

# Improving the Connection Between Grantmakers and Grantseekers

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## Current Trends in Program Evaluation

Grantseekers read the grant application questions and form their programs (within reason) to the requirements of the grant maker. This trend has existed for decades and does seem to work, except in evaluation techniques. Each organization has different amounts of resources budgeted for evaluations, which makes it difficult to apply a standard evaluation policy, since some organizations cannot afford extensive or external evaluations. In response to that, other foundations don't require any structured or formal quantitative evaluation to accommodate the smaller organizations. This, unfortunately, encourages minimal evaluation of programs. (Figure 1) There's a need to establish a best method of evaluation that balances budgetary limitations and effective evaluation standards. Currently, not much evaluation or follow up takes place from grantmakers, therefore, there is not enough accountability or motivation.

## Why Combining Them Would Be Best

According to Shelly Kessler (Vice President) and Ashley Snowdon (Consultant) at TCC, Committing sufficient time and attention to the planning process increases the chances that your program will achieve your desired impact. As Grantmakers determine what they are looking for, they are better able to assist grantseekers in creating and sustaining the most impact. If grantseekers and grantmakers are not connected in their goals and desires, one, or both parties, will be disappointed. "Grantees receiving either comprehensive or field focused assistance perceive the foundation to have done more to improve their organizations' abilities to sustain the work funded by the grant in the future." This is not an easy task, but if grantseekers and grantmakers take the step to communicate and to determine each others needs and expectations, build a relationship, create and implement an evaluation process, then the efforts of both will have a greater impact together. (Figures 2-3)

