

Developing an income-generation strategy starts with identifying what will work best for your school, says **Justin Smith**, who is running ISBL-approved masterclasses in collaboration with FundEd

A solution THAT SUITS

Over the past few years, I have helped many schools develop fundraising and marketing strategies. Some issues come up again and again. School staff are overwhelmed with existing workloads and struggle to find time to dedicate to income generation. Often, schools don't know where to start, or what to focus their limited resources on.

On many occasions, there appears to be a disconnect between the work of the PTA (or Friends Association) and that of the main school. This can then impede the collective ability of the school to focus on income generation.

Some schools haven't got to grips with understanding their fundraising priorities, resulting in a stop-start approach that loses its way at the first sign of trouble.

Other schools may have a wish list of new facilities or improvements, but haven't clarified why these are needed, what impact they will have and, importantly, what evidence they can use to convince donors or funders that their project is worthy of support.

Every school is different – with its own distinct cohort of students, location and local community, buildings and history. So it's essential to take these variables into

consideration to identify the most effective fundraising methods for your school. Yet every school has an ability to engage with external stakeholders – from parents and neighbours to suppliers and grant funders. This brings opportunity – an opportunity to frame messages in a way that encourages their support and gets them on board.

If your school is located near a business park or industry then naturally you'll gravitate towards exploring sponsorship and commercial partnership opportunities. Schools in less affluent areas may find grant

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funding options are available, while small rural schools often attract strong parental support and emotional attachment.

Once you're clear on your priorities, stick to them. Putting together a simple plan and assembling a small fundraising team will help enormously. Having laser-like clarity on your aims, and distilling key messages so they are easily understood, enables potential supporters to stay with you. Use your imagination – think of a catchy project name and punchy headlines.

It's useful to start with a number of quick and simple wins that will have an impact. Agree short-term targets that are achievable and create a plan that includes the PTA, if you have one (see *Treasure your PTA* in the summer 2020 of FundEd).

Consider passive income streams (such as a school lottery) and a project with a realistic and attainable fundraising target within the first six months to one year.

Delivering quick wins will increase confidence in the school fundraising process. Communicating clearly will bring supporters with you, so keep them informed and involved. Always thank your supporters – and make sure they're aware of the difference they're making. And remember, you never know until you ask...

INCOME GENERATION MASTERCLASSES

Provided by Chameleon Training and Consultancy in partnership with FundEd, Justin's masterclasses meet the ISBL Professional Standards Tier 1 and 2 and are suitable for school business professionals, headteachers and governors. They offer a practical introduction to income generation, covering grant funding, crowdfunding, business sponsorship, Gift Aid and passive income streams. Delegates

receive resource packs and one year's subscription to FundEd and the FundEd grants database. Single day or modular online options are available, starting at £950 +VAT, with a 15% discount for ISBL and FundEd members.

■ For more information, go to chameleon-training.co.uk/our-services/training-and-masterclasses/#incomegeneration