

Proposal Development Tips

From Miss Dickey and Friends

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www.sinclair.edu/departments/grants

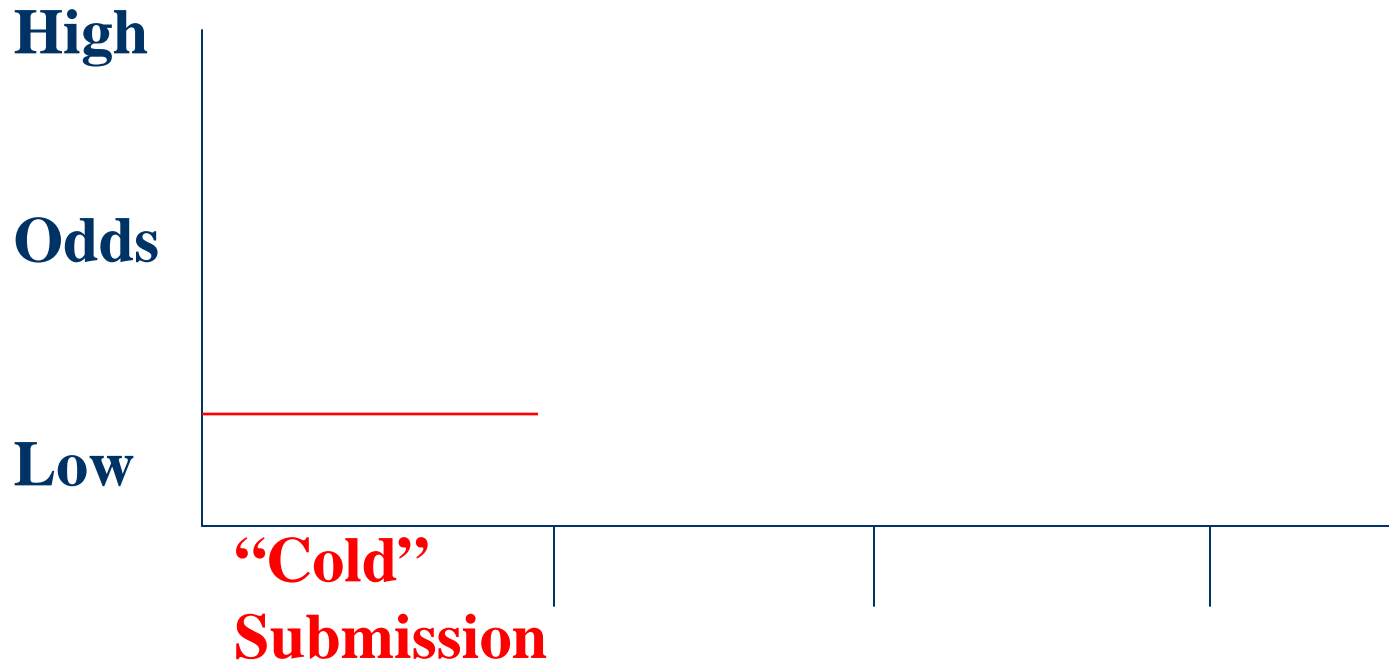
Always Follow the Directions!

Miss Dickey, First Grade Teacher, New Waterford, Ohio

- **Organize your application according to the outline in the Request for Proposals**
- **Follow all guidelines**

