Essential Elements of a Successful Application

Phil Ward
Global Challenges Kent
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Grants Factory

Established in 2009
Sessions have included
- Writing better bids
- Identifying an idea: what the funder wants
- How peer review panels work
- Essential elements of a good application
- Using the right words

Grants Factory
1. Tell a Story

- Things are bad: we should be really worried about this
- But don’t worry: we can solve this. I’ve got a plan
- Better still, I’ve worked out what we need for it
  - Money, but it’s a small price to pay to put your mind at rest
  - These people to help me. They really are the best.
- You’d be crazy not to: this will make the world a better place. I’ll make sure of it.
1. Tell a Story

- Ask an important question
- Offer a potential solution
- Be specific about what you need
  - Cost effective
  - The right team whose involvement makes sense
- Have a clear dissemination/impact plan.
1. Tell a Story

Alzheimer’s is a major and growing problem. Currently 29.8m worldwide, but this is going to balloon: we’re all getting older.

- **Aim:** to cure Alzheimer's
- **Objectives:** to identify the rogue protein within the brain that cause Alzheimer's
- **Outputs:** identification of the rogue protein
- **Outcomes:** a new target for an Alzheimer's drug to target
2. Structure: Opening Lines (5%)

First two sentences crucial to grab the reader

- It’s a summary of what’s to come
  - what’s the question,
  - why’s it important,
  - why now, and
  - how will it deliver a ‘step change’
- Don’t be shy
- Immediate, simple, accessible, exciting.
2. Structure: the Background (30%)

Summarises what is known and what is not known about the subject.

- What should we know
- Why must we know it now
- Why are you the one to discover or solve it
- But
  - Don’t self cite
  - Try to include preliminary data/pilot work
2. Structure: Aims & Objectives (5%)

- Ideally no more than one aim and five objectives
- Should be logical flow between them
- Avoid interdependency
2. Structure: Methodology (50%)

- Most crucial part of case for support
  - What are you actually going to do?
  - How are you going to achieve the objectives?
- Methodology should be appropriate for meeting objectives
- Sufficient (but not overwhelming) technical detail
- Be clear and structured
- Be both ambitious and realistic
  - Be aware of risk, and mitigate it
    - Advisory board
2. Structure: Management (10%)

- Also includes dissemination
- Important, but not dealbreaker
- Need to make sense and be appropriate
  - Match scale and ambition of the project.
3. Formatting

- Simple font
- At least 12pt
- Don’t overcrowd the margins or paragraph breaks.
- Break up the text, if possible, with images and diagrams.
- Proof read the application
  - Show it to others
4. Get Feedback
5. Be Known

Get out there

- Go to conferences
- Give papers
- Lead seminars
- Respond to consultations

Applications from unknowns are funded, but there is an inherent nervousness amongst panel members if you're an unknown quantity. Reassure with familiarity.
Essential Elements

1. Tell a story
2. Get the structure right
3. Format it clearly
4. Get feedback
5. Be known
Essential Elements of a Successful Application

- Phil Ward
  - p.ward@kent.ac.uk
  - @frootle
  - http://fundermental.blogspot.com/
- https://research.kent.ac.uk/researchservices/gcrf2018/