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HOW TO WRITE SUCCESSFUL PROPOSALS / APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS

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How to Write Successful Proposals & Applications For Grants

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Chapter 1: The 8-Step Grant Seeking Process	7
Chapter 2: 17 Greatest Mistakes to Avoid	29
Chapter 3: The Main Components of Proposals	36
Chapter 4: Nuts and Bolts of Grant Applications	42
The Cover Letter	43
Executive Summary	48
Statement of Need	50
Project Description	52
Organisational Information	54
Outcomes/Benefits	56
Monitoring and Evaluation	57
Sustainability	60
Budgets	61
Chapter 5: Sample Proposals	64
A Full Proposal	65
A Letter Proposal	73

INTRODUCTION

By the time you finish reading this manual, you will be glad you made the right decision to order a copy. *How to Write Successful Proposals/Applications for Grants* provides you with a simple blueprint to develop proposals that win grants.

This manual is a direct response to the concerns of my numerous clients who worry a lot about their inability to grasp the process of writing successful grant proposals.

In this manual, you will:

- Learn essential techniques for developing comprehensive and compelling proposals and applications for grants.
- Read real life examples of proposals that won grants.
- Understand effective and best ways to communicate with funders.
- Get to know how to develop and build relationships with funders.
- Sample essential tips on winning grants from trusts and foundations.
- Analyse common mistakes that make your proposals fail to win grants.
- Get insight into what makes proposals tick.
- Find avenues for researching available grants programmes.

The manual takes you through the grant writing process. In this present competitive environment, writing very good proposals and applications is a must to enable you win grants from trusts and foundations and government sources.

Here is a resource that you can use to develop proposals that win you grants. I will lead you step-by-step through the proposal writing process...Show you checklists to use ... And sample winning proposals to make your applications stand out.

Chapter 1

The 8-Step Grant Seeking Process

Grants are major sources of income for many non-profit organisations worldwide. To get grants, somebody in your organisation – a trustee, project worker or chief executive - must write a proposal or an application to a funder.

Trusts, foundations and some government institutions are set up purposely to award money to good causes. To achieve this objective funders are always looking out for organisations to help them promote their cause. They, therefore, periodically ask that grant-seeking organisations submit written requests for grants support to them.

All funders award grants in accordance with their own specific eligibility criteria. It is your duty as a grant seeker to understand a funder's interest and link your work to it.

Effective grant seeking requires clear vision of a project. This in turn involves a process of planning, researching, reaching out to, and courting the favour and partnership of funders.

Funders want details about a project, not generalities. They want to be assured that their funds will be spent effectively. Therefore, you must follow a process and do some specific things to increase your chance of being successful every time you write and submit a proposal or an application to a funder for support.

Remember that there are hundreds, if not thousands, of other organisations like yours out there who are writing to the same funder for money.

To become successful at winning grants, these are 8 proven steps I have been taking. I will suggest that you should also follow these steps anytime you write and submit proposals to funders. It will help you win grants most of the time!

Let's look at the 8 steps of your grant seeking process:

Step 1: plan, plan and plan

Before you apply for any grant, you or your organisation must have identified a need or a problem in your community or among your user group. This need or problem must require an urgent attention for the benefit of the public.

The first step you must take as an organisation when seeking for a grant is to form a team, if this is possible. And the team should adopt strategies like brainstorming and research in a planning process to come up with ideas, suggestions and solutions for the problem.

- Think critically about the project to resolve the problem,
- Decide on the best way to present the need and its solution to a funder,
- Clearly identify who your target group is,
- Think of a suitable – concise, clear and precise - name for the project.
- Come up with an aim and objectives for the project,
- Identify benefits project users will gain,
- Decide on how you will track success of activities and other variables,
- Decide how you will sustain the project after the grant is finished,
- Finally, assign cost values to items and activities. This is your budget.

At the end of the planning process, the team should come up with a written outline of your project proposal.

Here is one strategy I will recommend for you to follow at all planning meetings to help you develop winning grant applications.

Let's take an example of a community group in Mandy City that supports elderly people. This group is concerned about the lack of proper health care and frequent ill-health experienced by many elderly people in the area and would like to undertake a project to alleviate this problem.

Create the following five questions and try to provide possible short answers to them every time you have to write a proposal for grants. It will become the cornerstone of your proposal.

Question1: What is the problem you want to address?

Sample answer

Elderly people in Mandy City do not have access to appropriate and affordable healthcare due to them.

Question 2: What do you propose as a solution?

Sample answer

To train 20 local people from the Mandy City community in the year to become volunteer care givers.

Question3: What benefits will your solution bring to project participants?

Sample answer

- (a) Culturally appropriate care available to more elderly people in Mandy City.
- (b) Local people and volunteer care givers will acquire relevant skills and knowledge to enable them access gainful employment.

Question 4: How will you track the progress of your work?

Sample answer

- (a) Ask elderly people being supported how they rate the project and their carers.

