Top Ten Tips from an SBIR Reviewer

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Areas of particular importance to reviewers (from a reviewer’s perspective):

1. Read the latest posted SBIR/STTR guidelines/rules. Then read them again. Then read them a third time.

2. Use *italics* or **bold** or underline to help stress aspects of novelty and innovation

3. Ensure that you lay out very clear defined goals and milestones (with statistics!) at every opportunity

4. Be realistic – do not come over as too ambitious or that you are on a “fish-expedition”

5. Be open and frank about possible hurdles and pitfalls, and most importantly discuss alternatives and solutions to overcome them.

6. All the reviewers have a lot to read and comment on and SBIR/STTR grant reviewers will be dealing with subjects that they may not be fully conversant in. Make it clear, precise and easy for the reviewers to grasp. To not cram the pages! Edit, edit, edit…

7. Make sure you have a strong argument for commercial potential, unlike R01s etc, this about commercialization and product development, not just cool science.

8. If more than one PI – really highlight integration, a working relationship, and, strong letters of collaborative and institutional support. Make sure intellectual property issues are discussed (if applicable) and legal agreements are detailed

9. Budgets are looked at very closely, if non-modular, makes sure that the budget justification is detailed and matches the budget pages.

10. Do not “boilerplate” the animal welfare and human subjects section. This really annoys reviewers. Read the guidelines – they change frequently.