

Elements Found in Most Successful Proposals

1. Relates to the purposes and goals of the funding agency.
2. Adheres to the content and format guidelines of the applicant agency.
3. Is directed toward the appropriate audience -- i.e., those who will review the proposal.
4. Addresses the review criteria of the funding source.
5. Is interesting to read.
6. Uses a clear, concise, coherent writing style, free of jargon, superfluous information, and undefined acronyms -- i.e., it's easy to read.
7. Is organized in a logical manner that is easy to follow.
8. Is meticulously proofread so that it has NO grammatical errors, misspellings, or typos.

The Proposal

9. Has a title that is appropriate, descriptive, and (perhaps) imaginative.
10. Has a clear, concise, informative abstract that can stand alone.
11. Has clearly stated goals and objectives that are not buried in a morass of narrative.
12. Follows naturally from previous/current programs or research.
13. Documents the need for the proposed project.
14. Clearly describes:
 - who will do the work (who),
 - the methods that will be employed (how),
 - which facilities or location will be used (where),
 - and a timetable of events (when).
15. Includes appropriate and sufficient citations to prior work, ongoing studies, and related literature.
16. Establishes the competence and scholarship of the individual(s) involved.
17. Does not assume that reviewers "know what you mean."
18. Makes no unsupported assumptions.
19. Presents a plan for evaluating data or the success of project.
20. Is of reasonable dimensions -- not trying to answer all the questions at once.
21. Proposes work which can be accomplished, or well started, in the time allotted.
22. Demonstrates that the individual(s) and the organization are qualified to perform the proposed project
23. Includes vitae which demonstrate the credentials required, e.g., do not use promotion and tenure vitae replete with institutional committee assignments for a research proposal.
24. Documents facilities necessary for the success of the project.
25. Includes necessary letters of support and other supporting documentation.
26. Includes a bibliography of cited references.

The Budget

27. Budget corresponds to the narrative: all major elements detailed in the budget are described in the narrative.
28. Budget is sufficient to perform the tasks described in the narrative.