

Funder-mental Fundraising Trade Secrets for Sports Clubs Page 1



Notes from a presentation by Neil Parsley,

1. Give funders a helping hand

“Never ask for anything ever again, sell an investment opportunity”

A bit extreme maybe, but this says something important about your relationship with a potential funder:

- You should no longer go around with a begging bowl. A funder's job is to give away money – let's help them do it!
- Success (or the promise of it) attracts money. Funders are keen to be associated with successful projects – the reflected glory maybe? They don't want to hear a sob story (unless things are going seriously wrong!)

2. Make yourself fundable

Minimum requirements for any group looking for funding include ...

- having a constitution (or set of rules) with charitable aims if possible
- having a bank account to receive the grant (with 2 signatories)
- making a clear case for support, with figures to match
- being able to demonstrate you have the capacity to handle money and spend it wisely



3. Make friends with your funders

Fact: The better the applicant knows the funder (and vice versa) the more money there will be on the table. Understand your funder's motivations; their strategic aims, objectives and criteria, then communicate yours project aims to them. The fundraising communication begins (through word of mouth, press publicity etc) long before you make direct contact.

And don't forget to thank them for their support when they give it, and invite them to your events. Acknowledge them in annual reports, newsletters, and on publicity materials. Funders love it (they sometimes demand it!) and it builds your credibility with other funders and your supporters/ members.

4. Learn the language

Keep your applications clear and simple. Use jargon and abbreviations with care and only when you're sure everyone understands what they mean. But learn the language, so when a funder asks about your 'exit strategy' you know the answer.

See 'jargon-busters' and other useful information sheets at www.syfab.org.uk and www.justdosomething.net/home/skills-for-citizens/getting-funded/good-practice.vdf

5. Remember the 6 Ps – Planning, Paperwork, Partnership, Preparation, Presentation and Passion.

- **Planning** – good planning is essential to successful fund raising. Select a group of like-minded people & identify
 - Who needs to be involved?
 - How are you obtaining the necessary funding?and from Where?
- **Paperwork** - have the systems in place to record contact (names, instructions, key dates etc) with different funders. Financial control and record keeping is also essential – keep your calculations on costing – even if an application doesn't require you to show them.
- **Partnership** is a buzzword but ... funders love to see it (and it can even benefit you!) A small group that teams up with a bigger organisation can benefit from their experience, share their resources. It might even help them to access European Social Fund without all the hassle.
- **Preparation** is crucial - writing and submitting your application is merely the last stage. The rest is research and 'customer care' / follow-up afterwards.
- **Presentation** is everything. No matter how worthy your cause or valuable your work, you will fail in your fundraising if you can't communicate your case for support clearly and persuasively.
- **Passion** has a part to play in fundraising. Enthusiasm can be infectious. But don't let your heart rule your head – just because you think your work deserves support, it doesn't mean others will.

30-40% of your time should go on research and planning
 30-40% on preparing your case for support
 20-30% on asking
 10-20% on aftercare



6. Network, network, network

Whether we like it or not, effective fundraising is about who you know (some say 90% of it!) as well as what you know. So go out and make contacts, make friends, make friends with your friend's friends! And have some sort of reliable and accessible database system for keeping contact details etc.

7. People give to people, not to organisations

Funding bodies and funded organisations are made up of individuals. People sit on assessment panels, people run organisations, and people (or animals) are usually the beneficiaries of our work.



Project Promises must be delivered - However good the organisation looks on paper, the funding application will ultimately be judged on the ability of the individuals in the organisation to deliver on their promises.

Pictures speak more than thousands of words.....

Funders (and other supporters) can also relate most easily to an organisation at the human level, as even the RSPCA discovered! So make sure your promotional materials – annual reports, leaflets, newsletters - feature people. photos, quotes, and the life stories of both staff and service users bring your work alive. Also brief your trustees/club management committee about the human side of your work.

One national funder was moved to tears by being shown around a project in the South-West of England. For example we used details from a Student exchange from Eastern Europe to Devon where they took photographs of how bad our school facilities were as part of a funding bid submission for new facilities. Far more effective for fundraising than facts, figures and action plans!

8. Get the basics right

Regional development funding officers have compiled their 'top ten tips' for success with your lottery application. These include ...

- Read the help notes
- Be concise and to the point; avoid jargon
- Get someone who knows nothing about your project to read a draft.
- Ring the enquiries line for a brief chat about the suitability of your application before you go too far



9. How to avoid the dustbin

Feedback from the Big Lottery, Community Fund, Heritage Fund, BBC Children in Need and the European Social Fund has identified the main reasons why applications tend to fail. These include ...

Eligibility – funders' rules (e.g. only charities) prevent them funding some of the groups who apply or they fall outside their criteria (e.g. Children in Need only fund disadvantaged under 18s)

Inadequate planning – or project management, proper costing and financial control – and lack of evidence. The budgets of up to 90% of the early lottery applications simply didn't add up!

Involvement – show how your project involves beneficiaries or local people. Make sure your group is fully involved in the application (and project design).

Match money with your mission (not the other way around)

Don't chase money! ***Decide what you want to do and then plan how you're going to fund it.*** A certain amount of 'tweaking' may be necessary, but if a funder is going to divert you away from your core purpose (assuming you know what that is) avoid it.



What YOU need to do next?

If you need funding, sponsorship or financial support for a project at your athletics club, please take the following action & I will research as to where you can best obtain suitable funding & advice: -

1. Advise your funding advisor of all possible sources of funding for this project or resources you are aware of, this should include: -
 - a) existing funds within your club
 - b) potential partners (other clubs you can work with)
 - c) all potential sponsors who may be interested in supporting your project
1. Provide written details of the project or resources you are seeking – including the approximate costs
2. Please complete a Funding Search Checklist to help inform your funding adviser what you are looking for & what you may have already researched:

Remember - ***“Imagination is more important than information”*** – Einstein

Any Questions?

Useful Funding Websites & Contact details

Big Lottery Fund - for advice on your project:
Ring the Big Advice Line on 08454 10 20 30
www.biglotteryfund.org.uk Email newprogrammes@biglotteryfund.org.uk

Awards for All for projects £300 - £10,000
Ring Advice Line 0845 600 20 40
www.awardsforall.org/england

Other Lottery funded programmes:
Ring 0845 275 0000 www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk

Best of luck with your applications! Thanks for listening

Neil Parsley – Funding Adviser SW Region

