



## **Bath Spark Guides: 5 Top Tips for making a successful application to Bath Sparks Funding Awards**

**1. Be clear about your idea.** It is essential to clearly explain your enterprise idea. Use clear language and avoid the use of jargon. Think about how you would explain your idea in a couple of sentences. What is the idea and who is it for? Try explaining your idea verbally to others who don't know anything about it, then ask them to tell you what they understand of your enterprise idea. If they can't explain it back to you, then you know you need to think about how you communicate your idea more clearly. Using - *who, what, why, when, why* is a useful technique.

A useful exercise is to try and write your idea in 150 words and then also in 1 simple sentence. Keep reviewing this and reworking it as you develop the idea further and your research and depth of your idea develops.

### **2. Demonstrate your research**

You may be passionate about your enterprise idea, but having an idea is only the starting point. Research is essential. Again using *who, what, why, when, why* technique to begin asking yourself questions, for example:

- What exactly is your idea and what makes it unique?
- Who is it for (who are your customers)?
- What does it solve (i.e. why is there a **need** for it)?
- Who are your competitors and why is your idea better than the competition?
- How will you use the money you are applying for?
- How will you assess the impact of your idea (this could be through profit, audience reach or social or educational impact)?

### **3. Allow plenty of time**

Allow plenty of time to complete your Bath Sparks Funding application. Although our application forms are quite concise, take time to really think about what you want to say and how you want to say it. It is a good idea to plan the answers to your questions in MS Word or a Google Doc and then copy and paste them into the Google form when you are ready to submit.

### **4. Maximise the word limit**

Each Bath Sparks application question will give you an indication of the required word limit and it is important to maximise this and make every word count. The application is your opportunity to really convey your idea. Be mindful that the panel reading your application cannot make assumptions about your idea. They can only base their decision on whether you will progress through to the pitching round for any of the funding awards, based on what you have written. Don't leave it to the possibility of a pitch or presentation to convey essential aspects of your idea.

**5. Make effective use of supporting information.** If you provide none, or very little evidence it will be less likely that you will be successful with being shortlisted through to the pitching round. Make sure each item you choose to attach as supporting information has 'adding value' to your application. As a minimum we suggest:

- A simple business plan to evidence you have considered your business idea. You may find the following Business planning clip a helpful starting point. [BSU - What is a Business plan?](#)
- Examples of the product, service or idea. There are extensive choices, but examples could include prototype drawings, links to websites, photos/ images, examples of work, brand designs, audio files or video content.

In addition to this, supporting information could relate to: Further details about your idea, demonstrate your research, evidence of any previous success you've had with your idea (if applicable); or if you have received funding previously it would be helpful to hear how this has impacted the idea to grow so far. Do make sure that attachments make use of file extension types that can be accessed by most computers/users.

## **Bath Sparks Awards - Additional information:**

### **Santander Funding Criteria:**

The Bath Sparks Awards are funded by Santander Universities UK. The funding is there to help students and graduates to build sustainable enterprises that have the potential to scale. Santander Universities enterprise funding aims to:

- Support the top entrepreneurial students and graduates from the partner University
- To connect and enable students and graduates to connect with the wider SME community.

**Bath Sparks Awards** looks to fund applications that show that there is the potential for an idea to be impacted and to grow through the awarding of the funding. We are looking for applications that show evidence of how funding can help build toward sustainability of the enterprise in the future

**The Bath Sparks Awards can fund (but not limited to):** Membership and subscriptions, specialist consultancy, webpage building, brand development, additional training, product prototyping, small product/ material purchases, licenses or insurances.

**The Bath Spark Awards can not fund:** Applications for asset purchases such as laptops, cameras or substantial pieces of equipment.

**What to Expect if you're shortlisted for pitching:**

If you are shortlisted to pitch to our enterprise panel, you will be sent a diary invitation outlining the process. You will be expected to deliver a pitch between 8-15mins long, depending on the Award, followed by 5mins of questions from the panel. As a minimum the panel will be looking for the following from your presentation. We will be selecting successful pitches based on the following:

- Evidence of your business planning process with further explanation beyond your application form, which will include: Market research, Customer analysis, Competitor analysis, Product / service information, Organisational structure, Financial information
- What makes your idea unique?
- How could your idea make money or make a difference in the future?
- How will the Explore It funds help to support the success of the idea?

**Useful links:** We have put together some useful links of organisations or template examples that may be helpful with your application:

[Freelance UK - Business planning for freelancers](#)

[NESTA - Creative Business Planning Toolkit](#)

[NESTA SWOT Analysis template](#)

[NESTA Business Model Canvas Template](#)

[Princes Trust Enterprise Tools](#)

If you have any further questions about Bath Sparks funding you can contact: [bathsparks@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:bathsparks@bathspa.ac.uk).

Or look at our webpage: [Bath Sparks](#)