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What is a fundraising strategy?

A Fundraising Strategy is a plan that sets out your organisation's funding needs over a given period. It provides an overview of the actions, timescales, and possible funding resources/approaches to funding to achieve the plan. It can be a record of what has been successful in the past as well as recommendations for the future. It should be closely related to your organisation's business plan, supporting the plan, and enabling the organization to reach its stated goals.

Each fundraising strategy is different according to the needs of the organisation; it can be two pages or twenty pages. To be a useful document, your strategy needs to be as long or as short as is appropriate for your organisation. If you create a plan that is too unwieldy, it is unlikely you will use it.

Your strategy 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?

"Before anything else, preparation is the key to success."

A good strategy will direct your efforts across all channels and campaigns to help you meet your goals.

Your Fundraising Plan is your roadmap to success!

But it's more than a simple roadmap from A to B. It helps you plan what resources you will need, identify funding streams to explore or develop, and what tasks to designate to different teams. It guides every part of your organisation towards one, or a few overarching targets.

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

Through the implementation of a good strategy and the ongoing analysis of your performance against it, you will also be able to provide more transparency about where your resources are being allocated, where you are underperforming and succeeding.

Developing the strategy

The best fundraising strategies are those that are a joint effort, carried out in consultation with staff, management, and other interested parties. The strategy will work best with the input and support of the people who are expected to make it happen.

Before you even begin to write your fundraising strategy you need to do your research.

This starts with looking back at your organisation's past. What is your past success? Where has your income come from in the past – You cannot set measurable goals to improve things if you don't have a baseline. Consider - Where do we get our best donors? Which fundraising sources offer us the best ROI? Do we need to diversify?

Another part of the process is to look at the organisation internally and do a SWOT analysis (*see SWOT Template on page 7.*) You can't create an effective strategy without analysing your organisation's current fundraising position and the impact of the external climate. This will allow you to identify more easily areas where you might want to focus your attentions and areas where you may decide that they are not a priority for the coming year.

The final part of the research is looking into each of the different income streams. How are they performing currently? Using the information from the SWOT, what are the opportunities and threats over the time of the strategy and what are your resources for investing time in them.

Now you have done your research, it is time to start writing your strategy (see *Fundraising Strategy Template on page 8 for guidance*). As with most strategic documents, a simple fundraising strategy will fall into three main sections:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to get to?
- How do we want to get there?

Top Tip

Generating income can include a range of sources; from donations, applying for grants, online and community fundraising or crowdfunding, to starting to trade or delivering services under contract.

Having a range of funding sources and not being reliant on one- or two-income streams means that your organisation is likely to be more resilient.

Implementing the strategy

Top tip

When you have written your plan and it has been signed off, make sure you communicate it to the people it affects. Strategies are often implemented by people who did not write them, so you also need to explain the rationale behind it.

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 organisation who has responsibility for fundraising should find it useful to refer to. It should help them plan their workload, 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 trustees/committee to ensure it has the support it needs to be an effective tool for all in the organisation.

Monitoring your success

Constantly monitoring and evaluating how effective your fundraising efforts are in relation to the objectives as set out in your strategy will help you to detect early signs that your approach needs tweaking.

You need the flexibility to react to new opportunities as they arise or to curtail activities that are either not practical or not profitable.

After every fundraising activity, and at least once a quarter, step back and check how you are going. If you are not hitting your targets, what could you do to put the situation to rights?



SWOT Analysis

A strategic analysis of your current fundraising, and the external environment will enable you to plan more effectively for the future.

Take into account your strengths, weaknesses, opportunity, and threats, (organisations may recognise a weakness and turn it into an opportunity).

Strengths

What are you good at?

Maybe you already have an engaged supporter base that want to hear from you

Weaknesses

What are you not good at?

Consider all the areas you could improve.

Maybe you secretly know that your supporter data has not been kept up to date and has lots of gaps in it.

Remember: some weaknesses could become opportunities in the future.

Opportunities

What is coming up?

Maybe you have some great success stories that you can use at the heart of your fundraising appeals

Threats

What could prevent you from reaching your goals?

Maybe its lack of funding in the sector or the increased competition for funding

Perhaps it is the changing priorities of funders /statutory organisations

How might you overcome these threats?

Template Fundraising Strategy



Below are some of the common areas that are usually covered in a fundraising strategy. Add sections that you think are appropriate to your organisation, and make sure it is clearly written

Think about who needs input into each section: management committee, staff, volunteers, service users, stakeholders, funders:

Front Page

- Date - Which years the plan will cover
- Image – this should ideally be a positive representation of your fundraising
- Logo – having a clear corporate identity and consistent imagery helps people to recognize and identify your organisation

Contents page

A clear list of page numbers and contents to enable the reader to find the sections they are interested in.

Introduction

Add information here on when your organisation was set up, its aims and objectives, how you are run, track record, and what services you deliver.

Executive summary

Introduction of the plan and summary of the main points the document will cover. This section should describe the aims and objectives of the strategy in line with the business plan. In this section you want to include who you have consulted as part of your strategy.

Analysis of the current strategy

This should include the findings from your SWOT analysis and should focus on your strengths and any areas that you wish to develop.

Current Income and Future Forecast

Within this section you should outline past, current, and future sources of income. This should be broken down to show each income stream. This breakdown of income will demonstrate the percentage each source has in making up the funding total and therefore, the reliance your organisation places on individual sources of funding. Also include any income that may be generated from the sale of products or services, as well as any unsuccessful fundraising attempts and the reasons why funding could not be obtained from these sources.

Conclusion

Briefly summarise the strategy

Appendixes

This is where you want to add in the detail. You can attach your Fundraising Action Plan which details how you will put your strategy into place. You should also include here your Communications/Marketing Action Plan. This will align to your Business Plan and your Fundraising Strategy.

Further Information and website links

Worksheets

Conducting a SWOT analysis

These can be found via the attached link: www.diycommitteeguide.org

Creating a Strategy

The Chartered Institute of Fundraising have produced this [helpful guide to creating a Fundraising Strategy for Small Charities](#)

Funding

Community Impact Bucks provides regular information on funders and funding via regular newsletters with updates on the voluntary sector and relevant Bucks news - sign up to be a member now at:

www.communityimpactbucks.org.uk/membership

Community Impact Bucks also has a dedicated funding webpage:

<https://communityimpactbucks.org.uk/funding/>

For further information contact: frankie@communityimpactbucks.org.uk

Further Support

Community Impact Bucks offers support to charities and groups. If you would like to book an advice session to discuss your governance, funding or volunteering needs please visit: www.communityimpactbucks.org.uk/events

Or if you would like to view our online resources please visit:

www.communityimpactbucks.org.uk

