

WRITING (SUCCESSFUL) GRANT PROPOSALS

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WRITING!



WRITING

- Is NEVER wasted (unless it is terrible)
- Is USUALLY frightening (unless you are just doing something you've done before)
- Is ALWAYS hard (unless you are not trying)



WRITING -- SOME TIPS

- Start early
 - Really – do what I say, not what I do
- Talk it through first
 - Know what you are going to say
- Have a plan
 - What pieces, when
- START EARLY
 - Worth repeating, my personal failure

Grant Proposals

GRANT PROPOSALS...

- Are NOT research papers
 - You are planning what you WILL DO, not telling what you HAVE DONE
- Are going to be read by a DIVERSE audience of (smart) non-experts
 - So it isn't a good idea to shut them out
- Are going to be read by reviewers who have a big stack to read
 - So you need to catch their attention early
 - AND you need to help them do their job

GRANT PROPOSALS... NOT RESEARCH PAPERS

- Forward-looking documents
- You don't have to KNOW everything – you need a good PLAN
- Clarity is VERY IMPORTANT
 - The committee needs to know what you are going to do, when and how you are going to do it, what the impact will be.
 - Don't make them figure it out

GRANT PROPOSALS... READ BY A DIVERSE GROUP OF (SMART) NON-EXPERTS

- Non-experts
 - Don't use jargon
 - Think of a broad audience (may involve different parts of a proposal)
- Smart
 - Don't 'dumb down' your proposal
 - Don't try to hide something you don't know

GRANT PROPOSALS... ARE GOING TO BE READ BY REVIEWERS WHO HAVE A STACK TO READ

- Make it easy to read
 - Use white space
 - Use paragraph breaks
 - Use subheadings
- START WITH A BANG
 - What is the problem
 - Why does it matter
 - What are you going to do about it?

GRANT PROPOSALS... ARE GOING TO BE READ BY REVIEWERS WHO HAVE A STACK TO READ

- FOLLOW THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS
 - Address the issues they want, hopefully in the order they want
 - Use subheadings to guide your reader
 - Don't be afraid to duplicate language – if they want 'aim and importance of endeavour', GIVE them 'aim and importance of endeavor'
 - The call for proposals (and any associated guidelines) should be bedside reading... your best friends... your favourite essays. Know them inside and out

(SUCCESSFUL)

SUCCESSFUL?

- APPLY
- But... here's the secret:
 - MOST WILL NOT BE (SUCCESSFUL)
 - Get used to it

SUCCESSFUL?

- Starting small isn't a bad idea
 - Look for non-tricouncil grants in your area
 - University grants
 - Association grants
 - Grants from governmental agencies
 - Gives you a track record

SUCCESSFUL?

- Build on your successes
 - How does this new project relate to earlier work?
 - How can you leverage your earlier projects?
 - How can you leverage existing text?
- Partnerships
 - Who can help you with this project?
 - What do they add?
 - Think non-academic as well...

SUCCESSFUL?

- Perfect your 'elevator pitch'
 - Explain your project in simple terms, in a couple of minutes
 - Try it on your mother... your teacher from high school... your best friend's little sister
 - When you think you have it, try it on some MORE people
 - It should be
 - Engaging
 - Easy to understand
- This is your proposal 'guide'

SUCCESSFUL?

- GET YOUR FRIENDS AND ANYONE ELSE YOU CAN THINK OF TO READ IT
 - You want real, constructive feedback
 - If they can't understand it – YOU HAVEN'T DONE YOUR JOB
 - Note you don't need to TAKE all feedback – but all feedback is helpful
- Proofread, proofread, and proofread again

SUCCESSFUL?

- Knowledge Mobilization
 - Think outside the box
 - Who would care about this?
 - Why would they care?
 - Look for non-academic partners
 - Government
 - NGO
 - Industry

SUCCESSFUL?

- Knowledge Mobilization
 - Look for opportunities to mobilize to various audiences
 - General public
 - Professional
 - Industry
 - Government (policy)

