PROPOSAL WRITING

WHAT IS A PROPOSAL?

It is a long & formal document that helps to sell your idea persuasively.

TYPES OF PROPOSALS

Internal Proposals

- To convey your idea to upper-level management in your institute

- Long, formal report (i.e proposal)

External Proposals

- To sell your idea to an audience outside your company

- External proposals are written usually as a response to Request for Proposals (RFPs)

TYPICAL PROPOSAL TERMS

FAQs: Typical Proposal Terms

Q: When I read about proposals, I see terms like *RFP*, *T&C*, *SOW*, *boilerplate*, and *solicited* and *unsolicited*. What do these words mean?

A: Here's a table defining these common proposal terms:

Proposal Terms	Definitions
Boilerplate	Any content (text or graphics) that can be used in many proposals
RFP	Request for Proposals—means by which external companies and agencies ask for proposals
Solicited Proposal	A proposal written in response to a request
SOW	Scope of Work or Statement of Work—a summary of the costs, dates, deliverables, personnel certifications, and/or company history
T&C	Terms and Conditions—the exact parameters of the request and expected responses
Unsolicited Proposal	A proposal written on your own initiative

CRITERIA FOR PROPOSALS

To guide your readers through a proposal, provide the following:
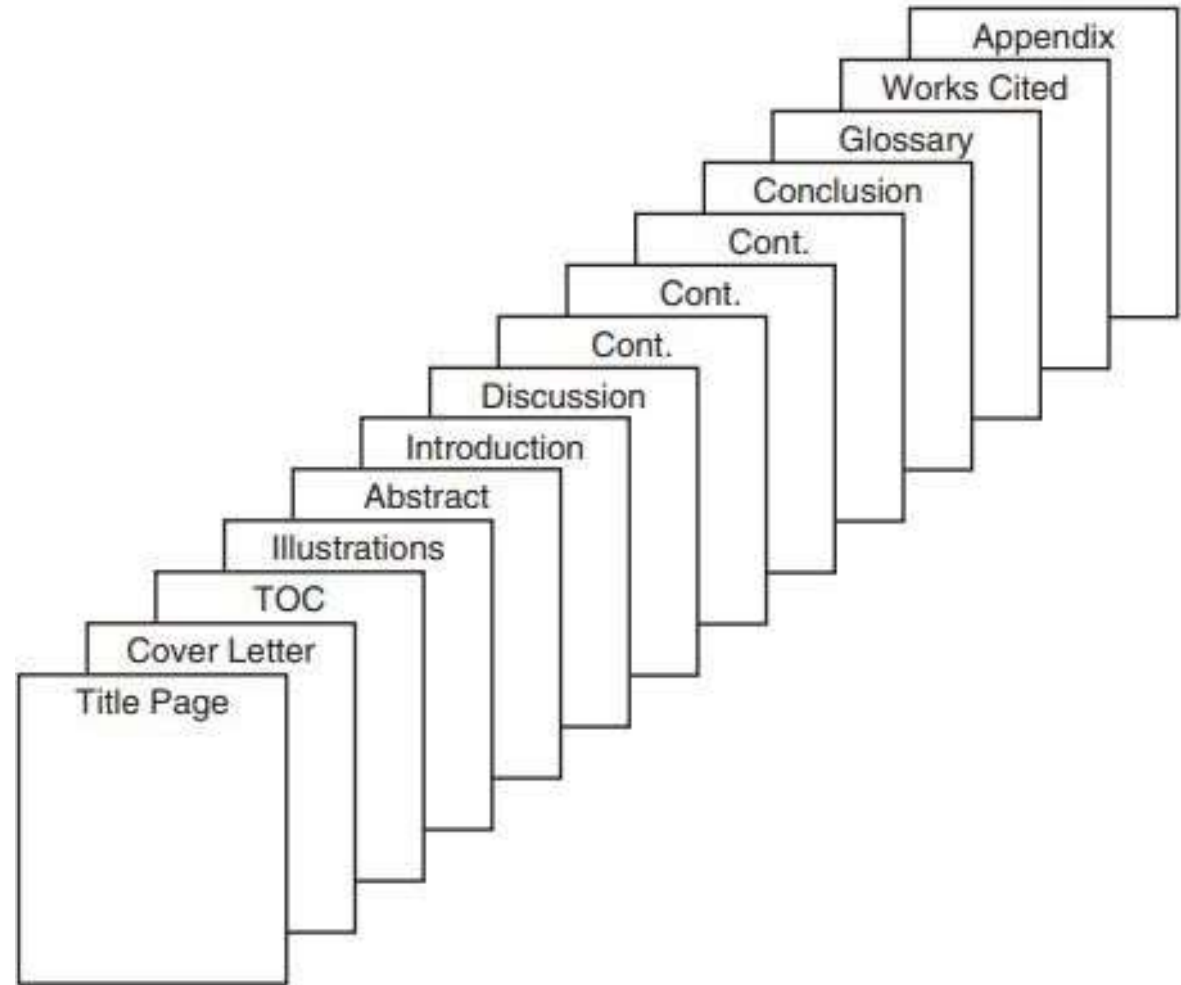
ABSTRACT

- Audience for the proposal will be diverse

- Low-Tech Terminology with quick information

- limited to approximately three to ten sentences

- 3-10 sentences

FUNCTION OF ABSTRACT

- Problems leading to your proposal

- Highlight the suggested solutions

- Present benefits your audience will derive.

