

Getting Ahead with Fundraising

10 top tips to stay ahead in fundraising



1. Have a plan.

Know what you want to do in the short, medium and long term. It can take between 6 and 9 months to secure funding for a project or your work, so plan well ahead. You may have to develop a track record so funders can judge your ability to manage larger projects. People in your organisation may have to develop their skills in order to manage your project confidently. **(See the Guide - Simple Strategic Planning)**

2. Understand your environment.

What are the internal and external factors that effect your organisation? Understand your strengths and weaknesses. What other organisations are there which do the same kind of work as you? Gather key facts and figures about your beneficiaries, locality etc. Use this information to inform your strategic and fundraising plans. **(See the Guide - Simple Strategic Planning)**

3. Get into networks.

The right networks will supply you with a steady stream of up to date information on funding opportunities as well as examples of best, and innovative, practice elsewhere. Think about journals, newsletters, e-mail bulletins, forums and conferences. Have regular meetings with colleagues from similar organisations. **(See the Guide "Where to Get Info for Free")**

4. Get organised.

Fundraising is an ongoing task, so get organised to avoid starting from scratch each time you write an application. Collect and keep information on:

- ◆ potential funders.
- ◆ your organisation.
- ◆ the community in which you work.
- ◆ users or beneficiaries of your service.
- ◆ evidence of need.

Keep records of applications you have sent, contact names, key decision dates, etc. **(see the Guide "Supporting Information")**



5. Be flexible.

Be prepared to adapt your plans in response to funders' priorities or partial success or changing needs over time. The only thing guaranteed with any plan is that it will not go according to plan!

6. Identify what resources are available.

So you can see what sort of money there is and what for. You should look at all of the National Lottery Funding Available, funding from your local authority undertake research to see which of the 1000's of Charitable Trusts and Foundations are most likely to support your work. Then gather up application forms and guidelines to decide what factors to consider when planning projects or work plans. **(See the Guide "Sources of Funding – Where to look")**

7. Mind and passion – don't forget the passion.

Fundraising is a people business. You have to convey the benefits of what you want to do in people terms while demonstrating you know what you are doing in a business like way. A bit of both is best for making a really good case for support.

8. Involve everyone and get involved.

Your services or activities should be accessible to everyone, if not, you should take steps to make sure they are. Similarly, everyone connected with your organisation should have the opportunity to inform your future plans; some funders will want to see evidence of this in your application. A fundraiser is better placed to describe the work of an organisation and attract support if they are intimate with how it works and what the beneficiaries gain from the work. **(See the Guide "Getting your stakeholders involved")**

9. Be determined.

If you are going to give in after your first rejection give up now. There are always more organisations seeking money than the funds available. Better quality applications that meet the funders' objectives have a better chance of success. You need to learn from your mistakes and keep on trying if you are going to succeed.

10. Always say thank you.

If you succeed in getting a grant. Also make sure you comply with any restrictions, conditions or obligations on your part. Even if you don't succeed in getting a grant it may be worth sending a "thank you for your consideration" letter as part of a developing relationship with that particular funder to help win future support.