
16 May 2016

"Are you investment ready?" You’ve probably heard this question a lot if you’ve explored social investment. You might also still be wondering what it means. Thankfully, help is at hand...

If you want to grow your organisation and expand what you do you may need to attract investors. They’ll want to know how your organisation works, the skills and experience of your team, how well you know your customers, your market and your finances. Ultimately, they’ll want to know how they’re going to get their money back.

You may need support to help you answer these questions, to put business plans together and develop your offer. This is where investment readiness programmes can help you. I’ve helped organisations get ready for investment for a few years now and have learnt a thing or two along the way...

1. **Raising social investment isn’t easy.** In fact, it will probably be harder than you think. I don’t say this to put you off. Social investment can be absolutely transformative when used in the right way. I say this to let you know that hitting bumps along the way is ok. And for that reason...

2. **You really need time and space to work out whether investment is right for you.** Social investment isn’t right for everyone or everything. I know one organisation who received an investment readiness grant to help them secure a loan but during the process they worked out it wasn’t right for them. It was a real eye opener for the management and helped them avoid taking on investment at the wrong time.
3. **Raising social investment is a partnership of many.** You are likely to work with external consultants to help you put together an offer. You will need to work with investors and make sure the partnership works for both of you. There may be commissioners or local authorities involved if you are providing services or delivering contracts. At all stages, your partnerships need to feel right, and you will need time and effort to nurture them.

4. **Tell your story.** Raising investment involves making the numbers work. But social investors are actually interested in more than just that. If they weren’t, they wouldn’t be getting involved. They will want to know what you are doing and why. And they will want to understand how you measure the impact of your work.

5. **If at first you don’t succeed,** you can always try again. If you try to raise investment and it doesn’t work out it that’s ok. Try to get as much feedback as you can, learn from the process and take that into whatever you do next. The work you’ve done should be useful for your organisation regardless of the outcome.

Ultimately, getting investment ready should help you understand more about your organisation and put you in a better position for the future.