



*Talking Law*

## Episode 138 – Top strategies for finding and securing grants

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### Transcript

**Joanna:**

Hi, it's Joanna Oakey here and welcome back to Talking Law, a podcast proudly brought to you by our commercial legal practice, Aspect Legal. Now today we have the second and last half of our two-part series talking all about grants with the CEO and founder of grant ready and Grant Guru Adrian Spencer, Adrian has pioneered grant strategies and better access to funding he has also secured over \$500 million in grants and funding and was an adviser to the government on grant making. Now in this episode, we talk about the top strategies for finding and securing grants, Adrian drills into four key steps of an effective grant process. And he also discusses a new online learning program that grant guru has prepared for the people who want to be masters of their own grant destiny. This is such a valuable episode for any business owner, advisor and also your client. So sit back, and here we go with our discussion with Adrian.

**Joanna:**

Adrian. Hi, Ron, welcome to the show. So good to have you on the show again today.

**Adrian:**

Hi, Jo. Thanks for having me back. Really appreciate it.

**Joanna:**

Well, I'm so excited to have you back because it's such an exciting topic. And you know, for anyone who missed the first episode, we talked all about the sorts of grants that might be available for you today, however, we really focus on the top strategies for finding and securing grants. So take it away. Adrian, what's your top tips on finding and securing grants? Thanks, Joe.

**Adrian:**

We looked back over the last 22 years, we've secured over \$700 million in grant funding for our clients. And we asked ourselves, yeah, mind-boggling, really. So but we asked ourselves the question, what's the key to success? Because there are some grants that we've got up there are some that we haven't. Sometimes the good ones don't get up. And sometimes the ones that you think they're a bit borderline they do, we really wanted to delve into what's the key. And we looked over hundreds of clients, we looked over hundreds of applications. And we found that there are four key steps to ensuring grant success. And when I say ensuring I say, well, increasing your chances, because you can never be 100% Sure you're going to get a grant those four steps. They might sound obvious, but most people miss them. The first one is to think right, you need to understand why grant programs exist. And it's put yourself into the shoes of the assessor and say what is the grantmaker trying to achieve with this program. Because if we understand what that is, then we can decide if we have alignment. And if our aim and their aim are aligned, we're going to massively increase our chances of being successful. So step one, think right. Step two is to have a grand strategy. Don't just apply for the first grant that comes along. Some people are so pleased to see an application form fall on their desk, they just rushed to fill it in, which I would say is probably setting yourself up for failure, not a success, and also wasting potentially a lot of your valuable time. Most businesses we know they're flat-out nice noses to the grindstone, and they're really trying to get their business to succeed or grow. So a grand strategy really is having a list of grants, knowing which ones you have the best chance of applying for knowing how much effort they're going to take, and how much money is going to cost you to do them. And whether it requires a matching contribution, what those ratios are building that list, and knowing when grants open as well. So it's a strategic approach to a list of grants that you would then work with over 12 or 18 months. And we've learned this from the not-for-profit sector, because they relied 33% of all their income coming from funding. And we looked and studied at how they do it. And we took all that information. And we're now sharing that with businesses. Because in business, a grant is often nice to have not imperative to keep your business running. So we sit Great, let's share this information and get businesses to be smart and savvy, just like the not-for-profits are. So number two is the grand strategy. Once you've done the grand strategy, then you have the list of grants. You can put the priority ones at the top you can look at when they open and when they close, and then you can be ready and in a position to start doing the grant writing. Grant Writing is a bit of science and a bit of art. And most people just go oh, I find it really hard to put pen to paper especially when I'm looking at a blank page. And so we say to people that most grant writing and really is like a, it's like a business plan. Most grants are going to ask you

about your management capability, what're your commercial opportunities. What's the unique proposition? Why you need some support for this, and what the broader benefit is going to be beyond your business and organization. If you can answer those five things, you're in a good position to fill in a grant application form, you know, it's not spooky, it's not, you know, the hardest thing you're ever going to do. The first time you do it, it is going to be weird. And you're going to find yourself speaking a slightly different language. But we just say to people roll up your sleeves and give it a go after your first application, don't give up if you're not successful, that will actually increase your chances of being success the next time, exponentially. So if you're not the grant writing type of person, there will be someone in your organization who's good with words, and there'll be somebody who's good with numbers. You know, if you've got an external accountant, they're going to be able to help you to put the cash flow and budget together. And they're also going to be able to answer a lot of the questions around, what's my company's structure? What's my turnover? How have I grouped all those sorts of questions as well? So we say build a team, work collaboratively, work with your providers, or work with your advisors, talk to your lawyers about it, there will be a contract that will be available on the website, just flick it through to them and say, Is there anything in here that would stop me from applying for this that I should know about in advance, don't wait until it all blows up and goes wrong, just get on the front foot. And by asking all these questions in advance, you can then confidently put your application together. So that's step three. That's the big one. But everyone starts there, we say don't start there. That's step three.

