

# Program Development

David Pugh

Veteran business consultant and trainer David Pugh created the Program Development Course and the materials for Federally Funded Research and Development Centers such as the Jet Population Laboratory. He defines Program Development as a “philosophy and a set of skills” to help “define your role, focus your activities, discover legally and ethically permissible opportunities for serving sponsors, determine your sponsors’ needs, and inform current and prospective sponsors of your unique capabilities.” Properly done, the PD process should “inform industry, the citizenry and federal agencies of your organization’s mission, strengths and unique capabilities.” It should furthermore “establish alliances and partnerships with industry, other FFRDCs, not-for-profits and universities to serve the needs of the nation.”

The PD process begins with strategic planning, knowing what program to develop. At the core of this effort is the SWOT analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to you, competitors and sponsor. The resulting strategic program plan consists of vision and mission statements, assumptions and analysis, realistic strategic objectives and an implementable plan.

Sponsor Identification and Analysis follow, identifying potential sponsors and understanding their needs. People involved usually play one of six roles: decision maker, advisor, user, administrator, champion or external such as lawyer, banker or consultant.

Strategic Positioning follows, keeping potential sponsors informed of your unique, special capabilities. These information modes are designed to reach the three types of learners. Visual people prefer brochures, videos, white papers and line presentations. Auditory learners may prefer briefings, panels, telephone and meetings. Kinesthetic people may prefer prototypes, hands on demonstrations, site visits and interactive media.

Opportunity Assessment, determining what opportunities to pursue, comes next. David Pugh suggests a meeting with the sponsor, spending 40% of your time asking questions about the sponsor’s needs, requirements and expectations; 50% of your time listening (an acquired behavior); and 10% informing them of your capabilities and solutions.

Capture Planning results chiefly in writing a proposal that can consist of an executive summary, introduction, technical background, objective, scope of work, schedule, management and personnel, reporting and deliverables, financial requirements, disposition of property, ES&H issues, classification and security, and technical references. The all important executive summary should consist of one third text, one third graphics and one third white space.

Finally, the Ongoing Relationship Management phase leads to a mutually satisfying long term relationship, “creating sponsor delight” without driving up costs. Know your sponsor’s business. Help the sponsor respond to opportunities and threats. Provide value engineering and make value-added tangible. Identify what’s wrong, not who’s wrong. “Everything should be made as simple as possible but not simpler,” he notes.

“The Value of Excellence” is also important to Pugh. Since people do not buy products or services per se, they buy hopes, expectations, relationships. Therefore, he suggests five basic approaches to Program Development:

1. Differentiation, how you differ from competition
2. Niche, where you fill a narrow area of technical uniqueness
3. Full Service, your multidisciplinary approach to deliver more expertise quicker

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4. Cost, lower because of existing technologies and facilities
  5. Teaming/Partnership, your cooperative alliances with universities, laboratories, other agencies, or private industry.

The bottom line in Program Development is higher quality, better performance, state-of-the-art technology, cost effective solutions, lower risk, faster delivery, smart facilities, flexibility, expandability and adaptability.

For more information, Pugh recommends William Davidow's *Marketing High Technology* (New York: The Free Press, 1986) and Theodore Levitt, *The Marketing Imagination* (same publisher, 1983).

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