“Don’t Go For Broke”
Fundraising – Some Useful Advice

The question of where to get the money to make your show happen, in any context, is the one that is asked the most and can also be the most difficult to answer. Raising the money to bring your show to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe presents its own unique challenges however if your intention is to take your experience at the Fringe and channel what you achieve into further opportunities beyond the Festival, then fundraising remains a very prevalent issue.

Arts projects can require subsidy out with what they generate in ticket income for them to happen at all and sourcing that subsidy is the biggest challenge facing any arts organisation or artist, emerging or established.

The purpose of this guide is to help you navigate your way around the various funding systems that are available, help you to identify funding opportunities and give you an overview of other sources of support such as sponsorship, trusts and foundations.

This information can be applied to your Fringe project but it is also useful in the wider context of your career as an artist. It is by no means a comprehensive guide but rather some useful suggestions to get you started.

So You’re Broke After The Fringe...Don’t Worry

If you are embarking on the Fringe for the first time or have completed your run you will be aware of various financial hurdles the Fringe presents. The Fringe Guide to Doing a Show effectively summarises what you need to consider when budgeting for the Fringe. There are many fairly substantial cost implications that are unique to the Festival; accommodation, venue costs, registration fees, marketing costs and general living expenses.

It is very important to bear in mind that you are not at the Fringe to make money; in fact it is more than likely that you will lose money. You should look at breaking even as a success.

For a long time formal funding bodies and agencies would not fund work to appear at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe unless the appearance was part of a
wider project or tour and to some extent this is still the case when looking at an agency’s general funding streams. However, in recognition of the fact that the taking part in the Fringe can be an immensely useful career move, a number of organisations have created funds to support work coming to the Fringe, such as Made in Scotland.

The reality is that, for the Fringe, you need to prepare for the eventuality that you might need to invest some of your own cash to make it happen. Very few artists and companies are able to fundraise the full cost of a Fringe run from external sources. The Fringe is unique and so is budgeting for it.

**Introduction to Arts Funding**

Trying to find funding can seem like a very daunting task especially if you are not used to it. It can sometimes feel insurmountable and that there are just too many obstacles but don’t let this put you off.

There are a number of sources of funding available for arts activity in the UK from public, charitable and private sources.

There are over 1000 trusts and foundations in the UK, and many offer funding for arts activities. There are too many to be listed in this guide, but many of the resources listed at the end can help you identify appropriate trusts and foundations for your project.

Businesses can offer support for arts organisations and projects, through sponsorship and in kind support. **Arts and Business** provide useful information on raising sponsorship on their website: www.aandb.org.uk.

Your local authority is the governing body of your area and will quite often be very keen to support cultural projects that represent their community on a national or international platform.

Local authorities invest as much money in the arts in this country as major arts councils. Local Authority funding is usually targeted at the same agendas as central government, so it important to do your research and make sure you understand what their priorities are. You can then tailor your pitch accordingly.

More so than anything else, it is about the artistic quality of your project and targeting the appropriate funding sources for you. Funders want to fund good, creative ideas so if you get that right, then you are half way there.
Securing funding or sponsorship is a complex task which takes considerable time and effort. You need to consider the different stages involved carefully before you attempt to make an application or create a sponsorship proposal. You should never underestimate the time, knowledge and detail required when seeking subsidy for your project. You will always be competing against many other good ideas, so you will not always be successful. Don’t take setbacks personally; nobody is 100% successful with funding bids. If you are not successful the work you have put in will help with other funding applications. Remember no application, successful or unsuccessful, is a waste of time.

10 Steps to Success in Fundraising

These are ten general points to keep in mind when making any kind of approach for funding; whether it’s from an arts council, trust or corporate organisation.

1. **Keep the Facts At Your Fingertips**
   Make sure that all the information you will need about your organisation and about the project is readily available. Back up your argument with facts and figures, don’t just make assertions.

2. **Build Your Credibility**
   Get yourself and your organisation known in the grants world; develop effective public relations, get (good) publicity for your work. Don’t underestimate the value of just meeting funders informally and chatting. This is often when the best fundraising is done.

3. **Develop Grant-Winning Ideas**
   Some ideas and projects are so good that they have no difficulty in being funded. Think about your work and see if there are ideas or projects which will more easily win a grant.

