

FACT SHEET

Writing a Fundraising Strategy

What is a fundraising strategy?

A fundraising strategy is a written statement of how a group intends to fund its work. It should be closely related to the group's business plan or organisational strategy. It will support the organisational strategy and enable the group to reach its stated goals. It can be a record of what has been successful in the past as well as recommendations for the future. Each fundraising strategy is different according to the needs of the organisation: it can be two pages or twenty pages. It is not meant to be stuck to rigidly, nor to be written and then forgotten, nor should it stop an organisation from responding to funding opportunities that come up unexpectedly.

Why do we need one?

Organisations that need to fundraise in order to carry on must be well prepared and organised to replace existing funds and/or to enable the organisation to expand.

A fundraising strategy will:

- lay out when existing funding comes to an end, and provide a time scale for replacing it
- it will take the organisation's stated aims and lay out how and where funds will be raised to reach these aims, and
- it will allow continuity in the case of fundraising responsibilities changing hands.

A fundraising strategy, like a business plan or organisational strategy ought to be a useful working document, not simply another piece of paper work to be written to meet monitoring requirements and then filed. Similarly, it should be reviewed and updated every 6-12 months.

Developing the strategy

Developing a fundraising strategy can be delegated to a member of the management committee or staff, but should also be discussed with the management committee as a whole and should be formally adopted by them, in order to have integrity. Below is a list of suggested headings, which may be useful.

- **Introduction** – description of the organisation's activities. This can also be broken down in terms of the funding of each part of your work.
- **History** – where current and previous funding comes from. This can include a copy of the group's recent budgets and/or accounts.
- **Future plans** – can be adapted from the organisational strategy and should describe the group's plans for the next couple of years (i.e. is your main priority survival, or are you sufficiently established to think about expansion?). If the group plans to expand, in what way and how do you think this will be funded?

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- **Time scale** – write down when current funding runs out, and when the group needs to start looking for further funding (at least 6 months before end). This should include plans of when you will start working on bringing in funding for new work as well as replacing existing funds. This can include a time line in diagrammatic or diary form if useful.
- **USP** – what is your Unique Selling Point? You will need to convince funders why they should support you. Demonstrate the need, prove how effective you are at reaching your target group, show them how proactive you are.
- **Good Practice** – this can be an appendix if you prefer, containing good phrases or descriptions of the organisation, successful past applications, and anything that might be useful to someone writing a future application.
- **Conclusion** – briefly summarise the plan.

Implementing the strategy

The idea of having a strategy for anything is that it can guide the people within your organisation in carrying out their tasks in the most co-ordinated and effective way. This applies to a fundraising strategy as well. As stated above, it should be a working document which will guide, remind and record. The person within your group who has responsibility for fundraising should find it useful to refer to. It should help them plan their work load, both long and short term. It should provide them with an easy reference point as to which funders have supported you in the past and those that might support you in the future. The plan should be developed with the involvement and support of the management committee in order to ensure it has the support it needs to be an effective tool for all in the organisation.

Monitoring the usefulness and success of the strategy

Monitoring of the strategy should be done to ensure that it is a useful working document. This should be done by the fundraiser, along with representatives of the management committee. The strategy should be reviewed every six to twelve months to make sure it is up to date, and monitoring its usefulness can be done at this point. For example, has it helped you plan your workload, raise money for existing projects, raise money for new projects?