

Building Your Research Team

Kurt M. Ribisl, PhD

Gillings School of Global Public Health

NIH Early Career Investigators Meeting, Bethesda, MD

August 10, 2017



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL



Goal

To identify strategies that will help early career researchers **build a research team that will help them get funded** to do innovative and important health-related research

TEAM BUILDING!!!!!!



emagen.com

1. Find Your People

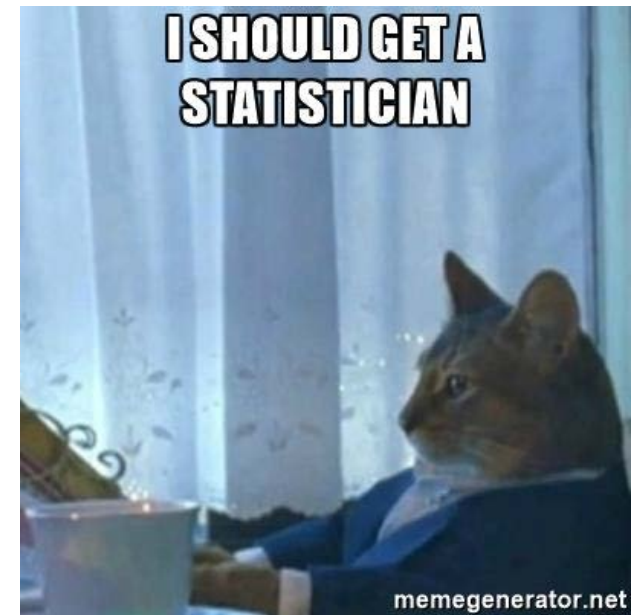
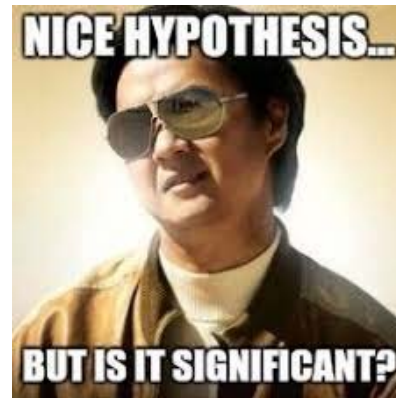
- ▶ You are often starting from scratch, with limited resources
- ▶ Expend your startup funds (staffing/data), beg Center director or dept chair...
- ▶ Recruit junior people by giving them valuable grant experience
- ▶ The Team
 - ▶ You
 - ▶ Senior/funded PI
 - ▶ Co-investigator
 - ▶ Stats/Methods person
 - ▶ Grad student / postdoc (n=1-2)
 - ▶ Project director?
 - ▶ Grants manager
 - ▶ Program Officer (for input on Aims)

2. Start Very, Very Early

- ▶ Quality and rigor derive from many iteration cycles (n=20-40 drafts)
- ▶ People don't like last minute requests
 - ▶ Esp. your statistician (see #3)
 - ▶ Talk with people 4-6 months prior to deadline
- ▶ Complete several sections at least 1 month before grant is due (so you can focus on the Science)
 - ▶ Biosketches (ensure new format, PMCID #'s, 4 max articles)
 - ▶ Budget & narrative
 - ▶ Facilities

3. Covet a Great Statistician

- ▶ A great statistician is very hard to find
- ▶ Woo your stats person
- ▶ See if there is a BIOS or STATS Core at your institution



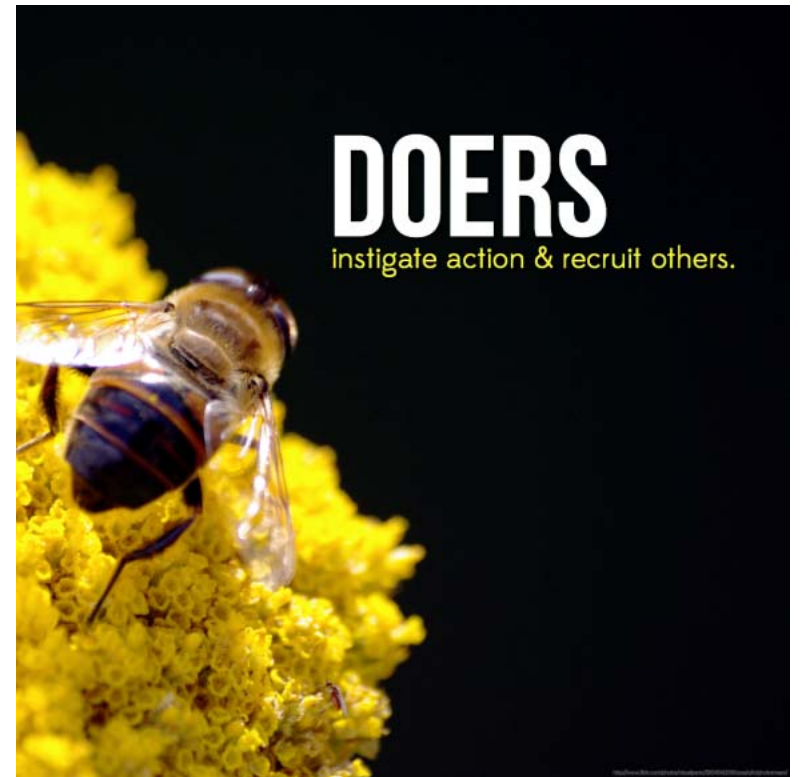
4. Collaborate With Many People (Early on)

- ▶ Don't be afraid to 'cold call' people as collaborators / consultants or Co-I
- ▶ Find your type of person
- ▶ You will find some people who you are NOT compatible with and that is OK



5. Find Worker Bees

- ▶ Identify key people who will get things done
- ▶ Not everyone excels at getting work done





TEAM BUILDING

SOMETIMES, THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON YOU CAN LEARN
IS THAT YOU'RE NOT A VERY GOOD TEAM.

memes.com

6. Learn to Delegate

- ▶ You can't do it all
- ▶ Aims – don't outsource
 - ▶ Iterate a LOT
- ▶ Significance (1st draft) → grad student / postdoc based on your detailed outline
- ▶ Innovation – trainee – based on your outline
- ▶ Research Plan/Methods (you + input from your mentor + statistician)
- ▶ References (Endnote – admin or trainee)
- ▶ Budget/narrative – Project Director?

7. Reward Your Team

- ▶ Rewards work
- ▶ Give people food, praise, \$
- ▶ Tout experience they will get
- ▶ Example: Tom Brady





Bonus

Assemble a Tough Review Panel

- ▶ 3 Weeks before Proposal is due