

KEY ELEMENTS IN DEVELOPING AND SUSTAINING THE GRANTMAKER/GRANTSEEKER PARTNERSHIP

IS THERE A POSSIBLE MATCH?

Lesson 1 – Research, research, research -- use the rifle rather than the shotgun approach.

Grantseekers that take the time to research a company/foundation and review guidelines to determine compatibility save both parties' time and increase the chance for a partnership.

Lesson 2 – Funders have different personalities.

Grantseekers that network and attend meetings such as this are ahead of the game in finding out what different funders value. Like nonprofits, funders are unique, so it's not one size fits all in approaching funders.

ONCE YOU'VE DETERMINED THERE IS A POSSIBLE MATCH, THEN THE RELATIONSHIP BUILDING BEGINS!

Lesson 3 – Be strategic when pursuing the funder.

Grantseekers that create opportunities for funders to meet their staff, clients, and board members at events such as receptions or funder hosted briefings help funders learn about your organization while putting your agency in a good light. This is a people business.

Lesson 4 - Keep the funders informed.

Grantseekers that keep in touch with both current and potential funders further enhance the partnership. Let funders hear the good news– significant recognition and press, *and* the bad news – if there is going to be negative press or rumors floating around, it's best to pick up the phone and call the funders so you can give your take on the situation.

Lesson 5 – Don't overlook a possible advocate for your agency.

Grantseekers that consider everyone as a possible ally reap the benefits. Remember that everyone you deal with could influence the potential partnership, from the secretary to the program officer to a trustee. Don't overlook current funders as possible advocates.

CLOSE THE DEAL -- GO FOR THE GRANT!

Lesson 6 –Clear, concise and complete proposals that meet the funders giving priorities can get your foot in the door.

Grantseekers that tailor their requests to meet the unique guidelines of the funder, including all documentation and a compelling project description, move their proposal ahead of the dozens of other proposals being reviewed by funders.

Lesson 7 – Site visits can make or break the relationship.

Grantseekers that have done all the right things up to this point and a site visit or meeting has been requested by the funder should plan carefully for the visit. It is important to have the appropriate people available and program(s) under consideration running on the scheduled date to put your organization in the best possible light.

Lesson 8 – Board members can be your ringers in the process.

Grantseekers that use their boards effectively in the grantseeking process can strengthen their chances of getting a grant and further enhance their partnership. Some funders may request that a board member attend the meeting since effective nonprofit governance is becoming important to more and more funders in the grant review process.

Lesson 9 – Transparency is key throughout the relationship

Grantseekers that have staffing, program or other significant agency changes during the proposal review process should contact the funder by phone or email right away. If your organization receives a grant and is having trouble staffing the project or raising the additional dollars needed, it is equally important to notify the funder right away.

Lesson 10- If you don't at first succeed, try, try again.

Grantseekers that don't get a grant should not give up unless funders have given you a specific reason why funding for your organization will be unlikely; the competition may be different the next time or you may have a more compelling project.

Lesson 11 – Learn from the experience and increase your odds of a future grant.

Grantseekers that accept the proposal rejection graciously and follow up with a thank you letter to the funder are always seen in a positive light. Some funders might offer suggestions for strengthening your organization's next proposal submission.

SO YOU GOT THE GRANT – HOW DO YOU CONTINUE TO BUILD THE PARTNERSHIP?

Lesson 12 – Don't take the money and run.

Grantseekers that continue to communicate after they receive a grant as well as submit the required progress reports place their organization in the best possible light for continued support.

In summary, developing partnerships is always a work in progress; the partnership can be a good one and a lasting one – but it requires commitment and effort on the part of both the grantseeker and the grantmaker.

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