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Trade  
Centre

NORWEGIAN  
REFUGEE COUNCIL



# Proposal Writing Techniques

Trainer's Name

Mukhtar



# Learning objectives

**By the end of this module, you should be able to:**

1. Identify components of a cover letter.
2. Prepare bids in a way that is tailored to the job description or the needs of the client.
3. Create customizable proposal template from scratch.



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# Proposal Techniques



# Learning Outcomes

**By the end of this session, you should be able to:**

1. Identify components of a cover letter – salutation, intro, the hook/sales pitch, conclusion and closing
2. Prepare tailor-made cover letters for every job
3. Create customizable proposal template from scratch

# The cover letter

When submitting proposals, freelancers prepare a unique cover letter answering the how, when and what questions in the client's job requirements. It accompanies other aspects of your proposal.

Every proposal you write will include a cover letter. Therefore, it is worth taking a moment to master the art of doing it right.

# Components of a cover letter

- ***Salutation (opening)*** – Get the client's name, any name. By hook or by crook try to get the clients name.
- ***Introduction*** – Talk about your experience and similar projects you handled or accomplished.
- ***The hook / Sales pitch*** – Show the client that you are a good fit for the project. Answer the questions the project description poses.
- ***Conclusion*** – Conclude by either suggesting the client to contact you or indicate that you are ready for a chat!
- ***Closing and Signature*** – Finish your cover letter with a closing such as “Sincerely” or “Regards” or any of the good closing covered below. Your names should follow the closing as a signature.

## Salutation and Greeting

### ***Good salutation & greeting***

Dear [Client Name]

Hello [Client Name]

### ***Bad salutation & greeting***

Dear [Abbreviated Name]

Hey [Client Name]

Dear Sir/Madam

Hi [Client Name]

To whom it may concern

**Note:** If you can not find the name of the client, use:

Dear Client,

## Closing and Signature

### ***Good closing & signature***

Sincerely,

Regards,

Best regards,

With best regards,

Kind regards,

Most sincerely,

Respectfully,

Thank you,

Thank you for your consideration



## Closing and signature

### ***Bad closing & signature***

Affectionately,  
Best wishes,  
Cheers,  
Eagerly waiting for a response,  
Fondly,  
Warm regards,  
Warmest regards,  
Warmly,  
Take care,  
Take it easy,  
Have a great day,

### ***Bad closing & signature***

Have a nice day,  
Love,  
Smiles,  
XOXO,  
Yours faithfully,  
Abbreviations (e.g. Thx or tx),  
Any emoticon,  
Sincerely yours,  
Yours truly,  
Respectfully yours

# Upwork proposal examples

Upwork is the largest freelance marketplace online, with thousands of jobs posted daily.

Getting started as a freelancer on Upwork can be tough, because you are often competing with dozens of other freelancers for a single job, and many of them are well established on the platform, with lots of great ratings and reviews.

So, how can you **compete**?

Well, it helps to submit A LOT of proposals.

In the words of Wayne Gretzky...

*"You miss 100% of the shots you do not take."*

And it follows that the more shots you do take, the more likely you are to score.

But you should also ensure that you are submitting **QUALITY proposals**, proposals that will help you stand out from the crowd and give you a solid chance of winning the job.

So, **QUALITY** and **QUANTITY**. That is what you should be aiming for.

And that is where the following list of Upwork sample cover letters can help. They will enable you to apply for more jobs without resorting to obvious copy-and-paste tactics.

Each sample below is derived from a real cover letter that won a real job on Upwork.

Included are the screenshots of the original job postings and cover letters so you can see exactly what the job was and how it was won.

Below each sample, you will find a corresponding template you can use to quickly craft your own proposal for ANY job on Upwork.

There are 4 templates in total.

## 1. The short and sweet

This first proposal sample comes from Justin, a freelance web designer, and digital marketer.