4. **Sort Out Your Fundraising Strategy**
   Think about how your organisation is going to be funded over the next few years, whether this is realistic and what you need to do to put your organisation’s funding on a secure basis. Think about how you intend to attract funds for the project immediately and on an ongoing basis (if the project is to continue).

5. **Research and Identify Likely Grant Prospects**
Avoid the scattergun approach. Make carefully targeted approaches at a few funders rather than writing a circular letter to anybody and everybody. Cross-reference your ideas and projects with likely funders, matching their interests to your needs.

Be sure you know which budget the money is coming from. For example; if you are approaching a company, you could be looking for support from the donations budget, corporate PR, marketing or personnel department, or even its employee-giving or voluntary committee. Your approach will need to be adapted accordingly.

6. **Write a Good Proposal**

Write a clear and succinct application, making a really good case for support. Try and include some really strong supporting material. This is particularly important if you are an emerging artist or organisation as you might not be on the radar of a funder yet and will need to try harder to demonstrate the quality of your work. This can be tricky if you haven’t got a body of work behind you but don’t underestimate the value of including references or support statements from contacts you might have who are more established.

7. **Manage the Application Process**

Find out who the contact is for the funding source and how best to start a dialogue with them. Figure out whether it’s a formal proposal that should be put to them right away, whether a meeting or visit could be arranged first, and how you can bring more influence to bear on the decision making process. Also, should you be the person making the approach? Would it be better if it came from someone else? A colleague might have more established contacts with the funders, or a prestigious trustee or supporter may have more impact.

8. **Respond Appropriately**

If you succeed in getting a grant, note any restrictions or obligations on your part and make sure you comply with these. If it’s a private sponsor or philanthropic donation then say “thank you” immediately.

9. **Keep in Touch**

Maintain contact with those who are supporting you but also with those who are not (where you feel there are organisations or individuals that should be interested in your work). Report on your successes and continue to build your credibility with them.
10. Go Back

Ask those who have supported you for further support the next year or the year after – they have already demonstrated that they like you and what you are doing. Go back to those who have turned you down – if you feel that they could be interested. Persistence really can pay. Note any reasons given for rejection. It may be worth finding out whether there is a chance of reapplying and trying to arrange a meeting to discuss your proposals further.

**Official Arts Funding – “Making an Application”**

**The Bullet Points**

When someone talks about official arts funding, they are often referring to subsidy from an arts council or government funding initiative. The application processes for accessing such funds can be very laborious and complex with lots of things to consider, like the purpose of the fund, its objectives and timescales. However, if you take your time and make sure you go through everything thoroughly, taking each stage one at a time, then you will make the process much easier for yourself.

The key points to consider before you even make an application to an official funder are as follows;

- **Eligibility.** If you are applying as an organisation then you will to ensure you meet the criteria for eligibility; written constitution, management structure (even if this is small, it still needs to be clear), dedicated banking arrangements and system for accounts.

- **Organisation Status.** What kind of organisation are you? Non-profit, charitable or commercial. NB: If you are commercial and are applying for public sector money then you will need to prove that your project is not for commercial gain or profit.

- **Management and Delivery.** You will need to very clearly demonstrate how you will deliver your project including detail on the systems you will put in place to manage the money.

- **Other Sources of Income.** Bear in mind that arts councils will not normally fund your entire project and often expect at least 10% of your overall project cost to be from other sources or from your own resources. Think carefully about what your other sources of income will be, where they will come from and when you will have access to
them. Don’t put all your eggs in one basket! Ensure you factor in a contingency line into your budget.

- **Timescales.** Ensure you are aware of application deadlines. Normally you won’t get funding for projects that have already started so make sure you plan ahead and factor in time for the decision making process, which can be up to a few months. Make sure your project won’t be delayed or compromised by waiting for a funding decision. NB: Goods or services bought before a decision is made will not be paid for by an formal funder.

- **Assessment Criteria.** The most common things that funders will assess your project on are:
  - Artistic Quality
  - Public Benefit & Demand
  - How well the project will be managed and delivered
  - Financial strength and value for money

- **Flesh out the Details.** Each area will require a certain level of detail and the larger the amount of money you request and the more complex your project then the more detail you will need to give. You will also need to provide support material such as videos, press material, script samples and reference letters.

