

Proposal Development Team



- Purpose
- Organization
- Function
- Goals
- Definition of Success

Why Are They Difficult?

- Large project opportunities are often limited and could require a limited institutional submission process
- Significant resources need to be dedicated to reach submission
- Extremely competitive environment
- Multi-disciplinary projects mean participants need to learn each others “language and culture”
- Trust needs to be built over time -- short time frames stress the process
- They can be high risk, high yield, high profile

Institutional Challenges

- Is there a faculty champion?
- Is there an administrative champion in an academic unit (Dept Head or Director)?
- Is there an administrative champion in an administrative unit (VC, Provost, etc...)?
- Do those advocating the submission have experience with large and complex proposal submissions and administration?
- Can the institution afford to meet the proposal requirements of cost sharing (if applicable)?

Issues with the Lead

- Is the lead experienced with large proposals?
- Is the lead organized?
- Will the lead need relief from instructional duties during proposal preparation?
- Does the lead need clerical and administrative assistance?
- Does the lead have sufficient contacts throughout the institution?

Administrative Concerns

- Have submission timelines been established?
- Is there concurrence on the established timelines?
- Communication among colleagues
- Writing with a unified voice
- Satisfying the various components of the proposal requirement

Concerns Unique to Large Efforts

- Small Business Subcontracting Plan
- Management Plan
- Data Dissemination Plan
- Graduate Education Plan
- Outreach Component
- Assessment Plan
- Diversity Plan

Common Mistakes in Competition

- Failure to achieve an integrated scope of work
- Proposal not written in a single voice
- Poor management plan
- Poor outreach effort
- Unrealistic budget requirements
- Inability to make programmatic decisions pertinent to the proposal submission

Practical Solutions & Best Practices

- Provide centralized support for large proposal submissions
- Buy out faculty instructional time
- Hire external editors
- Hire external support for graphics
- Provide a proposal war room
- Create an institutional proposal development team

Proposal Development Team

- Seeks out challenging new research opportunities
- Advocates the capture of big research opportunities
- Assembles research teams
- Assists with proposal preparation and planning
- Assists with proposal preparation resources
- Assists with the establishment of submission timeline
- Coordinates review teams
- Assists with management planning
- Assists with budget development
- Serves as liaison with sponsored programs

What do we do?

- Facilitates preliminary meetings with potential researchers
- Helps identify additional collaborators
- Explores ways to make project fit sponsors program
- Facilitates proposal planning, preparation, university boilerplate
- Assists with communication links,
e.g., listservers, conference calls, meetings
- Runs interference with chairs, deans
- Assists with management plan; budget development
- Reviews and edits proposal drafts; organizes outside reviews
- Assists in inter-institutional partnerships and major university research centers
- Helps locate supplemental or follow-on funding

Some considerations

- **Know your faculty**
 - Faculty orientations
 - Expertise databases
 - Google search in your .edu domain
 - Brown bag lunches on selected topics
 - Attend symposia/research reviews in areas ripe for interdisciplinary collaborations
- **Build around faculty interests**
 - Stay connected to research intensive faculty
 - Mediated fund searches
 - seed funding (e.g., SGER, R21, internal)

More considerations

- **Build on your institutions strengths**
 - e.g., physics, materials, marine/environmental sciences
- **Organize around specific funding opportunities**
(only if researchers are passionate about area!)
 - NSF Partnerships for Internat'l Research & Education
 - DoD Multidisciplinary Research Initiative (MURI)
 - NEH Collaborative Projects
 - NIH Exploratory Centers for Interdisciplinary Research
- **Organize workshops/symposia around specific topics,**
e.g., obesity, climate change, technology transfer; program evaluation; broader impacts; effective management structures for large initiatives
- **Be visible!**

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

Is there ample time to prepare a competitive proposal?

Need for partners and politics?

Who picks up the tab?

SITE VISITS

Answer lingering questions

Verify capabilities

Verify that

- PI is in charge
- All cast members are working together
- Upper administration is aware and supportive

SITE VISITS

Things to be mindful of

- You only get one try
 - Hold a full dress rehearsal
 - Be sure all players are on hand (see previous list)
 - Include one or two Senior Administrators

SITE VISITS

- Get a room that holds everyone comfortably
 - Make it easy for the review team
 - Name tags and name placards
 - Snacks
 - AV needs? Have trouble shooter on hand throughout!

SITE VISITS

Miscellaneous

- Know in advance someone may want to see something (lab, facility, equipment)
- Have special administrators on “stand by”
- Fully answer all questions provided in advance
- Understand who’s on the site visit team
- Recommend a nice, comfortable, convenient hotel

Definition of Success

- Increased funding from targeted agencies
- Achieved new areas of funding
- Increased number of major awards
- Increased success rate of proposals
- Increased number of faculty and students supported
- High level of faculty satisfaction
- Increased research recognition
- Increased scholarship