Chapter Funding Communications Plan

Focus your communications planning on the handful of funders you’re applying to this year who are most important to your Chapter’s future. Keep the universe manageable. For each of them, develop a tailored communications plan covering the period from now until your letter or proposal is submitted.

**Brainstorm answers to these questions for each funder.**

1. On a scale of 1-10 (10 is best) what’s your relationship with the funder? If it’s below 8, why? What’s the history? What’s the last progress report you sent them? Did you hear anything from them about it? Did you follow up with a phone call to make sure it gave them the information they wanted?
2. Who is the primary contact at your organization or within your membership for this funder? Who is your primary contact at the funder?
3. Who are your biggest champions at the funder? If asked about your strengths, what would they say? About your weaknesses? Why do they want to fund you—what needs of theirs do you answer, and how? What might they not understand about your organization? What makes you unique from other organizations that might be competing for these funds?
4. How close are your contacts at the funder to the *actual* decision makers? Are they trusted and credible? Are they the people who actually will argue for your grant?
5. Have you asked them what the challenges will be for your grant? What funding levels they recommend? What they need to make as compelling a case as possible? When was the last time you interacted personally with them when a grant wasn’t involved? Do you need to reconnect? What non-grant related communications do they get from you, and how often? What communications tactics strategies and channels might work best with this person?
6. Do you have any detractors at the funder? What’s the history and what power do they have? What would their criticisms be? How can you neutralize those criticisms before they’re ever voiced?
7. Who are the current decision makers and what’s your relationship with them? Does it need cultivation? What kind? How interested are they in your issue? How familiar are they with your organization? With your members? What might they not understand about your organization? What are the toughest questions they might ask your champions? If they decide not to fund, what do you think their rationale would be? How do you communicate with decision makers now? What other strategies and channels might be effective?
8. Who, from outside the funder organization, might influence these decision makers in your favor? How might you *ethically* seek the help of those influencers? What information would they need from you to be effective? How might you use your members? What role, if any, might strong testimonials play in helping you get this grant?