

Selecting a Proposal Title

Preamble

The grant title is one of the first things a reviewer will look at when looking through the grant proposal. The title gives a chance for the grant writer to artistically give the reviewer an idea of what the grant proposal is all about. A bad title for the proposal can throw off the whole concept of the project in the reviewer's mind. The Title is the label of your submission. Good titles are short yet specific enough to include the result they want,

in words anyone can understand. When I say short I mean it's b words. Including the result will show the c for (always a good idea). It is ideal to have a good proposal title that will make your

proposal saleable.

Learning Objectives

1. To evaluate the importance of a proposal title.
2. To equip the students with the knowledge on how to write a good proposal title.

Learning Outcome

2. By the end of this course, students will be able to write a good proposal title and know the importance of a proposal title.

Discussion Notes

The title of a project is of ultimate importance, thus make sure to take your time to find the best one. Titles must be attractive and exciting at the same time. The title must convey the meaning, the area of intervention and the goals of the project while being enticing. It is good practice to select the final title together with all the other members of the NGO. Whereas the project proposal is very technical and requires

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specific skills that not everybody may possess, the title represents aspirations. Accordingly, all the members should be asked to participate in the process of selecting the title to make sure that they all feel excited by the idea of working towards its development.

Some Steps

First, write down on paper five key words, which summarize your project. For instance if your project will organize a communal meal in a certain neighborhood known for its lack of social cohesion in order to improve relationships among those living there, you may have the following words: food, dinner party, neighborhood, community, and social cohesion.

Second, gather all the members of your NGO for a collective brainstorming session. Write down the five words you selected on a board and ask the group at large to work with those words and suggest possible titles. It is important that you set your goal for the meeting as that of coming up with the best three title-proposals within a couple of hours. Make sure to prepare coffees and cakes for your collaborators (it is not proven that sugar helps creativity, but it will create a more relaxed atmosphere). Set aside an hour to produce a long list of titles and another hour to shortlist the best three. Keep the meeting within the 2 hours proposed to maintain concentration among the group. You could decide whether to work within smaller groups or with one big group according to the size of the NGO and group dynamics.

Third, at the end of the meeting you should have your three short listed titles. At this point, you should organise a focus group with a group of five to ten friends. Present in brief the project to the focus group and write the three final project titles on a board. Ask the participants to choose one and to explain why they selected it. Take notes during the discussion. By the end of the focus group you should have all the information you need to make your final choice. Read through the notes you have taken and assess the information you have gathered. Write for each of the titles their strengths and weaknesses. Compare your results and take your final decision. Make sure to circulate the final title among all the members of your NGO who participated

in the process to communicate the final decision.

In brief, the Best Title Will:

- Give a general idea of what the project is about
- Make you curious about the project and prompt you to read more and to participate in it
- Not be descriptive
- Catch people's attention because of a play of words or a reference to movies, books, popular culture etc.
- Be simple and straightforward (avoid overcomplicated titles)
- Be memorable.
- The title should be clear and unambiguous
- Think of your title as a mini abstract. A good title should paint a quick picture for the reader of the key idea(s) of your project.
- The words you use in your title should clearly reflect the focus of your proposal. The most important words should come first, then the less important words. Try to remove words from your title that really are not necessary for understanding.

Reflective Question

Define a proposal title, giving its importance.

Reference

Hines, A.H. 2003. Ecology of Juvenile and Adult Blue Crabs: Summary of Discussion of Research Themes and Directions. *Bulletin of Marine Science*: 72(2): 423-433.