

Name of the faculty: Dr. T. Hepzibah Mary

Business Proposals

1. Business Proposals:

By definition, a proposal is a persuasive presentation for consideration of something. A proposal is a written document that seeks to persuade the reader to accept a suggested plan of action. The objective of a proposal's argument can be almost anything, but it is usually to convince the client that the proposal is for his/her best. Some reasons for business proposals are:

- To buy a service or product from the client
- To convince the client of the existence of a situation or to take a course of action
- To convince your department of your need for a new technology
- To provide you with funds (for example, a loan or grant or to become a partner or shareholder)

A proposal is an offer to be sold to clients and should contain information that would enable them to decide whether to approve the project, to approve or hire you to do the work or both. To write a successful proposal, put yourself in the place of your client – the recipient of the proposal – and think about what sort of information that client would need to feel confident about having you do the project.

2. Key Elements of Business Proposals:

A winning business proposal will help the client

- Gain comfort with you and your organization and
- Understand the value of your solution.

- **Solutions** – Explain how your business is the best amongst other bidders to provide solutions. Also ensure that these solutions can be implemented successfully. After you have written a lead paragraph on the company's needs and problems, follow up with a solid presentation of how your business can provide solutions. The key here is to promise solutions you can deliver.
- **Benefits** – State how your business can maintain confidentiality and meet prescribed deadlines. Outline the benefits to be gained by the funding company by doing business with you. All winning business proposals clearly outline for the company the benefits to be gained from doing business with you. If your small business can offer complete confidentiality and meet tight deadlines state it in your benefits section.
- **Credibility** – Establish credibility by highlighting your previous projects – successful projects in the same area, you can also present some testimonials that speak for your potential. This is often the overlooked portion of a business proposal but all winning proposals glow with credibility. If you have worked with clients in the same field or have an award-winning business, then third-party endorsements will build credibility.
- **Samples** – Include in the appendix a small sample of your work in similar area. This will serve as evidence of your ability to accomplish the project if offered. A business proposal with samples and evidence of your ability to deliver is vital to gaining the winning bid. A small sample of your work can show your ability to do the job.
- **Targeted** – A winning business proposal is all about communication. Speak in the language spoken by your intended audience. If the proposal evaluators are from an engineering background or financial department use the appropriate jargon.

- **Explain that you understand what the client needs and why it is important** – In your proposal clearly demonstrate your understanding of not only the client's stated challenge, but also the secondary impact to their organization of not solving the issue. A majority of your time and effort should be placed here. As the client reads your proposal, they might even recognize new, important reasons this issue needs to be solved.
- **Demonstrate how you have solved similar problems for others** – Share stories in your proposal about how you solved challenges for organizations facing similar issues as your client. Even if you have not solved the identical issue at hand, illustrate how and why the client might find that another client's predicament is similar enough to demonstrate where you delivered solid results. That said, be candid if you have never before delivered the exact solution you are proposing to your client. The client will find out and your honesty will build trust. Do not make sensational, unsupported claims in your proposal about being the only people on the planet who could possibly solve the client's issue. Identify any potential risks of achieving their goals, and your plan to avoid those challenges.
- **Talk about yourself very little and the competition even less** – In your proposal use your existing customer's words to talk about you. For example: "Our clients describe us as responsive, innovative, and reliable". Nobody believes the vendor's claims about themselves. But, your client's words are credible. The reader gives those words almost as much weight as a third-party reference. It may seem like a subtle difference, but adding your client's voice makes a positive difference. Though you can certainly be conscious of the competition, never say anything negative about your competition (especially in a written proposal). Your client can say something negative about other vendors, and when they do, the only appropriate response is "It's unfortunate that you've had that experience". If you add fuel to the fire, you will only get caught in the mess.
- **Pricing and Timing** – Your business proposal must directly connect your pricing (their investment) to the value the client will receive from your solution. Successful proposals portray a solution as an investment and clearly show what happens if the client does not solve the issue at hand. Illustrate the costs, benefits, timing, and financial impact of your solution. Remember it is essential your proposal focuses on results, not resources. The customer wants to solve a problem, not buy hours or items.