### Job description

### SEM & SEO Consulting

SEM - Search Engine MarketingInvite OnlyPosted Aug 7, 2017 - [View Job Posting](#)

**Hourly Job**  
Less than 30 hrs/week  
More than 6 months

**\$\$\$ Expert Level**  
I am willing to pay higher rates  
for the most experienced  
freelancers

#### Details

We need someone to be our SEM / SEO consultant that can manage our Adwords marketing campaigns for all of the new cloud based products and services we will be introducing.

 Only freelancers located in the U.S. may apply.

Skills Required: Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Google AdWords WordPress  
Search Engine Marketing (SEM) Facebook Marketing

## The short and sweet

### The cover letter

#### Cover Letter

Hello [REDACTED]

Thanks for the job invite. It's a pleasure to meet you. Can you please tell me more about your cloud based products and services? Also, can you send me a link to your site? What web platform are you using for your site? Do you have a monthly budget in mind for PPC advertising?

I am google adwords search certified. I have done adwords work for clients from all over the world in a variety of industries including the following: hospitality, marketing, real estate, retail, and tech.

Best regards,  
Justin **less**

**The result:** Justin was hired for the job at \$50/hour.

**SEM & SEO Consulting**

Hired by [REDACTED]

**\$0.00 | \$50.00/hr**

**No time logged yet**

## The short and sweet

Justin explains:

*“I typically use the same model for Upwork proposals: I ask about 3-4 relevant questions about the job in the first paragraph, and I qualify myself in the second paragraph.”*

### *The Template*

Hello [Client Name],

[If applicable: Thanks for the job invite.] It is a pleasure to meet you. [Ask 3-4 short but relevant questions about the job here. This shows that you have read the description and know your stuff and invites the client to begin a conversation with you.]

[Qualify yourself briefly here. 1-2 lines that communicate why you would be a good fit for this job.]

Best regards,

[Your Name]

## Notes

- Justin addressed the client by name at the beginning of his cover letter, even though the client never mentioned their name in the job description. Often you can find the client's name mentioned in the reviews section of their profile. Going to the effort of finding their name and including it in your proposal will help you stand out from the crowd.
- Keep in mind that Justin was invited to this job, which gave him a much better chance of being hired. Justin believes the



key to getting hired is his strong profile and track record on Upwork.

- Justin taught himself web design in a two-month period, then started on Upwork at \$9/hour. A little more than a year later he had also taught himself digital marketing and was earning \$45-55/hour consistently.

# Activity – proposal writing (group work)

## 2. The screen-cast standout


This next proposal sample comes from Natalia, a freelance copywriter.

## Job description

# crowd funding campaign copywriter


Copywriting

Posted 2 months ago

 Hourly


Less than 30 hrs/week


Less than 1 week

 Entry Level

I am looking for freelancers with the lowest rates

## About the Client



 (4.45) 2 reviews

United States

Stamford 04:27 AM

7 Jobs Posted

100% Hire Rate, 1 Open Job

\$6k+ Total Spent

11 Hires, 6 Active

\$34.42/hr Avg Hourly Rate Paid

195 Hours

Member Since Aug 12, 2016

## Details

Looking for a copywriter to write a high-converting sales copy for our crowd funding campaign, that makes potential backers fall in love with our product! Freelancers previously experienced in writing content for crowdfunding campaigns desired, although not a requirement.

Project Type: One-time project

Other Skills: 

Copywriting

Creative Writing

Marketing Strategy

Sales Writing

## The screen-cast standout

### The cover letter

Hello,

Thank you for your invitation.

I saw that you are the creators of [REDACTED] so I recorded a 5min screencast with some comments about the copy on your website and options for the future crowd funding campaign. I think a few changes in the message flow could dramatically increase your conversion.

<https://www.screencast.com/t/ADSogRvF5Xdi>

Otherwise, I'm very fond of your products, both the community and [REDACTED]. I know first hand how life-changing it is to have real support and train oneself in positive thinking. I've been using Happify app for almost two years and I think it's important to have more such apps, products, and communities dedicated to increasing personal and overall happiness.

Here is an example of copy I wrote that goes immediately to the main benefit and the product description itself. [REDACTED]. But the copy message and style depends first and foremost on the language and profile of your audience. Know your customers and you will find your true voice.

