



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Top Tips for Artists & Cultural Organisations

Clarity, confidence and practical steps
to grow your creative work

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BY

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Helping creatives and communities thrive

www.pocket-creatives.com



WHY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

Many creatives think “business development” sounds too corporate — but in reality, it’s about giving your projects the right framework to succeed.

Without a strategy, ideas can stay stuck on paper. With some structure, your creativity can reach the right audiences, attract the right partners, and grow sustainably.

Top reasons to invest in business development:

- Confidence: know what you stand for, the value you bring, and how to pitch
- Connection: stronger partnerships with buyers, funders, and collaborators
- Clarity: clear values, roles, and processes reduce stress and misunderstandings
- Sustainability: a structure that supports your practice and projects long-term

Top Tip: See business development as a creative tool — it’s about designing the future of your work, not just filling in forms.

GOVERNANCE & STRUCTURE BASICS

Governance = how your business is run, how decisions get made and who's responsible.

It's not red tape — it's the foundation that clients, funders and partners need to trust and invest in you.



FOR INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS / SMALL GROUPS:

- Use simple agreements that set out who does what (and how money is handled).
- Track finances transparently, even if it's just a shared spreadsheet.
- If collaborating often, consider forming a collective, association, or CIC.



FOR ORGANISATIONS / CHARITIES:

- Pick the right structure (Charity, CIC, Ltd by Guarantee, Association).
- Build a diverse advisory group or board.
- Keep records of decisions (minutes, policies) — this protects you if things get tricky.

TOP TIP: Strong governance shows professionalism. Funders are more likely to back a project if they can see you have accountability in place.

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THE 5 W'S & 1H

Every strong website, project or proposal answers these questions:

- WHO → Who are you, the partners, collaborators, and audiences?
- WHAT → What exactly are you producing, in 2–3 sentences?
- WHERE → Where will it take place, and why is that location important?
- WHEN → What's the timeline? (key stages, delivery date, milestones)
- WHY → Why does this matter? (impact, relevance, social/cultural value)
- HOW → How will it be delivered? (resources, budget, governance, logistics)



EXAMPLE

WHO

the artist, the community, the audience/client

WHY

your mission and values, driving force, problem to solve

WHAT

you practice, materials, areas of interest, courses/classes

WHERE

country, area, type of space

WHEN

Tinelines, experience

How

Processes, methods, growth

TOP TIP: Use this framework to review your website or next proposal — it makes partners feel confident and reduces the questions they'll ask later.

PROPOSALS & PARTNERSHIPS

Project proposals/Funding

- Always tailor your proposal to match sponsor/supporter priorities.
- Show evidence of need (audience data, testimonials, surveys).
- Highlight impact — both artistic and social (e.g. audience numbers, wellbeing benefits, regeneration impact).
- Don't just chase grants — think sponsorship, crowdfunding, and earned income too.

Partnerships

- Go beyond the “usual suspects” — consider local businesses, developers, sports clubs, universities.
 - Lead with shared value: What do they get? (visibility, PR, audience reach, community goodwill).
 - Build long-term relationships: check in between projects, not just when you need funding.
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TOP TIP: Keep a simple database of contacts, supporters and partners. Track when you last spoke, what was discussed, and when to follow up





Want tailored support?

Pocket helps artists and organisations with governance, business strategy, partnerships, sponsorship and press.

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MARKETING, VISIBILITY & NEXT STEPS

Marketing

- Keep your online presence simple and clear — your website/Instagram should say what, why and where you do what you do, in 10 seconds.
- Share not just “events,” but also impact stories: who you worked with, what changed, what was learned.
- Consider LinkedIn for professional partners (spaces, developers, councils), and Instagram for creative networks.

Visibility

- Run workshops, speak at webinars or join panel talks (great for profile and networking).
- Write short articles or blogs — sharing your story and positioning yourself as a thought leader.

Next Steps

- Choose one area to focus on this month: governance, funding, or marketing.
- Build consistency: small steps every week can add up faster than big projects.
- Seek accountability — through mentoring, peer groups, or workshops.

TOP TIP: Don't just share what you do — say why it matters, make it personal. Frame messages around the change your work creates (to you, to others, the environment) to build deeper connection and credibility