

statement section of the proposal), define the problem narrowly. Do not attempt to solve all the ills of society with this additional funding. Document the problem with research and statistics. Demonstrate your depth of understanding of the problem.

Propose a specific objective that is measurable and realistic. If you intend to request additional funding in the future, the funding source will want to know what you have accomplished with the resources granted in the past. They will want tangible statements, such as: "purchased three buses for the disabled and transported 25 wheelchair patients to the physical therapy facility each day" or "renovated 22 homes for occupancy by low-income families."

Your proposal should have a special section entitled Future Funding. Funding sources will want to know how you will continue your program when their funding runs out. You should present a plan for obtaining additional funding in the future."

Proposal Formats

There is little agreement about what format to give proposals or what to name the various subject headings. Often, RFPs or solicitation packages suggest an outline or contain a Business Proposal Instruction section. If so, follow that format. In following a dictated organization, your persuasiveness and the quality of your solution will distinguish your proposal from the others submitted. In the absence of such guidance, you may be able to follow a standard format that your company uses. Perhaps you will be fortunate enough to be able to design your own format. Designing your own format is your opportunity to be persuasive and creative, but do not deviate too far from the traditional format. Effective proposals, at the minimum, include a summary, a statement of the problem or need, the proposed solution, how the solution will be implemented, and what it will cost to implement the solution. The following is a suggested format that will be appropriate for many proposals.

cover letter → Include purpose of proposal

1. **Cover Materials:** Include a letter of transmittal, a title page, and a table of contents.
2. **Executive Summary:** A persuasive summary briefly states the need or problem, the solution, the implementation plan, and the costs and resources required. Use an attention-getting device to open your summary and highlight the themes or strategy you will discuss throughout the proposal. Make the summary persuasive and concise enough for your reader to make a decision about your offer on reading your summary, without having to read the entire proposal. At the same time, draw in and make your reader want to read the rest of your proposal.
3. **Introductory Materials:** The introduction can include the background to the situation or problem which the proposal is addressing, the most immediate cause of the problem, and the purpose for studying the problem or

- i) Need Based RFP
- ii) Problem Based RFP

submitting the proposal, the goals of the proposal, or the benefits to be derived from adoption of the proposal.

4. **Need or Problem Statement:** State the problem concisely. Differentiate between symptoms of the problem and the root problem.

5. **Technical Solution or Methodology:** This section is the heart of your proposal. Present your solution and prove that it is not only viable but that it is the best alternative for solving the customer's problem or meeting the need. Convince the reader of the strengths of your proposed solution. Demonstrate that your solution is based on the latest research findings and the most current or most appropriate technology. It is not enough to just state your solution; you must sell your solution. Use facts, figures, and expert testimony.

This section also outlines the implementation of the technical solution. Discuss the methods. Identify major and minor tasks. Provide a time line for completion of each task. Give the specifications of materials and products used or produced.

If you are writing a qualification proposal, describe how you will accomplish the work, how you will conduct the study, what research techniques will be employed, why they are the most appropriate measures to use, and how you will analyze the data.

Finally, many customers want to know how you will evaluate yourself and track your progress to completion. If the job will be lengthy, the customer may ask you to periodically report on the progress of the project and to evaluate your company's performance. → Terminal Report

6. **Management Profiles.** First, introduce the individual or team who will be implementing the solution. Describe qualifications and related backgrounds. Include resumes of key personnel in an appendix. Tailor the resumes for the specific proposal. Highlight your company's previous experience or specialization in the area. List work done for other clients in the area of interest and the scope or depth of the work performed.

Second, describe how you will organize the project. Delineate lines of authority and responsibility. Design the workload and structure from start-up to completion. Create an organization chart. Include all resources and facilities to be used.

Next, present the management policies and administrative methods applicable to the project. For example, describe quality control, cost accounting, payroll, time-keeping, and reporting methods.

End the Management Profile by demonstrating that your company is stable, financially viable, and reputable. Include financial statements, letters of reference from satisfied customers (in an appendix), and awards. Close by selling your company's strengths.

Budget. Provide a thorough breakdown of costs and differentiate between

8. direct and indirect costs. List any subcontractors and give their qualifications and costs. Describe the method of payment that will be followed and clearly state any penalties prescribed for late payment.
9. Conclusion and Recommendations. The conclusion is your last chance to sell your solution. Make it persuasive. Summarize the problem and your solution. Bring in key themes and strategies and highlight the strengths of your solution and your company. If the proposal would benefit from a recommendation, include it.
10. Bibliography. If you did research and want to project a scholarly or authoritative image, include your sources.
11. Appendices. Include resumes of key personnel, letters of reference, highly specific details of implementation that you summarized in the body of the proposal, and any other relevant material.

FINISHING TOUCHES

Some finishing touches include packaging, evaluating, and delivering the proposal.

Packaging

Does your proposal have a professional appearance? Type should be clean and easy to read. Avoid dot matrix printers for final drafts; the clean type of a laser printer is preferable. Print your proposal on white paper that is smooth, crisp, and heavy enough not to look cheap. Use 25 percent cotton content (rag) bond, in 20 pound weight. External proposals should always be enclosed in a binder. When bindings should be attractive, avoid obvious extravagances, such as submitting your proposal in a leather binder. You do not want to give the impression that you squander resources needlessly.

Evaluating the Proposal

After you have completed writing the proposal, evaluate it in light of the RFP or IFB to ensure that it is complete. Have you correctly identified the problem? Have you offered a solution that is feasible? Were you effective in selling your solution? Have you met all the requirements? Does the text flow smoothly? Read the proposal as if you were the evaluator; is it concise and competitive? Now read it from the viewpoint of the busy decision maker; is it a persuasive document if skimmed?

Delivering the Proposal

If you are rushed to complete the proposal, you are likely to overlook crucial last minute details. Be sure that you are submitting the correct number of copies of your proposal. Is a transmittal letter enclosed? Is the proposal addressed properly? Are all the required forms enclosed? Careless omission of any of these details could cost you the job.

... customer has narrowed the choice to two or three companies