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# Pink & Red Teams

Nine Tips for  
Conducting  
Effective Pink  
and Red Team  
Reviews for Your  
Proposals

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# Color Reviews

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- **Are a proposal best practice**
- **Can bring a proposal score a grade up if conducted correctly**

# 1. Invite the Right Reviewers

- **Managers (non-SMEs) often know what's broken but not how to fix it**
- **Most valuable proposal reviewers know the subject matter, RFP, and customer**





## 2. Ensure Everyone Understands the RFP

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- Many reviewers fail to read the RFP prior to the Pink or Red Team Review
- Some reviewers may only scan the RFP without diving into important details
- Summarize the key requirements and highlight RFP's peculiarities

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a white rectangular card. The card is held between the thumb and index finger, with the rest of the hand visible in the background. The card has the text 'ARE WE ON THE SAME PAGE?' written on it in a bold, dark, sans-serif font. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

**ARE WE  
ON THE  
SAME PAGE?**

# 3. Train the Reviewers on How to Review a Proposal

1

**Prohibit copy editing**

2

**Show examples of good and bad comments**

3

**Explain how compliance works**

4

**Explain how to review the proposal like an evaluator**

5

**Explain you want many comments, not few**

6

**Ask for insights that require reviewers' full brainpower**

# 4. Assign the Right People to the Sections



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- Have more than one reviewer look at each section
- Don't have everyone start with section 1—they may not get to the end
- Match reviewers' expertise to the reviewed sections
- Use authors who wrote other sections as reviewers

Section Reviewer	1. Executive Summary	2. Technical Approach	3. Management Approach	4. Past Performance
Pages	5	20	10	10
A. Smith	Low	High		
B. Jones	High		High	Low
C. Thomas	High		Low	High
A. White	Low	High		
M. Doe		Low	High	
K. Largo		Low	Low	High

## 5. Ensure Everyone Knows How to Spend their Time

- Agenda is important: set the times for Kickoff, Review, Reviewers' Caucus, Debrief, and name who must attend
- Allocate a realistic volume of material per reviewer, and add more reviewers if necessary; 10 minutes per page is a rule of thumb (6 pages per hour)
- Urge reviewers to plan how they will spend review time
  - Refresh understanding of the requirements
  - Check compliance
  - Read the section once in its entirety
  - Read and comment in detail
  - Write up recommendations
- Set expectations of how long things take so that the reviewers get to work instead of a long "warm up" and distractions



## 6. Channel Reviewer's Frustration Constructively

1

**Set the rules of engagement upfront**

2

**Manage the atmosphere and culture of the review**

3

**Tell the reviewers to roll up their sleeves and fix issues**


4

**Don't let the reviewers carpet-bomb the authors**



## 7. Choose the Form of the Review that Fits Your Audience

- Virtual review using color review software, SharePoint simultaneous review, MS Word files, etc.
- Synchronous vs. asynchronous review where the files are sent to the reviewers for a couple of days to review
- Hard copy review with multiple printed copies
- Hard copy with one copy on the wall



## 8. Explain How You Want to Receive Feedback

- Redlines (must be merged by hand, unless you use a review software or work on the same SharePoint document)
  - Remember to set file naming convention and location for uploads
  - Provide training on color review software
- Comments (easier to merge documents; can take longer to describe desired changes instead of just making them)
- Summary slides or comment sheets with score, strengths, weaknesses, recommendations, and other sections
- Summary table with score/color given to each section
- Hard copy redlines with optional post-its marking pages with comments

## 9. Pose Specific Questions to the Reviewers

- Where could we cut?
- Do you agree with our interpretation of this requirement?
- What win themes have you picked up on in the document?
- What past performance references should we go with out of the lineup?
- Other solution-specific questions you wrestle with



# Expand Your Proposal Skills

- Take our **Bid & Proposal Academy** Courses on a variety of proposal topics
- **Foundations and Advanced Proposal Management** courses, as well as writing and editing classes may be particularly useful



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