



TOP 10 TIPS FOR SBIR/STTR SUCCESS

1 TEND TO THE BASICS EARLY

Take care of the pesky registrations required by every agency. No matter how much we beg and cajole, we still have companies that start the process too late or don't pay enough attention to the details. The result? Failure to submit!

2 DON'T PUT OFF 'TIL TOMORROW WHAT YOU SHOULD HAVE DONE YESTERDAY

Get going on your proposal early. Planning a proposal 3-4 months in advance is reasonable, and skimping on development time will come back to haunt you!

3 READ, READ, AND READ SOME MORE

Before you make a move toward proposal preparation, be sure to go over the solicitation with a fine toothed comb. There is simply no better place to start than at the source, which can answer your questions and solve mysteries!

4 FOLLOW THE RULES

Ok, now that you've carefully read the solicitation, follow the rules it sets out! Rules for things like page limits, margins, font sizes, headings, etc. are **not** suggestions, and failure to play by the rules can lead to rejection without consideration.

5 FOCUS FOCUS FOCUS

Even if yours is a platform technology, focusing on a single product or application will make your proposal more credible and achievable. The most successful companies know they cannot be all things to all people. Decide what you must prove, how you'll do it, and whose help you'll need and then go for the gusto!

6 TALK TO STRANGERS

Don't assume anything about what your customer needs. The only way to know for sure is to ask. Whether it is SBIR agency personnel or customers in your target market segments, the risk of developing the wrong product or proposal is extremely high if you don't get their input.

7 KNOW THE BUDGETING FACTS OF LIFE

The budget may not directly impact the technical and commercial review of a proposal but will always be taken into consideration for overall funding decisions. So make sure yours is well crafted and supports the work proposed. Veteran reviewers can sniff out an inappropriate budget, so keep it real, keep it accurate and keep it honest.

8 DON'T COME LATE TO THE PARTY

Electronic submission sounds fast and easy. Don't believe it! Proposals are often submitted with errors, and it can take time to get them corrected before the deadline. Not allowing yourself some breathing room can have dire consequences (i.e., rejection).

9 COLLABORATE

Find organizations, consultants or advisers that bring unique and complementary expertise to your company or project and add them to your team. Challenge them to challenge you to look at what you are doing from a new perspective.

10 KEEP AT IT!

Following these tips will improve both your proposals and likelihood of funding, but remember that few applicants are funded the first time around. If your proposal isn't funded, carefully study agency feedback, fully address their concerns and try again!

BBCetc is comprised of a group of geeks and gurus of commercialization and non-dilutive federal R&D funding for early-stage technology companies. Services include training courses and one-on-one consulting in the areas of commercialization planning, research grant assistance, SBIR/STTR training and proposal development assistance, grants and contracts management and tech-based economic development programs. The group:

Lisa Kurek
The Boss



Michael Kurek,
PHD
NSF, DOE, DOC,
DOT, DoEd,
EPA, USDA



Becky Aistrup
DOD, DHS,
NASA



Andrea
Johanson,
PhD
NIH



Kris Bergman
Grant &
Contracts
Management



Jayne Berkaw
Marketing &
Outreach

