"Show me the money!"

10 Tips for Applying for Funding

1. "Sharpen the Saw…"

"Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe." Abraham Lincoln

Being well prepared can be a real time saver. Have you taken the time to do your research? Do you know your organisation? Do you know the status of your organisation? Have you researched what funding is available to you and chosen the most appropriate? Have you followed tips 2 and 3…?
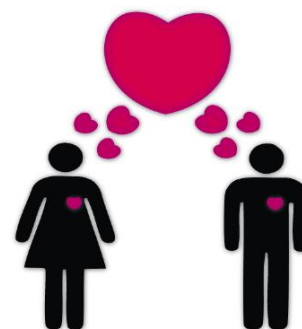
2. "You're the one that I want…or are you?"

One of the first tasks is checking that you or your organisation is eligible to receive the funding available. Some funders will offer grants to specific groups (e.g. not for profit). Some may only fund applications from certain catchment areas or support the development of specific genders or age groups. Save yourself a lot of time by checking if you are eligible from the outset! Funders often receive applications that they simply cannot fund. This is a waste of the funder's time. More importantly it's a waste of yours.

3. "Find your perfect match…"

Applying for funding is just like finding your perfect partner! Matching a funders grant criteria is like finding the ideal characteristics in your soulmate! Consider: does your project meet the grant criteria? Can you give the funders exactly what they want? Do not give the funder any excuse to reject your proposal! If there is a grant criteria make sure you can meet each point as a minimum in your application. If they do not have a specific criteria you may be able to speak to the funder directly and find out what they are looking for.
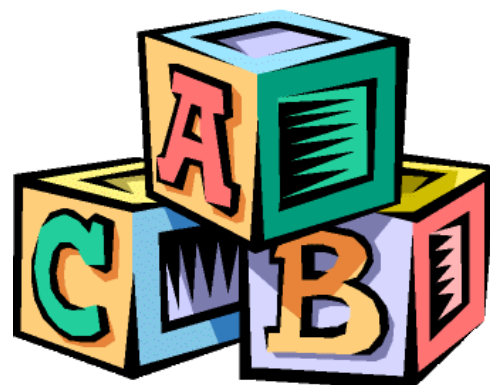
4. "I have a dream…"

What is your desired outcome? How will your project really make a difference? That is the information that the funders' will require. But first of all, do you know what 'the dream' is? Do you have a goal and a plan of how to get there? This may be a formal strategy that you have put in place. Take time to consider your projects purpose. How can you make progress measurable? (E.g. numbers of participants). Who are your beneficiaries? Have you identified a need for your pr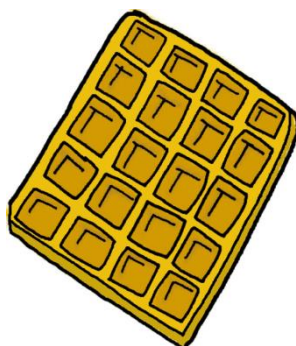oject that has inspired this application? Having an outcome in mind and a clear map of how you intend to get there can give your application strength. A vivid dream will engage the funders' whilst a vague dream may send them back to sleep!

5. "Sweep the sheds…"

The New Zealand Rugby Team, referred to as the 'All Blacks' use this mantra. It means 'never be too big to do the small things.' Get the basics right in your application. Is the spelling and grammar correct? Are the relevant documents attached? Have you met the deadline? Is your application addressed to the appropriate person? Some funders may take offence at what they see is laziness on behalf of the applicant. Give your application every chance of success by getting the basics right!

6. "We all love waffles…"

Savoury or sweet, with bacon or ice cream, waffles are simply great! Waffling however is not! Get to the point when writing your bid. Consider what the funders are actually asking for and aim to deliver a concise answer. Avoid repeating yourself. I said, avoid repeating yourself! Remember that funders often have very limited time to review applications. Make an impact and give them the information they have asked for.

7. "It's only words…"

Lyrics made famous by the Bee Gees (or Boyzone for our younger applicants!) The tone of an application is extremely important. Whilst the application needs to be the point and be based on facts, there is nothing to stop you being innovative and making it an interesting read. What are your USP's? Why should the funders be excited about the project you want them to fund? Be positive. Strike a balance by being passionate and excited without sounding overly hopeful or desperate.

8. "Icing on the cake…"

It is possible for you to meet all the criteria and not receive a grant. Maybe there was no more funding available at the time of your application; maybe there were more deserving applications. Some things are out of our control. What you can do is give your application the best chance of succeeding by showing why you believe your project could have 'the edge'. Do you have any partners in the project? Is anyone able to 'match fund' or offer support 'in kind?' Do you have volunteers that are giving up there time to make this project happen? Remember that these details should be factored into a project's cost. This gives the funder the chance to see the overall cost of a project and establish if there is value for money. Also consider how the project will be monitored to make sure there is continual improvement. Can the project make a real impact? Will you leave a legacy?

9. "A time for reflection…"

It can be very helpful to reflect from time to time. Reflection offers a time to consider what you may be happy or unhappy with. The same can apply with your funding bid. Consider, is there anything missing? Have you made it obvious that your project meets the grant criteria? Think from the funders' point of view; imagine that they will have to justify NOT giving you the funding. Do not give them any excuse not to give you the money. Have you got 'your message' across? It is a good idea to have someone who knows about your project review your application and invite criticism. It is also helpful to have someone who knows very

little about the project review your application. They can help identify where you may not have sufficient information in place. You need to assume that someone reading your project has no idea about what you are doing. Give them the detail they need and remember, be concise!

10. "It's all about time…"

Applying for funding can be a lengthy process. It may be something that you have to do multiple times to get the desired outcome. Use your time wisely. Consider creating a 'funding file.' This could be a folder to store information that may be pertinent for multiple funding opportunities. This may include relevant supporting documents from the club (e.g. constitutions, membership details, coaching qualifications) or press cuttings or details of accreditation or awards from relevant bodies. This could be a tremendous time saving investment on your part.

So there you have it. 10 top tips to give you a great chance of securing funding for your project…

Good luck!