EXAMPLE

Abstract

Due to deregulation and the recent economic recession, we must reduce our workforce by 12%.

Our plan for doing so involves

- Freezing new hires
- Promoting early retirement
- Reassigning second-shift supervisors to our Desoto plant
- Temporarily laying off third-shift line technicians

Achieving the above will allow us to maintain production during the current economic difficulties.

INTRODUCTION

- Purpose Statement
- Need Analysis

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this report is to propose the immediate installation of the 102473 Numerical Control Optical Scanner. This installation will ensure continued quality checks and allow us to meet agency specifications.

NEED ANALYSIS

- Provide specific details to explain the problem
- Doing so shows that you understand the reader's needs and highlights the proposal's importance

RESEARCHING CONTENT

- Interviewing customers, clients, vendors, and staff members

- Creating a survey and distributing it

- Visiting job sites to determine your audience's needs

- Using the Internet to locate sources of documentation

- Reading journals, books, newspapers, and other hard-copy text

Writing Persuasively

A successful proposal will make your audience act. Writing persuasively is especially important in an unsolicited proposal since your audience has not asked for your report.

To write persuasively, accomplish the following:

Arouse audience involvement—focus on your audience's needs that generated this proposal.

Refute opposing points of view in the body of your proposal.

Give proof to develop your content, through research and proper documentation.

Urge action—motivate your audience to act upon your proposal by either buying the product or service or adopting your suggestions or solutions.

ORGANIZING YOUR CONTENT

- **Comparison/contrast** Rely on this mode when offering options for vendors, software, equipment, facilities.

- **Cause/effect** Use this method to show what created a problem or caused the need for your proposed solution.

- **Chronology**. Show the timeline for implementation of your proposal, reporting deadlines to meet, steps to follow, and payment schedules.

- **Analysis**. Subdivide the topic into smaller parts to aid understanding.

Content Dev.

Your goal is to tell your readers how you would like to handle the problem and why you would handle it that way.

In this section, you should do the following:
- Identify the solution.
- State the objectives of the plan.
- Describe the plan's major and minor steps.
- Identify the deliverables or outcomes.

DISCUSSION

TABLE 1 Key Components of the Proposal's Discussion Section

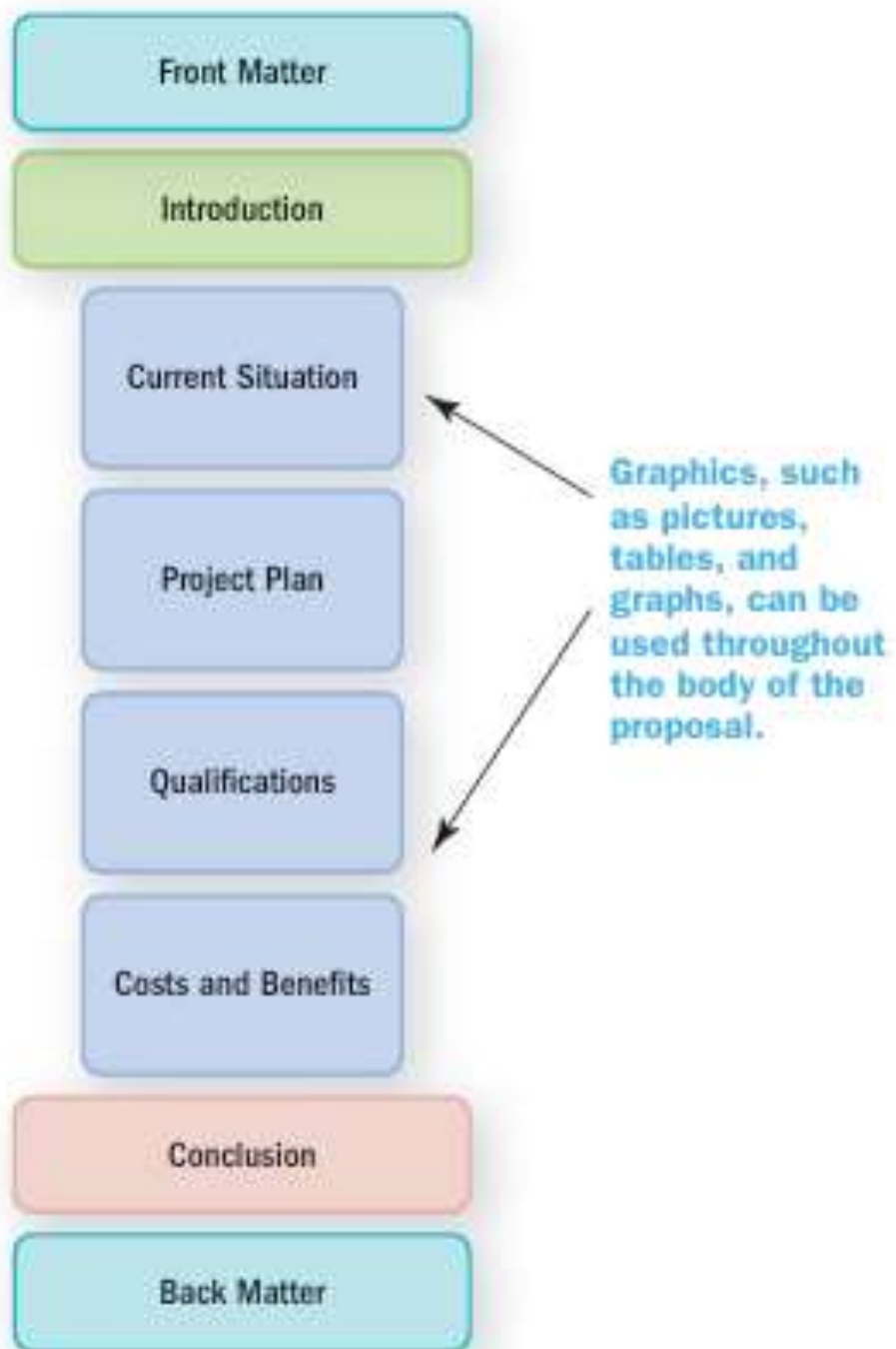|			
Analysis of the existing situation, your suggested solutions, and the benefits your audience will derive	Spatial descriptions of mechanisms, tools, facilities, or products	Process analysis explaining how the product or service works	Chronological instructions explaining how to complete a task
Comparative approaches to solving a problem	Comparing and contrasting purchase options	Managerial chains of command	Chronological schedules for implementation, reporting, maintenance, delivery, payment, or completion
Corporate and employee credentials	Years in business	Testimonials from satisfied clients	Certifications
Analysis of previous accomplishments	Biographical sketches of personnel	Chronological listing of projected milestones (forecasts)	Comparative cost charts