If you want to collaborate with me lets discuss it in more detail over the chat.

Kind regards,  
Natalia Nowakowska [less](#)

See Natalia's screencast [here](#).

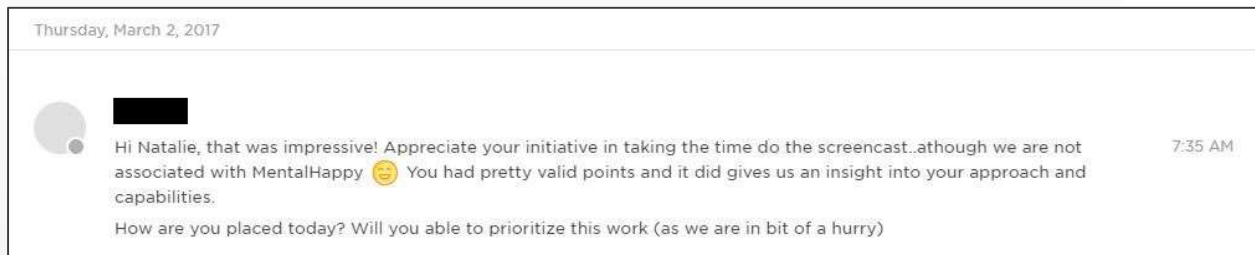
## The screencast-standout

Natalia explained via email:

*“This was my very first proposal screencast. It saves time to make a screencast to review a client’s website rather than writing endlessly to explain what you mean. This proposal was an answer to an invite to apply, but he invited a few people so I wanted to stand out.”*

## The result

The client was impressed:



Natalia ended up getting paid \$350 for this job, but that was not the end of their engagement:

## The screencast-standout

*“I’m still working for this client, and he is constantly thinking up new jobs I can do for the campaign because he is always happy with my work.”*

This Week

0:00 hrs

\$0.00

Last Week

0:00 hrs

\$0.00

Since Start

18:40 hrs

\$350.00

[View Work Diary >](#)

Rate

\$18.75

[Decrease rate](#)

Limit

15:00 hrs/week

Manual Time Allowed

Yes

Client



It's Mon 4:37 AM in ,

[Messages](#)

Contract Details

Active

Since Mar 2, 2017 - Contract ID

[View original job post](#)

[View Offer](#)

[Escrow Instructions](#)

[Give a Refund](#)

[End contract](#)

## The short and sweet

First, a warning! 

You should be selective including screencasts as part of your cover letter. They are not always appropriate. Use them if you find yourself trying to explain something to a client in writing that would be more easily explained on screen.

**Note:** You can use [Loom](#) software to create and share screencasts effortlessly. Reach out to the RESI mentors if you want to learn more about screencasts at [resikenymentorship@gmail.com](mailto:resikenymentorship@gmail.com).

Hello [Client's Name],

[If applicable: Thank you for your invitation.]

[Share a link to your screencast and briefly explain what it contains. You want to give the client a compelling reason to click the link and watch. Tell them what benefit they will get from it and note that it will only take up a few minutes of their time.]

[1 paragraph explaining why the job appeals to you. Bonus points if you can share why the goals of the client resonate with you personally.]

[1 paragraph sharing an example of your work, ideally closely related to the job you are applying for.]

If you want to collaborate with me let us discuss it in more detail over the chat.

Kind regards,

[Your Name]



# Activity – proposal writing (group work)

### 3. The honest newbie

This next proposal sample comes from Gray, a freelance graphic designer.

