of Ostomy Lifestyle is not compromised by agreements with external parties.

Terms of Policy

1. Eligibility

Ostomy Lifestyle welcomes support from organisations as long as:

- i. The interests of the organisation are not opposed to the interests of the charity
- ii. The work and the image of the organisations are such that the reputation of Ostomy Lifestyle cannot be tarnished or harmed by co-operation with it

2. Access to mailing list

No third party will be allowed direct access to the Ostomy Lifestyle database. However, the agreement may include an arrangement for Ostomy Lifestyle to forward information relevant to Ostomy Lifestyle service users, as long as it does not interfere with Ostomy Lifestyle's impartiality or image.

3. Product endorsement

- i. Ostomy Lifestyle supports the availability of the widest possible range of appliances and accessories, whether prescription items or otherwise.
- ii. We do not endorse individual products, of whatever kind; we believe people affected by stoma surgery should be able to access and choose the appliance most appropriate to them.
- iii. The charity's general approach is to encourage active partnership between patient and health professionals, in the interests of informed choice on the part of the patient.

4. Acknowledgements

The type of acknowledgement that the company will receive will be discussed before the agreement is finalised. This could take the form of wording such as 'working with' 'in association with' 'supported by' 'made possible by', especially in media such as Ostomy News, websites, and the Annual Review.

5. Promotional material, press, use of logo

- i. Ostomy Lifestyle retains a veto over all materials produced in connection with a joint activity/initiative. Companies should be aware of Ostomy Lifestyle's house style, use of language and positive images.
- ii. Articles relating to joint activities may be included in Ostomy Lifestyle's publications. Ostomy Lifestyle retains editorial independence over its publications including Ostomy News.
- iii. Press releases are to be written in collaboration. Companies may not issue press releases relating to the joint activity/initiative without prior agreement with Ostomy Lifestyle.
- iv. Ostomy Lifestyle should be consulted whenever and wherever its name is used. Any copy which refers to joint projects should be approved by Ostomy Lifestyle before it is used.
- v. The Ostomy Lifestyle logo may only be used by following express written permission accompanied by instructions for use of the logo.

6. Organisation contacts

Ostomy Lifestyle is happy to work with the contacts of an Ambassador organisation, such as PR agency etc. In the first instance a representative of the Ambassador organisation should be present in meetings with this external contact.

7. Other support

The sponsors' support of Ostomy Lifestyle is not exclusive; Ostomy Lifestyle is free to seek support from other organisations at any time. The Ambassador organisation should be aware that it is not receiving preferential treatment from Ostomy Lifestyle.

8. Mutual termination of agreement

Ostomy Lifestyle may withdraw membership if the conditions of the agreement are not adhered to, as may the Ambassador organisation.