The Sustainable Materials Management Webinar Series

How to Sell (Propose) your Organization to Foundations, Corporations, and Other Non-recycling Funding Sources

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Presenter:

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How to Sell (Propose) your Organization to Foundations, Corporations, and Other Non-recycling Funding Sources

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Louis Pasteur

“Chance favors only the prepared mind.”
EASY FORMULA
FOR GRANT WRITING
Why Proposals Matter

“Thunder is good, thunder is impressive, but it is the lightning that does the work.”

~Mark Twain
Necessary Reality

- Cannot receive money without a formal, written proposal: tangible evidence of abilities to meet a funder’s needs and requirements, manage a project, and produce results.
- Must touch heart and mind of a funder by means of the right solution to a serious problem.
- Must make effective decisions with regard to your idea, accuracy of your information, and credibility of your plan.
Dispelling Common Myths

“The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity.
The optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.”

~Winston Churchill
Myth #1:

- Due to Uncertainty in Global and U.S. Markets and in the New Policy Directions of the Trump Administration, grant awards may be limited in 2017.
Myth #2:

- You **must** have a **long-term** relationship with a funder to get a grant or sponsorship.
Myth #3:

- Successful proposal writing depends on an overly scholarly style
Myth #4: Collaboration reduces work and time spent on a proposal.

“Well, partner, we’re either going to be the greatest team ever to hit town or we’re going to end up killing each other.”
Myth #5:

- Grants are awarded to organizations that have the greatest need

For every funded proposal, there are four unequal declined proposals.
Myth #6

- Grant makers are eager to read about your organization and what you’re proposing
Common Barriers to Persuading or Selling your Organization to Funders

- Insufficient understanding of current funding trends
- Inadequate appreciation of funder’s priorities or self-image
- Failing to validate funder’s information
Common Barriers

- Ineffective organization and staffing approaches to proposal process
- Problematic analysis of data to support reasons for writing proposal
- Lack of attention to quality assurance
Common Barriers

- Vague organization description-poor self-assessment
- Defining the wrong problem
- Questionable solution
- Superficial or weak hypotheses (research project)
Common Barriers

- Irrelevant facts
- Critical information missing regarding significance
- Overly ambitious work or study plan
- Failure to use questions to develop and shape proposal content
Common Barriers

- Lackluster diction
- Unrealistic budget
- Cluttered appearance
- Poor marketing strategy

“Crumple this into a little ball, will you?”
Challenges of Grant Seeking

“To see far is one thing: going there is another.”

~ Brancusi
NOW WHAT???

- Conceiving and prioritizing projects that solve real problems
Challenges of Grant Seeking

- Assessing competition and devising strategy to beat that competition
Challenges of Grant Seeking

- Identifying realistic and measurable outcomes of proposed project
Challenges of Grant Seeking

- Expressing unique relationship of your project to Big Picture
Challenges of Grant Seeking

- Organizing and managing a proposal development and writing process to meet grant maker's requirements and deadlines
Shaping the Right Idea

“The answers you get depend upon the questions you ask.”

~ Thomas Kuhn
Generating a competitive and innovative project
(Da Vinci Exercise)

1. First, write project purpose from your point of view.
2. Next, write project purpose from perspectives of at least two other people who are close to or involved in the idea.
3. Rewrite purpose statement to correspond to mission of the grant-seeking organization and potential grant maker.
4. Synthesize different perspectives into one all-inclusive purpose statement.
Shaping the right project:

Why does project meet current priorities of the grant maker and your organization?
Shaping the right project:

- Why is the project necessarily innovative or surprising?

  THIS GRANT I'M WRITING IS GONNA BE HUUUUUGE!
Shaping the right project:

- How does your project help solve current and important problem(s)?
Shaping the right project:

- Why is your project truly significant?
- Does it elicit real emotions?
Shaping the right project:

- What short-term and long-term benefits does your project offer?
Shaping the right project:

How practical is your project? Why?
Shaping the right project:

- What will be the stories and events created by your project?
Identify key and distinctive factors about your organization

- Mission/Vision
- Challenges
- Strategic Direction
- Leadership
- Community Perception (online and offline)
- Resources/Experience
- Unfair Advantage
- Impact/Accomplishments
Finding Funders in 2017

“By God, gentlemen, I believe we’ve found it—the Fountain of Funding!”

