

Funding Advice Bureau

SYFAB guide to...

**Developing
a fundraising
strategy**

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Developing a fundraising strategy

A fundraising strategy is any kind of plan for how you will raise money to do something specific. It could be just a plan for raising money for one particular project or activity, but more likely, it refers to a plan for raising all the money your organisation will need over the coming year.

In this guide, we'll run through the main steps involved in putting together a simple fundraising strategy for your organisation.

Why have a fundraising strategy?

Planning out the fundraising tasks you need to do is all part of general organisational planning in the not-for-profit sector. It's important to plan well in order to make sure that your work meets its aims and objectives, and that you have the resources you need to carry out your activities. It may seem like a lot of extra work to produce your fundraising strategy when there are urgent tasks to do today, but producing and using your fundraising strategy will save you a lot of time in the future. Here are some reasons why:

Firstly, when you write the strategy, you will need to take time out to plan what your organisation wants to do in the future. That may sound obvious but it's something that lots of groups don't do. Without a plan for your future, it's easy to get a bit lost and end up doing activities that don't fit in with your original aims.

Secondly, planning your future activities will mean that you look at your organisation as a whole, as well as the individual projects that make it up and how they fit together. Again, this is something that many groups forget to do and it can have a negative effect on the development of your organisation. Looking at the bigger picture might also help you to identify new ways of raising money for your work. For example if you've always relied on grants, you might decide to try and sell some of your services.

Thirdly, writing the strategy will help you to prioritise your funding needs and decide which are the most pressing and it will make your fundraising less daunting by breaking it down into manageable tasks.

And finally, once you have the strategy, you can use it to refer back to and check your fundraising against the original plan. It will keep you focussed.

What's in a fundraising strategy?

Your funding strategy effectively sets out the fundraising tasks that your organisation will need to complete, who will do them and when they will do them. If you are fundraising for a small organisation, your strategy might be very simple indeed, and may even just cover one project or activity. If your organisation grows and you take on more projects and activities, your fundraising will have to get more sophisticated, and so too will your planning.

When we describe a fundraising strategy, we're talking about your plan for all of your organisation's fundraising work over the next year. By the end of this planning process, you are looking to produce an action plan for how you will achieve your fundraising target for the year, setting out who will do what by when.

Here's what you need to cover in your funding strategy:

1. Your aims and objectives for the coming year – details of the overall purpose of your organisation and your work, and what you are trying to achieve.
2. The activities you intend to carry out over the year with details of the specific pieces of work you will do over the year – what you will deliver, where, when and to whom.
3. Your organisation's budget for the coming year, showing the planned costs of doing your work over the year.

4. Details of the funding you currently have in place, what it pays for and how long it will last.
5. Details of possible approaches you could take to packaging your work into projects, or separate items to fundraise for.
6. Details of the amount of funding you will need to raise for each project or item.
7. A summary of the possible funding sources you could approach for each, along with details of any impending deadlines or criteria to you need to be aware of.
8. Details of the resources you have available to carry out your fundraising work – who will be able to do the fundraising tasks and how much time they have available to do it.
9. An action plan showing the tasks you need to complete, who is responsible for each, and the deadline for each.

Your organisation may already have some of this information in other plans and documents, such as a business plan or operational plan. If so, you don't need to repeat all of that in a separate funding strategy. The important thing is to make sure all your planning is joined-up so that the fundraising tasks you have set match up with the operational plans and the financial plans of your organisation.

Using your fundraising strategy

Once you've got a fundraising strategy written, the hard work really begins. Any strategy is only worth having if you implement it – your organisation needs to have measures in place to make sure that the work gets done on time, and to adjust the plan over time. So you should ensure that your strategy is circulated to your committee, and that you have regular updates and reports on your progress, with milestones and targets to measure against, and a process for reviewing and updating your strategic planning' as necessary.

Further reading

The Complete Fundraising Handbook
Nina Botting & Michael Norton

The Complete Guide to Business and Strategic Planning
Alan Lawrie

Fundraising Strategy
Redmond Mullin

Available from Directory of Social Change (DSC) and other book sellers and possibly your local library too.

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