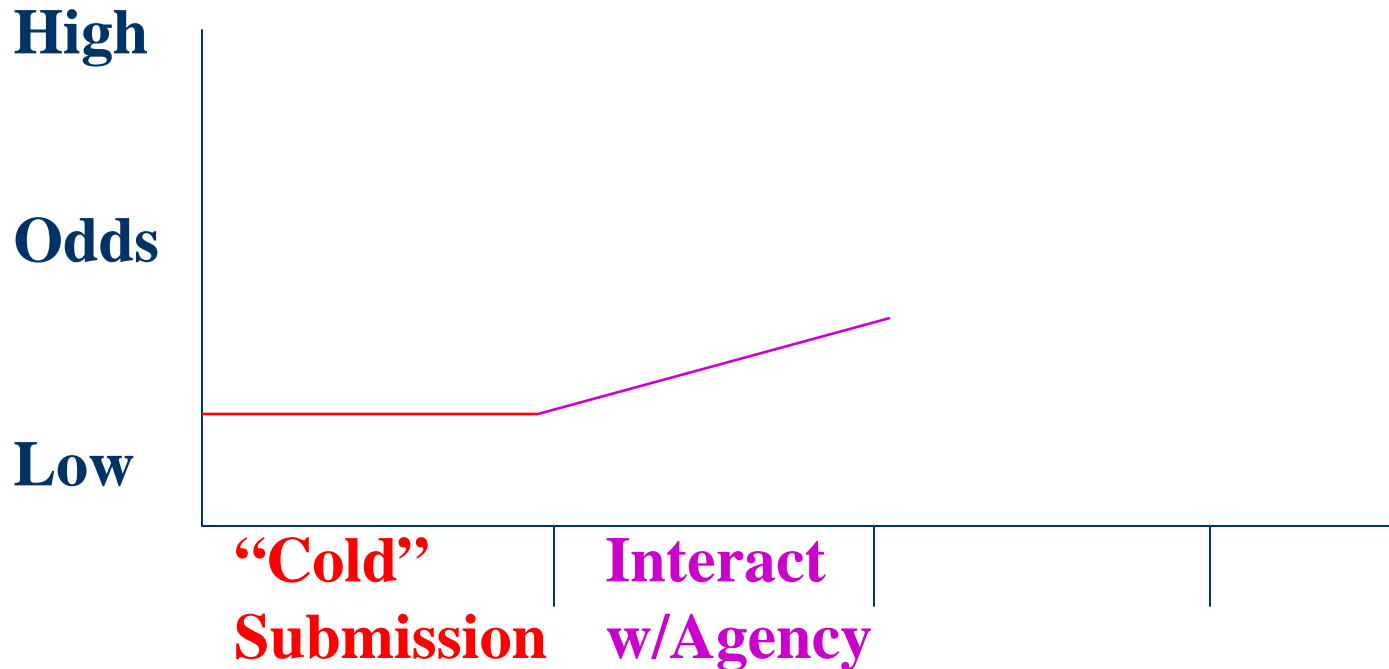
How to Improve Your Odds of Receiving a Grant

(Joan Suchorski, AVP, Santa Fe CC, 2000)