- **Beat the Competition.** Always remember that the amount of money out there is limited and the demand/competition is very high so make sure your application is the very best it can be and you have thoroughly understood what is asked of you.

- **Check, Check and Check Again.** When you have completed your application ask someone who you trust to give you constructive criticism to proofread it for you. Ideally, you should also have someone who is not in the arts read it for you because often applications fall down by failing to communicate clearly what the project actually is. If someone with no experience with arts jargon can understand what you are trying to achieve and why it’s worth funding then you are definitely on the right track.

- **Use the Available Guidance!** All funding bodies provide guidance notes and a help service – use these! Read everything carefully and several times. Filling out a funding application is a time consuming and arduous task, taking the time to get it right is very important.

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Don’t Get Mad (Get Patient). If all your application efforts result in rejection try not to fall victim to your own frustration. The competition for arts funding is fierce in what is an increasingly austere climate, there are more projects but fewer funds. Not everyone is going to be successful. Definitely don’t vent your anger at the funder, which is only going to result in them remembering you in a negative light when you apply again. Rather, politely ask them for feedback so that you are best equipped to improve on future applications.

The fact is that if you are a new artist, unless your project is evidently very good, you are unlikely to get funded on your first attempt. Make sure you ask for feedback, take it on board and keep trying.

Corporate Sponsorships

Companies support the arts, as much for philanthropic reasons as to associate their brand with exciting creative projects. They will often request for their support to be acknowledged, in marketing materials or press releases for instance.

If you do have a sponsor on board for your Fringe project make sure you check with your venue that it is ok to credit them and align them with your marketing campaign.

A good way of searching for companies that could support your work is to look at the websites of other artists and companies in your field, and to look for the names of their corporate supporters (you can usually find that on the Supporters page, or on the organisation’s annual review).

Companies will often offer support in kind by donating materials or services, rather than making a cash donation. Be imaginative and do not hesitate to approach local companies in your area.

You can find a directory of companies that make philanthropic grants in the Guide to UK Company Giving by the Directory of Social Change, available from public libraries.

Some Basic Do’s and Don’ts When Approaching Corporate Sponsors
Don’t write indiscriminate ‘Dear Sir/Madam’ circular letters to any and all company’s you come across.

Do target your approach to companies who have a declared policy indicating a specific interest in your group’s area of work.

Do convey your enthusiasm about your project within your approach.

Don’t use any database(s) you may have access to as a simple mailing list.

Don’t write to a company that specifically say they do not support your kind of work.

Don’t write to a company who operates in the same locality as your group unless there is a clear product link between your needs and its supplies.

Do use any strong personal links or contacts with senior company officers to your advantage, or those of members of staff who are actively involved in your work.

Don’t write to a company unless there is a good reason to write to that particular company. The fact that the company makes a profit and your group needs money is not a sufficiently strong link.

Top 5 Tips for Writing a Sponsorship Pitch

1. Keep it Clean
The best pitches are concise, quite visual and get to the point quickly. Avoid being too wordy or vague about what it is you are offering. Eye-catching images used together with good copy and bullet points can be far more effective in demonstrating the quality of your proposal. Potential sponsors do not have the time or inclination to work through pages of text to try and find out what is on the table.

2. Know What You Want, Know What You’ve Got
You need to know exactly what it is that you are asking for and what it is you have to offer in return. The bottom line is that, with any potential sponsor, they are only interested in what is in it for them. It’s also important to understand the value of your offer against what you need. Whatever you say in your pitch will need to show that you have understood what it is the business/company does and why that is a good sponsorship match for your project. And most importantly, don’t be afraid to ask for exactly what you need.
3. Present The Facts
Back up your presentation with lots facts and figures that will be attractive to any potential sponsor; audience figures, the size of your mailing list, website traffic, the profile of any other partners or collaborators, positive press quotes, awards and accolades. Don’t be afraid to blow your own trumpet a little bit because what you are trying to create is a partnership with your sponsor therefore you need to make them want that partnership.