## How Grant Funders Seek Feedback, According to Grantseekers

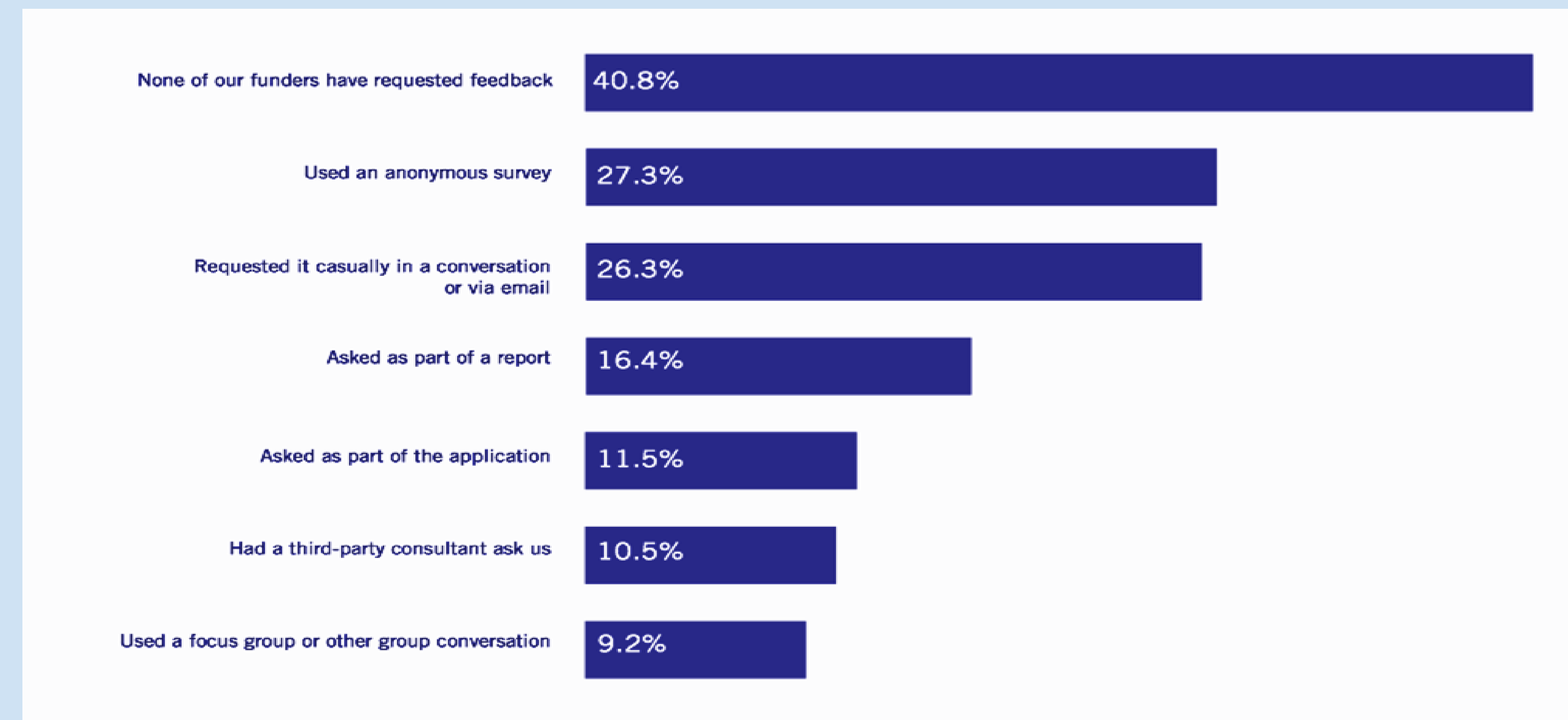