**Joanna:**

And I just want to highlight, you know, we talked in the last show, we were talking about, grants about the example of, of the business who'd spent all of this time and money in this massive, this application for this massive grant, they've won, it was at a \$5 million grant?

**Adrian:**

\$5 million, they were off. And then

**Joanna:**

they thought of looking at the T's and C's after they've done all of that, and then worked out, but it was just not gonna work for them. And then they had to throw all of that time and attention away, and the opportunity of a \$5 million grant. I mean, you know, there must have been some real problems. But fascinating.

**Adrian:**

Yeah. And I think the thing that hurt me the most about him when they told me that story was that the T's and C's were on the website at the time of doing the application. So but I understand people just don't think of it. And for me, you know, it's one of the messages I want to get out there. You know, just look, it's not too hard. Just remember it, put it on your checklist, just make sure you do it,

**Joanna:**

That's a great idea. Do you have a checklist on your Grant Guru site?

**Adrian:**

We've actually provided in our training, programs training, so you have training programs.

**Joanna:**

Okay, let's talk about that in a moment. Adrian, let's not leave the side of this podcast without talking about that. But we are up to number four, I don't want to just I don't want to interrupt this list, we've done one, two, and three, let's take us away to four.

**Adrian:**

So four can go two ways four is whether you're successful or not successful, if you're not successful, don't go into the relationship with the administrator. We had one of our clients in the early days who didn't get the funding, and I think unfairly didn't get the funding. But they then rang up and abused the administrator in the worst possible way, with the worst possible language you could imagine. And, we had to jump in and apologize to the administrator. And the administrator said, Look, we understand it's not your fault, but we're never going to fund them again if they put an application in, and they literally burned that bridge forever. So you put people put a lot of effort into these applications. Sometimes they can be unfairly assessed, and we just say to people, if you get the email that says no, you're not successful, just take the 24 hours, you know, cool down, you aren't going to be a bit miffed about all the time and effort that you've put in, but get over it, and then move on, and then don't give up in the heat. If you are successful, I mean, that's, that's great news, there are two things you need to know. You go from being sort of almost an adversary to then being on your side. Because once they've awarded you, they want you to be successful with your application. So it's really important to make sure that you do your reporting your acquittals, and everything really well and communicates with them. It's not unusual for a grant to take a different direction once you started. And if it does need to go in a different direction, get on the front foot and tell them but the other thing you need to know is they'll ask you to sign a contract. And as we were discussing before, that's the point where they will send through the contract. I'll put the milestones in there. If you have any concerns, raised them before you sign it. Get an expert to have a look at it and get somebody who's used to looking at these things to help you. And then you can discuss that with them and make it Have you changed before you sign? It's just so much harder to change things once you've signed a contract and you've committed to

**Joanna:**

Well, absolutely, you're 100% correct there, Adrian, you've sort of lost most of your power at that point as well.

**Adrian:**

Exactly. That's exactly right. Yeah. And then, and then you sort of push uphill to try and get things changed. So we just say to people be aware, like, don't get lost in the joy of having received the grant that you've just signed with the thing they put in front of you. And it might have been five months ago that you put the submission in. So things might have changed, and just be honest and upfront with them. If you need to change the direction of the project, don't say to them, Look, we don't want the funding anymore. Just say, well, could I use this funding? Instead of doing this activity? I need an equivalent amount of funding to do that activity. Would that be okay? 90% of the time I say, Yep, no problem. Brilliant,

**Joanna:**

wonderful. Well, look what great strategies you've given us there. And I did promise that we will come back to talking about this, this course that you have, I'm really

interested in. So you've got these products, where businesses can search and find the grants that might be relevant to them and can have a notification running so they can be notified. So tell us also about this course, that sounds very sensible, sounds like something that people should be doing. If they're interested in working out how to make the most effective applications,

**Adrian:**

we found that some people are relying on grant writers to do the work for them. And we wanted to give people the option, we know some businesses will still go to a consultant. And they want a consultant to do the grant writing, and they've got the funds to be able to afford to get them to do that. And we have our own grant writing business. And we're happy to help people. But we also like people to have the skills and knowledge and capability in-house to do it. Because we think that the best person to write an application for most programs is the organization. Some programs are a bit too hard. r&d tax is legislatively complicated. EMDG can be legislatively tricky. But I would say 95% of programs, you can do them in-house,

**Joanna:**

you said EMDG. I just want to spell that out. Because we talked about it we actually talked about that in our last episode. But that's the export marketing development grant is the DEA development. Is that right? Export marketing grant?