Ultimately, the best business proposal is none. When your company is well-positioned and unique in the marketplace then it is only you who can meet the needs of the company requesting the bids. If a retail craft chain is looking for a web design firm and your company specializes in web creation for the crafts industry you might be able to circumvent the proposal process. In the end, you may not win all bids, but will win business that best matches your company to the prospective business. A win-win for all parties involved.

3. **Types of Business Proposals:**

Consider the situations that necessitate proposals. A company may send out a public announcement requesting proposals for a specific project. This public announcement – called a Request for Proposals (RFP), or Request for Quotation (RFQ), or an Invitation for Bids (IFB) – could be issued through newspapers, trade journals, Chamber of Commerce channels, or individual letters. Firms or individuals interested in the project would then write proposals in which they summarize their qualifications, project schedules and costs and discuss their approach to the project. The recipient of all these proposals would then evaluate them, select the best candidate and then work up a contract.

- Internal and External – according to the target audience
- Solicited and Unsolicited – according to the source

In both cases, proposals are usually read by people in positions of authority.

- a. **Internal Proposals** – A proposal written to someone within your organization (a business, a government agency, etc.) is an internal proposal. Some business contexts in which internal proposals may arise are:
- The Chairman of a company asks the Personnel Manager to develop a training programme for the new recruits.
 - The Vice President (Production), of a company, asks the Senior Manager to suggest a new design for increased productivity in the plant.
 - The CEO of a business organization asks the Project Manager to suggest a project management plan to deal with huge assignments to be carried out for companies abroad.

With internal proposals, you may not have to include certain sections (such as, qualifications); you may also not have to include bulky information. These proposals can be submitted in the form of a manuscript or a memorandum. The proposal can be built within the memo or it can be attached to memo.

- b. **External Proposals** – An external proposal is one written from one separate, independent organization or individual to another such entity. The following situations may entitle an external proposal:
- An independent consultant can propose to do a project for another firm.
 - An advertising agency may propose to design a scheme for a nationwide advertising campaign for a bank.
 - A company in India may propose to set up a wastewater treatment plant in another country.

As opposed to an internal proposal, an external proposal is sent in the form of a letter as it goes outside the organization. As in the case of internal proposals, an external proposal can also be sent in the form of a manuscript along with a separate covering letter.

- c. **Solicited Proposals** – A solicited proposal arises out of a specific demand or when the client asks for a proposal. In other words, a proposal is solicited, if the recipient of the proposal in some way requested the proposal. In proposals of this kind, a corporation or government body seeks a business to fulfill a project or complete a task and thereby allows companies to bid for the project. An open bid is placed on the market with other companies competing for an interview spot. The winning candidate is offered the project. A solicited proposal provides you with a description of what the client wants. Many also provide you with formatting instructions for your proposal and the evaluation criteria that will be used to make a selection. Sometimes you will make a suggestion to a potential client and they will ask you to submit a proposal so that they can consider your suggestion. This counts as a solicited proposal because they are expecting it and you have a chance to talk to the customer and gain an understanding of their needs.

Many businesses and government agencies issue requests for proposals. These RFPs outline a particular need or service the business or agency wants to outsource, as well as the information they require in the proposal. Interested parties develop a proposal that details the ability of the company to provide the service, as well as projected costs and delivery dates. The proposal serves as a job application that competes with other applications. Stick to the structure of the RFP, as the evaluation committee will assess your proposal on your apparent understanding of the RFP.

- d. **Unsolicited Proposals** – You can initiate a proposal yourself. When you initiate a proposal it is an unsolicited proposal and can be either an internal or an external proposal, depending on whether the proposal is for your employer or some outside agency. In other words, a proposal is categorized as unsolicited when it is sent without the recipients asking for it. For example, you might perceive that some changes in the hiring policies of your company could improve the morale and performance of the company's employees. If you submit such a proposal, it is, technically, an unsolicited internal proposal. On the other hand, suppose a governmental agency attempts to improve working conditions in your industry and advertises the availability of funds for rectifying common problems. The agency invites any qualified person to submit a grant proposal using the agency's guidelines. If you were to submit such a proposal, you would be preparing an externally solicited document.