4. Make it Look Good
Ensure that whatever you are presenting, whether it’s an electronic power point presentation or a package sent in the post, looks good and is free from errors. First impressions can make or break you and nothing will put off a potential sponsor more than a sloppy pitch full of spelling errors, bad formatting and low quality graphics. Get your peers to feedback on your work to make sure what you are putting out there is the best it can be.

5. Be Creative
Don’t be afraid to inject a little bit of personality into your pitch. You will be able to gauge exactly how much dependent on the nature of the business you are approaching but a creative approach and showing a little individuality will be far more attractive than something that is quite dry and looks no different than the hundreds of other proposals they may have received. Having said that, larger organisations can sometimes provide information or guidelines on how to make a pitch to them so be sure to have researched thoroughly and adhere to any instructions provided.

Crowd Funding
Crowd funding originated in the United States and is a relatively new concept for the UK but is steadily increasing in use and has a substantial success rate.

The concept is simple, which is a key reason for its popularity, and tends to be the same across the various platforms available; you create the profile for your project, explaining what it is and why you need the support, you encourage people to pledge financial support and in exchange for this patronage you reward them with whatever incentives you are able to provide. For example; tickets to a show, a limited edition piece of merchandise, free advertising or special credits in your programme/website.

What makes it so appealing is that you are in control of your campaign; you set your own targets and incentives and if you are proactive and clever in your approach for support, the higher the chances are of success.
It is also a very good way of developing an audience for your work which can be just as valuable, if not more, than a cash donation.

We Fund is the largest crowd funding platform in the UK and has a bespoke section on their website for Fringe performers.

Another UK platform, Sponsume, has a very useful guide about the do’s and don’ts when using crowd funding which are very important to bear in mind before embarking on this kind of campaign. Knowing what to prepare and how to tackle it can save you the embarrassment of a failed attempt! You can find this information here.

Because this concept is growing more popular there are now a few platforms available to choose from, a selection of them are listed in the Resources section of this guide. Be sure to do your research and ask around before making your choice.

**Crowd Funding for Students**

A new platform launched in 2012 was Sponsorcraft which helped over 50 students go to the Fringe. Sponsorcraft is the world’s only crowdfunding platform specifically for students.

Sponsorcraft’s key benefit is its focus on education. Your project is connected to your educational institution, which creates trust and provides the opportunity to promote your project to alumni.

The Sponsorcraft team gives advice and support at every step of the process so if you are a student company looking to bring your show to the Fringe you can find out more from their website [https://sponsorcraft.com](https://sponsorcraft.com).
Resources

- National Agencies & Cultural Organisations
  o Creative Scotland - www.creativescotland.com
  o Arts Council England – www.artsCouncil.org.uk
  o Big Lottery Fund - www.biglotteryfund.org.uk
  o Awards for All - www.awardsforall.org.uk
  o British Council - www.britishcouncil.org
  o Visiting Arts - www.visitingarts.org.uk
  o Cultural Enterprise Office - www.culturalenterpriseoffice.co.uk
  o Department for Culture/Media/Sport - www.culture.gov.uk

- Trusts & Foundations
  o Arts Trust Scotland – http://www.artstrustscotland.org.uk/
  o Dewar Arts Award - www.dewarawards.org
  o The Elephant Trust - www.elephanttrust.org.uk
  o The Esmee Fairbairn Foundation - www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk
  o The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation - www.gulbenkian.org.uk
  o NESTA - www.nesta.org.uk
  o The Prince’s Trust Scotland - www.princes-trust.org.uk
  o Wellcome Trust - http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/
  o The Paul Hamlyn Foundation - www.phf.org.uk

- Crowd Funding Platforms
  o Crowdfunder (UK) - www.crowdfunder.co.uk
  o We Fund (UK) - www.wefund.co.uk
  o Sponsume - www.sponsume.com
  o Fund It (IRE) - www.fundit.ie
  o Kickstarter (USA) - www.kickstarter.com
  o RocketHub (USA) - www.rockethub.com
  o Fundbreak (AUS) - www.fundbreak.com.au
  o IndieGoGo - www.indiegogo.com

- Sponsorship
  o Arts & Business - www.artsandbusiness.org.uk

- General Information
  o Creative Choices – www.creative-choices.co.uk
  o Arts Admin – www.artsadmin.co.uk
  o Stage One – www.stageone.uk.com
  o British Arts – www.britisharts.co.uk