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

***The view from the funder's hilltop...***

Which of the following are already part of your fundraising toolkit and which do you think might make a difference if you used them?

*Go through the list and number your replies as follows:*

You already do this regularly and well – **4**

You do this occasionally and could probably improve it - **3**

You think it might be useful to try this - **2**

You do not think this would work for you - **1**

You think this is not relevant in your context – ***cross out***

**A (real) bad-tempered funder's guide to writing a successful application**

- Always apply in good time for your project.
- Meet the funder's deadline (if there is one). If this is not possible, and with their agreement in advance, send in as much as you can by the deadline, with the rest following later. However, only do this if you have let the funder know in advance and told them when the additional information will follow.
- Contact the funding body *before* you send in your application. It may well save you a lot of time and effort and the funder may have some questions to ask you about your plans.
- Think the whole project through *before* you start to complete the application form.
- Be absolutely clear about the objectives of your project. What are you trying to achieve and how are you going to achieve it?
- Know who your project will reach. You should have expressions of interest, if not firm commitments from partners, stakeholders, participating organisations, target groups etc.
- Focus on what the funder *needs to know*. This may not be the same as *what you want to tell them*, so edit what you write accordingly. Resist the temptation to provide lots of extraneous material: it smacks of desperation and will probably end up in the bin. Try and make the funder's job as easy as possible (this will make them better disposed towards you). Provide what they need in a clear and concise manner, in the order in which they request the information. Remember that they will probably form an opinion of your application after a *very* quick read...



- Do not assume that because you have a reputation and a track record, you can skip any sections of the application form. Do not attempt to claim any special privileges. Equally, do not assume that the person receiving your application will know all about you and your work. When you are writing, imagine they know nothing about you.
- Successful applications are about making the best possible *match* between your project's objectives and those of the funder. You have to demonstrate that your project will make a significant contribution to what *they* want to achieve through their funding scheme.
- Don't waste your time and effort on applications if your project doesn't meet the criteria and guidelines. This is annoying for the funder and won't stand you in good stead for future applications to them.
- Funders (generally, though not always) are there to help. The questions they ask are to assist them in funding the 'right' projects, not to make life difficult for you. Answer *all* the questions and try not to give the same answer to different questions!
- Prepare your budget carefully and accurately. Do not inflate figures because you expect to receive less money than you have asked for. Double check everything. If your sums don't add up or your costs seem inflationary, your application becomes suspect.
- Assume that the person receiving your application will talk to other people. Do not be tempted to 'exaggerate' about expressions of interest or the commitment of other funders.
- Work hard at additional sources of money. Generally speaking, funders do not like projects which are entirely dependent on them.
- Be both flexible and creative in planning your projects and making your applications. Funders have low boredom thresholds too and like to feel enthusiastic about what they support. Write to capture the reader's interest!
- Be accurate. Check everything against the guidelines. Proof read your application! Double-check names of people and places. Use at least an 11 point font size and add extra line spacing for legibility. Put your organisation's header at the top of each page. If submitting in English, get someone you trust to look out for and correct any double meanings or ambiguities.
- Include a brief covering letter.
- If you are *unsuccessful*, try and get some feedback on why, so that you can formulate and submit better applications in future. Send a note of thanks - however much it might 'stick in the throat'!
- If you are *successful*, keep the funder in the loop and check what accreditation, reporting mechanisms or timescales they want you to observe, and then stick to them, or alert them promptly to any problems. Send a note of thanks and acknowledge when payments are received.
- Try and build up a longer term relationship with your funders. Invite them to future events. Let them know of your plans. Keep in touch.

And if you can do all that... you will be *unstoppable!!!*

(Written by a funder on a cold, wet and miserable Friday afternoon... December 2011)