Figure 1

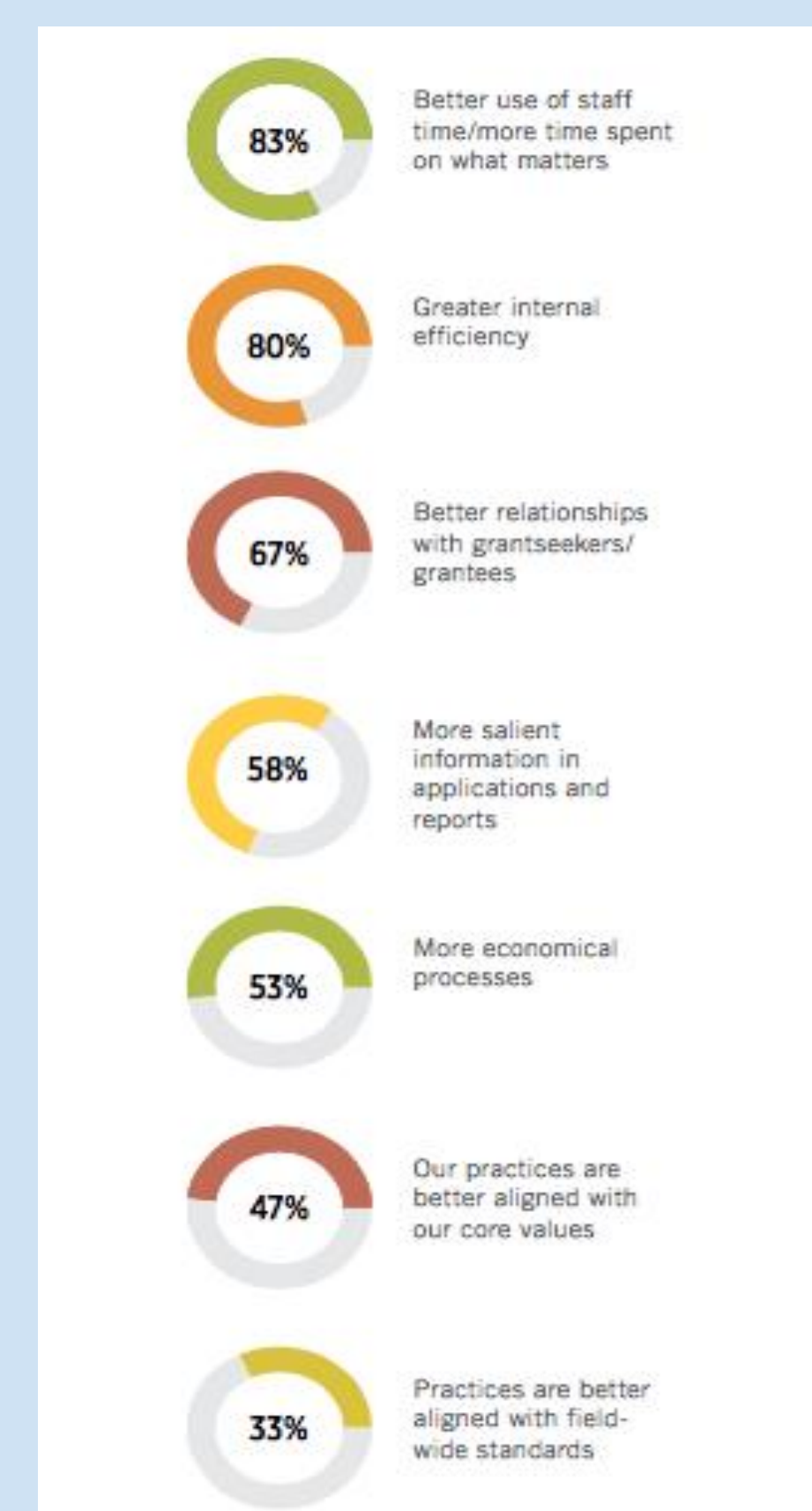
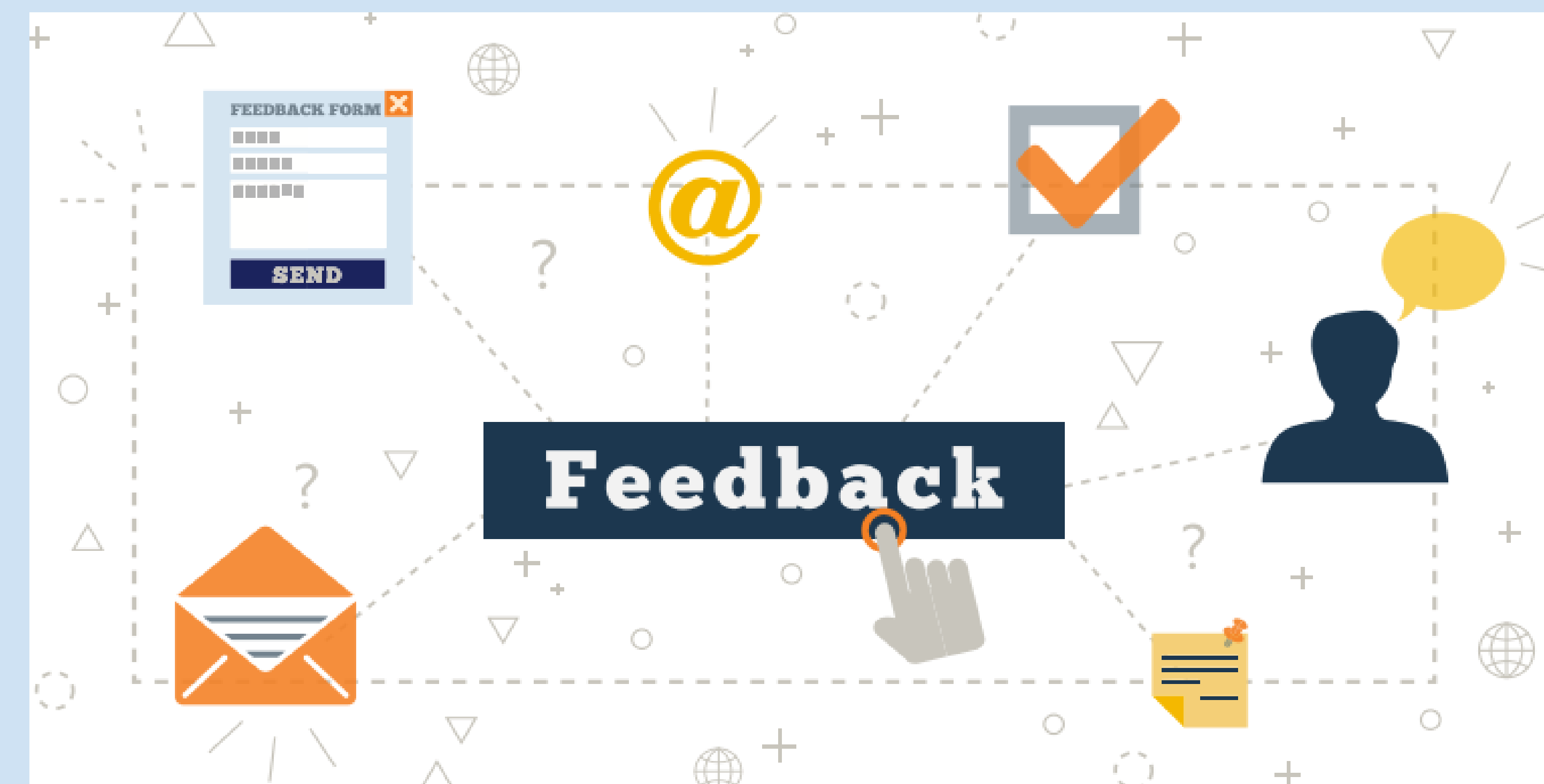