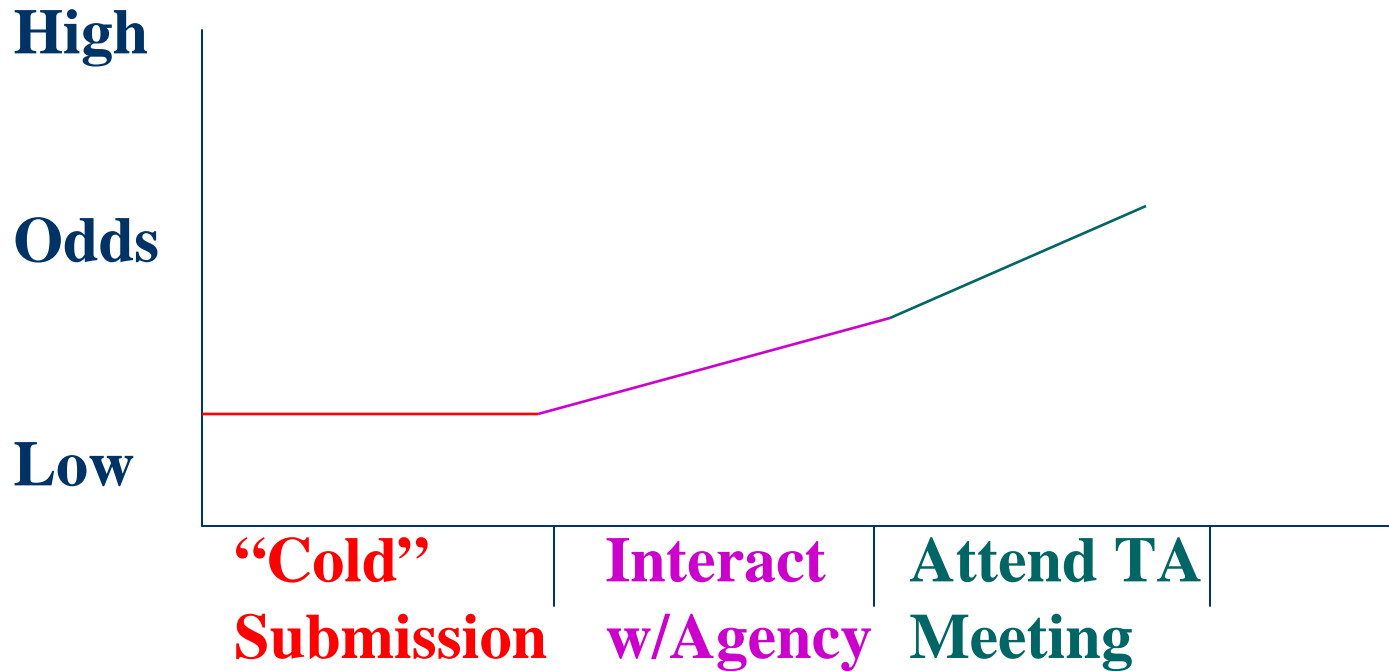
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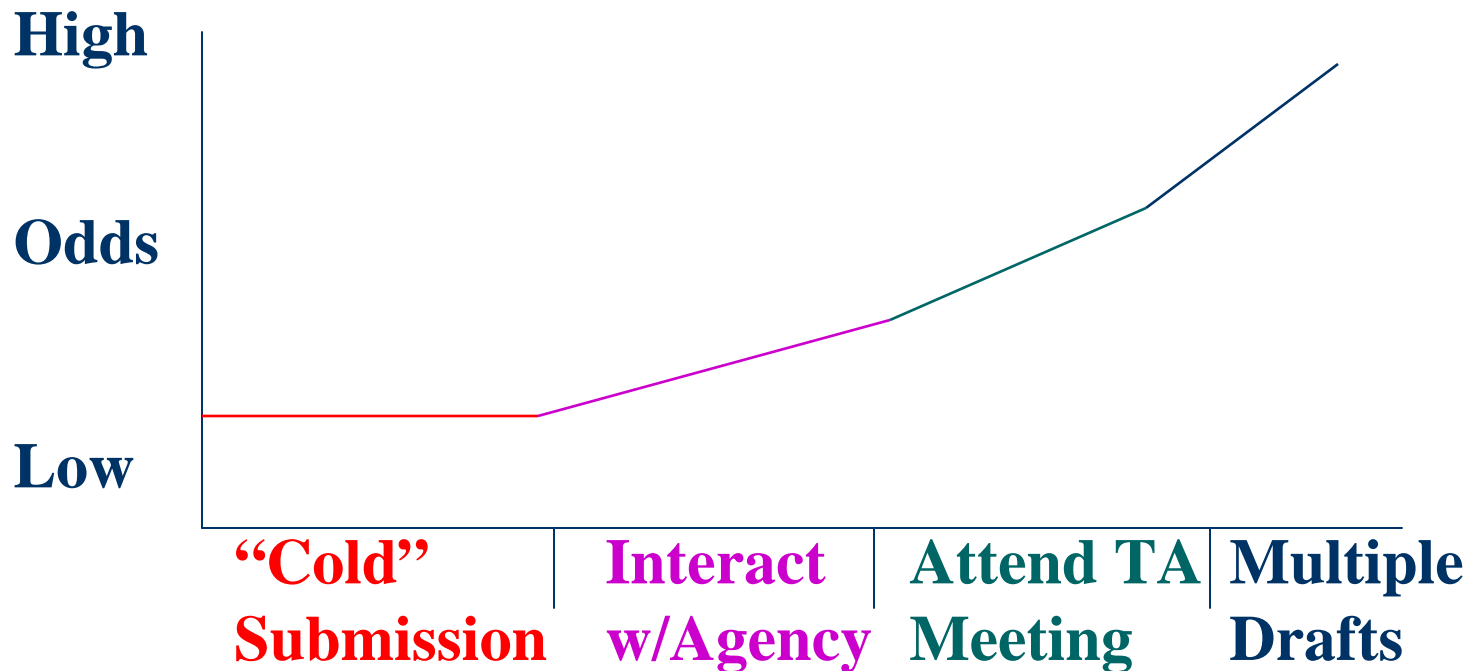
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80% of developing a proposal involves planning; the remaining 20% is the actual writing.

(Leon Bey, Dayton & Montgomery County Public Library, Librarian, 1986)

- **Plan first**
- **Do not write until you have planned**
- **Use storyboarding or other process**

If something can go wrong--it will go wrong.

(Murphy's Law, an eternal truth)

- **Hard drive crashes**
- **The printer binds it incorrectly**
- **The copy machine is down**
- **Other examples?**

Research the agency & program.

(Hy Silver & Associates, Training Program, 1995)

- **When do you plead a need?**
- **When do you demonstrate national-class expertise?**
- **When do you use your congressional representatives?**
- **Do your homework--network, web pages, RFP, TA meetings, colleagues**

Know Your Reviewers

(Paul Anderson, Miami University, English Faculty, 1977)

**“Who are your readers?
How will they read the document?
How will they use it?”**

- **Proposals are disposable documents-- they are read once, then tossed away**
- **Readers may only skim the document**
- **Know how proposals will be read and reviewed**

There are Three Types of Reviewers.

