Writing a Successful Proposal

*How to write smarter not harder*
1. Build Your Network Today not when RFP hits!
1. Build Your Network Today not when RFP hits!

• DO NOT get tunnel vision!

• DO NOT look for only one type of opportunity!

• DO NOT limit your organization to a single role!
1. Build Your Network Today not when RFP hits!

Look up:
You = sub-contractor  Them = prime contractor

Look left:
Co-Applicant with organizations like yours

Look right:
Co-Applicant with organizations different than yours

Look down:
You = prime  Them = sub-contractor
Hi (name):
(I saw you speak at the conference) (Or, Its been awhile since we talked) (Or, I was doing some research saw on your bio that you do X).

The reason I’m emailing is because I wanted to know if you are involved in pursuing federal funding opportunities at your job? My department is looking to develop new partnerships and wants to expand its network within the (Aerospace) field.

I would be interested to know about any technical areas you might have an interest in when it comes to grant funding. I don’t have any particular grants in mind right now, but I want to be knowledgeable about what you do, in case there is an opportunity to ever team in some way on a proposal. I would also be happy to forward any pertinent opportunities I come across, regardless of teaming potential.

Just let me know. Thanks.
2. It’s Not About You!

It does not matter how inspiring, innovative, awesome, your project or idea is!

What matters is HELPING the funder and/or its staff achieve ITS goals through your project. The agencies have metrics to meet and funding to justify. YOUR project must be viewed as way to help THEM!
3. Identify the Problem

- A successful proposal should identify a problem in your market, service area, industry, academic field, etc.

- The problem should be expressed quantitatively.

- General national statistics typically hold little value.
4. Show You are the Solution

- Explain how and why you are the solution.
- The more closely aligned the problem and solution the better.
- The problem/solution should be expressed at the start. IE Overview
5. Parrot Key Words/Phrases

- Look for “hot button” words and phrases in the evaluation criteria section.

- Use these EXACT words and phrases when writing your Proposal.
Examples

“Existing NASA Content”
DOES NOT EQUAL “Space Curriculum”

“Engineering Aptitude”
DOES NOT EQUAL “Mechanical Abilities”

“Sustainability Plan”
DOES NOT EQUAL “Future Funding Plan”
6. Be Concise and direct

• Constant goal – say it more powerfully with LESS words.

• If you can CUT words you can EXPAND ideas!

• Bullet points, numbering, paragraphs sub-headings make it easier to digest.
We believe it is extremely important to set in place goals and secure commitment from all parties involved that ensures that the actions of the deceased individuals shall indeed create a positive long term impact. This impact will serve as the starting point for new philosophies, policies and procedures related to personal and collective freedoms for citizens of this country. The government that manages these policies and procedures will recognize that these items, are in fact, authored by individuals themselves, in an effort to help these individual citizens. Adhering to this systematic and philosophical approach will ensure the long term sustainability and survivability of our country’s ability to govern and provide for its citizenry.
That we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain;

That this nation shall have a new birth of freedom;

and that this government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.
7. Prove It – Internal Evidence

• Ideally, you should have ALREADY done something that PROVES your CONCEPT is valid.

• Logical correlation is more important than scale or direct connection.

• Evidence may be internal statistics, survey results, case studies, etc. Testimonials typically do not cut it. COLLECT NOW!
8. Prove It – External Evidence

• Most agencies want “Informed by best Practices”.

• Customize the selection of external evidence based on funder and project.

• Ask yourself would this be logical evidence to make me invest my money?

• Scholarly journals, white papers, agency studies, newspaper / magazine articles are good sources.
Sources for External Evidence

• Google Scholar
  http://scholar.google.com/
• National Academy of Public Administration
  http://www.napawash.org/
• National Education Association
  http://www.nea.org/home/32073.htm
• NSTA
• Google News Article Search
  http://news.google.com/
• Search on Federal Agency’s own site!
9. Bio = Grant Job App

• Bios should be customized for each proposal

• Reviewers care that you have experience, background, and expertise that relates to the project

• What you may consider minor to your career may be of major significance to proposal.
Dr. Tristan Fiedler
Dr. Fiedler currently serves as Associate Vice President for Research - Federal Government Relations & Partnerships. Prior to joining Florida Tech, Dr. Fiedler was an NIEHS postdoctoral fellow in the Marine & Freshwater Biomedical Science Center of the Rosenstiel School of Marine & Atmospheric Science of the University of Miami performing genomic analyses of Expressed Sequence Tags (ESTs) of *Aplysia californica*.

Dr. Fiedler then completed a research fellowship in bioinformatics at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Long Island, NY. While at CSHL, he created the online review of *Caenorhabditis elegans* biology, an open-access peer-reviewed multimedia resource available at www.WormBook.org. Dr. Fiedler is a founding member of the nematode Genome Annotation Assessment Project (www.wormbase.org/wiki/index.php/NGASP) which objectively assessed the accuracy of the current protein-encoding gene prediction algorithms in *C. elegans*, and to applied this knowledge to the annotation of the other *Caenorhabditis* genomes.

