

# Make Every Grant a Money Maker

Writing Tips from  
*Tech & Learning*

## Edit it.

Editing is really the heart of the writing process. This is where you are able to clarify and tighten your narrative into a compelling proposal. A common saying among writers is that writing is rewriting. There is no good writing, only good re-writing. Great writers do this instinctively. For the rest of us, we need to practice.

## Plan ahead.

This will give you the opportunity to re-write. There is nothing like the luxury of time near the end of the grant writing process. Sleep on it. Wait two days to begin the editing process. Going at this with a clear mind will help you find what works and what doesn't work in your proposal. What seemed logical at the time of writing will now stand out. As you begin to edit, remember that this is the time to cut, not add. Most of us are too wordy in our writing. Use this time to get to the heart of what you are trying to say. Sure you will need to add a word here and there, but for the most part you should be trying to be as concise as possible.

## Don't go it alone.

Your proposal will no doubt have been word processed, so take advantage of the spelling and grammar checking capabilities. Make sure that the finished copy and appearance have numbered pages, headings, and clean margins. After you have simplified, spell-checked and generally cleaned up the final look, share the document with colleagues and ask for their insights and reactions. Particularly ask for their comments about clarity and content.

# Keep it Short, Exact, Specific and Buzzfree

By Gary Carnow from  
*Tech & Learning*

- Short sentences and short paragraphs are easier to read and understand. For example, instead of currently, try now; instead of initiate, start. Using short words and short sentences keeps your writing crisp and compact.
  - Using the active voice over the passive voice makes for a stronger proposal. Active verbs add energy and the active voice reveals who is speaking and taking action. The passive voice hides who is speaking and comes off as the voice of an institution speaking.
  - Avoid vague words and phrasings; instead go for accurate and exact. That doesn't mean that you cut all adjectives and adverbs, it means that you sharpen them to make your point.
  - Avoid educational jargon and the latest buzzwords. Use a down-to-earth word that says the same thing as the latest fad word. For example, instead of "interfacing with your colleagues," perhaps you will "meet and discuss." Clear and direct language always wins out over long-winded and heavy-handed.
  - The fatal flaw of unfunded grant proposals is the use of generalities. Be specific. Don't leave the grant reader guessing at what you mean. Take time to synthesize what you want to say and express it confidently in declarative sentences.
  - Grant writing is not lawyer writing. Write like you talk. Don't worry if it sounds too informal. You can adjust the tone in a rewrite.
-