



How to increase your chances of bid-writing success before writing a word



Introduction

- About Clear Thinking Consultancy
- The case for investing in the process before bid-writing
- The three P's
 - **Prospecting**
 - **Programme** design, and
 - Application **Planning**
- Your approach



Participant outcomes

- KNOW

- Practical ways to improve how you identify relevant prospects to fund your services, and
- How you design programmes to meet the criteria provided

- FEEL

- Confident of a higher success rate in bid-writing

- DO

- Be more discerning when applying for funding
- Invest more time in the process



The case for investing in the process



The funding landscape

- Reduced local authority budgets
- Increased needs as a result of Covid-19
- Particularly for mental health, social isolation and violence in the home
- More applications to Trusts and Foundations and for Corporate partnerships
- Many funders still in emergency giving phase / reviewing giving priorities

“We’ve noticed that previous committed givers (Trusts) are no longer a ‘sure thing’. Competition... is overwhelming and application processes don’t often warrant the maximum grant amount” (Fundraising ROI’s benchmarking study, LarkOwl, 2021)



Time spent vs success rates

- One in eight charities are spending three working days a week or more on grant applications since March 2020
- Over half have seen a decrease in their success (Fundraising UK Limited)
- Average fundraising success is 1 in 7, though as low as 1 in 12 for cold approaches (LarkOwl, 2021) rising to 1 in 3 for warmer more established relationships
- JRCT, Tudor Trust, Henry Smith, etc. weed out at most applications at first stage those which fall outside funding priorities
- Most funders ask you to wait a year before reapplying

Identifying strong and relevant prospects



**LESS
IS
MORE**

Factors to consider when carrying out prospect research

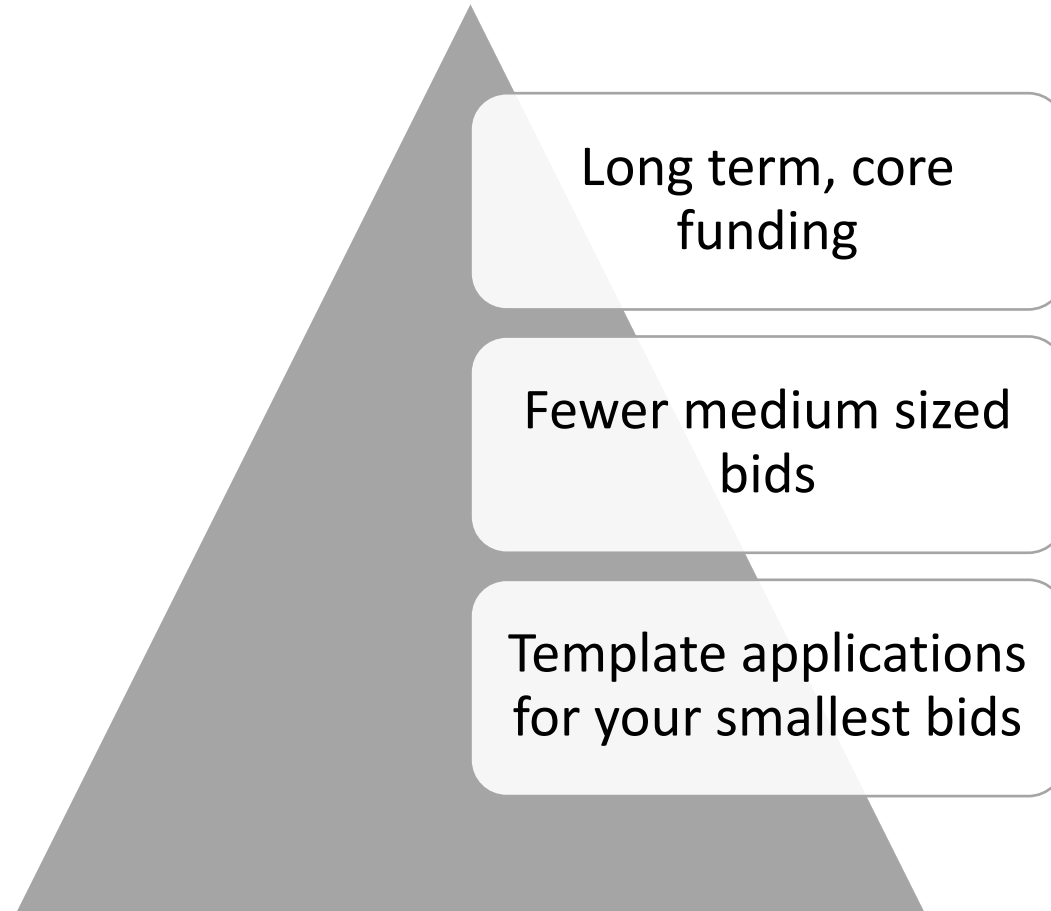
Make sure they are relevant to your organisation