Question 5: How much do you need and what will you spend the money on?

Sample answer

£5,000 in the year towards training of 20 caregivers, purchasing medical equipment and reimbursements of expenses to the caregivers.

Step 2: defining aims and objectives

Every project proposal should have an aim and two or more objectives.

We define the aim of a project as the long term changes that we expect to see in people as a result of their taking part in the project's activities.

We usually write the aim using words like: improve, increase, reduce, enable and others. For example: The aim of this project is to:

- Improve quality of life for families who are homeless in Mandy City,
- Increase confidence of disadvantaged children and young people in Sana,

Objectives of a project are the milestones you set to help you achieve the desired changes in beneficiaries. In writing objectives, you use words like: provide, offer, support, facilitate, by the end of project, in 6 months' time, etc.

Objectives of your projects must always be written in SMART terms.

Step 3: research potential funders

It is now time to research potential funders to approach for support. With the outline project proposal you developed during the planning stage ready by your side, you will now use on-line and published resources as well as personal contacts to locate the most promising funding sources for your project.

A good research will fit your funding request with a particular funder's interest.

Step 4: read the funders guidelines

After thorough research, you'll have identified some potential funders which you believe will be interested in supporting your project. If that is the case, then take your time to carefully read those funders' guidelines and follow all the instructions they give in the guidelines. Pay particular attention to whatever any funder would direct you to do when approaching them.

Step 5: call the funder

One of the most important steps in setting yourself up to succeed with your grant seeking process is to build relationship with funders. You can do this by developing the habit of calling grant officers of funders and talking to them about your project before submitting your proposal.

Before making a call to a trust, write what you are going to tell the grant officer on a piece of paper. Rehearse and master what you have written so well that when you meet your grant officer accidentally on the ground floor in a lift, going on to the third floor, you can communicate the message to him/her very clearly before the lift opens. Here is an example of a typical call to a grant officer:

"Hello, my name is John from the Children's charity, the Incredible. We work to improve educational attainment of socially excluded young people aged 8 to 16 years in Mandy City.

Our charity is considering applying to your trust (mention the trusts name) to run an out of school learning hub for young people. Our aim is to improve confidence and self-esteem of young people in Mandy City, majority of who suffer from genetic disorders which prevent them from attending school most of the time.

Our project will use 4 volunteers to help 50 disadvantaged and other children every week to do activities that relieve them of isolation and improve their skills. The total cost of the project is £xyz. We would like you to support us with £xy. I am calling to ask how appropriate this project is to your interests in this funding round."

Step 6: write the application

When a grant officer gives you the go ahead, 50% of your work is done! It is time for you to now write and submit the proposal or application. So, what do you write?

1. You will write a proposal to an identified funder, seeking its support for a project you have developed in response to a community need.
2. Follow the criteria and the guidelines of the particular funder you will send the application to when developing your proposal

Write the application with passion and confidence. Show how users of your project will see changes in their lives after taking part in the project.

- Explain your project in coherent, clear and simple English language. Follow the 'C' rule – Clear, Concise and Convincing,
- Avoid the use of abbreviations and professional jargons,
- Write short and not long and winding sentences. This will help the reader of your proposal or application to follow your thoughts,
- Keep your narrative simple and easy to understand,
- Present a passionate and compelling case on why you should be given the funding. Focus on the strength of your organisation to beat your competitors,
- Show that you have the capacity to make a difference in the lives of people you serve. That you can put the funder's money to a very good use.
- Support assertions you make about the need with hard data and empirical evidence.

Step 7: revise and edit

Read over the proposal or application you have written and correct all errors, spellings and grammar. Read over again, revise and edit your final version of the proposal for style, content and technical issues.

Application checklist

1. Do you have a clear and specific title that explains what the project will do?
2. Have you stated clearly who this project will help and how many of them?
3. Is your project meeting a clear need of your beneficiaries? Remember? 'What is the problem?'
4. How clear are you about what you are going to do? What logical solution are you proposing to satisfy this need?
5. Have you stated the credibility of your organisation to do this? (your aims, objectives, experience and track record)
6. Have you said how your organisation involved users and beneficiaries in the project planning process and the part they will play in delivery and evaluation?
7. Check to see if you included information on your partnership or collaborative work with other organisations in the area.
8. What is the aim of this particular project? Is it satisfying a need?
9. How SMART are your objectives?
10. Have you stated clearly the specific activities this project will undertake to achieve the desired aim?

11. How long will the project take? What are the start and end dates? Say whether it is a new project, on-going or a one-off project.

12. Have you stated how you will measure and evaluate the success of the project? Have you also stated what you will do with the evaluation data?

13. Check to see if you are very clear on how much you need to run this project and what you will spend this money on.

14. Have you stated how you will sustain this project after this grant? What happens when this funding ends?

15. Have you explained in the proposal how others will learn from your project?

A well-designed project should have answered all these questions and your proposal or application will have a better chance of being successful.