An unsolicited proposal is a document about your products and services. They are usually produced individually and given to someone specific (although it may be to someone you do not know very well). Unsolicited proposals are often in letter form, unless they are large documents, in which case they are bound. If you are writing an unsolicited proposal try, focusing as much effort on graphics design as you put into a brochure. Every piece of copy, every aspect of the layout and every graphic should contribute to persuading the client. Both brochures and unsolicited proposals tend to suffer from a lack of information about the client.

In some cases, you may see how your business can provide a valuable service to another organization but the business has offered no RFP. You can develop an unsolicited business proposal to try to convince this business that it should hire your business. Unlike a solicited proposal where the organization has already identified the need, your unsolicited proposal needs to demonstrate both the unidentified need and why the company should use your business to deal with it. Unsolicited proposals should very specifically address the organization they target.

- e. **Continuation** – These are essentially reminders/updates for ongoing (and already approved) projects. These are almost not even proposals, in the sense that you are not asking for anything new or pitching your case. Instead, all you have to do is remind the audience of the project they previously approved, report on its progress and account for any changes and ask for permission to continue. Usually, continuation proposals are reserved for requesting funds when starting a new phase in a project.
- d. **Renewal** – Once an ongoing project has finished or outlived its usefulness, a renewal proposal can be written to make the case for its continued support. Much like continuation proposals, these are less about convincing the audience of the project's worth by itself and more about showing why it is valuable to continue doing it. This usually means weighing up the return benefits with the resources it takes to upkeep the practice.
4. **Business Proposal** – A business proposal is a document that is designed to persuade an organization to buy a product or service. While business proposals can take the form of a less-structured proposal letter, they are often long documents that might include anything from engineering specifications to equipment lists to project staffing, depending on what is requested in the RFP.
5. **Project Proposal** - A project proposal is a request for financial assistance to implement a project. The proposal outlines the plan of the implementing organisation about the project, giving extensive information about the intention, for implementing it, the ways to manage it and the results to be delivered from it. A project proposal is a detailed description of a series of activities aimed at solving a certain problem. In order to be successful, the document should:
 - provide a logical presentation of a research idea
 - illustrate the significance of the idea
 - show the idea's relationship to past actions
 - articulate the activities for the proposed projectDesigning a project is a process consisting of two elements, which are equally important and thus essential to forming a solid project proposal:
 - Project planning (Formulation of project elements)
 - Proposal writing (Converting the plan into a project document)The project proposal should be a detailed and directed manifestation of the project design. It is a means of presenting the project to the outside world in a format that is immediately recognised and accepted.
6. **Academic Research Proposal** - An academic proposal is the first step in producing a thesis or major

project. Its intent is to convince a supervisor or academic committee that your topic and approach are sound, so that you gain approval to proceed with the actual research. As well as indicating your plan of action, an academic proposal should show your theoretical positioning and your relationship to past work in the area. An academic proposal is expected to contain these elements:

- a **rationale** for the choice of topic, showing why it is important or useful within the concerns of the discipline or course. It is sensible also to indicate the limitations of your aims – do not promise what you cannot possibly deliver.
- a **review** of existing published work (“the literature”) that relates to the topic. Here you need to tell how your proposed work will build on existing studies and yet explore new territory.
- an **outline** of your intended approach or methodology (with comparisons to the existing published work), perhaps including costs, resources needed, and a timeline of when you hope to get things done.

Particular disciplines may have standard ways of organizing the proposal. In any case, in organizing your material, be sure to emphasize the specific focus of your work – your research question. Use headings, lists, and visuals to make reading and cross-reference easy. And employ a concrete and precise style to show that you have chosen a feasible idea and can put it into action. Here are some general tips:

- Start with why your idea is worth doing (its contribution to the field), then fill in how (technicalities about topic and method).
- Give enough detail to establish feasibility, but not so much as to bore the reader.
- Show your ability to deal with possible problems or changes in focus.
- Show confidence and eagerness.

