

The Best of....

# Building Relationships

Articles reprinted from Augment's Newsletter



*Building Relationships* began as a newsletter for Augment's clients. Later, I distributed issues to students in classes I taught and to colleagues in the fundraising profession. My original intent was to post past issues of *Building Relationships* on the [augmentdirect.com](http://augmentdirect.com) website. In reviewing the content, I found that at least one article in each issue included information that was dated. Not wanting to share statistics that are two or three years old, I decided to select the Best of *Building Relationships* articles and share those. I hope you find these articles as interesting and helpful as past readers have found them.

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## Successfully Seeking Grants Tips for Creating a Powerful Presentation

### Market Positioning

There are many ways to present the same idea. Tailor your description of your project to the NEEDS of the funder.



What pushes the funder's hot buttons? When you align your project with the purpose and goals of the funding source, you'll have a better chance for success.

Timing is critical. Anticipate when your issue will be in the news. Seize the moment and ask for a meeting with a funder immediately.

### Guidelines

Tailor your proposal to specifications in the guidelines. Include only the number of pages allowed. Observe the format. Is there a form to complete?

Don't just look at what grantmakers fund. Read the section of their guidelines that's titled, "What we don't fund."

## Funders

Do not limit your funding search to one source. Think foundations, corporations, clubs, government agencies, etc.

## Who Writes the Proposal?

The concepts, ideas, and project development are designed by the program staff. A good writer puts the presentation together.

## A Friend Who is Truthful

Have a friend — not a colleague — read your proposal. Is it easily understood by someone who is not close to the subject? Will the foundation program officer who is not familiar with your programs be able to understand and appreciate your project and your request?

## Parts of the Proposal

### *The Cover Letter*

- One page only.
- Business letter format & at least 12 pt. type.
- Use a subject line.
- Signed by someone with the authority to sign a contract.
- Proofread.

### *Notable Title Page*

- Include your project title — make it descriptive and memorable, but not cute.
- Include the name, address, and phone number for your organization — and the name and email address of the contact person.
- Write: Proposal to — and the name of the grantmaker.

### *Need a Table of Contents?*

- If your proposal is longer than ten pages — yes.
- Most government agencies expect one.
- Include one if reviewers might be moving from one section to another rather than reading from start to finish.
- Include: sections, subsections, and page numbers.

### *Outcomes*

To be useful, outcomes should tell:

- Who (target population: individuals, group, neighborhood, etc.)
- Is doing what (change in condition, behavior, etc.)
- When (change occurs by this date)
- How that change is measured — use data to describe the changes.

### *The Budget*

Discover the funder's budget requirements and preferences.

- Are matching funds required?
- Is in-kind acceptable as some or all of the applicant's share?
- Can the job be accomplished with this budget?
- Are costs reasonable for the market — or too high or low?
- Is the budget consistent with proposed activities?
- Is there sufficient budget detail & explanation?

Be knowledgeable about your budget in case the funder wants to talk about it.



### ***Timeline***

Draft a timeline that includes the planning phase, the period of researching funders, proposal writing, and the intended project start date. Periodically update the timeline as you learn more about the project.

If you need to include a timeline chart and the funder doesn't specify the format, create a simple format that can be understood by people who are not familiar with your programs.

### **Turned Down?**

When you aren't funded, request feedback about your proposal's strengths and weaknesses. Expect the frequent answer, "There were more requests than there were funds available."

### **Remain Optimistic**

A successful researcher and proposal writer knows that a great project will find funding.

### **Why Funding Requests Are Rejected**

1. The funder doesn't have enough money to fund all good, relevant, and achievable projects.
2. The proposed solution:
  - Doesn't fit the guidelines.
  - Isn't significant — won't make a big enough difference.
  - Is more complex than the proposed project suggests.
3. The methodology:
  - Doesn't fit the problem.
  - Is judged not workable.
  - Doesn't appear well thought-out.
4. The budget doesn't fit the project or overstates the need.

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