Step 8: submit your application

Once you have completed all these tasks, place your proposal or application and all other supporting documents together into a clearly addressed envelope and post the package to the funder. Make sure that the address on the envelope is correct.

Read the detailed texts on how to write successful proposals and applications for grants by [ordering](#) the main book now

Organisation: New Generation

Charity No. XB123A

Project: To improve the well-being of elderly refugees and asylum seekers in Mandy City by involving them in a variety of social activities that will enable them to live healthy, active and independent lives.

Organisational Background:

New Generation helps refugees and asylum seekers in Mandy City to access services, integrate and live independent lives. The main support given is in the provision of advice and information, interpretation and advocacy for those with little or no English. We also provide care of the elderly, family support and a mentoring project to turn around the lives of young refugees experiencing disadvantage.

We play very important roles in the lives of our service users by helping them to find homes, lost families and other services. Established in 200X, the charity relies mostly on its pool of 6 dedicated volunteers, majority of who are former refugees to support over 1,200 refugees every year. New Generation is managed by a 7-member trustee board who know the community very well. They are comprised of former refugees, service users and skilled in community group management.

The Need for this Project

Over 1000 elderly refugees and asylum seekers in Mandy City need local and accessible day-time opportunities to improve their social integration and address problems of loneliness and frequent ill-health.

Our charity has been working with the refugee community in Mandy City for over 10 years now. Research and user consultations we conduct reveal that refugees, especially elderly ones are socially excluded and feel redundant. Surveys we conducted in January 201X showed more than 60% of elderly refugees live alone due to old age, bereavement and/or break down in family ties. Volunteers on outreach have reported health issues of arthritis, high blood pressure, glaucoma and others among many elderly refugees for which they need support to manage.

For elderly people living in these conditions, lack of opportunities to meet with peers and participate in constructive recreational, physical and social activities exacerbates social deprivation. This project addresses the outcry of disadvantage and social exclusion elderly refugees complain about and their wish to be included within their local community settings, activities and events to benefit their health.

Innovative approach to solving this problem:

This project will relieve isolation and loneliness for over 200 elderly refugees and asylum seekers in Mandy City in the year by bringing them together to socialise,

involve with their community and take part in a variety of stimulating cultural and social activities of their choice. We will hire a project support worker to:

- Provide 1 day a week of drop-in centre support for networking and social activities including discussions, playing of games, cards and quizzes.
- Offer health information, advice and support sessions to improve physical and mental health and well-being of elderly refugees and asylum seekers.
- A keep-fit instructor will involve elderly refugees in an hour of soft exercises, traditional dance and activities that will keep them healthy and active.

We will establish a volunteering scheme to tap into the vast experience of elderly refugees and asylum seekers to involve in their community's life.

Emphasis will gradually be placed on elderly refugees taking active part in designing activities and leading sessions. Activities will take place at Mandy City Centre on Saturdays from 11am to 4pm.

Outcomes

The benefits of this project to 200 disadvantaged elderly refugees include:

- 89% report improved mental and physical health,
- 90% will feel less isolation as a result of greater participation in community,
- 95% gain improved knowledge of available services in the community.
- There will be increased social interaction, self-esteem among older refugees.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We will monitor and evaluate the impact of this project by:

- Collecting statistics on all elderly refugees, their families and carers attending and accessing sessions each week,
- Observing and recording their active participation in project activities and
- Organising user-involvement days once in every six weeks to collect feedback from clients on how well the project is meeting their needs and expectations.

Information derived will be collated into quarterly reports for trustees to scrutinise in terms of whether the project is demonstrating that its aims and objectives are being met. This will guide us in planning and developing robust projects in the future.

Sustainability

New Generation is committed to supporting refugees, especially the elderly ones to live active, healthy and independent lives. Good practice provision of this project will be shared with other charities. We will involve users as volunteers in all project provisions to create a pool of experienced support workers to lead the project when funds are low. We have developed a fundraising strategy to seek funding from trusts, corporations, individuals and events. These actions will help to sustain this project far into the future.

Project Budget

	£
• Venue hire (£15/hr x 4 hrs/week x 36 weeks)	2,160.00
• Project administration (Stationery/tel/copying/postage/ £90/month x 12 months)	1,080.00
• Volunteer training (Trainers fees 10 vols (£10hrs x 40 hours) 400 (Workshop materials and handouts) 450	950.00
• Volunteering support - reimbursements (10 volunteers @ £50 each a week x 36 weeks)	1,800.00
• Health equipment (mats, monitors, weighing scales, etc.)	1,200.00
• Refreshments (£14/week x 36 weeks)	504.00
• Project Support Worker (£14/hr x 5hrs/week x 36weeks)	2,520.00
• Keep Fit Instructor (£25/hr a week x 36 weeks)	900.00
• Publicity	400.00
TOTAL COST	<u>£11,514</u>