

5 top tips for managing relationships

Good relationships with your funders and supporters are vital. Without good relationships it is harder to get repeat funding, or to ask for help when things go wrong. Although it can feel time consuming to do it, its essential if you want to be successful!

1. Say THANK YOU!

No matter what type of donor you're working with or the size of the gift you've received, the most important thing you can do is say Thank You. By telephone is great, but by email or letter is just as good. The most important thing is that you say it, promptly.

2. Stay in touch

Don't forget to stay in touch with your funders. Let them know how the project is developing and how their funding is making a difference. You don't need special systems or tools to do this, just a diary. Put a note in your diary to contact the funder every few months with an update and make sure you do it. If you experience a problem with the project, make sure you keep the funder up to date on this. They'll appreciate hearing about the challenges you've faced and will help you overcome them if they can. They won't appreciate finding out that the project stalled 6 months ago when you submit your annual report.

3. Show not tell

Telling a funder how the project is progressing is good. Showing them is better. If you can, get them to visit the project they can see the work and its impact for themselves. If you can't, then send them videos or pictures so they can see really clearly how their help has made a difference.

4. Stick to the guidance

If the funder has asked for specific reporting, make sure you adhere to this, and on time. If you are going to miss the deadline, then let them know in advance and ask for an extension. They'll appreciate the contact and try to help you if you need it.

5. Ask again

At the end of the funding period many organisations start to look for funding from new funders. But, if you've managed the relationship with your original funder well, there's no reason why you can't approach them for a second round of funding. If they have enjoyed working with you and feel part of the project because you've kept them so well updated, they'll be keen to help if they can. If they can't help, then at least you've developed a great relationship for the next project you need funding for – and they'll remember the great experience they had working with you last time.