- Use funding databases
- Register with your local CVS
- Look at similar organisations to yours – who is funding them?
- Ask them!

Make sure your ask is realistic

- Turnover
- Track record
- Research previous grants
- Start small
- Core vs restricted funding
- Guidance documents

Have a plan



Plan to fail – risk adjusted pipeline

Fund	Grant applied	Likelihood	Likely Grant	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Deadline information	Notes/Bid Status
BLF: Awards for All	£10,000	100%	£10,000	£10,000			Rolling application -	Successful!
BLF: Reaching Communities	£90,000	33%	£29,700	£9,900	£9,900	£9,900	Rolling application	In progress
Children in Need	£30,000	100%	£30,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	Next round to be	Successful!
City Bridge Trust	£40,000	25%	£10,000	£3,333	£3,333	£3,333	Rolling application -	In progress
Comic Relief	£25,000	25%	£6,250	£2,083	£2,083	£2,083	Strategy due to be	Not started
Esmee Fairbairn	£90,000	25%	£22,500	£7,500	£7,500	£7,500	Rolling application	Not started
The Henry Smith Charity	£60,000	100%	£60,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	Rolling application	Successful!
Trust for London	£25,000	67%	£16,750	£8,375	£8,375		4th February; 28th	Not started
Trusthouse Charitable Foundation	£10,000	100%	£10,000	£10,000				Successful!
Tudor Trust	£30,000	100%	£30,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	Rolling application	Successful!
Target Income	Target to secure			£90,000	£75,000	£50,000.00		
Projected Income	Total projection			£91,191.67	£71,191.67	£62,816.67		
Secured Income	Amount secured			£60,000.00	£40,000.00	£40,000.00		

Invest in the programme design process

2. Decide what to do

Where to focus? What are
the core needs?

Which solution to
choose?


Convergent
thinking



Discussion

- As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, many families have been plunged into crisis for the very first time.
- What are the needs?
- What are the possible solutions?



Feedback: families in crisis as a result of Covid-19

What are the needs?

What are the possible solutions?



Helping you achieve sustainability and growth for your organisation



Discussion

- A Great Funder (AGF) has announced a fund, to which applicants can bid for up to £20k for a maximum six months of programme delivery
- On which needs should we focus?
- Which solution should we choose?



Feedback: £20k over max six months

On which needs should we focus?

Which solution should we choose?



Application planning





Application planning

- Summarise
 - Funder and fund objectives
 - What you're applying for: amount and period
 - Timeframe for submission and others' involvement (and when)
 - Other key info
- Share responsibility – who else should be involved in this?
- Be clear on requirements
 - Guidance document
 - Due diligence
 - Submitting procedure



Begin with the end in mind (S. Covey)

- Start with the deadline date and work backwards
 - Programme design
 - Evidence
 - Content (word first!)
 - Budget
 - Supporting documents
 - Approvals
 - Buffer!



Other tips

- Beef up your evidence of need
 - Up to date research to independently verify the need for your services?
 - Recent challenges that have exacerbated the challenges faced by your service users that you can explain more clearly?
 - Recent news stories or high-profile events as a ‘hook’?
 - Bring to life with case studies, images or videos (if applicable)
- Demonstrate user involvement
 - Strategic planning
 - Co-design
 - Reviews and surveys
- Show local knowledge of who else is operating in this space and why / how what you’re doing complements that work (or is different)
- Use the correct charge out rates when producing your budget



Your thoughts



Intended outcomes

- **KNOW**
 - Practical ways to improve how you identify relevant prospects to fund your services, and
 - How you design programmes to meet the criteria provided
- **FEEL**
 - Confident of a higher success rate in bid-writing
- **DO**
 - Be more discerning when applying for funding
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Thank you!

Helping you achieve sustainability and growth for your organisation