Helpful hints for proposal development

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“TAR HEELS”
POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN CONTACTING A “PROJECT OFFICER”

• What do you want?
• Why would the funding agency be interested in your project?
• Who are you?
  - your qualifications
  - your past record
• How do you plan to reach your goal?
  - “time table”
• How much $$$?
  - to do the project
  - you are actually requesting
POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN CONTACTING A “PROJECT OFFICER” (cont’d)

- When to call (to discuss your idea)?
- Latest Guidelines
- Reviewer’s criteria
- Some agencies request or require seeing a preliminary proposal
- Some agencies provide consultation
  - by telephone
  - by meeting
  - for review

ALWAYS REQUEST COPIES OF SUCCESSFUL PROPOSALS OR LISTING OF LAST YEAR’S SUCCESSES
MAKING THE MATCH

1. Consider the agency’s major areas of interest and funding priorities
   a) is their mission statement general or quite specific?
   b) are current priorities long-standing or is this a new direction?

   AGENCY’S ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA
   a) geographic restrictions
   b) population restrictions
   c) types of support:
      • research
      • training
      • Service

   Always look for a “mission statement”
   Statement from the president/director
   List of grants over the years
TALKING ABOUT $$$

Set the stage!
Provide the rationale!
Objections overruled...
• Acknowledge the objection
• Don’t debate – educate
• Give facts rather that opinions
• Emphasize needs & connections
• Maintain a common ground
WHAT MATTERS MOST IS HOW YOU SEE YOURSELF
Successful grants answer ALL:

- What?
- How well?
- How?
- who?
- Why?
- with what?
- how much?
### Information for all grants: the template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>BACKGROUND</strong></th>
<th>What problem/gap in knowledge exists? Provide documentation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVES</strong></td>
<td>What outcomes are to be reached to solve this problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIGNIFICANCE</strong></td>
<td>Why is it important to address this problem? What impact will it have?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>METHODS</strong></td>
<td>How will the objectives be accomplished? Procedures should relate directly to the objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVALUATION</strong></td>
<td>Have the objectives been accomplished?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PERSONNEL</strong></td>
<td>Who will carry out the objectives, why are these individuals necessary?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EQUIPMENT/FACILITIES</strong></td>
<td>What libraries, computers, labs, studios?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BUDGET</strong></td>
<td>How much cost will be involved?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Write an Objective?
What’s an Objective?

1) OBJECTIVES DO NOT DESCRIBE THE PROCESS OR METHODS AND ACTIVITIES THAT YOU NEED TO DO.

2) OBJECTIVES SPECIFY A SINGLE RESULT
   - starts with “TO” and follows with a VERB
   - includes WHEN the result will be accomplished WHAT and WHEN something will be done (NOT WHY OR HOW)
   - relates the stated goal or project purpose
   - it is SPECIFIC, MEASUREABLE, VERIFYABLE
   - describes an END product or desirable situation
Okay, I’ve Written the Objectives…

Now What?  What Comes Next?

Objectives = End Product

Methods = The Project/Program Activities
How do they fulfill the objectives?
What is the sequence of events?
the flow and interrelationships of activities

(A Flow Chart = 100 words)
Methods Should...

- Indicate Cost/Benefit Ratio
- State Specific Time Frames
- Discuss Potential Risks
  - (but you’ve got it in hand)
- Indicate Uniqueness
- Assign Responsibilities
And Now… EVALUATION

MEASURES PROGRAM PROGRESS

Reviewers’ Paradise!
How did they achieve objectives?
Did they show a cause and effect relationship?  
(where appropriate)
Did they follow The Plan?
# Being Concise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>NO</strong></th>
<th><strong>YES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in order to</td>
<td>to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for the purpose of</td>
<td>to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have a preference for</td>
<td>prefer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with the exception of</td>
<td>except</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the near future</td>
<td>soon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the not to distance future</td>
<td>soon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in addition to</td>
<td>also</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at this point in time</td>
<td>now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at the present time</td>
<td>now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the course of</td>
<td>now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in a number of cases</td>
<td>while* (during)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the majority of instances</td>
<td>some (several)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in all probability</td>
<td>usually (most)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the nature of</td>
<td>probably</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in view of</td>
<td>like (similar to)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in view of the fact</td>
<td>because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it is imperative that</td>
<td>because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>may result in damage</td>
<td>be sure that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the amount of</td>
<td>may damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arrived at the conclusion</td>
<td>for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>last but not least</td>
<td>concluded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Don’t use FACT unless it IS a fact!</em></td>
<td>finally</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*WHILE* and *Since* = TIME
“BEST ADVICE”

1. TALK TO YOUR ADMINISTRATORS... early

2. TALK TO YOUR ADMINISTRATORS ... early!

3. TALK TO YOUR ADMINISTRATORS EARLY!
Before Sending Your Proposal...

Did You:

- Recheck budget calculations?
- Sign the application (before photocopying)?
- Get the right institutional signatures?
- Check all of the guidelines and follow them?
- Add all of the correct forms to be filled out – are they in correct order?
- Make sure the abstract reflects the proposal content?
The Budget

- Personnel Costs
- Fringe Benefits
- Equipment
- Travel
- Participant Costs
- Supplies
- Subcontracts
ALWAYS be sure you check with ...

- **IRB**
  - Institutional Review Board (for Human Subjects)
- **IACUC**
  - Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
- **IBC**
  - Institutional Biosafety Committee
  - Compliance Office/Officers
WE HAVE READ YOUR PROPOSAL...

...AND WE ARE GIVING IT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION.
COMMON PROBLEMS OF NEW APPLICANTS

- Over-exuberance
- Inexperience in the proposed technique
- Insufficient preliminary date
- Poor peer review publication record
- Inadequate research designs
COMMON PROBLEMS

Lack of originality
An uncertain approach
Unfocused research plan
Poorly stated research goals
An uncritical approach
An experimental approach that involves questionable reasoning
Poor methods
Poor treatment of the literature
Taking on too much
REJECTED
2. Research problem: significance – unimportant, unimaginative, unlikely to provide new information.
3. Experimental design: study group or controls – inappropriate composition, number, or characteristics.
5. Experimental design: data collection procedures – confused design, inappropriate instrumentation, timing, or conditions.
6. Experimental design: data management and analysis – vague, unsophisticated, not likely to provide accurate and clear-cut results.
TODAY’S FUNDING WORLD

- Interdisciplinary projects gaining recognition
- Interdisciplinary programs offer novel approaches to traditional problems
- Federal agencies now address funding interdisciplinary research
- Interdisciplinary research gained visibility in major journals (Science, Nature)