

Treating a Proposal with Multiple Personalities



Causes

Multiple sources of material:

- Program managers
- Experts and founders and directors
- Past proposals written by you
- Past proposals written by others
- Communications materials written for other purposes (development, planning)



Goals

- Make meaning and intention clear
- Avoid any and all confusion
- Demonstrate professionalism and capability
- Instill confidence



Treatment

“Consisticize”



Method

1. Voice
2. Tone
3. Time
4. Terms
5. Names
6. Numbers



Seattle Waterfront Project

SWOA increases citizen involvement in reimagining industry, art, and tourism on the Seattle Waterfront between the Elliott Bay and First Avenue from King Street to Broad Street.



Big Bertha Needs Your Help

The Seattle Waterfront Optimists would like to request \$5,000 from the ABC foundation to support the organization's Save our Bertha! (SOB) project.

The association was founded in 1913 to promote a monorail under the Sound. In 2012, our dream came true! Big Bertha rides to the rescue! She has been working hard for us for 4 years, and needed help. With the SBB project, we will generate community involvement and advocacy for mass transit.



1. Voice

- First person?
- Third person?



1. Voice

- SWOA increases citizen involvement ...
- The Seattle Waterfront Optimists would like to request ...
- to support the organization's ...
- The association was founded ...
- In 2012, our dream came true!
- With the SBB project, we will generate community involvement...



1. Tip

Contain the first-person “we.”



2. Tone

- Formal?
- Informal?
- Conversational?
- Level of detail?

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2. Tone

SWOA increases citizen involvement in reimagining industry, art, and tourism on the Seattle Waterfront ...

Big Bertha rides to the rescue!

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2. Tip

Look at how long the words are.

Look at how long the sentences are.



3. Time

- Consistency is about locating your story in time.
- Consistency is created by using verb tenses correctly, *not* by always using the same tense.



3. Time

The Seattle Waterfront Optimists would like to request ...

The association was founded in 1913 to promote a monorail under the Sound. In 2012, our dream came true! Big Bertha rides to the rescue! She has been working hard for us for 4 years, and needed a little help.



3. Tip

*Read for shifts in verb tense.
Evaluate for appropriateness.
(But don't assume every shift is wrong.)*



4. Terms

Level of vocabulary:

- Technical?
- Plain language?
- Organization-specific terms?
- Funder-specific terms?
- Consistency of terms used.



4. Terms

- citizen involvement in reimagining
- community involvement and advocacy
- working hard for us
- to support the organization's Save our Bertha! (SOB) project
- monorail
- mass transit



4. Tip

*Make a list.
Alphabetize.
Sort by similar concepts
Find and Replace.*



5. Names

Accurate and consistent:

- Spelling
- Capitalization
- Punctuation
- Full (long) form
- Short form (preferred version)



5. Names

- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Gates Foundation, Bill Gates Foundation, the Gates' foundation
- School of Nursing, SoN, SON, UWSON
- Ms. Smith, Mrs. Smithe, Jane Smith, Jane



5. Names

Seattle Waterfront Optimists
SWOA
the association
ABC foundation
Save our Bertha! (SOB) project.
the SBB project
Big Bertha



5. Tip

*Make a list.
Alphabetize.
Confirm accuracy.
Find and Replace*



6. Numbers

- Time: years, months, days
- Number of people served
- Size/scale of project
- Number of volunteers/staff
- Size of organization
- Amount requested



6. Numbers

- request \$5,000
- founded in 1913
- In 2012, our dream came true!
- Bertha working hard for us for 4 years
- 5 stories tall, in 41 pieces, heaviest piece weighs 900 tons, arrived in Seattle 2013, damaged after 1,000 feet of digging, tunnel planned for 9,000 feet, piece being removed and repaired weighs 2,000 tons

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6. Tip

Make a list.

Do the math.

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Method

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Consistency Across Parts of a Proposal

- Narrative
- Abstract
- Budget
- Bios
- Logic model
- Figures or tables

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Discuss

- Do you ever incorporate text from other sources into your proposals? From where?
- How does your organization present itself (voice, tone)?
- How might you use—or modify—this method in your work?



Questions?



Getting Started: Stylesheet Hit Parade

- Names
 - People
 - Programs
 - Organizations
 - Funders
- Numbers
- Key messages
- Examples of documentation style



Planning for Consistency

- Authors: Who gets input who gets to make decisions?
- Style: Is there an organization style sheet? Who owns it? Who can update it?
- Schedule: Is there time for proofreading at the end?
- Process: How to plan in advance (where possible) for maximum consistency.



Creating a Stylesheet

- Ideally, you create a stylesheet before you start writing, when you are not under a deadline
 - We've been able to do this once.
- Realistically, you create it while you write/edit
 - But you can refine it afterward, to prepare for the next time.
- Stylesheets are dynamic documents
 - You need to decide owner/decider and contributors/questioners.



One point of contact. Two sets of eyes.

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