**Adrian:**

That's exactly right. I get caught up in our border back.

**Joanna:**

To pull that out, we did talk about what an awesome grant that was. But as you're saying that can be a little bit complicated in the writing of the application process.

**Adrian:**

That's spot on. Yes. So there are those programs, we provide assistance. But what we've done is we've taken our 22 years of knowledge. And we've said, What's everything that you would need to know in a digestible format, in a relatively easy to learn that people can do in their own time at their own speed. And we've built our own learning management software, and we have created our own online program, which we will be releasing in the next two months. And what we want people to be able to do is be masters of their own grants destiny, essentially, we want them to have those skills and knowledge. And we provide everything, it's all video-based reading based. So whichever your approach to learning is, we've got it in there. We've even got some very fun and approachable little questionnaires just to help people lock in the learnings. And we've got a toolkit in there. And the toolkit contains things like, what are the checklists that we use when we do grant applications. So we don't miss anything? How do you write letters of support, we give templates and examples of those things. There are these little tips and tricks that we find that give you the 80% for actually, you know, a very small amount of effort. And they can take your application from a good application to a winning application. And we want people to have that knowledge. We don't want it to be, you know, all inside within us. There are too many people for us to try and meet one on one. So we said let's just get out there and share it.



**Joanna:**

Brian, our look, I absolutely love Adrian, what fabulous information you just shared with us today, on this episode. And on the previous episode, just a reminder, if you haven't heard that, make sure you check out the show notes for that previous episode. Adrian, I just want to say a huge thank you, to you for coming onto the show. And before we leave, of course in our show notes, we're going to link straight through to you and to grant ready and to grant guru so everyone can find you and you our listeners can go in and start to get yourself signed up on the database and start finding some grants that you can now go and apply for with this fabulous knowledge that we've had. Adrian, huge thank you for coming on to the show any parting words or any, you know, last ideas for our listeners in terms of how to apply right away the ideas that you've you've shared today?

**Adrian:**

Thanks, Joe. Two things. I just encourage people you've got to be in it to win it. And even though it seems daunting And then it's a whole new world, if you've never done it before, I do encourage people to give it a crack. But keep it in balance. It's not everything. It's not nothing. Just make sure you have a grand strategy. And the tools that we have built really are designed to empower people. We want to put the knowledge and the information that we've learned into their hands, so they can be successful. So they can just kick goals. We want to see successful businesses, we want to see them grow to the next level. And we know that grants will help enable them to do that.

**Joanna:**

Love it, Adrian, what a fabulous array of information we've covered today. And in the last episode, huge thank you for coming on to the show. Thanks,

**Adrian:**

You're welcome, Joe. Really appreciate it.

**Joanna:**

Well, that's it for this episode of Talking Law with our guest, Adrian Spencer, of Grant Guru and Grant Ready. Now, this was the second and last half of a two-part series all about grants. And just a reminder, as we had discussed, the grant process can be a gruelling process, and the success rate is usually increased when you work with the right team. be collaborative, and work together with your advisors. You also need to talk to the right lawyers to read the contract before you apply for funding and make sure you truly understand the complex details not to mention, also helping to make sure that you have the right IP protections in place, which can often be a really important component of grants.

Now, if you'd like to talk to our Legal Eagles, then just head over to our show notes to find out how to book a free call to discuss in our show notes as well. You can also find links on how to contact Adrian at Grant Guru and Grant Ready. So as part of this podcast episode with Grant Guru Adrian and his team have been kind enough to extend a bonus offer to our listeners. And of course, this grant guru tool is exactly what any small business owner will need to really hone in on finding grants throughout the year. So make sure you check out that link in the show notes to find out all about the Essentials product with Grant Guru. Now we've also included a link to Grant Guru's pro product for accountants, consultants, and other business advisors. Knowing that there are going

to be some of you who are interested in offering a grant search service to your clients, is a great way to extend the value of what you're offering. You'll need to book a demo to see the power of this in action for your clients. And of course, there's a link to doing this in our show notes. Be sure to mention Aspect Legal when booking to access our special partnership offer and if you'd like more information about this topic, then head over to our website at [talkinglaw.com.au](http://talkinglaw.com.au) where you'll be able to download a transcript of this podcast episode if you'd like to read any more detail and that's it I hope you enjoyed what you heard today. If you did don't forget to subscribe to talking law on Apple podcasts Spotify or your favourite podcast player to get notifications straight to your phone whenever a new episode is out. We also love hearing feedback so please leave us a review and rating if you're already one of our subscribers or even if you're listening to this podcast for the very first time.

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