Job description

[Back to proposals list](#)

## In-App Purchase Screen for App Design Needed

Other - Design & Creative
Posted Jun 29, 2017 - [View Job Posting](#)

Fixed Price
\$ \$ \$96.00 Budget

 \$\$\$ Expert Level  
 I am willing to pay higher rates for the most experienced freelancers

### Details

Hello, I have a completed social slot game that uses in-app purchases and has a 'cashier' page or page listing the coins/credits players can purchase. I have an example of how I would like the page to be designed and I have the look and feel already completed. Essentially, we need someone who can translate the design of the coin purchase options into the game's existing message frame. Both the example of the cashier and the message board from the game are found inside the attached zip. The fonts used are copperplate gothic light, Puritan and Puritan Alternate. It needs to be delivered in a PSD so we can manipulate the file. I would also like to use one or both of the coin images in the attached file "SteamPunkSlot-elements\_Coin\_03.jpg" we have next to different amounts. We expect to require more designs in this theme moving forward so this could be an ongoing request. Can you please review and advise of an estimate?

Please include the capital city of Japan at the top of the cover letter. [less](#)

### Attachments (3)

- [message window.jpg \(75.8 KB\)](#)
- [coinpurchase.jpg \(206.3 KB\)](#)
- [SteamPunkSlot-elements\\_Coin\\_03.jpg \(237.2 KB\)](#)

Skills Required: Graphic Design Mobile UI Design

## The cover letter

### Cover Letter

TOKYO!

Hello [REDACTED]

I'd really like to work with you on this one if possible!

I do have a couple of questions, but first I'd like to make you an offer and some background so you can check my work out.

My name is Gray and I am a designer with nearly 20 years of experience, with 9 of those years in online gaming and games design. A lot of the games I have designed are slots and mobile games, so I am pretty familiar with what you need doing.

However, I am new to upwork and looking to get a few clients that I can build upon. If you take a look at my work and feel that I could help you, I'll do it for a 10% discount.

You'll get all the expected stuff like a great professional service and a fast turn around, at a bit less, and I get a bit more exposure.

You can have a look at my portfolio here: <http://graywalsh.com>

The question that I have is really to do with the source files. In your outline you mentioned that you have the look and feel sorted etc. So does that mean that you have source files / .psds all ready and the cashier can be incorporated into it?

If the above offer sounds like something you would be interested in, I'd love to hear from you.

Regards,

Gray. less

## The honest newbie

### The Result

Gray was hired to do the job at a 10% discount, but that was only the beginning. As he explained to me via email:

*“This also led to ongoing work and was for the guys who I am pricing up that \$8,000 job for. Its looking like it is going to be a bit more than that btw. Its for a complete game, and I'm currently going through the specs with them bit by bit.”*

### The template

*“I came at it with an honest approach and said basically ‘look, I have a lot of experience, but none on Upwork, help me out and I will do it for a 10% discount’. Win win.”*

**Note:** the following template does not contain the word **TOKYO**, which was included at the top of Gray's cover letter. Gray added that as a response to the client's request at the bottom of the job description. Many clients use this trick to quickly determine if you have actually read the job description.

So... make sure you actually read the job description!

Hello [**Client's Name**],

I would really like to work with you on this one if possible!

I do have a couple of questions, but first I would like to make you an offer and some background so you can check my work out.

[**Short paragraph explaining your work experience relevant to the job.**]

However, I am new to Upwork and looking to get a few clients that I can build upon. If you take a look at my work and feel that I could help you, I will do it for a 10% discount.

You will get all the expected stuff like a great professional service and a fast turnaround, at a bit less, and I get a bit more exposure.

[If applicable, include a link to your portfolio website here, or invite the client to check out the work samples you have attached to your proposal.]

[Ask 1-2 short but relevant questions about the job here. This shows that you have read the description and know your stuff, and also invites the client to begin a conversation with you.]

If the above offer sounds like something you would be interested in, I would love to hear from you.

Regards,

[Your Name]

# Activity – proposal writing (group work)

## 4. The quick lister

This next proposal sample comes from Susan, a freelance editor, and proof-reader.