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Types of Grant Makers

- Government Agencies
- Independent Foundations
- Operating Foundations
- Special Purpose Foundations
- Community Foundations
- Corporations; Unions
- Civic Organizations
- Family Foundations
Types of Grants

- Project grant
- General operating grant
- Capital or endowment grant
- Restricted grant
- General purpose grant
- Start-up funds or seed money
- Challenge/Matching grant
Additional Types of Grants

- Re-grant program
- Special projects
- Research
- Capacity-building
- In-kind contribution or service
- Technical assistance
- Fellowships
- Awards and prizes
Grant-Seeking Resources

- [www.foundationcenter.org](http://www.foundationcenter.org) -- Foundation Center--Directory of private philanthropic and grant making foundations.

- [www.cof.org](http://www.cof.org) -- Council on Foundations--Membership organization serving grant makers, family foundations, corporate giving programs and international grant makers.

- [www.grantadvisor.com](http://www.grantadvisor.com) -- Since 1983, The Grant Advisor newsletter has been a leading source of information on grant, research, and fellowship opportunities for U.S. institutions of higher education and their faculty.
Grant-Seeking Resources

- **www.grantstation.com** -- FEE-BASED -- Site provides members the most current and in-depth research on all types of funders, educational guides, fundraising trends, and networking opportunities.

- **www.fundsnetServices.com** -- Great comprehensive website, tips to finding grant makers, links to funder sites and resources for grant writers.

- **www.infotoday.com** -- Publisher of *Information Today*, as well as other periodicals, books, directories, and online products; and is the organizer of Computers in Libraries, Streaming Media, Enterprise Search Summit, and other prestigious conferences and exhibitions for the library, information & knowledge management communities.
Federal Gov’t Resources for Grants

- **www.grants.gov** -- Federal website with one-stop access to all online U.S. government resources for grants.

- **www.cfda.gov** -- A government-wide compendium of Federal programs, projects, services, and activities which provide assistance or benefits to the American public.

- **http://www.house.gov/ffr/resources_all.shtml** -- A listing of sources of information for researching grants, procurement, and other resources.

- **www.federalregister.gov** -- The Federal Register is the official daily publication for Rules, Proposed Rules, and Notices of Federal agencies and organizations, as well as Executive Orders and other Presidential Documents.

- **www.usa.gov** -- The U.S. government's official web portal for the public to get U.S. government information and services on the web.
Corporate Foundation Funding: Search Sites

- Hoover’s Online: www.hoovers.com
- Thomas Register: www.thomasnet.com
- Corporate Information: www.corporateinformation.com
- Securities and Exchange Commission: www.sec.gov
- State Corporate Records Files: www.xx.gov
Grant-Seeking Resources

○ www.grantselect.com  --

An online database of funding opportunities such as grants (for programs, projects, planning, start-up, endowments, technical assistance, facilities and equipment, etc.), awards, and fellowships.
Grant-Seeking Resources

- [www.researchfunding.duke.edu/search-results](http://www.researchfunding.duke.edu/search-results) -- This Duke University Office of Research Support site provides an extensive, on-line database of funding opportunities as a resource for the entire Duke University research community.

- [www.amphilsoc.org/grants/franklin](http://www.amphilsoc.org/grants/franklin) -- The Franklin grant program is particularly designed to help meet costs of travel to libraries and archives for research purposes; the purchase of microfilm, photocopies, or equivalent research materials; the costs associated with fieldwork; or laboratory research expenses.
Grant-Seeking Resources

- www.guidestar.org -- Subscription-based
  GuideStar offers basic, in-depth, and customized data services on more than 1 million U.S. nonprofits and thousands of foundations.

- www.philanthropy.com -- Subscription-based
Blogs: Grants Research

- Keep up to date on trends and changes
- Find new opportunities
- Share opinions
- Many blogs specific to particular interest areas or disciplines
Blog Examples:

- New Voices of Philanthropy – [www.tristaharris.org](http://www.tristaharris.org) Maintained by Trista Harris, nationally known as a passionate advocate for new leaders in philanthropic and nonprofit sectors.

