Pitching Your Project:

Using credibility, passion, and logic to make a compelling case for funders

Presented by Dr. Nico Wood Kos
nicowoodkos@gmail.com
Nico Wood Kos is grant writer, interpretive park ranger, and professional storyteller with a PhD in Communication.

She has written more than 30 successful grant proposals to city, county, and state-level agencies, as well as universities, nonprofit groups, and philanthropic organizations.

She chairs the grants committee for Electric Peak Arts Council and oversees the evaluation and distribution of grants by North Yellowstone Education Foundation’s Connect! Grants program.

She lives in Mammoth Hot Springs, Yellowstone with her husband and two daughters.
Pitching Your Project: an overview
Pitching Your Project: an overview

- Telling a great story
Pitching Your Project: an overview

- Telling a great story
- Reading RFPs
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- Telling a great story
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- Persuasion - Ethos, Pathos, Logos
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- Telling a great story
- Reading RFPs
- Persuasion- Ethos, Pathos, Logos
- Practical application
WHAT IS CREATIVITY?

“Creativity is a crushing chore and a glorious mystery. The work wants to be made, and it wants to be made through you.”

—ELIZABETH GILBERT

#BIGMAGIC
Student for 23 years
immeasurably specific & a smidgen pretentious

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2 pages a day
immeasurably specific & a smidgen pretentious

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2 pages a day
Communication Theorist Walter R. Fisher calls human beings “homo narrans,” explaining that it is fundamental to human nature to make sense of our world through stories.
What David JP Phillips calls an “Angel Cocktail”

- Dopamine
- Oxytocin
- Endorphins
What David JP Phillips calls an “Angel Cocktail”

• Dopamine
• Oxytocin
• Endorphins

“Devil Cocktail”

• Cortisol
• Adrenaline
What is a pitch?

An “elevator pitch” is a two-minute description of your project that includes all of the relevant information you’d want a potential supporter to know.
Don’t take extra time, space, or characters to communicate something you could have said with less.
Ethos
Pathos
Logos
“In a **grant** proposal, you’re not reporting, you’re selling.” - Julie Cwikla
Ethos
credibility and reliability
Pathos
Logos
Ethos: credibility and reliability
Pathos: emotion and empathy
Logos:
Ethos
credibility and reliability

Pathos
emotion and empathy

Logos
rationality and the presentation of facts
I’m telling you have a Ph.D., I am revealing myself to be an authentic person who struggles with writing.
Ethos

I’m telling you have a Ph.D., I am revealing myself to be an authentic person who struggles with writing.

Pathos

I’m talking about my baby and my writing as though it is a baby.
I’m telling you have a Ph.D., I am revealing myself to be an authentic person who struggles with writing.

I’m talking about my baby and my writing as though it is a baby.

I am describing how I rationally and meticulously worked to overcome my fears and write.
What is your project?
What is your project?

- What you’ll do
What is your project?

- What you’ll do
- How you’ll do it
What is your project?

- What you’ll do
- How you’ll do it
- When you’ll do it
Pathos
Pathos

“Pulling at their heartstrings”
Pathos

“Pulling at their heartstrings”

Think in terms of needs:
- Who are you serving?
- What is the nature of their need?
- What might happen if this need is not met?
Logic always has something to prove.
Logos

Logic always has something to prove.

- Data and Statistics
- Clarity of ideas
  - Does your project make sense?
  - Is your timeline rational?
  - Is your budget sound?
Ethos

Impressions of your character, intentions, and abilities.
Ethos

Impressions of your character, intentions, and abilities.

Prior (or extrinsic):
The credibility you bring to a pitch because of your experience or reputation.
Impressions of your character, intentions, and abilities.

Prior (or extrinsic): The credibility you bring to a pitch because of your experience or reputation.

Demonstrated (or intrinsic): The credibility you display through the act of communicating.
Impressions of your character, intentions, and abilities.
Ethos

Impressions of your character, intentions, and abilities.

- Credibility of your organization
Ethos

Impressions of your character, intentions, and abilities.

