Life in the Bear Pit – Being a Grant Panel

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Potzdorf Grand Fenwick Research Council’s Grant Selection Panel

Your committee has a total $8m (20% of Potzdorf Grand Fenwick’s GDP) available to allocate across all fields of research over the next 3 years. Applicants have been told that this will be the amount of funding available to allocate. You have to allocate this money carefully and wisely. This research funding is equal to 50% of the total PGF healthcare budget over the same period, so as you might imagine it’s effective use really means a lot to the Potzdorf Grand Fenwickians and their future prosperity.
• You each have a personality and bugbears you hate in proposals.
• Each group has a panel chair
• You have 6 proposals to read, discuss, rank and come to a final funding decision.

Get cracking …

… you have 30 minutes
What have we learned?

There is no “Deep Thought”

There is no perfect proposal evaluation system.
Committees are the best process we have, but they are not perfect, and they are composed of people.

Committees never have enough ...

Time to assess all the proposals perfectly
Background in every discipline to be an expert
Money to fulfill all the requests worth funding
Mental stack space to absorb the acronyms & jargon & background for your field

Good Applications
Tell a readable story, concisely and clearly.
Provide the context to explain the importance of the science questions posed.
Explain what you will do, and show you can do it
Explain how that answers the big questions.

Know you Audience
Who is on the committee?
What are their spread of backgrounds?
Write for that audience

Take Charge!
If the panel can’t understand your brilliant idea, then consider it your fault for not being clear enough!