- Nonprofits Assistance Fund – [www.nonprofitsassistancefund.org/blog](http://www.nonprofitsassistancefund.org/blog) Interesting and informative blog focused on “helping nonprofits thrive.”


Profiling Grant Makers

- History/Current Priorities?
- Public Image (e.g. Web site)
- Total Assets?
- Limitations?
- Average Grant Award?
- Awardees?
- Management and Program Officers?
- Leadership-Belief System
- Press Releases/Media Stories/Social Media?
Understanding Grant Makers

- They may know little or nothing about your project/program area
- Grant makers are busy, normal people
- The last thing they want to see is a wordy, boring proposal
Tip of the Day: Use that Understanding to Promote your Organization

- UTILIZE Google Grants for Nonprofits
- FREE ADVERTISING THROUGH GOOGLE (puts you on top of search engine) – one of best kept nonprofit secrets!
- Be Specific – basic requests like “Recycling” cannot be used with Google Grant but phrases like “how can I help clean up Los Angeles” work so brainstorm several phrases and keywords that could relay back to your organization to be used with Google Grant Ads!
Defining the Real Need or Problem

- Determine if there is a real need or problem; convey reasons why it hasn’t been addressed
- Supported by statistics, anecdotes and statements from authorities
- Identify consequences if nothing is done—tales of woe
- Prove need or problem relates to grant maker and to mission of your organization
Proposal Development: Project Plan and Design

“Converting a decision into action requires answering several distinct questions…”

~Peter F. Drucker
Justifying your Plan

- Indicate rationale or theoretical basis for effectiveness of your specific plan; provide evidence of best practices to justify use of time and resources to meet plan’s goals and objectives
Framing your Plan

Link each objective to project methods and activities (how)
Explaining your Work Plan

- Use short tables, diagrams, charts and other visual displays to ensure plan is clear and logical; helps answer grant maker’s questions about process for achieving goals and objectives, strategies and timetable.
Work Plan

- Identify who is going to do work and why they are qualified

“We only hire temps, and you have a look of permanence about you.”
Work Plan

- Describe timeline, place and resource commitments that will actualize an effective project
Work Plan

- Discuss plan’s challenges and external pressures and how they will be addressed
Work Plan

Describe how plan’s effectiveness will be communicated to grant maker and project/program constituents and stakeholders
Evaluating your Plan

“You got to be careful if you don’t know where you’re going, because you might not get there.”

~Yogi Berra
Maximizing your clarity

The Linguistics Golden Rule:

“Send unto others what you would like to receive yourself.”

~Tom Sant
Persuasive Business Proposals
Proposal Writing Resources

- Purdue University's Online Writing Lab offers a wide assortment of writing tutorials, information, and guidelines. In the section titled “Professional, Technical, and Job Search Writing,” most of the subsections referring to “Business Writing” apply directly to the type of writing that makes a grant inquiry or proposal attractive and effective.

- The government website Plainlanguage.gov is also a valuable resource for streamlining your writing. The website offers tools (such as quick reference pages and thesauruses), numerous examples and explanations, discussions of how to use plain language in different contexts (such as law, government, and the private sector), and links to other resources. For amusement purposes, check out “Humor” in the “Examples” section.
Proposal Writing Mindset

- Think of argumentative speech: look at the issue from every perspective and anticipate “why” and “how” questions.
- Think of journalism: concise, clear, interesting, simple.
- Think of business writing: to the point, logical, important points stand out.
- Do not fear failure!
Inspiration

- Don’t worry about trying to be better than someone else. Always try to be the very best you can be. Learn from others, yes. But don’t just try to be better than they are. You have no control over that. Instead try, and try very hard, to be the best you can be. That you have control over.

  ~John Wooden, legendary UCLA basketball coach
Keeping your sanity

- Make sure to develop a systematic, workable process that deals successfully with any and all proposal requirements
- Seize every opportunity to master the craft of grant writing
- Good Luck!
Thank you to the National Recycling Coalition & Pennsylvania Recycling Markets Center!

For questions or comments please feel free to contact me:
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QUESTIONS?

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