Tall Poles of Proposal Writing

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Hello, my name is Susan Hoban...

Overview

What to Avoid

Proposal Writing = Story Telling

Reviewer’s Eyes
WHAT TO AVOID

WEAKNESS:
Proposal is not responsive to the solicitation
“I’m very glad you asked me that…”
WHAT TO AVOID

WEAKNESS:
Proposal is not responsive to the solicitation

SOLUTION:
Step 1: Read the solicitation carefully.
Step 2: Does your project fit?
NASA Strategic Plan 2018
WHAT TO AVOID

WEAKNESS:
Proposal is not responsive to the solicitation

SOLUTION:

Step 1: Read the proposal carefully.
Step 2: Does your project fit?
Step 3: Make a decision.

No. Try again next time.
Yes. Craft your language to reflect the language in the solicitation.
Proposal Writing is Story Telling

How do we start?

“It was a dark and stormy night...”
Outline for a Cohesive Proposal Story

Vision
Goals
Objectives
Strategy
Anticipated Outcomes
Metrics and Milestones
Evaluation
Start with the Big Idea.
Vision: what you want to accomplish - the ultimate destination

NASA’s BEST Students

Vision

Increase the number of students from underrepresented groups who choose go into engineering

The sky’s no limit for NASA’s BEST Students!
Goal: what needs to be accomplished to reach the destination
NASA’s BEST Students
Goal
Attract and retain K-8 students in STEM programs
Objectives: specific actions and times to meet the goal

2005
- Develop Educator’s Guides

2006
- Field test Educator’s Guides

2007
- Revise Educator’s Guides

2009+
- Conduct Professional Development for Educators

NASA’s BEST Students Objectives
-- Objectives are measureable and have deadlines
Strategy: Plan of action

NASA’s BEST Students Strategy

- Assemble a **team** of 4 educators and 2 STEM professionals
- Conduct design sessions for Educator’s Guides
- Write Educator’s Guides in grade-level order:
  - K-2, 3-5, 6-8
- Use NASA Education network to establish testing sites
  - Schedule field tests -> Conduct field tests
- Revise guides using feedback from educators at field test sites
- Develop website
- Market product through NASA, education networks (e.g., NSTA)
- Schedule PD through NASA, NSTA and other networks
- Conduct PD [Face-to-face & online]

**TEAM** is important. Start early. Assemble the best team for the project. Sometimes this is a hard decision.
Anticipated Outcomes

- Refer directly to *solicitation* and *Strategic Plan*
- Use *language* from these documents whenever possible
- Include specifics as well as high-level outcomes
  - e.g., Specific: reach 2000 students
  - e.g., High-level: promote positive change in student attitude toward STEM

Note: The Educator Guides were outputs, not outcomes
Metrics & Milestones

If you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it.

How will you measure success?

**Metrics**: quantitative measure of success.

**Milestones**: Accomplishments, outputs and outcomes along the way.
Evaluation

Work with your evaluator from the beginning

*Not just for NASA:* Design metrics and milestones that will help *you* manage the project

Mid-project evaluation can provide important feedback for continuous improvement

Take evaluation seriously: *NASA does*
Reviewer’s Eyes

Read from the reviewer’s perspective

They will be reading 10 - 20 proposals!

Format it so it is easy to read:

- Give them some **white space**
- Use **figures** to make a point when possible
- **Proof read**, and then **proof read** it again
- Ask your best friend to read it for you
Start early. The Strategic Plan and NSPIRES are previews of what’s coming up

Give them what they ask for. Develop proposal outline to mirror the structure of the solicitation.

Follow the instructions. Pay attention to details regarding fonts, spacing, etc.
Questions?

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