

# DANCES WITH WOLVES

## Managing Proposal Teams without Real Authority



Jaine Place  
Director of Research Proposal Development

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**How do we manage proposal teams without real authority?**



## Proposal Development Unit at NC State

- Provides services to PIs preparing large-scale multidisciplinary proposals for graduate fellowships or multidisciplinary research.
- Opportunity must be >\$1M
- Project facilitation
- Proposal writing
- Budgets and cost-sharing
- Review and editing
- Administrative support
- (CV's, current & pending, etc.)



## Managing Proposal Teams without Real Authority

### Proposal Writing

- Institutional background
- Management Plan
- Education Plan
- Outreach Plan
- Technology Transfer Plan
- Economic Development Plan
- Facilities and Equipment Plan
- Diversity Plan
- Evaluation Plan



## Managing Proposal Teams without Real Authority

# Real authority comes from:

- Trust
- Being good at your job
- Your personal power



## Managing Proposal Teams without Real Authority

### Information is power. Get it!

- Study solicitation and awarding organization/program.
- Talk to Program Officer.
- Understand the decision process.
- Who's the competition?
- Study up on the topic!



## Managing Proposal Teams without Real Authority

### **Immerse yourself in the discussion.**

- Join the team asap.
- Learn about your team members.
- Show respect for their expertise.
- Know your organization's strengths.



## Managing Proposal Teams without Real Authority

### Understand expectations.

- Clarify your role.
- Clarify the rules.
- Clarify the exit strategy.



## Managing Proposal Teams without Real Authority

### **Set a schedule and manage it.**

- Present it at first meeting.
- Add everyone's travel schedule.
- Keep reminding the team; discuss consequences.



## Managing Proposal Teams without Real Authority

### Control the meetings.

- Frequency, length, and location.
- Prepare agendas. Don't discuss everything at every meeting.
- Form subgroups.
- Give homework.
- Send out action items.



## Managing Proposal Teams without Real Authority

### Hone your meeting facilitation skills.

- Brainstorming
- Consensus building
- Staying on topic
- Dealing with chaos and indecision
- Protecting the weak



## Managing Proposal Teams without Real Authority

### **Don't wear the team out with process.**

- Not everything requires consensus.
- Most important process is developing shared vision/mission.
- Take charge of everything that isn't technical.



## Managing Proposal Teams without Real Authority

### Bring resources to the table.

- Knowledge
- Potential partners
- Cost-sharing
- Graphics support
- Clerical assistance
- Food!



## Managing Proposal Teams without Real Authority

### Jump start the writing.

- Outline
- Don't divvy up writing assignments by section. Ask for specific pieces of information by certain dates.
- Pull the first draft together yourself.
  - Happens sooner
  - Provides framework
  - Shows length



## Managing Proposal Teams without Real Authority

- Communicate
- Communicate
- Communicate
- And force the team to communicate.



## Managing Proposal Teams without Real Authority

### Remember Murphy's Law.

- Things will go wrong.
- Technology will crash.
- People will get sick.
- People will misbehave.
- People will not do what they say they are going to do.



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## Managing Proposal Teams without Real Authority

**You don't need authority  
when everyone is turning  
to you for solutions.**



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