

**Strategies for success -
from the grantee's perspective
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Outline

- **Writing**
- **Planning**
- **One (of many) possible styles**
- **The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly**

Learn (to love) to write

- **Outlines**
- **Be clear about what you want to say**
- **English has a certain structure**
- **Readers expect things in certain places**
- **If you pay attention to structure, you greatly increase the chance you will be understood**

Gopen GD. The sense of structure. Writing from the reader's perspective. 2004. Pearson Education, Inc

Write

- **Do experiments that will result in a paper**
- **Publish it**
- **Society journals vs. prestige journals**
- **Write early and often**
 - **Fs, Ks, LRPs**
- **What comes first: the paper or the grant?**

Planning

- **Don't do this on your own**
- **Get 2 - 3 funded faculty to critique your grant**
- **Write an Aims page**
- **8 - 12 months: review Aims and preliminary data**
- **3 - 4 months: write first draft**
- **2 months: full draft to mentors**
- **Accept criticism; cherish it**
- **Anticipate several re.-write.s**

Style - Specific Aims

- **One page summary of the application**
 - **What is the problem?**
 - **Why is it important?**
 - **What are the exciting preliminary data?**
 - **What hypotheses are supported by the data?**
 - **To test the hypotheses, a simple list of the Aims**
 - **Summary - how the field will be advanced**

Background and Significance

- **Assume a general audience**
- **Make it interesting - make the reviewer want to read it!**
- **Emphasize medical importance of the topic**
- **Discuss controversies in the area**
- **Summary - how the background ties into the neat preliminary data and the hypotheses you want to test**
- **Innovation**
 - **How will your work advance the field?**

Approach: Preliminary Data

- **Show primary data for critical methods in a logical order**
- **Figures and tables – labeled and readable**
- **Point out strengths and limitations of data**
- **Summary**
 - **Convince reviewer what you propose logically flows from the data and that you can do it**

Approach: Aims

- **Overview - how do the Aims relate to each other?**
- **Re-state each Aim as a title**
 - **Rationale**
 - **Methods (controls vs. details)**
 - **Pitfalls / Alternatives**
- **Aims should interrelate but the success or failure of an Aim can't hinge on the outcome of a previous Aim**
- **Summarize (timeline)**

The Good

- **Paying attention to internal critiques**
- **Well written**
- **A simple, testable hypothesis that is supported by preliminary data**
- **Medically significant**
- **Innovative**
- **Rationales, limitations, controls, and back up plans**
- **Collaborators and consultants**

The Bad

- **Not writing for a general audience**
- **Jargon / poor writing**
- **Omitting literature contrary to your ideas**
- **Mislabeled tables and figures**
- **Not discussing strengths and weaknesses of your data**
- **Proposing your life's work – unfocused, overambitious**
- **Measuring a ton of variables without justification or proper statistical analysis – descriptive**
- **Overly detailed methods - boring**

The Bad

- **Methodology over Biology**
- **Not exploring mechanisms**
- **No biostatistical support**
 - **sample size calculations for animal / human studies**
 - **complex data sets**

The Ugly –Response to Critiques

- **Major Principles:**
- **“What we got here is failure to communicate”**
 - **It’s not personal**
 - **If the reviewer misunderstood me, it’s my fault**
- **Good ideas:**
 - **Be thankful and diplomatic**
 - **Restate each criticism and how you revised the grant in response to that criticism**
 - **If you disagree with a criticism, do it with respect**
 - **Indicate how you show the changes (bars, italics)**

The Ugly- Response to Critiques

- **Bad ideas**
 - **Anger (get over it)**
 - **Trying to figure out who your reviewers are**
 - **Setting an adversarial tone**
 - **Thinking you are smarter than the reviewer**
 - **Ignoring criticisms**
 - **Not changing the grant**
- **Realities of 2013**
 - **Near miss**
 - **Unscore**