

The Fundraising Toolkit





**Know yourself and
what you are seeking
funding for**



**Research
the market**



**Prepare a
target list**



Take stock



**Build and
cultivate the
relationship**



**Review the
application
process**



**Prepare your
application**



**Learn from your
experience**

The art of fundraising from Trusts and Foundations

Funders and funded alike are engaged in a complex dance in which the agenda of those wishing to make grants is reconciled with the agenda of those applying for them. This reconciliation is rarely straightforward, and is challenging to both sides. High quality grant-making is an attempt to make that relationship a productive one for both parties.

This tool-kit (informed by funders and applicants) provides a guide for applicants in order to master the steps of the grantmaking tango. As an arts organisation you are in the position to offer exciting solutions that funders may wish to invest in, in order to achieve their goals – which they can not do without you.

Charitable Trusts and Foundations are in the business of finding suitable partners with whom they can dance. This requires both parties to be open and honest, to share issues and concerns, and ultimately to be successful together. Always remember that it is a personal relationship that is being developed.

There is however no single magic formula and within the overall approach it must be recognised that there are many different styles and an array of potential partners. When you are confident with your own steps and are matched with a partner – then you can take to the floor in style.

But perhaps before you get started you might want to view the Institute of Fundraising ‘5 minute fundraiser’ - a series of short videos which give a snapshot of the key principles of successful fundraising:

www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk

Know yourself and what you are seeking funding for



1

This is an essential pre-requisite. To help you through this Arts & Business have prepared a workbook. Are you fundraising ready? The fundamentals are in the checklist of questions below:

Do you have appropriate governance and financial systems in place and suitable organisational capacity?

Can you describe succinctly who you are, what you do, and why?

How do you measure your success and impact and what is your track record?

What do you need funding for and how does this fit in your organisation's strategy and budget?

Have you information and evidence at hand that funders may require e.g constitution, policies, accounts, case studies / stories, evaluations, references etc?

Other resources that may help you get your own house in order are available which all offer helpful general support and advice and have links to more specialised fundraising resources referred to below:

www.nicva.org.uk

www.nvco-vol.org.uk

www.knowhownonprofit.org

Research the market



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There is a wealth of published and web based material, some free, other to purchase, and some subscription based. It might seem a daunting task to find the right funders for you from the thousands that exist in the UK. Help is readily at hand from a range of sources:

www.acf.org.uk

For an overview of grantmaking by UK trusts and foundations and a list of links to ACF members

www.dsc.org.uk

Annual Directory of Grantmaking Trusts

www.fundingcentral.org

Tools, resources and case studies

Fundraising from trusts and foundations is however an on-going and dynamic process, and therefore it is important, once you have a sense of the field, to keep up to date with developments. A number of organisations offer real-time information - www.grant-tracker.org and www.trustfunding.org.uk provide subscription based databases of funders with grant search tools. www.comartspartner.org and www.voluntaryarts.org offer regular comprehensive news letters highlighting funding opportunities; and www.fundraisingni.org will keep you informed about local news and events.

Prepare a target list



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It is better to devote your time to a well researched and targeted cohort of Trusts and Foundations, in a strategic and systematic manner. As Eimer Henry from the Replay Theatre Company says 'We are deliberately trying to reduce the number of our applications.'

When preparing a target list:

Identify only those for whom you meet eligibility criteria (do not try to fit square pegs into round holes – funders are highly experienced and see straight through this)

Note specific issues relating to criteria, exclusions, deadlines and timing of decision-making, and likely levels of funding

Take stock



4

This is a good point at which to step back and assess your options:

Consider the resources required in order to progress

Set out a schedule with allocated responsibilities to ensure that you can meet deadlines

Determine the need for and implications of more than one application and their interdependence

Think of what you will do if successful and if unsuccessful

Be prepared not to proceed

Build and cultivate the relationship



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Once you have decided to proceed, do so with conviction and confidence. It is important now to think in terms of developing a relationship, that might require the following:

Get a feel for the personality of organisation and the people you will be dealing with e.g. style (formal / informal, programmatic / open), scope and scale, infrastructure (office location/ local advisers, numbers of staff) etc

Identify who / what else they have funded and talk to those organisations

Make contact by phone, email or in person if possible and initiate the conversation

Get to understand what the funder (and the individual you are dealing with) is looking for (put yourself in their shoes)

Help them understand your world and inspire them by what you do and demonstrate that you can help them meet their charitable objectives

Review the application process

6

Now you are at the stage of committing pen to paper - but before you start, satisfy yourself that you can complete the process. If there is an application form, read it and guidance notes completely before starting.

Before preparing your application you might find it helpful to review tips from funders and applications available on www.fundingcentral.org.uk or watch the presentations 'Writing a successful funding bid' on www.knowhownonprofit.org/studyzone/write-a-winning-funding-bid

Prepare your application

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In most cases trusts and foundations will provide an application form but there are some that don't. In both situations you must keep in mind what the funder is looking for; get across what makes you stand out from the crowd; articulate your passion as best you can on paper being positive, upbeat, self-confident, and creative. Use an appropriate pallet of colours and textures in your prose that will be attractive to the personality of that particular funder.

Where there is not an application form, structure your application around headings of:

A summary that will engage the reader and which encapsulates succinctly, who you are, what you do and the impact you make

Organisational background and track record

Describe your theory of change – i.e. in a situation of X by doing Y you will achieve Z and be specific describing exactly what you will do with their funding including figures and timescales, and how you will measure your success and impact

Budget

Where there is an application form:

Review the complete form before starting

Carefully read and answer all questions using appropriate evidence and facts

Check your application – does it stack up? Is it a good read? Does it flow logically with a good rhythm? Have someone else check your application internally (e.g. another staff member or trustee) and externally (someone who can offer an objective assessment).

Go through the funder's check list to ensure that you have included any additional material requested.

Learn from your experience



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Whether successful or not you can learn – request and take note of feedback.

Assess what worked and didn't in the relationship and consider if there is scope to address issues with that particular funder or draw from that experience when dealing with others.

Share your experience with others. While the process is competitive there is more benefit to be gained through increasing the collective potential in the arts sector.

Keep going through your steps – practice makes perfect

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