7. A Sample Business Proposal:

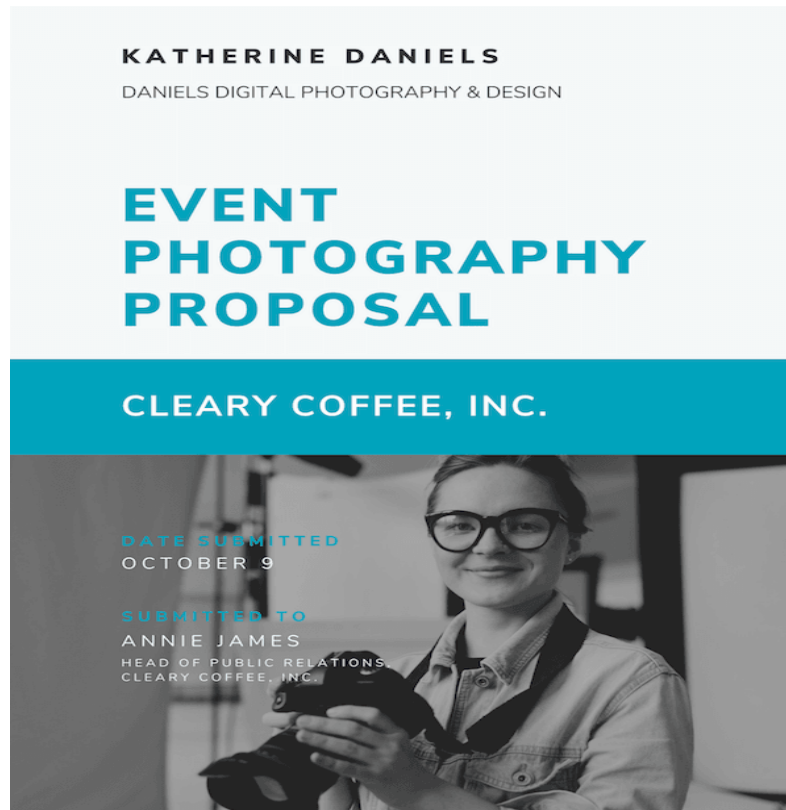
a. Title Page:

Use the title page to introduce yourself and your business. Be sure to include your name, your company's name, the date you submitted the proposal, and the name of the client or individual you are submitting the proposal to.

Date of Submission:

31st September 2021

September 31, 2021



b. Table of Contents:

A table of contents will let your potential client know exactly what will be covered in the business proposal. If you are sending your proposal electronically, include a clickable table of contents that will jump to the different sections of your proposal for easy reading and navigation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
1. Executive Summary	
2. Event Overview	
3. Recommended Services	
4. Qualifications	
5. Pricing	
6. Terms and Conditions	

c. Executive Summary:

The executive summary details exactly why you are sending the proposal and why your solution is the best for the prospective client. It outlines the benefits of your company's products or services, and how they can

solve your potential client's problem. After reading your executive summary, even if they don't read the full proposal, the prospect should have a clear idea of how you can help them.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This proposal outlines a plan to photograph the Cleary Barista Competition for Cleary Coffee, Inc. We will provide you with beautiful photos of your event that are cohesive with the Cleary Coffee, Inc. brand.

While our competitors photograph events across various industries, Daniels Digital Photography & Design specializes in the food and beverage industries. Our robust portfolio of work in these areas is what sets us apart from the rest.

d. **Statement of the problem or need:**

This is where you provide a summary of the issue impacting the potential client. It provides you with the opportunity to show them you have a clear understanding of their needs and the problem they need help solving.

EVENT OVERVIEW

Cleary Coffee, Inc. needs high-quality photos for its annual Cleary Barista Competition. They would like candid and posed photographs of the baristas and the audience, taken from a variety of angles.

