

Development Companion

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR CEO'S & DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS FROM DEWITT & ASSOCIATES

Short Ride in a Fast Machine

(with a bow to the composer John Adams)

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Introduction

This is not a definitive and exhaustive article on everything you need to know about this complex subject. Rather it is simply a beginning, a chance to share some ideas and experiences in an attempt to make all of us better stewards of the responsibility that has been handed to us.

The Foundation Landscape

As Harold Hill said in *The Music Man*, "You gotta know the territory!"

Foundations are unique. They are the only private agencies created exclusively to transmit money for the benefit of people and organizations. Without a great deal of explanation, here are the five basic types:

- **General Purpose** ("Independent")-have large endowments, defined objectives and areas of interest, and usually professional staffs
- **Special Purpose**-usually operated for restricted—close-ended--purposes
- **Corporate**-are nonprofit entities separated from their "parent" company
- **Community**-function under community control usually to support needs and project

within a geographical area.

- **Family**-generally set up by living donor/s as a channel for current giving.

Which one is right for you? Do your research ahead of time.

Before You Start

- A. **The Wrong Way:** 4 Easy Steps to Failure
 - Develop an idea
 - Write a proposal
 - Locate funding sources by (1) word of mouth, (2) previous grant experience, or (3) using one or two directories
 - Submit a proposal to those funding sources and wait for their decision

In This Issue

Introduction

The Foundation Landscape

Before You Start

Let's Get to Work!

And Finally...

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B. The **Right** Way: No Guarantees but a: Better Chance.

Ask yourself...

- In what ways will the grant benefit the funding source?
- If your project is continue after the grant period, how do you plan to continue funding after the grant has run out?
- Can you be specific about your organization's goals and objectives? What are they and how do they "align" with the funding sources?
- Who are your "clients'?" Are they represented on your board? How do you integrate the community into your operations?
- Is your operation cost efficient? What are the costs of funds raised?
- How does your program enhance the funding source's position in your community?
- How is your project original and effective? How can you show that you will not be duplicating the efforts of others?
- How can you show that your program will help to solve the problem it addresses?

Let's Get to Work!

- A. Determine Your Unique Features by answering these questions (Maybe produce as many as 5 answers for each)
- What makes us the best at what we do?
 - Why should a funding source give us money over another organization in our field?
 - What do we offer clients (*stakeholders*) that they can get nowhere else?
 - What do we offer funding sources that they can get nowhere else?

A frank, honest, objective, and complete set of answers to these questions will help immensely in shaping your proposal.

B. Ask Yourself The "Big 7 Questions"

- What is the issue to be addressed?
- Why is your organization the best "place" to address it?
- What will have changed by the end of the project?
- How will you accomplish those changes?
- What do you need—time/money/people—to do it?
- How will you measure your success?
- Why are you sending this particular proposal to this particular source?

C. Weave Your Answers Into A Proposal

- Sample **Outline** Proposal (Could also be "shaped" into letter format...see below)
- Introduction
- Issue
 - Your plan to meet it
 - Dollars needed
 - Why are you asking this funding source for help?



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- ◆ Staff and volunteer training

Project Description

- Issue elaborated
 - What is the change you want to make
 - What will be better as a result
- Plan
 - past approaches
 - your approach
 - why yours is better
- Operations/Activities
 - Methods
 - Personnel
 - Evaluation
 - Costs (include current and future sources of support)

(Optional) Testimonies (don't overdo them!)Summary

- Why your work is important
- Why the funding source would (should) also believe it is important
- Funds needed
- Thanks

Possible Attachments

- Budget
- Audit/Financial Statements
- Credentials of project manager
- Board List
- IRS Determination Letter

D. Add A Cover Letter If Necessary

- Why you're writing
- How much do you need, over what time period
- Describe the project
- Any special circumstances?
- A visit?
- Questions (include your phone #)
- Follow-up
- Thank you

E. Sample **Letter** Proposal Format – Provide the same information as in the Cover Letter above, but add:

- A full statement of need, purpose, and objectives
- Appropriate attachments (appendices), as in the Outline format

(WARNING: The shorter and simpler the better. Just because you make pages and pages of notes, don't be tempted to write a long proposal. Edit frequently and mercilessly. Produce a concise, readable, and motivating document.)

And Finally...

Writing successful proposals is a process that begins...
 ... with research,
 ... continues with designing, writing, and submitting proposals,
 ... and ends with ongoing grants management.

- This process requires that you accomplish certain tasks:
- Know your subject
- Know your audience
- Organize your thoughts effectively
- Write clearly and concisely
- Package your proposal properly

Bon chance!!! And remember, they don't grow on trees!!!



The 2016 Millwood Institute
 especially for CEO's and Board Chairs of
 nonprofit organizations will held on
OCTOBER 2-4 at the Carter Hall
 Conference Center, Millwood, VA.

SAVE THE DATE

Go to: <http://millwoodinstitute.org> for
 more information

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