

Experiences with SBIR/STTR

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Inception

- Father of a child with hydrocephalus
- Entrepreneur and executive in software biz
- Idea for how to reduce device point of failure
- Found Univ. of Utah lab with similar idea
- Found director of engineering with IP
- Needed to test feasibility of concept

Initial Work

- Secured philanthropic funding to start
- Created plan to get to SBIR submission
- Began work as a collaboration
 - Dir. Of Engineering oversaw productization steps
 - Lab Director managed lab tech, pre-doc, test bench
 - I executed on application infrastructure on grants.gov and drove the process

Challenges in Grant Planning

- Determining valid split of expenses
 - Needed lab to conduct 100% of scientific work
 - Director of Engineering needed “day job” prior
 - SBIR paylines are better than STTR
- Byzantine application process impeded finish
- Balance of competing objectives
 - University desire to publish, advance careers
 - Commercial desire for secrecy, secure IP
 - Commercial desire to move fast, fail fast

Subsequent Work

- Desire to see device innovations to come to market
- Have small team that can provide access to capital, engineering and marketing expertise
- Evaluated every SBIR granted under PA and every early stage device company in field
- Found a range capability in small businesses
 - Many too academic, too researchy to be practical
 - Little market awareness for target market
 - Limited access to clinical expertise and patients