Opening the conference, Pauline Broomhead CBE, CEO of the FSI, welcomed the audience to our 9th Fundraising Conference.

For those who were unable to attend and as memory jogger for those who were there, here is a summary of the sessions and some of their top tips.

Protecting your Charity in an Online World

The Fundraising Conference’s sponsor, the National Cyber Security Centre, shared their insights into how to stay safe online.

They highlighted how small charities are particularly vulnerable to online attacks as they rarely have a dedicated staff member to advise them on online security.

They suggested the best way to stay safe online was to have strong passwords, a good anti-virus and to consult their ‘Cyber Security Small Charity Guide (https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/cyber-security-small-charity-guide-pdf-download ; http://www.thefsi.org/general-resources/cyber/)’.
Morgan Kainth from Raise Your Hands gave her insights on millennials as a source of new donors in the fundraising world. She emphasised that focusing on impact should be central to any strategy intended to engage millennials’ support. Millennials tend to be less trusting of unknown charities, choosing to look at a charity’s website before donating. She said that key motivators for millennials are having a personal connection to the cause, transparency and ‘value for money’.

Morgan’s top tip:
- Look at donor demographic, look at social media followers and how you can leverage them for their reach!

Rachel Earnshaw from the Big Give and Suzie Rees from East African Playgrounds spoke about the importance of online fundraising; how it can be used to diversify your income so your charity is less reliant on one income source. Rachel placed importance upon clearly portraying your proposition, audiences and communication channels. Suzie echoed this message by sharing her own experiences of using online fundraising and using the Big Give’s Christmas Challenge to help East African Playgrounds to raise £15,129 last year.

Their top tips:
- Make the most of your timing, plan, be strategic, but if you have a short time scale, use that urgency to drive support!
- Figure out who you need support from in your organisation and tap that support early, getting that internal buy in is key to success!

Online Fundraising: Theory into Practice

Future-Proofing Your Fundraising - Making the Most of Millennials
For the second time in our London Fundraising Conference, we were joined by a panel of grant makers with extensive knowledge of Trusts and Foundations. Nicky Lappin (The Tudor Trust), Geoff Russell-Jones (The Leathersellers’ Company), Sara Cooney (Lloyds Bank Foundation) and Deborah Meyer-Lewis (Big Lottery Fund) shared their knowledge on how best to apply to grant making trusts, some of their key advice was:

- Small charities should do what is best for them, you don’t have to innovate, you just have to believe in what you do.
- Deliver impactful services, clearly show everyone the need, the impact and the outcomes.
- Smaller Trusts and Foundations don’t always have the staff to focus solely on building relationship. It is key to be really reliable with reports and to show your gratitude.
- Talk to your funder before you apply so they can see how they can support you. Think about what you can share with them – bring your charity to life with case studies.

Their top tips:

- Evidence the need, show potential funders the need for your work.
- Be clear, avoid jargon, and get someone to proofread.
Christine Harris from the London School of Economics gave her insight into engagement with major donors. How securing gifts from major donors is an art based on relationship building and that any small charity can put into practice.

Christine focused on three main principles of ‘start with what you’ve got,’ ‘show them love’ and physically show them appreciation rather than keeping everything online.

Christine’s top tip:
- Find those donors that really care about your organisation, tell them about the amazing difference they are making, and ask them to get involved.

Building Strategic Corporate Partnerships

We were joined by the FSI’s, Janine Edwards who spoke about taking a strategic approach to developing long-term partnerships with businesses.

Janine said that a charity must ask three key questions.
- Where is the win-win-win? A win for the charity, beneficiary and business.
- What is in everyone’s interest to solve?
- Whose problem does your outcome solve?

She also emphasised the importance of being visible
- having a good website which highlights impact and
- being proactive with your beneficiaries.

Janine’s top tip:
- Focus on the win-win-win for your organisation, the corporate and your beneficiary.
Keynote Speaker
Building Donor Loyalty for your Small Charity

Closing our conference this year was our keynote speaker, Dr Adrian Sargeant from Plymouth University. Adrian gave us the benefit of his experience on the importance of maintaining donor loyalty and of putting donors at the heart of your charity.

Adrian shared his steps to enhance and nurture the relationships with donors:
• Make an emotional spark
• Did the donation have the impact that you promised it would?
• Make the supporter feel good – show that you value their opinions
• Reflect on their past investment to build commitment.

Adrian has found the greatest benefit is seen when fundraisers think about how we make our donors feel when we communicate with them. The goal is to be respectful when developing relationships, donations are then more likely to follow.

The FSI
The FSI works to provide free and heavily subsidised support services to small and local charities and community groups, across the UK. Our mission is to build and share knowledge, to elevate the voice of small charities with policy makers and the public, to build leadership in small charities and to support small charities to raise vital funds to meet the needs of their beneficiaries.

Thank you to our sponsors, supporters and exhibitors. Thank you for attending the conference and we look forward to seeing you all again at a training or event in the very near future.