What makes a proposal a ‘winner' in the eyes of a reviewer?

**Great idea**
Paradigm shifter

**Grantsmanship**
Makes a good first impression
Well prepared and clear message
Credible
Good supporting document

*Why, What and How???

Renu A. Kowluru, PhD
“Why”

**A strong and testable hypothesis**

- Based on current scientific literature and preliminary data, and has a measurable, reproducible outcome.
- Increases understanding of biologic processes, diseases, treatments and/or preventions.

_Hypothesis-assumption made to test specific ideas which may or may not be true._
“What”

**Specific Aims**

- The tightest and most structured part.
- Goals: Basic gist of the proposed research and get the reviewer excited.
- Logical sequence, and not dependent on one another, but related.
- May be the only section an unassigned reviewer might read.

*Aims*- the intentions directing the effort towards the overall goal.
“How” Research Plan

• Good model system to test the hypothesis.

• Coherent direction with well coordinated plan that is clearly related to the central focus.

• Feasible, not overambitious—a ‘fishing expedition’.

• Novel approaches, or advantage of using a nonstandard approach.

• Potential problems and good alternate approaches.

Crystal clear, understood by reviewers not directly related to the field.
Abstract

• The first impression of the PI and the work.
• Roadmap of the proposal.
• Must be understood by both experts in your field and generalists.
• Content should include: – Brief Background – Hypothesis – Objectives/Specific aims – Methods/research plan – Significance-human significance important.

“Complete Picture”
Good story that conveys the excitement and enthusiasm, and states what impact that will have on a field.