

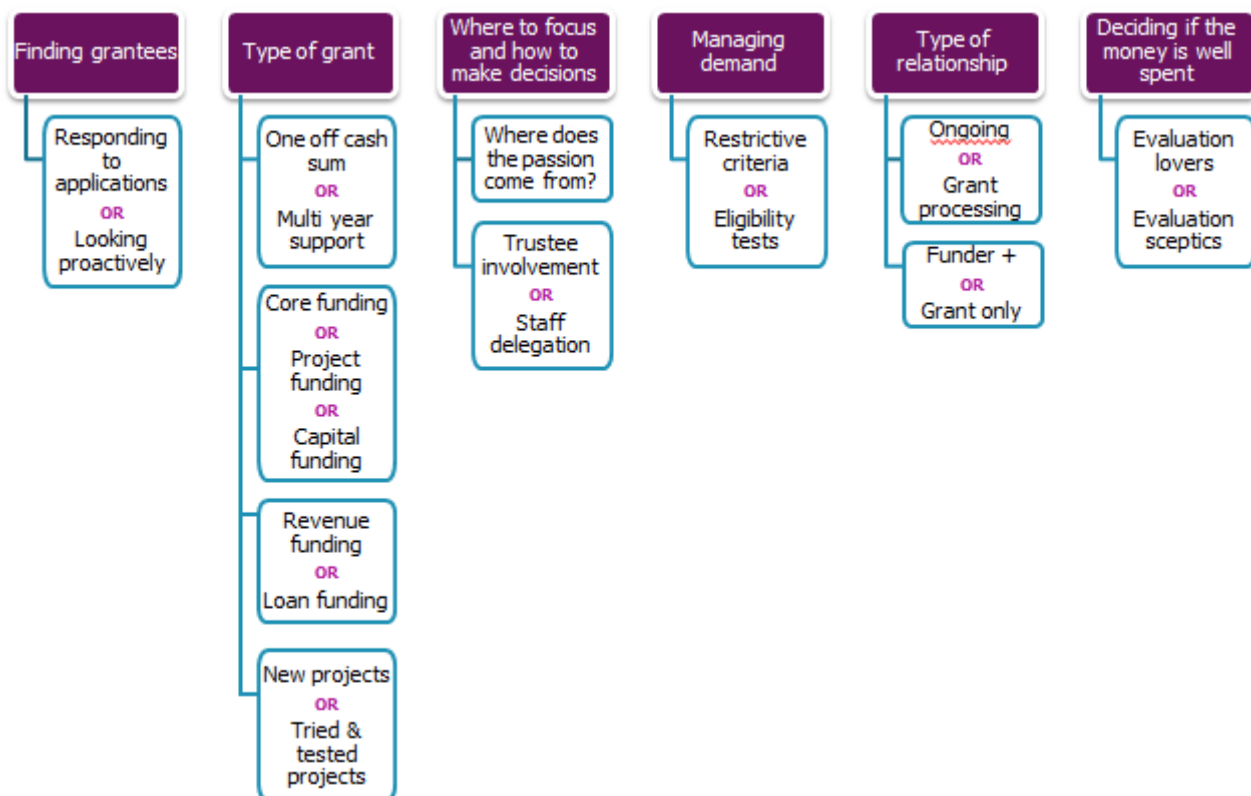
What makes for a successful application?

According to the grant-makers (“Inside the Mind of a Grant-maker” 2013), the hallmarks of a great application are:

1. Understanding the grant-making trust and tailoring applications
2. A strong idea
3. Competent people
4. Clear and succinct language
5. Showing finances are in order

1. Understanding the grant-making trust and tailoring applications:

- The number of ineligible applications that don’t meet the published criteria, is depressingly high.
- Don’t make assumptions about grant-makers. They vary in many ways:



- Do your homework and tailor your application to the trust.
- Show you understand what this grant-maker wants to achieve and how funding your charity will help them achieve it

2. A strong idea

- Will your project meet an identified need which no-one else is meeting?
- Can you provide evidence of this need?
- Is the project well planned and full costed?
- Are there achievable outcomes which can be demonstrated and which will make a real difference?
- Is it a tried and tested method? Or deliberately innovative?

3. Are you competent?

- People and ideas win grants. The strength of your application comes from the strength of the idea and the people behind it.
- Have you demonstrated to the funder that your organisation has the skills and experience to deliver this project successfully?
- You need frontline staff /volunteers and trustees with appropriate track records

4. See “Words, words, words”

5. Present good financial management

- Is the application budget thorough, credible and well presented?
- Are the organisation’s accounts up-to-date, audited and submitted to the Charity Commission as necessary, and show good financial management?

More thoughts.....

- Quality wins over quantity. Take the time to get fewer applications right, rather than sending many in the hope that one may get noticed.
- **Cover these 3 aspects in your bid:**
 1. The head – ensure a logical flow to your proposal. Does it make sense? Will your activities lead to the changes you claim? Do your numbers add up? Is the unit cost reasonable?
 2. The heart –get across the importance of your cause. Make sure you convey the experience of your users with examples and case studies.
 3. The hands - the call for action. What do you want the funder to do? You would not believe how many times this is not clear . Make sure the ask is upfront and explicit. For example, please give us £X to do Y to make Z happen.
- **Make sure your application is complete**
 - Many applications fail because they are incomplete.
 - Answer all the questions fully
 - Send the additional information requested but don’t send what is not asked for
- **Ask for advice and review**
 - Voluntary Action Swindon and Develop have funding advisors able to help you with applications
 - Ask someone who has no knowledge of your organisation or project to read the application and tell you if you have made a convincing case
- **Be honest with yourself**
 - Read your application and ask yourself whether you would give you the money. If not, why not?!