

Grant Writing II: Writing Effective Proposals

Sponsored by:



Common Mistakes

- A well-written proposal for a poorly designed project



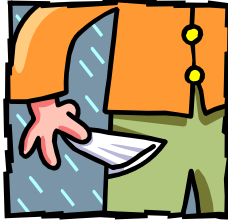
Common Mistakes

- Emotional appeals



Common Mistakes

- Pleading poverty



Common Mistakes



- Describing the tree

Common Mistakes

- "Let's develop a new program!
Then let's go market it to people who will use it!"



Common Mistakes



- The shopping list

It's All About You, Isn't It?



- Focusing on what you are going to provide, instead of what your clients or audience need

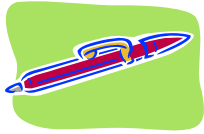
Common Mistakes

- Ferraris and Jalopies



Common Mistakes

- “Trinkets and Trash”



Common Mistakes

- Putting all the grantmaker's buzz words in the first paragraph...and nowhere else



Common Mistakes

- Alphabet Soup: “The OFSWCD has worked closely for eight years with ODNR-DSWC, -DOW and -DNAP, using the NAAEE guidelines, to present WET, WILD, PLT, and FLP...”



Common Mistakes

- Edspeak: “This project features hands-on, minds-on activities that draw upon the multiple intelligences of learners, evaluated through authentic and diverse assessment...”



Common Mistakes

- If we offer it, they will come



Common Mistakes

- “Drive-by workshops” with no follow-up



Common Mistakes

- The \$50 hotel room



Common Mistakes

- The Edge to Edge Pizza Proposal
(words cover the page from edge to edge)



Common Mistakes

- Lost-without-a-roadmap



Common Mistakes



...for only \$25,000!

Common Mistakes

- Benchmarking, yes!
Plagiarizing, no.



Common Mistakes



- "I'll have my school principal/state legislator/mother write a letter of support about what a great idea this is!"

Common Mistakes

- “Wet Ink Specials” – Not finishing a draft proposal early enough for your grant writing buddy or the grant maker to provide you comments and suggestions



Circular Reasoning

- Avoid presenting the absence of your solution as the actual problem
- Example: “The problem is that we have no pool in our community. Building a pool would solve the problem.”



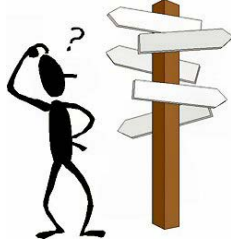
Parts of a Proposal

- Need or Problem Statement
- Goal/Objectives
- Activities
- Timetable
- Personnel or Organization Qualifications
- Outcome Measurements
- Continuation Plan
- Budget Spreadsheet and Narrative



Example of a Need Statement

- “In a 2010 survey of Ohio dry cleaners, 65% admitted having difficulty understanding which new disposal regulations apply to them. 50% said they would not be comfortable calling a regulatory agency to ask that question.”



Objective: Where do we want to be when we're finished?

- Example: “Our after-school program will help children read better.”



Better example:

- “Our after school remedial education program will assist 50 children in improving their reading scores by one grade level. Progress will be demonstrated on standardized reading tests administered after participating in the program for six months.”

Objectives

- Specific
- Measurable
- Appropriate
- Realistic
- Time-bound

Objectives vs. Activities

- OBJECTIVES explain what the project will achieve (where we want to be when we're finished.)
- ACTIVITIES are the specific steps that will achieve the objectives. How do we get there (the objective) from here (the current need)

Activities: How do we get there from here?

- Who, What, Where, When, and How
- Provide a detailed description for the duration of the project
- Explain the sequence and timing
- Specific activities make it possible to develop the project budget

Sample Objective

The students will create and maintain an environmental home page in our computer lab

- - Activity One:
- - Activity Two:



Better: If the *Objective* is to improve 150 students' computer and analytical skills...

- Activity one: Analyze the content of a Web page
- Activity two: Compare two Web pages on the same environmental topic
- Activity three: Create a home page about this class's environmental projects

Personnel/Organization Qualifications

- Why are you the one for the job?
- Brief biographical sketches (or job description if not hired yet)
- Evidence of accomplishments
- Endorsements from others
- Stick to what's relevant for the project



Project Evaluation: Things to Think About

- Correlation is not causation:
There may be multiple explanations for your good results
- Cost of evaluation relative to overall project
- Must be designed in early
- Include both quantitative and qualitative indicators



Project Evaluation: Things to think about...

- Lessons learned from UNsuccessful projects
- Purpose of your evaluation



“Summative Evaluation” (e.g., for reports to the grantmaker)

- Did the program work?
- Did it attain its goals?
- Were the desired outcomes for participants achieved, and were they worth the cost?
- Should the program be continued?

“Formative Evaluation” (to make an ongoing program better)

- What are the program’s strengths and weaknesses?
- Are participants progressing toward desired outcomes?
- Which participants do better than others and why?
- Can we operate the program more efficiently without compromising quality?

Program Evaluation Resources

- WK Kellogg Foundation’s Evaluation Handbook
<http://www.wkcf.org/>
under “knowledge center” and “resources”



More Evaluation Resources

- Centers for Disease Control Framework for Program Evaluation for health programs
<http://www.cdc.gov/eval/framework.htm>



Detailing a Budget (Itemize, Itemize, Itemize...)

- Personnel
- Non-Personnel
- Contractual



Personnel

- Salary/wages: number of hours times hourly rate for each position, or % of time @ what salary
- Benefits and how calculated
- Rule of thumb: benefits roughly 1/3 of salary
- Job description if not hired yet



Non-personnel

- Supplies (consumables): itemized, unit price, totaled
- Equipment: itemized, unit price, totaled
- Printing: number of copies times unit price, totaled
- Travel: miles at specified reimbursement rate, or per diem per traveler
- Allow for breakage
- Remember the Buick!



Contractual

- Describe the service being provided
- Name or organization or individual providing the service (or copy of RFP)
- Number of hours times hourly rate
- Grant makers scrutinize closely for contractors' padded indirect costs
- Don't hide extra salary in contractual

Meeting the Match

- Grant application should tell you how much cash or in-kind match is required
- Always offer at least the estimated value of your organization's staff time and supplies that are not being covered with grant funds
- Include volunteer hours in your match.
http://independentsector.org/volunteer_time includes current estimated rates by state


Letters of Support

- "This is a much-needed project, and this organization is terrific, just the one to do it right."
- That's nice.




Letters of Collaboration

- If someone's participation/permission is crucial to make the project happen, have them write *specifically* what they will do or provide
- **Coach them**, or they will write a generic support letter
- Allow enough time to assemble these letters



A word about innovation...

- Innovative, creative projects make funders' eyes light up
- Administrators (your boss?) want tried-and-true, sound methodologies with a track record of success under similar conditions
- What's a grant applicant to do?



Quick Tips...

- Re-read the RFP or grant guidelines after you've finished the draft
- Understand who will be reviewing the proposal, and tailor your jargon level to their understanding
- Be sure your proposal can pass the Spouse Test

Dew knot trussed yore
spell chequer two fined
awl yore mist aches.

Still More Quick Tips...

- Check your math on the budget
- Check your timeline against the funder's calendar
- Check to be sure you have completed all sections
- Round up needed signatures and collaboration letters



Happy Hunting!