(Hy Silver & Associates, Training Program, 1995)

- **Lazy readers**
- **Methodical readers**
- **Average readers**
- **Help the reader complete the evaluation sheet**
- **Each proposal must contain design elements for the three types**

Turn your weaknesses into strengths.

(Hy Silver & Associates, Training Program, 1995)

- **Analyze your college's strengths and weaknesses**
- **Partner to make strengths where you have weaknesses**
- **Do not partner just to partner**
- **Sign teaming or partnership agreements**

Problem/Need Statement

U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration
Workshop, May, 2001

Does your problem statement in your proposal:

- **Convey the focus of your project early in the narrative?**
- **Establish the importance and significance of the problems?**
- **Justify why your problem should be of special interest to the sponsor?**
- **Make the reviewer want to read further?**

Goals, objectives, activities, evaluation

(Grants Team, Sinclair Community College, circa 2000)

- **Generally one goal**
- **Generally 3 – 5 objectives (What will increase or decrease as a result of your grant?)**
- **Several activities for each objective**
- **Formative and summative evaluation**
- **Specific mixed methods evaluation strategies**

Can you measure the outcomes?

(Gary Barrett, Miami University, Zoology Professor, 1976)

- **Can you document specific, quantifiable outcomes from your project?**
- **Create an evaluation matrix: what outcomes, measured by what method, by whom, when**
- **Remember formative and summative evaluation methods**

Have a Proposal Design Philosophy.

(Hy Silver & Associates, Training Program, 1995)

- **Each selection should have a theme**
- **Each selection should have at least one graphic element**
- **Divide projects into phases--but no more than five phases**
- **Avoid “plunge, ramble, dangle” (Plunge into the writing, ramble until you hit the page limit and leave the reader dangle at the end.)**

Use templates and timelines during proposal writing

(Grants Team, Sinclair Community College, circa 2000)

- **Create generic descriptions of your college, programs, your city, etc. and use as templates.**
- **Create a timeline for every project, starting with the due date and working backwards.**
- **Set a time budget for every task — and stick to it.**
- **Create internal deadlines for your customers to keep things moving on the critical path.**

Avoid circular logic.

(Tom Keys, U.S. Department of Education, 1998)

Grant applicants too often fall into a type of faulty “circular logic.”

- **Our problem is the college needs a computer laboratory because it does not have one now.**
- **Thus, the objective of this proposal is to develop a computer lab.**
- **The implementation strategy is to plan to develop a computer lab.**
- **The evaluation will be to find out whether a computer lab was developed and built.**

Avoid circular logic.

(Tom Keys, U.S. Department of Education, 1998)

A stronger proposal follows this logic (part 1).

- **Our problem is that the 38% failure rate of students in 10 key courses is too high.**
- **The objective of this proposal is to reduce the failure rate in these key courses from 38% to 30% within two years.**

Avoid circular logic.

(Tom Keys, U.S. Department of Education, 1998)

A stronger proposal follows this logic (part 2).

- **The implementation strategy (chosen from a list of alternative solutions) is a plan to develop a computer lab to provide review and reinforcement programs for students in the 10 key courses**
- **The evaluation will focus on:**
 - **To what extent the implementation strategy is followed**
 - **To what extent the failure rate was reduced**

Apply WD40 Whenever Possible

(Neil Herbkersman, Sinclair Community College, circa 2000)



- **Keep customers focused on impending deadlines—provide reminders.**
- **Be proactive in anticipating issues that can become bottlenecks.**
- **Force difficult issues so they are dealt with early in the process.**
- **Use the sales approach: “I was in your neighborhood and thought I’d stop by.”**

We are not Mulder and Scully Seeking the Truth.

(Neil Herbkersman, Sinclair Community College, circa 2000)

- When documenting need, use any recent published data that supports the goals of your project.
- Example: your institution's data looks better (or worse) compared to similar national data rather than state data.

Never Leave Your PDA in the Office.

(Grants Team, Sinclair Community College, April 2003)

- Your PDA can be a productive tool when you are away from your PC.
- Carry grant development templates on your PDA.
- Portable keyboards are affordable and convenient.
- Beam me that spreadsheet, Neil.

Celebrate Your Victories

(Grants Team, Sinclair Community College, circa 2000)



Celebrate everything!

Acknowledge effort
in fun ways!

With chocolate!