



Emily Lehning of Roots & Legacies Consulting Achieves \$5MM Grant Proposal Clarity And Strategy For Her Client On Deadline

When Emily Lehning's company, [Roots & Legacies Consulting](#), was working with a West Coast-based processor interested in pursuing grant funds, she reached out to Nate Birt at Silver Maple Strategies.

"The problem we needed to solve was to help our client get clear about what they were asking for and align it with the request for proposals (RFP) requirements," shares Lehning, referencing a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant opportunity they identified as a good fit for their client.

"We aimed to pinpoint their desires and direct them towards the specific requirements outlined by the funding agencies."

Getting Clarity On Deadline

To help her client navigate the process of developing its project narrative and budget, Lehning needed the right kind of expertise.

"Nate provided invaluable support in helping us understand how to meet the RFP's criteria effectively. We had to ensure that our proposal told a compelling story and highlighted the uniqueness of our client's grant. Nate's skillful writing and guidance added tremendous value to the proposal," Lehning says.

Through the collaboration, Lehning and her client attained better clarity about what the funding agency wanted to see from applicants.

Never In The Dark On Value Or Communication

Emily routinely works with contractors, and she's experienced a spectrum of collaboration. One of her biggest fears is not knowing what the contractor's value will be and whether their contributions will help her client meet their objectives. She didn't experience those concerns during this engagement.

Case Study

Emily Lehning, Roots & Legacies Consulting



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“Nate was incredibly efficient and fair in his pricing,” Emily says. “His communication style helped me understand what had been done, what was outstanding, and the focus of our work in the next timeframe. This kind of communication kept things focused and made it easier for us as collaborators. It prevented confusion and overwhelmed feelings for the client. I can confidently say we couldn't have met the deadline without Nate's intervention.”

Successfully Bridging The Gap To Align Client Interests With RFP Fine Print

Because of her client's unique niche in the food and agriculture industry, she needed a contractor who could quickly grasp the organization's strengths and connect the dots to the grant opportunity.

“Nate excels at listening to what people are saying and helping them translate that into the narrative for the grant,” Emily says. “I observed him listening very intently and bringing back to the client a way to talk about their industry that was true to their experiences and also digestible for a USDA grant reviewer who doesn't work in that space every day. Nate's ability to bridge these worlds was evident, and it was his attentive listening that made that work so successful.”

Emily also appreciated the ability to discuss strategy, including the questions Nate asked her and her client.

“They helped clarify our thinking and led to better content, particularly in areas where Nate recognized things were lacking details or felt a bit weak,” Emily explains. “That was a tremendous benefit to the overall project.”

Assuring Clients With Strategic Direction And Peace Of Mind

For organizations new to the world of grants, the application process can be overwhelming. Emily feels confident her client's organization and C-suite leadership benefited from the engagement in more ways than one.

“Nate's confidence and energy are truly reassuring for clients, and I never hesitated to put him in front of the team and let him take the call,” Emily shares. “Throughout our collaboration, I felt relieved because I could trust Nate with a client that I really wanted the best outcome for. I feel a great deal of personal responsibility for their success in this area, so having Nate on board gave me reassurance.”

The value of grant strategy, technical expertise, and writing capabilities became clear through the engagement.

“Why invest in the strategic conversation and do the work beforehand?” Emily asks. “Being well-prepared ensures alignment. Having a strategic conversation beforehand allows us to be best prepared for the grant writing process. During the middle of writing a grant, we can refer back to those foundational elements, adjust them, and align them with what the RFP is requesting. By doing that work in advance, it saves time and money.”