

Proposals Writing

A **PROPOSAL** is a persuasive document that offers a solution to an identified problem or need.

This does not include the marketing glamour, sales pitches or commercial slogans.

Proposals are written, very often collaboratively, to convince your readers to adopt an idea, a product or a service. They are for readers within the organization or for outside readers.

Proposals can be directed to:

- colleagues inside your own organization (***in-house proposals***)
- to clients outside your organization (***sales proposals***)
- to organizations that fund research and other activities (***grant proposals***)

Their formats can be both formal or informal.

Proposals can be either:

- **Solicited** – Requested by the reader/client
- **Unsolicited** – Submitted to a client on your own without a request

Comparative Characteristics

Informal reports and proposals	Formal reports and proposals
Focus on a specific problem, situation, event	Address complex problems, situations, events
Single author usually	Collaborative writing
One to few readers	For multiple readers of different specialties
2 – 5 pages	6 – more pages
External → letter; Internal → memo	Mostly external audience
Created per template	Often bound or with some (file) cover
Headings help readers to find information	Multiple level headings to help locate information
May include appendixes	Have front and back material: Title page, ToC, Appendixes

Proposals can be categorized in several ways relating to the audience and purposes

Proposal Category	Definition of Category
A. internal external	within the organization outside the organization
B. formal informal	contains parts used in formal reports omits elements of formal reports; is often briefer
C. solicited unsolicited	is written in response to a request is written independently without a request
D. sales research grant planning	attempts to sell a product or service seeks approval for a research study asks for funding for a project attempts to persuade the audience to take a certain action

Three Basic types of Proposals

	Internal Audience	External Audience
Unsolicited proposal	<p>Suggests changes within an organization.</p> <p>Often written as an informal, memo proposal.</p> <p>May be formatted as a formal document if the proposal is expensive or suggests a major change, or if the primary audience is at the highest decision-making level (such as a board of directors).</p>	<p>Recommends product or service to potential client.</p> <p>A rare form of proposal—may be written as an informal letter proposal or preproposal that offers to solve a problem and introduces the organization's qualifications.</p> <p>Usually followed by a formal, solicited proposal.</p>

Three Basic types of Proposals (Cont'd)

Solicited proposal	<p>Suggests ways to solve problems or improve practices within an organization.</p> <p>Written at the request of another member of the organization.</p> <p>May be followed by a feasibility study.</p> <p>May be informal or formal in format, depending on complexity of the project and preferences of the reader.</p>	<p>Meets a specific need described by a client.</p> <p>Often a formal proposal written in response to a request for proposal (RFP).</p> <p>May be an informal letter proposal if it has been requested by a client as part of an ongoing business relationship.</p>
--------------------	---	---

Three Basic types of Proposals (Cont'd)

Grant proposal	<p>Requests support for special internal projects.</p> <p>Rare, although some organizations may make money available through a foundation or other special fund.</p> <p>Often written in informal, memo format.</p>	<p>Requests support to meet a community need.</p> <p>Formal document written in response to established guidelines or to a specific RFP.</p> <p>Addressed to nonprofit organizations, professional organizations, or government agencies.</p>
----------------	---	---

Four keys to ace in proposal and report writing skills:

1. Clearly understand your purpose – why you are writing?
2. Address the needs of the audience — what do they need?
3. Design your document per audience needs – how any solution is offered?
4. Edit carefully – the content must be error free, formal/business writings.

Unsolicited proposal: A document submitted without a request to convince your readers to adopt an idea, a product, or a service.

- *Unsolicited proposals are usually written as informal documents and often addressed to internal audiences.*

Solicited proposal: A document requested by the reader to help the reader solve a problem through the purchase of a product or a service.

- *Solicited proposals are usually written as formal documents and addressed to external audiences.*

ABC Format: Unsolicited Proposal

- **ABSTRACT:** Gives a summary or “big picture” for those who make decisions about your proposal.
 - The need—a problem to be solved or situation to be improved
 - Summary of the solution
- **BODY:** Gives the details about exactly what you are proposing to do.
- **CONCLUSION:** Drives home the main benefit and makes clear the next step.

ABC Format: Solicited Proposal

- **ABSTRACT:** Overview of the scope and desired outcomes
 - Scope of the proposal
 - Restatement of the situation or problem
 - Summary of proposing organization's qualifications
 - Benefits of the proposal
 - Overview of the general organization of the proposal
 - **BODY:** Details of the proposed plan, product, or service
 - Summary of the current situation
 - Background information and data as appropriate
 - Technical information
 - Management information
 - Cost information
 - (Appendixes—appear after text, but support body section)
 - **CONCLUSION:**
 - Benefits of accepting the proposal
 - Unique qualifications of the proposing organization
-