

BUSINESS PROPOSALS

Standard Format of Proposals

- a) Introduction
- b) Background
- c) Proposal, Plan
- d) Staffing
- e) Budget
- f) Authorisation

a) Introduction

- ▶ Can either make or break your chances of securing a new client
- ▶ Has to be written in an interesting and convincing manner
- ▶ Must state purpose of proposal
- ▶ Usually written in one paragraph
- ▶ Clear and concise

a) Introduction

- ▶ **i) Opening line**
 - State the purpose
 - A statement summarising the proposal
 - One to two sentences should suffice.
 - ▶ **ii) How you found out about the project**
 - Unsolicited : e.g. could be a mutual business acquaintance
 - Solicited : e.g. mention a previous contact with the recipient
 - ▶ **iii) Company's credentials**
 - A quick description of the company's services and products
 - Could also include the successes with previous clients
- * Note: If it is an **internal proposal**, the company's credentials would be **unnecessary**.

a) Introduction

- ▶ **Iv) Company's Niche**
 - Highlight the unique or extraordinary advantage that the company has over the competitors
- ▶ **V) Closing**
 - To inform the prospective client what is submitted to him/her
 - Mention the sub-headings in the proposal: plan, schedule, staffing, budget and authorisation

a) Introduction

► Example

We are pleased to submit our proposal **to open a childcare centre on the ground floor of your esteemed mall**. We heard about your mall expansion programme from a **mutual business acquaintance, Ms Maggie Tan Siew Lin**. We have been in this business for **over 20 years** and **have branches in a few malls** across Kuala Lumpur. Our childcare is **superior to others** if you read the online reviews that we have received. Moreover, we are **the only childcare in the market** that has collaboration with malls and this will be an added advantage to your business development. In this proposal, we include our **plan, schedule, staffing, budget and authorisation**.

Exercise 1

- ▶ Write out the first line of the proposal below in a clear and concise manner. Begin with: We are pleased to...
- ▶ Your company supplies sports equipment and you are trying to secure a university as a client. Write the first line of your introduction.

We are pleased to submit our proposal to

Exercise 1 (Answer)

- We are pleased to submit our proposal to be the sole supplier of sports equipment to all the gyms and sports centres in your prestigious university.

Exercise 2

Introduction

1. We are pleased to submit our proposal to help you reduce the stress levels of your students and improve their quality of life. 2. We heard about your project from a good and trusted friend. 3. We are a company specialising in the manufacturing and the marketing of health equipment. We have been established for more than 20 years. Some of our clients include renowned names such as Fitness First and California Fitness. 4. Our niche is that we are a company that provides massage chairs with high quality and affordable price. 5. In this proposal we are including our introduction, problem, solution, plan, schedule, staffing, budget as well as authorisation.

Read the above example of an introduction. Does it fulfil the requirements of an ideal introduction as stated above?

1. Is the opening statement clear about the product/service you are offering?
2. Would it satisfy the prospective client about how they heard about you?
- 3 & 4. Are your company credentials impressive and your niche unique?
5. Does the overview include the necessary items?

b) Background

- ▶ The **needs of the proposal and the recipient** are discussed
- ▶ Some of the questions that you can ask before you write this section are:

- ❖ 1. Why am I writing this proposal? Is there a **problem** that needs to be solved?
- ❖ 2. Is this proposal able to **improve** the current situation?

b) Background

Background and Purpose	Problem and Solution
<p>The Background section needs you to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Highlight the need for the project.b) Show that you understand recipients' needs.c) State the main purpose of the proposal.d) Provide brief summary of the anticipated benefit.	<p>Information needed in this section is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Highlight the problemb) Show that you understand the recipient's problemc) Suggest a solutiond) Highlight key benefits

Example (Background and Purpose)

We understand that your company is planning to launch your food delivery service in the market early next year, and **you are looking for marketing support**. You are concerned about the amount of competition in this industry and whether you will be able to compete with other food catering businesses. We understand that your strength is in the quality of your food and prompt delivery. **We are pleased to inform you that our team will be able to help you by coming up with a marketing strategy that will give you an advantage.**