In addition to genomics research and teaching, Dr. Fiedler has performed extensive analyses of the X-ray crystal structure of human myeloperoxidase, a lysosomal protein stored in the azurophil granules of neutrophils. A second enzyme, oligoribonuclease, served as the focus for his initial postgraduate fellowship training. ORN is an essential enzyme in *E. coli*, responsible for the degradation of mRNA to mononucleotides. Recently, the Federal Aviation Administration has funded Dr. Fiedler to serve as Academic Liaison to the FAA Center of Excellence for Commercial Space Transportation's Industrial Advisory Board (known as CESTAC).
Dr. Fiedler currently serves as Associate Vice President for Research - Federal Government Relations & Partnerships. Recently, the Federal Aviation Administration has funded Dr. Fiedler to act as the Academic Liaison to the FAA Center of Excellence for Commercial Space Transportation’s Industrial Advisory Board (known as CESTAC). CESTAC is a partnership of academia, industry, and government, developed for the purpose of addressing current and future challenges for commercial space transportation.

Dr. Fielder also serves as Florida Institute of Technology’s representative on the NASA Florida Space Grant Consortium (FSGC). In this role he helps to guide the organization’s efforts to provide space related scholarships, fellowships, and internships.

Through his work with CESTAC, FSGC, and university federal partnerships, Dr. Fiedler interfaces with scientists and engineers at Kennedy Space Center, as well as other NASA centers.

Prior to joining Florida Tech, Dr. Fiedler was an NIEHS postdoctoral fellow in the Marine & Freshwater Biomedical Science Center of the Rosenstiel School of Marine & Atmospheric Science of the University of Miami performing genomic analyses of Expressed Sequence Tags (ESTs) of Aplysia californica.
10. Budget Detail

• Break the costs down for EVERY category.

• Even if you don’t exactly how funds will be spent (IE which supplies) break down logical example.

Example – Supplies $1,000.00

50 binders & dividers @ $15 = $750
50 calculators @ $5 = $250
10. Budget Detail

• You must ABSOLUTELY break down ALL travel costs even though you CANNOT POSSIBLY know travel costs in the future.

• Focus on logical locations, durations, and frequencies.

• Use Orbitz, and use “today’s” costs for your budget detail

• For federal grants try and make sure you don’t blow through CONUS travel rates.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Entity Visited</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Nights</th>
<th>Hotel</th>
<th>Airfare</th>
<th>Car</th>
<th>Per Diem</th>
<th>Cost/ Traveler</th>
<th>Times 2 Travelers</th>
<th>Final Total (includes 1 car)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Knoxville, TN</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$111.00</td>
<td>$330.00</td>
<td>$80.00</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
<td>$507.00</td>
<td>$1,014.00</td>
<td>$1,094.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Huntsville, AL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$109.00</td>
<td>$454.00</td>
<td>$33.00</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
<td>$629.00</td>
<td>$1,258.00</td>
<td>$1,291.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Van Horn, TX</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$195.00</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
<td>$122.00</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
<td>$511.00</td>
<td>$1,022.00</td>
<td>$1,144.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$175.00</td>
<td>$327.00</td>
<td>$132.00</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
<td>$568.00</td>
<td>$1,136.00</td>
<td>$1,268.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cincinnati, OH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$160.00</td>
<td>$227.00</td>
<td>$125.00</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
<td>$453.00</td>
<td>$906.00</td>
<td>$1,031.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alexandra, VA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$160.00</td>
<td>$327.00</td>
<td>$132.00</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
<td>$553.00</td>
<td>$1,106.00</td>
<td>$1,238.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tulsa, OK</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$112.00</td>
<td>$372.00</td>
<td>$110.00</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
<td>$550.00</td>
<td>$1,100.00</td>
<td>$1,210.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Manassas, VA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$160.00</td>
<td>$327.00</td>
<td>$132.00</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
<td>$553.00</td>
<td>$1,106.00</td>
<td>$1,238.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dulles, VA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$160.00</td>
<td>$327.00</td>
<td>$132.00</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
<td>$553.00</td>
<td>$1,106.00</td>
<td>$1,238.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>East Hartford, CT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$96.00</td>
<td>$552.00</td>
<td>$119.00</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
<td>$714.00</td>
<td>$1,428.00</td>
<td>$1,547.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boston, MA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$97.00</td>
<td>$352.00</td>
<td>$103.00</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
<td>$515.00</td>
<td>$1,030.00</td>
<td>$1,133.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reston, VA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$160.00</td>
<td>$327.00</td>
<td>$132.00</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
<td>$553.00</td>
<td>$1,106.00</td>
<td>$1,238.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Irving, TX</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$195.00</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
<td>$122.00</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
<td>$511.00</td>
<td>$1,022.00</td>
<td>$1,144.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Naperville, IL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$125.00</td>
<td>$394.00</td>
<td>$128.00</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
<td>$585.00</td>
<td>$1,170.00</td>
<td>$1,298.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$175.00</td>
<td>$327.00</td>
<td>$132.00</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
<td>$568.00</td>
<td>$1,136.00</td>
<td>$1,268.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>City of Industry, CA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$110.00</td>
<td>$417.00</td>
<td>$154.00</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
<td>$593.00</td>
<td>$1,186.00</td>
<td>$1,340.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$19,720.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Cross the Finish Line

- “Good and on-time” ALWAYS trumps “Perfect and late”.
- Failure to submit demoralizes people more than losing.
- Winning percentage is 0% for unsubmitted proposals.
12. It’s a numbers game

• Typical award ration might be 1:10 (10% odds of a win) But if you write a GOOD proposal maybe you double these odds. 20%

• Pursuing multiple opportunities, with multiple proposals, increases your odds of winning once!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Submissions</th>
<th>“Good” Odds</th>
<th>1 win Odds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions

Paul Secor
Paul@SecorStrategies.com
321-720-8683