What's Your Point?

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Making the Cut

• Eliminating proposals with similar tasks or competing outcomes
  • Evaluators may search for "missing" requirements so as to reduce the number of candidates
  • Fulfill all the requirements and make it obvious
  • Explain clearly the differentiators
  • Describe what is unique (one-of-a-kind, none like it in the world)

• Evaluators may be assigned specific sections only
  • May not read the entire proposal
  • Not all evaluators are scientists - managers, legal, finance, human resources, diversity leaders
  • In addition to their scientific evaluation, they have personal, professional, corporate, and political interests to promote
Formal Evaluation Criteria

- Requirements are given relative weights
  - Selection process often uses a weighted matrix
- Degree of fulfillment (grade) will vary by reviewer
  - Stated objectives in line with proposal and organization
  - Clearly defined output and deliverables (fulfillment quantification)
- Technical merit
- Cost Realism
- Past Performance
- Uniqueness
- Diversity
- Weights often not published

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation By Weighted Requirements Fulfillment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weight</strong></td>
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<td>Req 1</td>
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Unspoken Evaluation Criteria

• Pet projects, historical funding
• Personal likes and dislikes
• Political pressure to fund certain organizations
• Benefit to the funding agency
• Political correctness - what is currently "popular"
• Public Relations - does it make the government agency look good to non-technical budget providers, like congress?
• Competition and overlap with other funding agencies or organizations
• Pride - can the funding agency be "proud" of this?
  • Potential use on website, advertisement, congressional material
  • Statistical impact (how many of this, how many of that are funded already?)
Where and How Your Points?

• Compile a Requirements Matrix and use it
  • Have an independent team assess fulfillment
  • Use one-liner quotes from the proposal to assess (exposes what is actually said)

• Pay special attention to
  • Active Voice - What you will actually accomplish
  • Tense - differentiate what you did, what you are doing, what you plan to do
  • Verbs - Avoid "study," "research," "investigate," "survey"
  • Quantification - How much, how many, how big, and when
Where Are Your Points?

• Absolutely in the Project Summary - It's all that senior decision makers will ever read

• Definitely on the first page

• Always in the first paragraph of every section
  • Write like a good newspaper article - this is not a scientific report
Why Your Points?

• *What* you plan to do is only part of the story

• *Why* will you do it?
  • Who cares?
  • Why is it important to the funding agency?

• What will be the consequences if it is not funded?

• Just because it has not been done, or not been done adequately, does not make it important (e.g., Guiness world records)
Situational Analysis
How to Prioritize Key Points

• Firing Squad - 1 phrase - what would it be?
• Elevator Speech - 1 minute - What's important?
• Bio Break - 3 minutes - What do you add?
• Fire Alarm - 10 minutes - What else?
• Post Office Queue - 20 minutes - What is left?
• Take it to the grave
  • What is it you will take to your grave and not say?
  • Unnecessary information that will kill your chances of funding
What Are Your Points?

• Make your story compelling
• Differentiators - Which points make this proposal different?
  • List them and move these to the forefront of every section
• What is unique?
• Quantification - When, how much, how many, to what extent?
• Do the homework - What else similar is out there already?
• Value Proposition - Quantify the value to the funding organization
• What are the deliverables?
• What difference will this proposal make to the world?
• Be bold - not a time for modesty
• Quantify your commitment