- Credibility of your organization
- Credibility of your project
Ethos

Impressions of your character, intentions, and abilities.

- Credibility of your organization
- Credibility of your project
- Local credibility
Demonstrating Credibility
Demonstrating Credibility

- Sharing personal experience or firsthand knowledge
Demonstrating Credibility

- Sharing personal experience or firsthand knowledge
- Providing sound research
Demonstrating Credibility

- Sharing personal experience or firsthand knowledge
- Providing sound research
- Following instructions
Demonstrating Credibility

- Sharing personal experience or firsthand knowledge
- Providing sound research
- Following instructions

*pathos*
Demonstrating Credibility

- Sharing personal experience or firsthand knowledge [*pathos*]
- Providing sound research [*logos*]
- Following instructions
Demonstrating Credibility

- Sharing personal experience or firsthand knowledge *pathos*
- Providing sound research *logos*
- Following instructions
- Most powerful & comprehensive
Park County Special Education Co-op
Grant Application 2020
What does rural mean to you?

For us, it means unobstructed sunrises over the mountains. It means breathtaking animals waltzing through our backyards. It means a snowmobile ride to and from school.

Rural means both distance and connection: where the span between homes may be farther, yet the kinship between people is brass-bound. Unfortunately, living in rural Park County can also mean lack of access to mental and behavioral health care.

Statistics from the Center for Disease Control tell us that Montana is facing a mental health epidemic. And yet, if you look at figures from the Health Resources and Services Administration, we have less than a quarter of the recommended number of mental-health care providers to serve our population. More often than not, children in rural communities do not have access to the tools they need to thrive. The Park County Special Education Co-op seeks to change this.

With your support, we will work to provide mental and behavioral health services to students in Park County Rural Schools. We will hire both a Behavior Analyst and a School-based therapist who will work together across rural Park County. These positions will provide Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions for students, as well as much needed support for staff, parents, and the community. We will also hire a Project Supervisor to ensure that this important work gets done.

Park County is filled with people who value beauty over convenience. People who relish both self-reliance and collective community growth. Here in Park County, we are willing to make sacrifices for the lifestyle we love. The mental and behavioral health of our children should not be one of them.
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Tailoring Your Pitch
Tailoring Your Pitch

- Reconnaissance work
- Usually very easy!
- Look at website, request for proposal, and any additional materials included with the grant
- Search for key works
Apply for a Grant

The Park County Community Foundation awards annual grants to nonprofit and local government entities serving people living or working in Park County, Montana.

We offer two types of community grant opportunities. Please select from the options below for eligibility information.

- Community Grant
- Collaborative Grant

For the 2023 calendar year, we have $150,000 to distribute in grant funding. Applications due in...
Apply for a Grant

The Park County Community Foundation awards annual grants to nonprofit serving people living or working in Park County, Montana.

We offer two types of community grant opportunities. Please select from the information.

For the 2023 grant cycle, we have $250,000 to distribute in grants for various initiatives.
We Will

PARK COUNTY
Change is in the air, or in Park County, you might say it’s blowing in the wind. New people, new businesses, new issues, and new challenges.

“I think affordable housing is one of the biggest issues, and probably the most difficult to solve.”

Every day local nonprofits, schools, healthcare providers, businesses, and governments plan for the future to better serve our changing community.

“We need to be proactive about restoring some of the social services that have left our community.”

But what actual data about Park County informs their decisions? How do they separate facts from personal experience? How do they coordinate their efforts with other organizations? Have they considered what kind of community we want to live in 10, 20, or 30 years from now?

We Will Park County is a citizen-informed initiative of the Park County Community Foundation that aims to answer those questions.

“There is going to be growth, there is going to be change. As we need, as a community, to make sure that all of us are playing a part in that change.”

Through an online survey that elicited more than 600 responses from throughout the county, 8 focus groups in Wilsall, Clyde Park, Livingston, Emigrant, Gardiner, and Cooke City, and dozens of other community conversations, you’ve told us your concerns, and you’re vision for Park County’s future.

