



applied training and consultancy solutions

## Writing Skills for Bid Writers

“Good writing will not save a poor bid from the bin, but it will transform a run-of-the-mill bid and make a good bid even better”.



June 20<sup>th</sup> London full  
July 6<sup>th</sup> London

£170 per delegate, £125 if booked by 15<sup>th</sup> April

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Telephone> 0845 053 3413

e-mail> [jump@leapfrogconsultancy.co.uk](mailto:jump@leapfrogconsultancy.co.uk)

## Course Background

Our tutor Mark Chacksfield is a fundraiser with experience as both a Grants' Officer and a Grants' Assessor. He developed this course with Derek Smith, our Training Director. Derek delivers the **Preparing Successful Bids for Statutory Grants and Tenders** course in partnership with Action Planning, and our **Winning Statutory Contracts** course, which has been delivered to over 1,400 people. The **Writing Skills** course takes account of the feedback on these courses and builds on the skills gaps identified.

Mark and Derek were part of the RNID team that quadrupled Statutory, Lottery, European and Trust funding in two years.

They believe that with constructive criticism all bids can be improved. At the RNID all bids were halted for 3 months while all past bids were assessed and the team retrained. When bid writing work resumed no bid could be sent out without having undergone a rigorous in-house assessment. The lessons learned were painful but worthwhile and they form the basis of this course.

Fundraising is about effective communication. A donor expects a charity to get its message across in a clear, concise and compelling way. The reader should be both informed and engaged.

It is therefore essential that bid-writers write clearly and succinctly and separate opinions from evidence.

Unfortunately, most people receive little training in written communication from school onwards. Most fundraising courses spend only a small amount of time on writing technique, though this is the underpinning competency for all bids. Strengthening the written communication skills of a fundraiser provides arguably the most economical and long term investment that can directly improve success through increased funding.

Derek and Mark have reviewed and assessed countless bids, many of which have been poor. Why is this? The real problem is that many funding bids lack focus, credibility and coherence. This is a problem that can be solved. The answer is better writing.

Competition is fierce and nothing can guarantee success. But the bottom line is you must make your bid stand out from the crowd. A potential donor is looking to make a difference. A well-written bid will do a great deal to convince them that your project is a worthwhile investment.



## Who should attend?

This training is for anyone submitting fundraising bids. It will be of particular relevance to grant proposals to Trusts, Foundations, and the Lottery and Statutory agencies.

Participants would benefit from some knowledge (although this is not essential) of the funder's agenda and of bidding. More experienced fundraisers will find that their ideas and practice are challenged in a constructive way.

This course puts the *writing* of bids firmly centre-stage and within the context of a generic approach to fundraising. Whether you are targeting corporate funders, Charitable Trusts, the Lottery or wealthy individuals, this course will enable you to write more effectively. It will improve the quality of your bids, your monitoring procedures and your evaluation reports, all of which underpin a successful fundraising strategy.

**“Never mistake legibility for communication”.**

**- David Carson**

The course will consider some of the theoretical approaches to writing but is focused on practical task-based learning. To gain the most from the course, you should be prepared to engage with others, sharing your skills and experience constructively.

## Delegate feedback from the 2009 courses

60% found the learning process stimulating with 86% recommending the course. 71% reported an increased level of confidence after the course.

All of those describing themselves as inexperienced reported an increased level of confidence after the course.

**“Excellent workshop. Very well run. Learnt lots of handy tips and techniques.”**

**“I think the resource book and the tasks are great! Very well put together, lots of variety - very useful.”**

**“Definitely feel equipped for my new role as a bid writer. Thoroughly enjoyed the course, Great delivery.”**

**“The course offered real value for money. We were delighted at how cost effective the training was.”**

## Course Design

The course will help you to design and deliver a well-written bid. The concept of quality is analysed, outlining common problems and proposing solutions. Those problems which relate directly to the *writing* of a bid are organised into 4 core elements: Focus, Cogency, Coherence and Accuracy. They address the need of the bid-writer to: define project aims, justify the need, and establish the credibility of the organization and pay attention to detail

The underlying theme is to look at bids from another point of view, sometimes the funder, sometimes the user. Bids that anticipate the criticism of a potential funder are far more likely to get funded. Similarly, too little attention is paid to the views of potential users, whereas this is one of the key things that a funder looks for, both to confirm the need for a project and the likely level of activity.

## Course Aims

- to improve your writing skills so that your bids achieve greater success
- to enable you to understand what makes a high-quality bid
- to enable you to establish the credibility of your charity

## Learning Objectives

**Delegates will improve their ability to:**

- think creatively and laterally in order to meet funder guidelines
- write clearly, concisely and persuasively
- analyse and define outputs, outcomes and impact measures
- build in cross-cutting themes to funding bids
- structure text so as to answer fully a funder's questions

## Course Tutor

Mark Chacksfield has worked in both the statutory and voluntary sectors over the past 20 years. He has been a Grants' Officer for a local authority and an assessor for both the National Lottery and Children in Need. He has also taught English as a foreign language.

Mark joined The Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) as a Trusts', Lottery and Statutory fundraiser and went on to become Director of Employment, playing a key role in raising over £5m in grants, contracts and corporate donations. He now works as a statutory and trust fundraiser for a large, national charity .

## Course Outline

Time	Activity	Content
9:15 - 9.35	Registration	Tea & Coffee
9:35 - 10:00	Course Outline	Introduction, course objectives & resource book
9:45 - 11.030	Theme 1	<b>Focus</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skimming and scanning guidelines to determine eligibility</li> <li>• Matching projects to programme aims</li> <li>• The principles of Plain English and Clear Print</li> </ul>
11:00 - 11:15	Morning Break	
11:15 - 12:30	Theme 1	<b>Focus Cont...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinking in bullet points</li> <li>• Summarising text</li> <li>• Hitting the target: scoring criteria</li> </ul>
	Theme 2	<b>Cogency</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building an argument and balancing opinions with evidence</li> <li>• Writing to persuade: style and tone</li> <li>• The language of monitoring: analysing, defining and targeting</li> <li>• How to link project need to outputs/outcomes</li> </ul>
12:30 - 1.30	Lunch	
1:30 - 2:45	Theme 2	<b>Cogency Cont...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relating project impact to charity's vision and stakeholders</li> <li>• How to measure impact and add value</li> </ul>
	Theme 3	<b>Coherence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embedding cross-cutting themes</li> <li>• Sustainability and how it concerns you</li> <li>• Executive summaries and key messages</li> <li>• Structuring content</li> </ul>
2:45 - 3:00	Afternoon Break	
3:00 - 4:00	Theme 3	<b>Coherence Cont...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principles of clear print</li> <li>• Ensuring consistency of text and layout</li> </ul>
4:00 - 4:15	Theme 4	<b>Accuracy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grammar and punctuation</li> <li>• Proof reading a budget</li> <li>• The importance of following guidelines</li> </ul>
4:15 - 4:30	Summary & Close	