

Branding Proposal Worksheet

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Proposals are one of the most valuable tools available to you as a brand strategist because they can help you create and capture new leads. Unfortunately, while they are a powerful tool in your marketing arsenal, they might not exactly be your specialty. Because you're in branding, you might not have any real training on how to write or submit proposals. But, because you're in branding, half of the lead generating process will be convincing the client that they need you to help them.

The majority of the high-end clients you want won't even consider you without a proposal. If you want to work for them then you have to take the time to learn how to write quality, persuasive proposals that get them talking, and hiring.

This worksheet will help you learn to write winning proposals that tell the client what you can do for them, and that you're worth what you're charging using sales techniques, and proposal writing techniques.

Let's get started.

1. Creating a Problem Statement

The first goal of any problem statement should be to outline the problem that the client is facing. Think of it in terms of creating a strategy, you would have to outline the problem before you can create a solution. A proposal is the same way.

The problem statement, which is placed at the start of the proposal, should outline the client's problems and not just what they've asked for in a job listing or request for a bid. While you could just list a couple of basic required services and leave it at that, this won't make your proposal stand out in any way. It's boring, requires no research, and probably won't win you the bid.

Instead, you have to take a look at what your client really needs. What problems are they facing that would require them to hire a brand manager? What problems can you solve? Dig into the company a little and see if you can't come up with core problems at the heart of their desire to hire a brand manager.

Outlining the actual issues driving the company to make a hire, and doing so from the start of your proposal, will help you to grab the client's attention, and get the job. Let's take a look at how that would work out.

Write the surface problem the client is hiring for:

Example:

ABC Company is looking for a brand marketing manager to take over their marketing team.

Your turn:

What does the client need you to solve for them?

Write an actual problem for the client's need listed above.

Here are a few examples based on the example listed above:

1. ABC Company is launching a new product and needs someone to oversee its launch and marketing campaign
2. ABC Company recently retired their brand manager and are in need of a new one, who is hopefully experienced enough to take over from an experienced brand manager.
3. ABC Company has acquired a bad reputation through years of faulty management, but has recently been purchased by another company. The new owners would like to rebrand ABC Company and present a new image to their consumers in the hopes of improving popularity.

Now you try

Take a few minutes to do a bit of research and come up with actual company problems. Why do they need a brand manager? Sometimes the answer is as simple as “they need a better web presence”, but sometimes you will find real answers.

2. Offering a Solution

After outlining the issues at hand, you can take a few minutes to offer a custom, tailored solution. The initial research you did for the first problem will help you out with most of the rest of your proposal. All you have to do now is target their problems with solutions of your own.

It’s important to offer solutions at this stage and not just skills. Anyone can offer skills, you want to distinguish yourself as someone who can solve their problems, not just send your resume.

Create a recommended solution for the problems you listed above.

Here's an example based on Example 1:

Create a custom branding campaign designed to promote consumer awareness and interest in the product. Create social pages, get bloggers interested in doing reviews shortly before launch, and release multiple videos for promotion, in order to garner interest and hype before the launch. Follow up after sales begin with direct incentives to review and share to keep sales moving. Run an ad-campaign on local TV networks and online PPC ads to ensure that the maximum amount of viewers are aware of and interested in the new product.

Your turn:

While this example is a bit long, you can see how creating an initial problem statement allows you to tailor the solution to their needs. By researching the client's problems, you put yourself in a position where you can solve their problems, not just list your skills.

3. Creating Perceived Value

Once you've told the client what you can do for them, you can get started making yourself seem like the best person for the job. While you've already gotten started by creating a custom pitch for them, it's not enough. If you want the job, you have to take it further.

You have an advantage here because you're the branding expert. You know what needs to be done, and they don't. You can make yourself appear more valuable by outlining the benefits of your services. Most of your competitors won't bother to do this, they'll just list their solutions or services and move on. You'll make your pitch stand out by taking the time to tell the client how your services can help them with their problems. Doing so creates perceived value for you and improves your proposal.

Ask yourself, "*What can I do for this client?*"

Let's use the example above, as well as your own answers for this part of the exercise.

List three to five reasons the client would benefit from hiring you.

Examples:

1. Increase potential ROI at launch by creating pre-launch Hype.
This will ensure better sales, and a better market for the product.
2. Follow up with consumers after the purchase to A) ensure that they are happy and B) ask them to leave positive reviews. This

helps to improve and control the product image and helps to increase sales, resulting in a direct ROI.

3. Run an online and offline ad campaign to increase awareness of the product.

Now give it a go with your own problems and solutions:

Once you've established yourself as valuable to the client, you can introduce pricing. Avoid the mistake of offering a lower price in hopes of getting the client. Unless they've specifically stated that they are on a budget, a higher price tag increases your perceived value. Offer return on investment, not budget prices.

Finally, while your price tag won't deter a good client, a confusing pricing section will. Make sure that it's easy to read and understand, and that you're breaking pricing down at a high level. Minute details are too confusing for a proposal.

4. Ask for Action

You might think you're finished with your proposal, but once you've done all the work, you have one thing left to do. Take a minute to ask the client to get back to you. It might sound odd, and it might sound like it will be too much of a marketing pitch, but that's what a proposal is. Including a call to action at the end of your proposals can and will increase their success rate.

Even if you've done a great job with your proposal, the client might still forget to get back to you. Nip the problem in the bud and create a call to action that makes it easy for clients to move forward with the proposal.

Over time you'll get better at writing proposals, but for now, keep in mind that each client has their own problems that they want you to solve. Telling them how you can help with that problem is your best chance for a successful pitch.

Good luck with your branding proposals.

You can definitely see immediate results if you implement even one of the suggestions in this worksheet. Of course, your results will improve even more when you implement several or all of them!

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