




WRITING A PROPOSAL





A proposal provides sufficient information to persuade the reviewer that the proposed work represents an innovative and profitable approach to an important problem.

A proposal is an offer to do something or a recommendation that something be done.

A proposal's purpose is to ***persuade*** readers to improve conditions, authorize work on a project, accept a service or product, or otherwise support a plan for solving a problem or doing a job

WHY DO WE WRITE PROPOSALS?

They are written for decision makers: managers, executives, directors, clients, trustees, board members, or community leaders.

Proposals decide:

- whether your suggestions are worthwhile,
- whether your project will materialize,
- Whether your product is useful.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS OF PROPOSAL?

The process has three stages:

1. Client X needs a service or product
2. Firms A, B, and C propose a plan for meeting the need
3. Client X awards the job to the firm offering the best proposal

PROPOSALS ARE CLASSIFIED INTO CATEGORIES

There are three classifications:

1. Origin
2. Audience
3. Intention

BASED ON ORIGIN

1. Solicited
2. Unsolicited

SOLICITED PROPOSALS

When a company has a particular problem to be solved or a job to be done, it will solicit, or invite, proposals.

The company will notify you and other competitors by preparing a **request for proposals (RFP)**,

which is a set of instructions that specify the exact type of work to be done along with guidelines on how and when the company wants the work completed.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Mesa Community College is soliciting proposals to construct and to install fifty individual study carrels in its Holmes Memorial Library. These carrels must be highly serviceable and conform to all specification standards of the American Library Association (ALA). Proposals should include the precise measurements of the carrels to be installed, the specific acoustical and lighting benefits, Internet access, and the types and amount of storage space offered. Work on constructing and installing the carrels must be completed no later than the start of the Fall Semester, August 21, 2009. Proposals should include a schedule of when different phases of work will be completed and an itemized budget for labor, materials, equipment, and necessary tests to ensure high-quality acoustical performance. Contractors should detail their qualifications, including a description of similar recent work and a list of references. Proposals should be submitted in triplicate no later than March 1, 2009, to:

Mrs. Barbara Feldstein-Archer
Director of the Library
Mesa Community College
Mesa, CO 80932-0617
BFeldstein-archer@Mesa.edu

UNSOLICITED PROPOSALS

With an unsolicited proposal, you—not the reader—make the first move.

Unlike a solicited proposal, in which the company to which you are submitting the proposal knows about the problem,

your unsolicited proposal has **to convince readers** that

(1) **there is a problem** and

(2) **you and your firm are the ones to solve it.**

BASED ON AUDIENCE:

1. Internal Proposal
2. External Proposal

INTERNAL PROPOSALS

An internal proposal is written to one or several decision maker(s) in your own organization who have to sign off or approve your plan.

An internal proposal can deal with a variety of topics, including changing a policy or procedure, requesting additional personnel, or purchasing or updating equipment or software.

EXTERNAL PROPOSALS

An external proposal is sent to a decision maker outside your company.

It might go to a potential client you have never worked for or to a previous or current client.

An external proposal can also be sent to a government funding agency.

External proposals tend to be more formal than internal ones.

BASED ON INTENTION:

- 1. Planning:** Suggests ways of solving a problem or bringing about improvements. It answers the following question:
 - What are the benefits of following your suggestions.
- 2. Research:** or grant proposal request approval and funding for a research project
- 3. Sales:** It offers a service or product. They are usually external proposals.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL

- 1. Approach writing a proposal as a problem-solving activity.**
 - Everything in your proposal should relate to the problem, and the organization of your proposal should reflect your ability to solve problems.
- 2. Regard your audience as skeptical readers.**
 - Even though you offer a plan that you think will benefit readers, do not be overconfident that they will automatically accept it as the best and only way to proceed.

3. Research your proposal thoroughly.

- You will have to research your topic by shopping for the best prices, comparing prices and services, verifying schedules, visiting customers, making site visits, and interviewing

4. Scout out what your competitors are doing.

- Become familiar with your competitors' products or services, have a fair idea about their market costs, and be able to show how your company's work is better

5. Prove that your proposal is workable.

- The bottom-line question from your reader is “Will this plan work?” Your proposal should contain no statements that say, “Let’s see what happens if we do X or Y.”

6. Be sure your proposal is financially realistic.

- Is it worth the money?

7. Be ethical.

- Don’t misinterpret your product or service by exaggerating its benefits

8. Package your proposal attractively

- Make sure that your proposal is well presented: inviting, attractive, and easy to read.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENT

The proposal will be evaluated on

- the technical approach having a reasonable chance of meeting the topic objective,
- the approach being innovative, not routine,
- the proposer's capability to implement the technical approach, i.e. has or can obtain people and equipment suitable for the task.

SIX STEPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL

1. proposal should define the problem and state how the proposed plan will solve this problem.
2. do not assume that your reader will believe your solution is the best.
3. proposal should be researched thoroughly.
4. prove that your solution works.
5. proposal should be financially feasible.
6. finished proposal should look attractive.

TECHNICAL CONTENT

1. problem
2. Proposed solution
3. Needed equipment/personnel
4. Schedule
5. Budget
6. Evaluation system
7. Expected benefits
8. Summary/conclusions

A GENERAL MODEL FOR PROPOSAL

Introduction

1. Statement of problem
2. Background
3. Need
4. Benefits
5. Qualifications of Personnel
6. Data Sources
7. Limitations
8. Scope

Body

Conclusion

BODY OF THE PROPOSAL

1. Methods
2. Timetable
3. Material and Equipment
4. Personnel
5. Available Facilities
6. Needed Facilities
7. Cost
8. Expected Results
9. Feasibility

CONCLUSION OF THE PROPOSAL

1. Summary of the key points
2. Request for Action