### Job description

### Expert Proofreader/editor (native english speaker) for a legal document

Editing & Proofreading Posted 2 days ago

**Fixed Price** **\$150** Budget

**\$\$\$ Expert Level**  
I am willing to pay higher rates for the most experienced freelancers

[Flag as inappropriate](#)

**About the Client**

★★★★★ (5.00) 42 reviews

**Switzerland**  
Geneva 05:45 PM

**55 Jobs Posted**  
79% Hire Rate, 1 Open Job

**\$7,763 Total Spent**  
58 Hires, 5 Active

**\$8.36/hr Avg Hourly Rate Paid**  
762 Hours

Member Since Jul 20, 2010

#### Details

Dear Upworkers

I am looking for an expert proofreader/editor for the following mission:

- Expert proofreader (native english speaker) for a legal document (3777 words = 9 pages) written by a non native.
- Document needs to be reviewed soon after hiring and the document must be sent back by tomorrow 28 March 2016 08:00 Central Europe Time.
- I need you to correct/improve the text without changing the meaning of the original sentences. However, the corrected document need to give the impression that it has been written by an educated native speaker.

In your application, please confirm that your can keep the information and documents regarding this project strictly confidential. Also, please mention if you have any past experience for such work or/and in the legal field. Finally, please add the code 883 in your application so that I can be sure you have read this description.

Thank you very much for your interest in my project.



## The cover letter

### ^ Cover Letter

Code: 833

Hi there,

I would be happy to work on your document immediately.

1. I can have it back to you within a few hours of receiving the file.
2. I maintain the highest standards of confidentiality. All documents are kept in a password-protected folder on a private computer and are deleted the moment I deliver them back to you.
3. I have edited legal contracts and business contracts in the past.
4. I am also in Europe so there will be no confusion of time zones.

I'm a native English speaker with a Masters Degree. I have a meticulous eye for detail and a concentrated focus on reader experience. My approach to projects is fast, flexible and friendly!

I provide comprehensive proofreading for errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, tense agreement, typos, and factual errors. I provide line editing for style, structure, language, flow, pacing, phrasing, repetition, clarity, conciseness, and effective word choice. I can make your entire document cohesive and polish it so it reads as though it was written by an educated, native English speaker.

What you receive:

One document edited using MS Word Track Changes  
 One document with all changes accepted and comments removed  
 One round of revisions (if necessary)  
 Delivery by March 28, 2016.

Send me a quick message and we can figure out if we are a good fit to work together!

Kind regards,

Susan

## The honest newbie

### The Result

Susan explained via email:

*“I bid \$125, and it was accepted immediately. This job took me 90 minutes to complete and 30 minutes to double check. As this was a legal document, I was careful to edit in a way that did not change the meaning of any of the sentences. This Swiss lawyer had English that was near perfect.”*

Susan concludes:

*“I delivered the files within 2 hours and the client added a \$40 bonus to my payment and left me 5-star feedback. \$165 for 2 hours is a pretty good rate.”*

**Expert Proofreader/editor (native english speaker)  
for a legal document**

\$165.00 earned

Fixed Price

Mar 2016

★★★★★ 5.00

*It was such a pleasure to work with Susan. She edited and proofread a nine-page legal opinion written by a non-native speaker. The result of her work was just perfect. She managed to correct and greatly improve the text and keep the exact same meaning. She started to work on the document right away and finished the editing one day before the deadline. The speed and the quality of the work were so impressive that I decided to give her bonus (she did not ask for any). I can only strongly recommend Susan to any employer. I look forward to working with her again in the near future.*

Hi [Client's Name],

I would be happy to work on your [document/job/whatever] immediately.

[Numbered list covering the most important requirements mentioned in the job description, and how you plan to meet them. This shows that you fully understand what is needed and have a plan for making it happen.]

[1-2 paragraphs detailing your background/expertise, as relevant to the job at hand.]

What you will receive:

[Short list that paints a clear picture of what you will deliver (and by when) should the client hire you to do the job.]

Send me a quick message and we can figure out if we are a good fit to work together!

Regards

[Your Name]

**Note:** Not included in the template: the “Code 833” at the top of Susan’s proposal. This was a response to the client’s request hidden within the job description. Many clients use this trick to quickly determine if you have read it thoroughly.

## What Next?

Pick your favorite template above, jump on over to Upwork, find some jobs you like, and use that template to quickly craft and submit effective proposals.

# Activity – proposal writing (group work)

# Questions?

# Thank you