

## MIT 2005 - Essay #1

*Please give an example when your actions had an impact on a person, a group, or an organization (up to 500 words).*

The project described in this essay was very important to me as it marked the first time I was given Project Lead responsibilities on a major Business Development effort. It also allowed me to gain greater exposure within General Dynamics by taking charge of a high profile, company-wide initiative.

About three years ago, one of my managers decided that we could assist our corporate Technology Integration efforts by exploring the innovative projects funded by the Department of Defense. We were particularly interested in emerging small business ventures with novel ideas with whom we could collaborate to apply their technologies to large scale government contracts.

My approach was to develop a searchable database that would include all the potentially relevant research awards. In order to do that, I needed to locate and compile an extensive amount of information available through various government Web sites and other sources. I then had to apply our company's standard business pursuit processes to select the particularly compelling technologies.

To assist me in this large effort, I delegated certain responsibilities to others. The two people who worked directly for me were database experts with prior experience writing data parsing scripts. I also collaborated with our legal department while drafting non-disclosure agreements. Lastly, the PR office assembled an information kit that I could use when contacting other companies with proposals for potential joint research efforts.

Eventually, we ended up with over 5,000 award abstracts that had to be matched with almost 200 keywords. Yet the biggest challenge was to make sure that all the Engineering Managers from different locations around the company would work with us to select the particular projects that were most practical and directly applicable to their Business Area. Many were openly reluctant to consider any technology that wasn't developed internally or hasn't yet been proven in the field.

To my surprise, even after I successfully demonstrated the many capabilities of our database at a special presentation, and received a lot of positive feedback on its usefulness, not everybody who could potentially benefit from our initiative showed significant interest. Still, a number of people jumped at the opportunity and asked me to explore topics as varied as Phased Array Radars, Electrostatic Atomization, Nano-Fiber Polymers, and Microfluidics.

In the wake of the September 11 attacks, our database served as a major source of information pertaining to companies specializing in Chemical and Biological Detection, as well as Non-Lethal Weapon technologies. Another successful application was looking for research facilities that were geographically close, which allowed us to simplify logistics and minimize development costs. And, although the project is now officially complete, I still get occasional requests for awards information applicable to particular product lines.

While the exact monetary impact of this strategic initiative is hard to estimate, as it will take time before some of the technologies that I brought into the company actually bear fruit, it should continue contributing to our bottom line for years to come.