

Maximising success: What's hot in fundraising right now?

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Earlier this year, DSC's very own Jay Kennedy (Director of Policy and Research), shared insights and tips on what's hot in grants fundraising as a presenter at Benefact Group's fundraising webinar.

There were many questions on the day, and the session could have gone on for hours! We've summarised five burning questions that audience members asked, including some that there wasn't time to address on the day.

We also have news of something coming hot off the press designed to help all fundraisers look for funding.

How much of a problem does AI pose for accepting applications?

AI seems to be helping drive an increase in applications, and funders are growing wise to spotting when it has been used. Our advice? Use AI carefully. Check to see that the funder has a policy on accepting AI-supported bids as many won't, but some might.

Use AI to help you with the legwork (research, drafting outlines etc.), but don't rely on it to do everything. You will need to check that the final version of your application is correct and sounds human.

And remember, never input confidential or proprietary information into your AI tool of choice.

For further advice about AI, you can check out [DSC's AI Hub](#), which contains details about upcoming AI courses, helpful articles and external resources.

How can we find new funders that don't have a website that may want to support us?

To find newly registered grant-makers, we recommend two DSC resources. Firstly, DSC's *Guide to New Trusts*, which contains information on just over 100 newly registered grant-makers. The guide is organised by cause and geographical location, making it easier to identify potential funders.

Secondly, we'd recommend [Funds Online](#) (DSC's online funders database) which aside from having around 8,000 funders listed, also includes updates on the latest new grant makers.

When is the moment that we should be picking up the phone more to call potential funders?

If a funder has a contact number, don't hesitate to give them a call. A quick conversation about your charity and whether it's a good fit for their funding priorities can save everyone time – and raise your profile as a potential beneficiary before you even apply.

If you weren't successful, it's okay to ask for feedback. Some funders are happy to do this, and it could make the difference between 'try again in the future' or needing to focus your energy elsewhere because you just aren't the right fit.

Where should I start with major funders?

Try not to focus on 'everything everywhere all at once'. Do your research, create a shortlist of good prospects and start there. Build up to applying to major funders because although they are worthwhile avenues of funding, they might have more complex processes or require more sustained work over a longer time. Begin by building relationships, then work towards an official application.

We also recommend diversifying your approach by applying to a wide range of funders, from smaller trusts to major institutions.

How can the charity sector make the grant application process better and less wasteful?

There is no simple answer to making the grant application process better and less resource intensive. AI is already disrupting the grant application process, and it remains to be seen how processes will evolve.

One promising trend is the rise of the two-stage application process, where funders first ask for a brief expression of interest, followed by a full application only if appropriate.

Final thoughts

The fundraising landscape is always changing, but Jay has shared some timeless advice. Make sure to use AI consciously, get in touch with trusts where possible, which can build rapport, and approach a variety of trusts, from smaller to major.

Why not check out [Benefact Group's previous webinar recordings?](#) You can also sign up to receive fundraising resources and webinar alerts.

Hot off the press... Sharpen your fundraising strategy

The Benefact Trust, alongside over 2,000 other funders, appears in the latest and greatest edition of the *Directory of Grant Making Trusts (DGMT)*, arriving in September! [Pre-order your copy today.](#)

DGMT is an essential resource that will help any fundraiser put Jay's tips into action. It contains everything you need to get a head start in finding the right funders for you, such as detailed overviews of funders' application processes and contact details. We've done all the digging for information for you! There is a huge range of funders to choose from, from those £50,000 to those giving in the millions so find your new funders now with [Directory of Grant Making Trusts](#).