Among others, we will launch your service to coincide with the coming Chinese New Year. We have surveyed all the competitions in the area and have come up with a plan that will boost your sales and market share in Malaysia. We hope to promote your food delivery service on all of the major social media channels; namely creating social media platforms as well as creating a brand you can promote on those platforms. **This plan will not only regain your market share, but also launch a brand of marketing and grab a lion's share of the market.**

Example (Problem and Solution)

After analysing the daily operation of your business, we have made some observations and would like to propose a **solution**. We have concluded that **your traditional marketing strategies seem to have limited effect and you may be missing out on a large segment of the market.**

We understand why many companies, such as yours, are hesitating to make the leap from traditional marketing to social media marketing as it is largely unfamiliar to you. In addition, your competition has begun acquiring a majority of the market share. This has brought your growing revenues to a halt. This is where we come in with our **solution**.

We hope to deploy our skills onto your company on social media channels; namely creating social media platforms as well as creating a brand you can promote on those platforms. This plan will not only regain your market share, but also launch a brand of marketing and grab a lion's share of the market.

c) Plan

- ▶ **Longest part**
- ▶ Explain in **detail your proposal (suggestions)**
- ▶ State **how you intend** to solve the problem or meet the recipient's **needs**
- ▶ Every proposal has **different sub-headings**

c) Plan

- ▶ Divide your plan into several paragraphs with appropriate **sub headings**
- ▶ Provide **detailed explanations** with **logical rationales** to support your plan of action
- ▶ Include a **schedule or timetable** that outlines what will be done and when it will be completed

Example

Heading

Plan

In order to set up our plan for your company, we propose the following:

Sub-heading

a) Marketing platforms

We propose marketing your products on the most popular social media channels. These include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and an official website. Since your products are aimed at young people, we believe reaching out to them via social media platforms to be the most suitable.

d) Staffing

- ▶ Similar to a **mini resume** of the company or the proposer
- ▶

Internal Proposal	External Proposal
<p>Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i) Project manager (Name, qualifications/ work experience / awards won)ii)People who will be working on the project.	<p>Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i) Company's credentialsii) Project manager (Name, qualifications/ work experience / awards woniii)People who will be working on the project.

Example

Staffing

Company's credentials (external proposal only; for internal proposal, you may include team's credentials)

Our company has been involved in producing modern and functional furniture designs for 20 years. Our designs are known to be innovative, creative and convenient to our clients. We have also collaborated closely with renowned design firms such as iG Design and Fella Design.

Project Manager

This project will be headed by Ms Paula Teo, who has had invaluable experience in this field for more than 12 years. She was an associate consultant for Herman Miller Furniture prior to her position with us. She is the recipient for the Red Dot Design Award, Germany in 2015.

Key Personnel

She will be assisted by 2 teams; a design team and a technical team made up of 9 people with different expertise. All of them have vast experience in their respective fields.

e) Budget

- ▶ Gives the reader or client an estimation of what your proposed project will cost
- ▶ The information on the cost of the project determines whether or not they would offer you the contract
- ▶ Has to be **calculated** and **prepared** carefully because we cannot increase the costs later

e) Budget

The breakdown of the costs is as follows:

Items	Quantity	Cost per unit (RM)	Total (RM)
Transportation	1		2,000.00
Accommodation	40	100/pax	4,000.00
Food and Drinks	40	25/pax	1,000.00
T-shirts	40	12/pax	480.00
Programme Books	40	2.50/book	100.00
Souvenirs	3	50/unit	150.00
Materials	40	15/pax	600.00
Total			8,330.00

f) Authorisation

- ▶ The Authorisation section contains:
 - ▶ a) **benefits** of your proposal (Restate it)
 - ▶ b) promise **results**
 - ▶ c) request for **action** (Urge them to accept)
 - ▶ d) a **reasonable deadline** for reply (for external proposals only)

Authorisation

We strongly believe that our solar unit will meet your expectations and help your company to save on the cost of electricity by at least 20% for the months following it. We ensure that you will also have unlimited access to our after-sales services. That is how confident we are with our product. If you accept our proposal, please sign the duplicate copy of this proposal and return it to us before October 15 this year, so that we can proceed to the next step.

request for action

deadline for reply –
external proposal only

benefits of your
proposal

promise results

Source:

Yap, YW, Fernandez, B, Aloysious, M, Balakrishnan, S & Zainudin, ZZ 2017, Essentials of professional communication: Business and commerce, Cengage Learning, Singapore.