Figure 2- Benefits to Grantmakers

## Benefits of Grant Collaborative Program Evaluation Between Grantmakers and Grantseekers

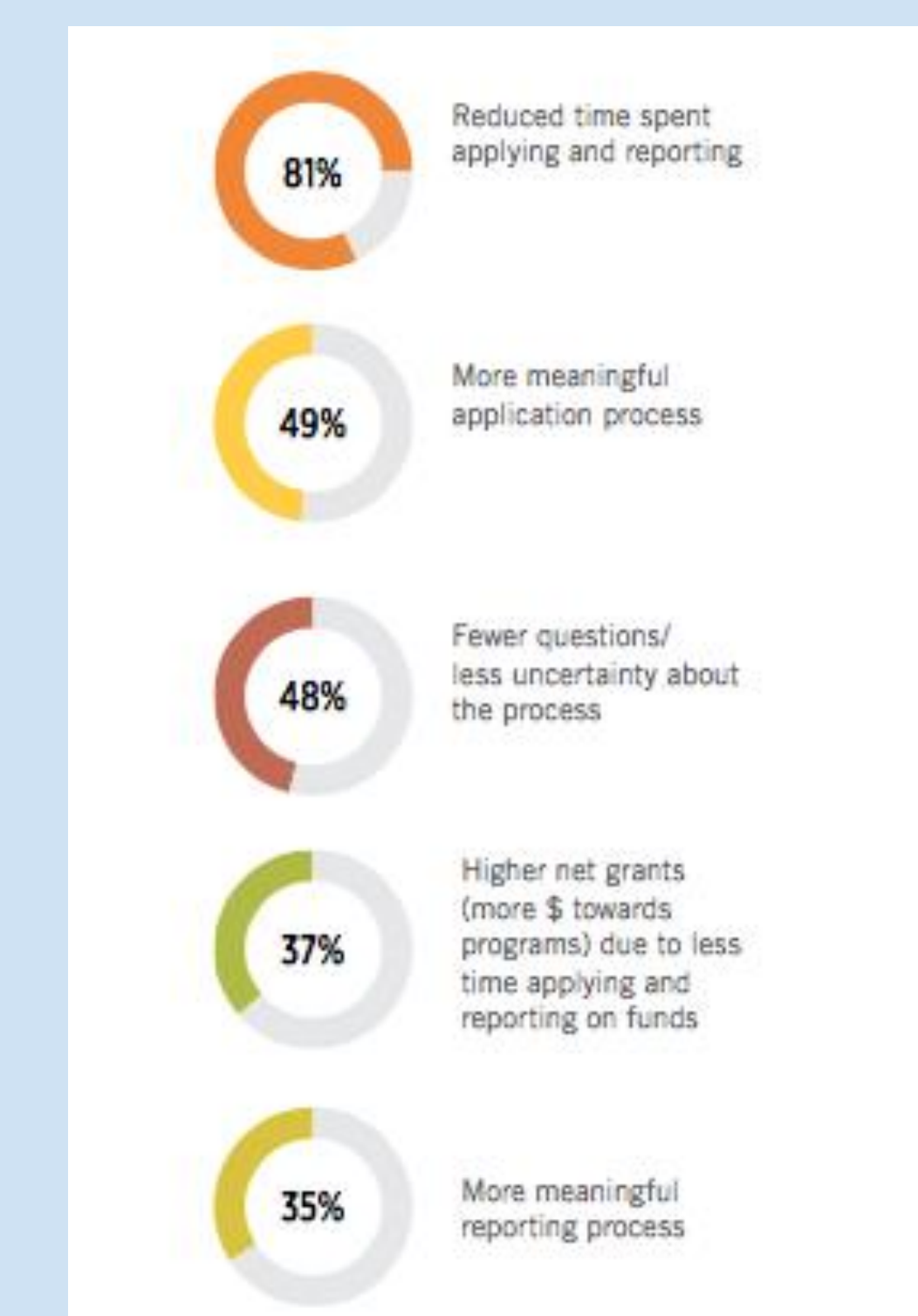


Figure 3- Benefits to Grantseekers

## What Grantseekers Want

Grantseekers want to find funding to either create a new program or to renew an on going project. Often grantseekers don't know how to properly communicate with their grantmakers about their needs and their successes. According to Debra Blum, from the The Chronicle of Philanthropy, grantseekers judge their grantmakers off of three key points. The first point, is that they want funders who are responsible and approachable. The second point is that they want clearly articulated goals by the funder. The third and final point is that they want the funders to share their expertise through personal demonstration of specific skills. Grantseekers, in essence, want grantmakers who not only donate to their cause but work with them to see it accomplished. They want follow up and they want feedback.

## What Grantmakers Want

Grantmakers aren't asking for much, and what they want makes a lot of sense. They want you to do your homework to make sure that the grant you are applying for is a good fit for your organization. After you've found a grant that seems like a good fit, pay attention to the application and follow it exactly - nothing is worse than being worthy of the grant, but being eliminated for not following instructions. Along with following application guidelines, is the importance of making sure your writing is clear and concise. Aside from the actual writing of the application it's important to start the process early. You never know what complications can come up in the writing and submission processes and starting early gives you a buffer to accommodate for those issues and still submit the application before the deadline is due. Grantmakers want their grants used for what it was intended. They strive to choose the best and most qualified grantseekers because they want their efforts to make a positive impact.



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