
Writing the Future: strategic thinking and fundraising for literature and publishing organisations and associations

Creative ways of fundraising for the work you want to do...

Purpose of session:

- To consider some creative ideas for generating income (or reducing costs)
- To start building a compendium of ideas for on-line use within the seminar group

1. Diversifying income

'A benefit of the current economic climate is that it shows the need for arts organisations to diversify their income structures beyond public grant funding and private foundations [and sponsorship]...[and] to explore income generating options.'
Sarah Thelwall www.sarahthelwall.co.uk

In your groups, share the following:

What income generating methods do you use - aside from public grant funding, private foundations and sponsorship?

What's the most creative/unusual thing you've ever done to raise money or get resources/help for something you wanted to do?

Creative thinking is not the exclusive preserve of artists...! It's an essential part of the cultural manager's toolkit as well...

2. Exchanging top tips for creative fundraising

Creative fundraising ideas are usually culturally 'congruent', which means they have to:

- Be familiar *and* 'different' enough to grab attention and build enthusiasm
- Make sense *and* stand out in the context of your organisation, work, community, participants, clients and users.

In other words they work best when they dovetail **or** juxtapose with your 'brand' and help establish or reinforce your identity.

Creative fundraising ideas can be about persuading your friends, supporters, customers and users to *spend* more **or** they can be about reconfiguring what you do (or the way in which you do it) in order to *pay* for or *sell* it in a new way.

2.1 Here are some ideas which are taking hold within the arts in the UK...

Crowdfunding – individuals buy 'shares' or 'units' in new work, projects or commissions

Unbound – authors pitch their ideas direct to readers who are invited to pledge support <http://www.unbound.co.uk/>

Birmingham Contemporary Music Group – Sound Investment Scheme
<http://www.bcmg.org.uk/default.php?id=1747>

Pledge Music – fan to fan funding platform www.pledgemusic.com

WeDidThis – internet organisation working with the arts to raise funds for projects
<http://wedidthis.org.uk/>

Kickstarter – site for individuals raising funds to realise projects
<http://www.kickstarter.com/>

FundedByMe – site for individual and organisations to fund their projects through social networks
<http://www.fundedbyme.com/>

Exploit your intellectual and physical assets (i.e. your tangible and intangible asset base). This can include spin-off items like DVDs or consultancy services based on your core strengths or areas of expertise.

Poetry and songs performed in a bookshop cafe

<http://www.artistsandmakers.com/article.php/20100420202214738>

New Writing North – services for schools and business

<http://www.newwritingnorth.com/services-services-for-business-page-1408.html>

Apples and Snakes – services for the workplace

<http://www.applesandsnakes.org/page/99/Apples+and+snakes+at+your+workplace>

Pop-up movement i.e. set up a low cost outlet, participation or exhibition space in an empty shop or office

A Day in the Life of Shoreham by Sea – community poetry project in an empty shop
<http://www.artistsandmakers.com/article.php/20101011082603782>

Writing workshop for professional artists

<http://emptyshop.org/news/writing-workshops-for-professional-artists/>

Pop-up theatre space in a derelict building

<http://www.theatredelicatessen.co.uk/>

The Shed – a temporary artist’s workspace

<http://nfasp.org.uk/page.php?id=186>

Empty Shops Network - Workbook

<http://artistsandmakers.com/images/emptyshopsworkbook1.pdf>

Meanwhile Space – experts on temporary uses of ‘meanwhile’ spaces

<http://www.meanwhitespace.com/>

Alternative currencies i.e. using a different ‘currency’ e.g. a skills/services LETS (Local Exchange Trading) System

Plymouth LETS

<http://plymouthlets.org.uk>

Letslink UK (Local Exchange Trading Schemes)

<http://www.letslinkuk.net/>

General information about LETS Schemes

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Local_Exchange_Trading_Systems

<http://www.gmlets.u-net.com/faq.html>;

Dream up attention-grabbing events or products for sale, e.g.

- organise a **sponsored or challenge activity** (e.g. marathon reading-out-loud, London Zoo Fire Walk http://www.everydayhero.co.uk/event/zsl_firewalk)
- **sleepovers with storytelling** (for a modest charge) in your venue (good for getting children to spend time in a library, museum or bookshop)
- **calendars** – featuring writers, quotations from texts, photos of activities, advice to budding writers etc.
- **clothes-swaps** (people dig out clothes they no longer wear and pay a small fee to go to a clothes swap party where they are given the same number of vouchers to spend as the items of clothing they bring. The organisation keeps the entrance fees).
- **50:50 initiatives** e.g. hold a weekly lottery (up to 50 tickets at modest price each), or a quiz night (modest entrance fee with winner answering most general knowledge or literary questions correctly)... then half the money goes to the winner(s) and half to the organisation.
- **Start a one-off appeal** for a new piece of equipment or to fix a leak in the roof... Get people to ‘buy’ a seat, a door, or a brick for capital projects or refurbishments, and attach their name to it.
- Hold an **auction** - of donated goods, services or ‘promises’ (e.g. to cook a meal) - even things ‘that money can’t (usually) buy’ e.g. tea with an author <http://www.wayswithwords.co.uk/news/fundraising-auction-for-the-words-by-the-water-bursary-fund-31>
- At the end of events - stand by the exit and shake a **bucket** for loose change (in the UK, still the most effective way of getting individuals to give...)

2.3 Your turn...

What creative fundraising ideas can you offer to literature, library and publishing organisations in the UK?

In your groups, please depict them on flipchart paper and exhibit on the wall...

Thank you!

3. Further reading

<http://www.labforculture.org/en/funding/contents/alternative-financing>

<http://www.artsandbusiness.org.uk/Central/Research/Digital-creative-futures/fundraising-online.aspx>

Lloyd, T. (2006) *Cultural Giving: successful donor development for arts and heritage organisations* (Arts and Business)

Fundraising for Dummies (2010) (Wiley Publishing)