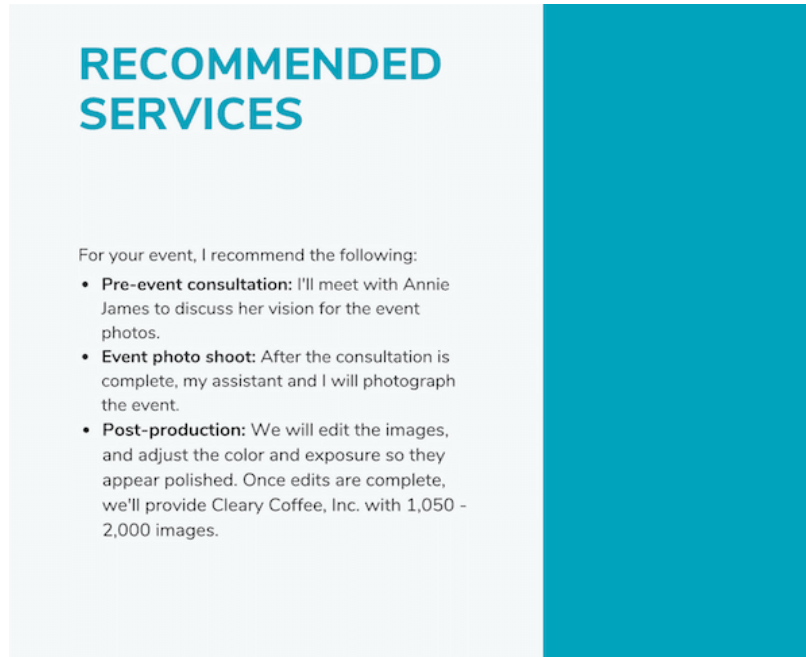
They would also like photos of the baristas' creations, as well as the Cleary Coffee, Inc. products.

These images will be used on their website, for marketing campaigns, and online and print media.

e. **Proposed solution:**

Here is where you offer up a strategy for solving the problem. Make sure your proposed solution is

customized to the client's needs so they know you have created this proposal specifically for them. Let them know which deliverables you will provide, the methods you will use, and a timeframe for when they should expect them.



RECOMMENDED SERVICES

For your event, I recommend the following:

- **Pre-event consultation:** I'll meet with Annie James to discuss her vision for the event photos.
- **Event photo shoot:** After the consultation is complete, my assistant and I will photograph the event.
- **Post-production:** We will edit the images, and adjust the color and exposure so they appear polished. Once edits are complete, we'll provide Cleary Coffee, Inc. with 1,050 - 2,000 images.

f. **Qualifications:**

Are you qualified to solve this prospect's problem? Why should they trust you? Use this section to communicate why you're best for the job. Include case studies of client success stories, mention any relevant awards or accreditations to boost your authority.



QUALIFICATIONS

As a professional event photographer for over 10 years, I've worked with over 500 business in the food and beverage industries, and provided them with the highest quality event photography. My work has been featured in publications such as Business Weekly, Top Small Businesses Magazine, and the Artisan Coffee monthly newsletter.

Daniels Digital Photography & Design specializes in event photography, with an emphasis on capturing the essence and style of your gathering, so it tells a consistent story with your brand. We'll provide you with high-resolution images for your website and marketing materials.

g. **Pricing:**

Pricing is where things can get a bit tricky, as you do not want to under or over-price your product. If you would like to provide the prospect a few pricing options for their budget, include an optional fee table.

Some proposal software offer responsive pricing tables which allow clients to check the products or services they are interested in, and the price will automatically adjust.

PRICING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-event consultation: \$150• Event photo shoot: \$200 per hour• Post-production: \$1,200 for 1,050 - 2,000 edited images	

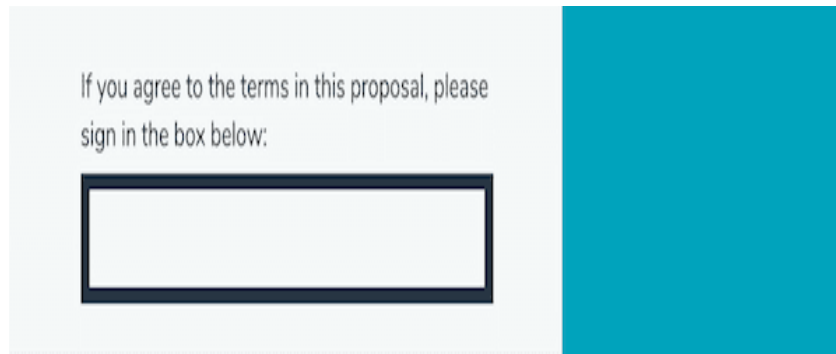
h. Terms and Conditions:

