Show me the money
How to make organizations appealing to funders

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5 funding truths no one will tell you

1. No one cares what you do. They care how what you do will advance their work.
2. No one wants to fund fan clubs. They want to fund impact.
3. Funding, like anything, has trends. Currently, the trend in work is COVID-19, and vaccine confidence.
4. Funders LOVE success stories. Build in measurement to provide proof points.
5. Funding is often more about relationships than RFPs.

Pay attention to funders' missions and areas of focus.

Target
Tailor
Tie

Target funders whose missions are aligned with yours.
Tailor pitches and RFP responses to funders' priorities.
Tie their success to your work.
5 funding truths no one will tell you

1. No one cares what you do.
   They care how what you do will advance their work.
   - Don’t assume:
     Initial funding determinations are often done by administrators, not SMEs, so spell it out!
   - Don’t scope creep:
     Respond to exactly what the RFP asks for
   - Tie their success to your work:
     Show them how your success helps them meet their mission.

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2. No one wants to fund fan clubs.
   They want to fund impact.
   Your organization needs a strong strategy.
   Be clear on:
   - What you do
   - What gap you fill
   - Why you do it better than any other organization.

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2. No one wants to fund fan clubs.
   They want to fund impact.
   - What’s your elevator pitch?
     If you can’t easily state what you do and why it matters, your strategy probably needs work.
   - Focus on programs or projects:
     They are easier to fund than administrative costs – you can integrate admin costs into program budgets but not the other way around.
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Funding, like anything, has trends.
Current IZ funding trends COVID-19 and vaccine confidence.

Even if your organization doesn’t focus on the trends:
- Demonstrate how what you do supports vax confidence
- Tailor a program or project to include COVID-19
- Create a new program that addresses BOTH but is still mission-minded

3. PRACTICAL HINTS

Why are you the best positioned to address it?
What is unique about you that positions you best?
How are you driving change?

Comparative Advantage

Funders love success stories
Build in measurement to provide proof points
Evaluate starts at the beginning of project, not the end!
- Strategy is your friend – so are SMART objectives
- Baseline v final
- Impact stories
- Journal articles
Funders love success stories
Build in measurement to provide proof points
Be clear on
• why you are doing something
• What you will do
• How you will measure it

Funding is often more about relationships than RFPs
Target your potential donors
• Think local and national!
• Build relationships slowly:
  Invest in them so they will invest in you
• Relationship management takes time
Appreciate your existing donors
• Mid and final project reports
  (even if they don’t ask for them)
• Attributable impact and success stories
• Social media call outs
• Annual reports

Potential donors:
• You only have one first ask, be sure the relationship is ready
• Be clear on the potential donor priorities
• Find an ally in the organization
• LinkedIn is your friend
• Appreciate your donors!

Existing donors:
• Be optimistic about thanks
• Aim for at least 4 “call outs” a year, schedule them
• Include screen captures of them in your reports

Time is the currency of relationships. If you want to invest into your relationships, start by investing your time.
-Dave Willis
Final helpful hints

RFP Best Practices

- Short sentences, no $10 words
- Focus on what they want to hear, not what you want to tell
- Read the RFP carefully and respond exactly
- Don’t get creative with fonts and margins
- Less is more
- Score your proposal
- Write a super strong capacity statement - it can be reused