“I’d like to see an economy where we have a bit more balance between farming, mining, timber, tourism . . .”

“I think that the vibrancy of a community and the health of a community is really reliant on people’s access to healthcare.”

“We need to focus on maintaining our intercultural background, the multi-generational families that founded, established here, homesteaded, and have held it for so long.”

“I think it’s really important to plan for the future because it’s an incredible opportunity for us to mold the community in the vision that we want.”

Even with the diversity in our county, some key concerns and priorities emerged and gelled into a common vision. Around Health, Safety, & Education, a diversified economy, around housing & affordability, around a small town sense of community and rural lifestyle, and Park County’s landscapes and natural beauty.

But this vision won’t amount to much if we don’t back it up with actual data to help us predict and measure progress toward that vision.

With the help of economists from the University of Montana, Headwaters Economics, and more, We Will Park County has identified key metrics in these five core areas that will help us focus our resources and energy.

But it’s not just for us. This data will be continuously collected, tracked, and available via a web-based portal, for any organization, business, government, or nonprofit that seeks to better serve our community.

Park County citizens have said loud and clear what their concerns are and what they want their future to be. We hope you’ll embrace this vision in your organization, and use this data to make more focused decisions, better collaborate with others, and serve the community that we love more effectively.
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Practical Application

Ethos, pathos, & logos -> brevity & precision
Practical Application

Ethos, pathos, & logos -> brevity & precision

- You don’t need to use all the characters
- “Second Draft = First Draft minus 10%”
- Look for opportunities to “pitch” with the application
PART 1 - Please choose one or two focus areas that best align with the proposed outcomes of your project.
Health, Safety, and Education
Economic Performance
Housing and Affordability
Small Town and Rural Lifestyle
Landscapes and Natural Beauty

PART 2 - Please share a few sentences explaining why you selected these focus areas.
PART 1 - Please choose one or two focus areas that best align with the proposed outcomes of your project.
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Honor these instructions!
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****

PART 2 - Please share a few sentences explaining why you selected these focus areas.

Honor these instructions!
We are going to take 4 minutes to generate an answer to PART 2 of this question in three parts.

1) Logos - State a fact and/or statistic.
2) Pathos - Demonstrate a need.
3) Ethos - Explain how your organization will meet that need in terms of the stated focus.

Please share a few sentences explaining why you selected these focus areas.

Health, Safety, and Education
Economic Performance
Housing and Affordability
Small Town and Rural Lifestyle
Landscapes and Natural Beauty
At the time of this writing, there is only one home listed for sale in Gardiner, Montana. The price for this house is over $900,000, in a community with a median income of $43,000 per year. The housing situation in Gardiner has made it all but impossible for our school to hire and retain teachers. By working to provide affordable teacher housing — alongside all the ways we support Gardiner School — North Yellowstone Education Foundation’s work aligns most clearly with the focus areas of Health, Safety, and Education and Housing and Affordability.
Logos: At the time of this writing, there is only one home listed for sale in Gardiner, Montana. The price for this house is over $900,000, in a community with a median income of $43,000 per year.

Pathos: The housing situation in Gardiner has made it all but impossible for our school to hire and retain teachers.

Ethos (and project mention): By working to provide affordable teacher housing — alongside all the ways we support Gardiner School — North Yellowstone Education Foundation’s work aligns most clearly with the focus areas of Health, Safety, and Education and Housing and Affordability.
Anytime you speak about your project, you want your words to:

- Paint a picture
- Stir an emotion
- Seem doable, realistic, and real
Conclusion

- Crisp, concise project description
- Ethos, pathos, and logos
- Enthusiastic, efficient, and wildly effective
Dr. Nico Wood Kos
Professional grant writer and non-profit consultant
nicowoodkos@gmail.com
406-529-9414
Additional Resources

- Grant Readiness
- Using Data to Tell Your Best Story
- Word Cloud
- Words to Minutes
- We Will Park County

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