

Beyond the words: Document design for grant writers

Funding success for any grant is an amalgamation of hard work, good science and grantsmanship. We will discuss how the principles of document design apply to grant proposals through.

- using typographic changes to your advantage
- creating a picture (or table) that is worth a 1000 words
- making every reviewer happy

Definitions

Merriam-Webster definition: the art of obtaining grants

AMWA members weigh in:

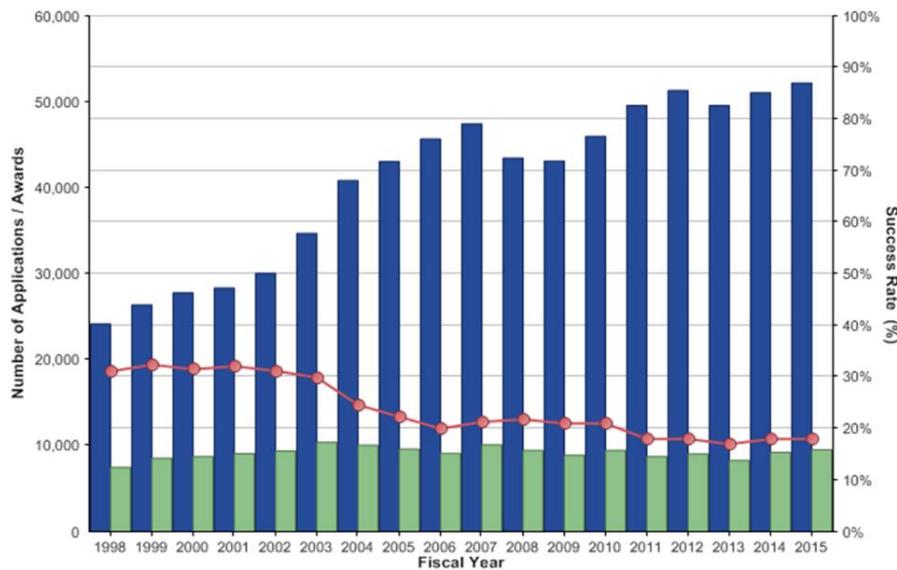
Naomi Ruff: Formatting, following instructions, explaining needs clearly, understanding funding priorities and reviewer criteria, realistic approach based on funding amount, demonstration of ability to trouble shoot and think outside the box.

Michael Frankin: defining significance and being innovative, cognizant of timeline for writing, utilizing physical and intellectual resources to your advantage.

Typographic Principles

Use highlighting techniques, but don't overuse them.

Boldface vs Italics



Personal preference: ragged vs justified

Avoid using all caps.

Reserve for only three headings in NIH grants: Significance, Innovation, Approach

Use 8 to-10 point type for text.

Minimum for NIH 11 point

Avoid lines of type that are too long or too short.

No columns shorter than 2 inches

Use white space in margins and between sections.

NIH 0.5 in margins

Use ragged right margins.

Figures and tables

Figure. 1. Research Project Grants Competing applications, awards, and success rates. Blue bars represent applications, green bars represent awards and the red line is the success rate (%).

Use legible fonts

Use colors minimally

***State the conclusion of the figure or table as the title

Things to keep in mind about potential reviewers:

8% of men and 0.5% of women are red-green color blind
(https://nei.nih.gov/health/color_blindness/facts_about)

Average age of PIs with NIH R01s is 42 years old.

What age did you start wearing reading glasses?

Principles for Writing Sentences

Use the active voice.

Use personal pronouns.

Avoid nouns created from verbs; use action verbs.

Avoid whiz-deletions.

Write short sentences.

Do not insert excess information into a sentence.

List conditions separately.

Keep equivalent items parallel.

Avoid unnecessary and difficult words.

Unstring noun strings.

Avoid multiple negatives

References

Guidelines for document designers. American Institutes for Research, November, 1981.

Introduction by Janice (Ginny) Redish, July, 2014.