



SA-UK Trust Network

Test, Test, Test

We are often reminded that fundraising is an art, not a science. Charity fundraisers go about resourcing their organisations differently. Even when developing fundraising proposals, templates differ. Experienced fundraisers know the rationale and reasons for each section of their proposals. But their templates are not the only way to go about approaching these donors. As one never stops learning, fundraisers with decades of experience read new books and blogs and attend training courses and conferences. They might learn how another fundraiser develops proposals, but this does not mean that they must change the way they develop their own. If it's working for them, they do not have to abandon their proposal writing format. Fundraising really **is** an art (rather than a science). However, one area that is scientific, is testing.

Testing is generally associated with individual fundraising, but it need not be restricted to seeking support from many people who generally give smaller amounts. Why not test funding proposals too? Trust fundraisers often anguish over how much to ask potential donors for. Why not test proposals and application forms too? If unsure of how much to ask potential corporate or trust donors for (and if not able to ascertain such donors giving levels via their websites, by email or telephone), try dividing them into two or even three groups and ask group one for a lower amount, request a higher amount from group two and ask the final group for the largest amount. Try testing whether a specific amount requested (versus just asking for support) works better. Track results of all testing, otherwise it's pointless.

Be creative. Test with numerous funding sources. Which crowdfunding copy, images and videos work better? What copy and message result in more people advising that they have included an organisation in their Wills? Which social media posts result in more online engagement and ultimately, donations? The rapid advances in the digital world in general and in online fundraising in particular, enable numerous opportunities to test messages.

Please test, test, test – one may well be surprised at the results.