This is where you go into detail about the project timeline, pricing, and payment schedules. It is essentially a summary of what you and the client are agreeing to if they accept your proposal. Make sure you clear the terms and conditions with your own legal team before sending the proposal to the client.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS	
Amount paid upon signing: 60% of the total payment is due upon signing.	
Cancellation policy: The contract can be canceled up to 60 days prior to the event.	
Once the fees have been paid in full, the 1,050 - 2,000 high-resolution, edited images will be released to Cleary Coffee, Inc. for use on their website, for marketing campaigns, and online and print media.	

i. Agreement:

Include a signature box for the client to sign and let them know exactly what they are agreeing to when they sign. This is also a chance to include a prompt for the prospect to reach out to you if they have any unanswered questions you can address.



8. **A Sample Academic Research Proposal:**

a. **Title:**

A Conceptual Framework for Scheduling Constraint Management

Comment:

Provide a brief and meaningful title to your project

b. **Abstract:**

Every construction project is unique and has its own operating environment and sets of technical requirements. As a result, the execution of a construction project is subject to numerous constraints that limit the commencement or progression of field operations, which invariably have significant negative impact on overall project performance. By definition, constraints refer to any condition, such as temporal/spatial limitations and safety/quality concerns, which may prevent a project to achieve its goals. Successful execution and control of a construction project relies on effective identification and management of constraints through master planning and short-term look-ahead scheduling. While the master schedule provides a global view of a project and the overall execution strategy, a look-ahead schedule offers a detail account of operational constraints and a detailed plan showing work to be done within a relatively short time window. Ideally, these detailed schedules should reflect actual field conditions and provide field personnel with operation instructions free of constraints and conflicts (Hinze 2008). This look-ahead scheduling and constraint analysis procedure is also a critical component of the last-planner methodology proposed by Ballard (2000). This research project will provide an overview of state-of-art schedule constraint analysis practice during look-ahead scheduling. In addition, it will propose a conceptual framework for managing constraints.

Comment:

Background or introduction section provides a description of the basic facts and importance of the research area -What is your research area, the motivation of research, and how important is it for the industry practice/knowledge advancement?

c. **Problem/Research Statement:**

The importance of developing a constraint-free and reliable work plan has long been recognized by the industry. However, numerous construction projects are still plagued by delays and cost overruns, which can frequently be traced to ineffective identification and treatment of constraints. First, when a constraint is not properly identified during scheduling, subsequent conflicts in the field are inevitable. Today's projects are becoming more and more technically complex and logistically challenging, which exposes construction operations to even more complex constraints. Second, the traditional scheduling methods, bar charts and Critical Path Method (CPM) which are widely used as a basis for constraint analysis, greatly limit our capability in modeling and resolving constraints during look-ahead scheduling. These methods have long

been blamed for their limitations in modeling and communicating constraints, including inability to cope with non-time-related precedence constraints and difficulty to evaluate and communicate inter-dependencies at the field operation level (e.g. Sriprasert and Dawood 2002; Chua and Shen 2001). In summary, there is a need for a better understanding of constraints in construction and a structured approach in identifying and modeling constraints to ensure a constraint-free work plan. More specifically, the following research questions need to be addressed:

1. What are the typical constraints found in various construction projects?
2. How to classify these constraints for easier identification and modeling?
3. What are the current industry practice as well as research advancements in modeling and resolving constraints?

How to unify the constraint classification knowledge and various constraint modeling efforts into a framework for total constraint management?

Comment:

Problem statement provides a clear and concise description of the issues that need to be addressed -What is the specific problem in that research area that you will address (e.g. lack of understanding of a subject, low performance ...)?

d. Objectives:

The long term goal of the research is to develop a formalized constraint management system. Constraint management is defined herein as the process of identifying, classifying, modeling, and resolving constraints. The objective of the current study is to provide a comprehensive review of literatures and industry practices in relation to constraint analysis and outline a conceptual framework for constraint management. Particularly, the study has the following sub-objectives:

1. To provide a comprehensive review of sources and characteristics of constraints typically found in construction projects;
2. To develop a constraint classification method for easier constraint identification and modeling;
3. To review current industry practices and researches in regards to constraint modeling;
4. To outline a conceptual framework for total constraint management.

