

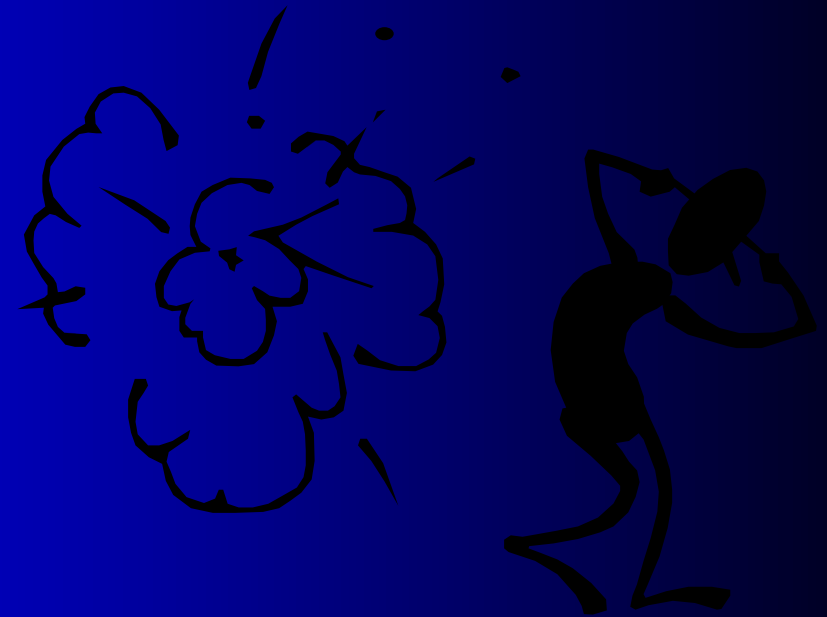
**Common Pitfalls of Proposal  
Writing  
for Government Contract  
Proposals**

# Winning Proposals

- Respond to the needs of the Agency
  - Where documented? RFP, Agency's Goals, Mission, Vision, Literature, Strategic Plan, etc
- Satisfies the 5 C's:
  - Clear
  - Complete
  - Comprehensive
  - Concise
  - Convincing

# Common Pitfalls

- Failure to follow RFP instructions on--
  - Proposal organization
  - Required info, etc.
- Failure to consider the evaluation criteria
- Failure to understand and to *demonstrate* an understanding of the requirement



# More Pitfalls

- Failure to submit your proposal on or before the required date and time. **FORGET ABOUT IT**
- Failure to include all information requested by Government
- Failure to tailor your response to the specific RFP
- Cost/Price unreasonable (too high or too low)

# More Pitfalls

- Cost information incomplete
- Failure to include specifics of your proposed approach
- Proposal is unprofessional in appearance (e.g., typos, blank pages, unnumbered pages, smudges, no white space, sloppy-looking, etc.) which in turn reflects poorly on your company.

# More Pitfalls

- Proposal is poorly written
  - information is not presented/organized in a logical manner
  - proposal is hard to follow
  - Inconsistencies
  - poor grammar, etc.
- Proposal merely repeats or paraphrases the RFP

# More Pitfalls

- Proposal does not explain how or by whom the project will be managed.
- Proposal does not contain **RELEVANT** information about your firm, its capabilities and/or its management and staff
- Proposal does not demonstrate that your firm/organization and personnel have the experience and capability to do the project.

# Reminders on Preparing a Successful Proposal

- Be Realistic, Factual, and Specific. Don't talk generalities or in emotional terms. Be able to substantiate all statements, or don't make them.
- Use Appropriate Language; Avoid abbreviations, initials, or jargon. Don't assume the reader will understand your acronyms or abbreviations-follow the rules of grammar.
- Use the right terminology



# Reminders on Preparing a Successful Proposal

- Read the Guidelines carefully! Make your proposal fit the projected funding/other requirements.
- Go over the checklist (twice!) and make sure each item is addressed.
- Choose a format that's clear and easy to read. Readers are overloaded with proposals and appreciate legible, attractive proposals. Make sure tables are legible and easy to figure out.

# Reminders on Preparing a Successful Proposal

- Stick to the specified number of pages. Extra pages or attachments may either be removed before the proposal is read, or may disqualify your entire proposal from the evaluation process.
- Make sure you include the requested number of copies and in the correct format when submitting your proposal.
- Make sure the cover page is complete, with all the information as requested.

# Reminders on Preparing a Successful Proposal

- Do it yourself; teach your own staff about proposal writing. But if you hire a development person or consultant, stay on top of it; proposals exclusively written by development people usually don't make sense because that person isn't familiar with the project.
- Be realistic about the amount of time necessary to assemble the proposal
- Plan ahead; allow plenty of time for those involved to meet, discuss, and review progress in the proposal writing process.

# Reminders on Preparing a Successful Proposal

- Most important....
  - Your greatest asset is your people
  - Treat them properly; Reward them
  - Working people into the ground may win a contract, but lose in the long run

