

THE BUSINESS VIEW – *James Temple***Corporate grant proposals: stewarding success**

In last month's article (*CF&P*, September 30), I wrote about some areas to focus on when writing corporate grant proposals. I thought I'd follow that up with something else that needs our attention: how to steward a corporate relationship once you've secured your funding.

Relationship building isn't always easy, especially when you're dealing with complex organizations with multiple managers responsible for reporting the outcomes of the funding they provided. Here are three tips to help keep us all focused and deliver on the outcomes we hope to achieve in the partnership.

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1. Shifting power dynamics – the geography of a meeting

We've all heard about the importance of setting the tone of a meeting through our verbal and body language. But have we stopped to think about how the geography of the meeting affects the outcomes we hope to achieve? How many times do we sit across from one another at a table – corporations vs. nonprofit teams – and create unnecessary power dynamics that might influence a discussion?

We've got to mix things up. Try hosting your meeting at a round table to create a more equitable environment of trust and collaboration. If that's not an option, make sure you take a seat beside someone you want to get to know better. You've already broken the ice with your grant proposal!

2. Stewarding successful sound bites

It's all about timing: who, when, what and how you deliver critical information about your organization and its impact. Good relationship management is based on strong communication – and the trick here is to keep it simple.

Grant reviewers appreciate short sound bites that tell them the information they need to know. What is the status of their funding? How was it used? What were some of the impacts and the value(s) you realized?

Make sure to use bold, italics, underlines and bullet points effectively to help make your message easy to read. It's all about the one-scan email so that they can say to themselves, “My partnership is on the right track.”

3. Recognition goes well beyond a plaque

The “art of the thank-you” is an important component of grant stewardship. Believe it or not, there are some

approaches to thanking someone that are more effective than others.

Take, for example, a plaque, a stuffed toy or a box of chocolates. These are definitely cute – but aren't always the best and most fitting gesture. Some companies lack wall space to display these forms of recognition, or end up throwing out your gift because there's no place to store the memories (as tasty as they might be)!

Believe it or not, a simple hand-written thank-you card can go a long way – it's tried, tested and true. There's a reason our parents keep telling us this. It can be passed along to others, has a meaningful message, takes time to complete, and can be conveniently posted on an office bulletin board for people to read.

Keep on courting

Finally, remember to keep things simple and make sure you're looking beyond the words you use to build relationships. Though corporations are complex creatures, they share one important thing with nonprofits: People are pressed for time and want to know that their relationships are strong and valued. It's a bit like dating, I suppose.

There's my three cents for your November reading. ☺



About James Temple

James Temple is the director of corporate responsibility for **PricewaterhouseCoopers Canada** and director of the **PricewaterhouseCoopers Canada Foundation**. He oversees a team responsible for integrating good social, environmental and economic values into PwC's decision-making processes.

James is a featured presenter at international conferences, speaking on the value of developing strong corporate-community partnerships. He co-chairs the **Association of Corporate Grantmakers** and sits on the Advisory Board for the **Institute at Havergal College**.

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