The result of this study will be valuable to the industry practitioners as well as related software providers in developing better practice and tools for constraint management and look-ahead scheduling.

Comment:

Objectives provide a list of goals that will be achieved through the proposed research –What are the benefits/impact (e.g. better understanding, improved productivity ...) that will be generated if the research problem is answered?

e. Preliminary Literature Review:

A preliminary literature review shows that past studies are primarily focused on understanding and modeling a particular type of constraint, such as technological, contractual, resource, spatial, and information constraints. Limited progress has been made on classifying various constraints according to their characteristics in a comprehensive manner. In terms of modeling and resolving constraints, various approaches have been recommended. For example, many CPM-based methods are applied to deal with time-related constraints; knowledge-based systems were used to automate work plan generation; network-based optimization algorithms were developed to resolve constraints; and databases and visualization techniques, such as 3D, 4D, and Virtual Reality (VR), are used to communicate and visualize constraints. What is missing from the past studies is a comprehensive and structured approach in managing constraints in construction projects.

Comment:

Preliminary literature review: provide a summary of previous related research on the research problem and their strength and weakness and a justification of your research -What is known/what have been done by others? And, why your research is still necessary?

f. Methodology:

The primary research method for this study is literature review and conceptual modeling. Constraint identification and classification through a structured approach is the very first step toward a “zero-constraint” environment. This study will first review various types of constraints in construction and their characteristics. Based on this understanding, a classification method will be developed to categorize constraint factors for the purpose of constraint identification and modeling. In the second stage of this study, existing constraint modeling methods will be identified based on a comprehensive review of current industry practices and academic researches. Finally, once the constraint classification and modeling techniques are identified, a conceptual framework for total constraint management will be outlined. This study will be conducted between September 2010 and May 2011.

Comment:

Research methodology defines the research methods and logic steps -What to do and how to solve the problem and achieve proposed objectives? Which research methods (e.g. survey, modeling, case study ...) will be used? Attach a project schedule table, if necessary.

g. Study Plan:

The study will consist of two steps. First, a literature review of articles will be done and secondly, such data will be collected in the area, using reports and internal statistics.

h. References:

Ballard, G. (2000). “Last planner system of production control.” Ph.D. Dissertation. Univ. of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK.

Chua, D. and Shen, L. J. (2001). “Constraint modeling and buffer management with integrated production scheduler.” Proceedings of International Conferences on Lean Construction 2001, Singapore.

Hinze, J. W. (2008). Construction planning and scheduling, 3rd ed. Pearson, NJ.

Sriprasert, E. and Dawood, N (2002). “Requirements identification for 4D constraint-based construction planning and control system.” Proceedings of CIB W78 conference –distributing knowledge in building, Aarhus, Denmark.

Comment:

All factual material that is not original with you must be accompanied by a reference to its source. Please use ASCE guideline on reference and citation style.

Other Sub Titles:

- Significance of the Study
- Scope of the Study
- Expected Learning Outcomes
- Date Collection
- Data Analysis
- Expected Results

9. Sample Cover Letter

1st August 2019
August 1, 2019

From
Barry Fenton,
Upright Construction General Corporation,
84, Softwood Road,
Pune – 820041.

To
John Smith,
Bristol-Myers Pvt. Ltd.,
223, Generic Avenue,
Bangalore – 325744.

Dear Mr. Smith

Subject: Business Proposal

I am very pleased to enclose my business plan for Upright Construction General Corporation. Inside, you will find a wealth of information about my business, a thorough assessment of opportunities in the marketplace, and a detailed plan for seizing them. I look forward to the possibility of working with you to make Upright Construction General Corporation a success in the coming months and years.

I am eager to hear your comments and answer any questions you may have. You can reach me at 09822415662.

Thank you for your time and attention.

With regards/Yours faithfully
signature
Barry Fenton
(The Manager)