

Top 10 tips from experienced fundraisers

1. "When I'm writing an application I try to imagine I'm talking to someone I've just met – would they understand what my organisation is about from what I've written in the case for support? And I always try to use a case study in my fundraising bids – it works wonders in bringing things to life." *A fundraiser in a small charity*
2. "I keep a file containing a "generic" organisational case for support and a different case for new and existing projects. I tweak them for different applications and make sure they underline the link between our organisational mission and goals and the stated priorities of the funder I'm approaching." *A fundraiser in a large charity*
3. "Our local CVS was really helpful to us and pointed out some local trusts we would not have known about otherwise. They also were able to introduce us to other organisations with experience of applying to some of the funders we were considering." *A fundraiser in a small charity*
4. "When I started in my current role, I looked at our competitor organisations – including those I knew about and those colleagues suggested – to see where they get their fundraised income. If they were a charity, I looked them up on the Charity Commission website and download their latest accounts. I managed to find two new funding options from doing this." *A fundraiser in a large charity*
5. 'Keep a copy of the application form. If the funder contacts you to find out more about the project, make sure you have it to hand so you can answer any questions.' *A fundraiser in a large charity*
6. "I always try to learn from each application and keep records of who I apply to and for what. Where possible, I always try to get feedback about why our application has or hasn't been successful" *A fundraiser in a small charity*
7. "Use the language the funder uses. Use the terms and definitions they use for the beneficiary group you support (e.g. young people, older people). Use their list (if they have one) of what an application should include. If they have a list of criteria, use these as headings under which you organise your application – saying how you meet each in turn. The more you say that is familiar to them the more likely they are to understand you and take you seriously." *A fundraiser in a large charity*
8. "When I'm researching a potential funder, I always look at their latest annual report on the charity commission website for the most up-to-date information." *A fundraiser in a large charity*
9. "I always ask the funder to acknowledge receipt of the application form in case it gets lost in the post and all the hard work goes to waste. For smaller funders I enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. If I post an application I always send it by recorded post and call to check it has been received a few days later. If I'm submitting by email, I always ask for confirmation of receipt." *A fundraiser in a large charity*
10. "I keep a file of useful support materials so that I don't have to scabble around when there's a funding deadline trying to find useful testimonials or examples of press coverage. If we get any letters of support or thanks – they go straight into the file and when we are running any research or consultation I make sure we ask participants for permission to use their comments in future funding applications." *A fundraiser in a small charity*