CONCLUSION

- Restate the problem, solutions and benefits

- Provide your readers closure

- Recommendation will suggest the next course of action.

- Specify when this action will or should occur and why that date is important.

Grant Proposals

In a grant proposal a person, or more likely, a non-profit institution asks funding agency or foundation to support an idea or program created by the institution

Researchers and nonprofit organizations prepare grant proposals to obtain funding for their projects

Front Matter

Introduction

Current Situation

Project Plan

Qualifications

Costs and Benefits

Conclusion

Back Matter

Graphics, such as pictures, tables, and graphs, can be used throughout the body of the proposal.

PLANNING GRANT PROPOSALS

Read the foundation's guidelines carefully

- to determine all the requirements or constraints set by the foundation (hard copy/soft copy, length, particular portions of text required)
- to determine the submission date in order to set a schedule for completing all the work
- to clarify the method of submitting the proposal
- to determine whether the foundation will fund your type of program and your type of organization

Collect all relevant data

Write or adapt usual elements of grant proposals (Intro, Discussion, Conclusion)

- write clearly
- use informative and persuasive details
- follow the constraints that the funder requires

Five elements common to grant proposals.

- Executive Summary
- Need
- Project Description
- Budget
- Organizational Information

Moves method for Intro

Move 1: Define the subject, stating clearly what the proposal is about.

Move 2: State the purpose of the proposal, preferably in one sentence.

Move 3: State the proposal's main point.

Move 4: Stress the importance of the subject.

Move 5: Offer background information on the subject.

Move 6: Forecast the organization of the proposal

DRAFTING THE PROJECT PLAN SECTION

Opening—Identify your overall solution to the problem Your opening might also include a list of project objectives so readers can see what goals your plan is striving to achieve.

Body—Walk the readers through your plan step-by-step. Address each major step separately, discussing the minor steps needed to achieve that major step. It is also helpful to tell readers why each major and minor step is needed.

Closing—Summarize the final deliverables, or outcomes, of your plan. The deliverables are the goods and services that you will provide when the project is finished

Describing Qualifications

Description Of Personnel—Short biographies of managers who will be involved in the project; demographic information on the company's workforce; description of support staff.

Description Of Organization—Corporate mission, philosophy, and history of the company; corporate facilities and equipment; organizational structure of the company.

Previous Experience—Past and current clients; a list of similar projects that have been completed; case studies that describe past projects.

Concluding with Costs and Benefit

The conclusion of a proposal usually makes most of these five moves:

Move 1: Make an obvious transition that signals the conclusion.
Move 2: State the costs of the project.
Move 3: Summarize the benefits of the project.
Move 4: Briefly describe the future if the readers accept the proposal.
Move 5: Thank the readers and offer contact information.

Practice

Write a proposal that suggests **_Changing the grading system_** OR **_Improving the parking situation at the university_**. Offer a solution that the administration might consider implementing. The proposal should be written to a named authority on campus