



insights®

How to write a winning proposal

Zoe Tate

What is a business proposal?

- A business proposal answers a **request by a business or individual to complete a specific job or project; to supply a service; or in some instances to be the vendor of a certain product**
- A business proposal can be either solicited or unsolicited

Who's opinion matters?



If you fail to plan,
you are planning to fail!

Benjamin Franklin

Study the requirements

- When requested to submit a proposal what are the questions you need to ask?
 - What are the company's goals?
 - What is my role in achieving these goals?
 - Is the time frame reasonable?
 - Is the budget reasonable?
 - Is the scope of work reasonable?

What happens if we win the work?



What happens if we win the work?

- Can we deliver?
- Do we have the time?
- Do we have the expertise?
- Do we have the resources to complete the project?

Decision time!



Understand the client

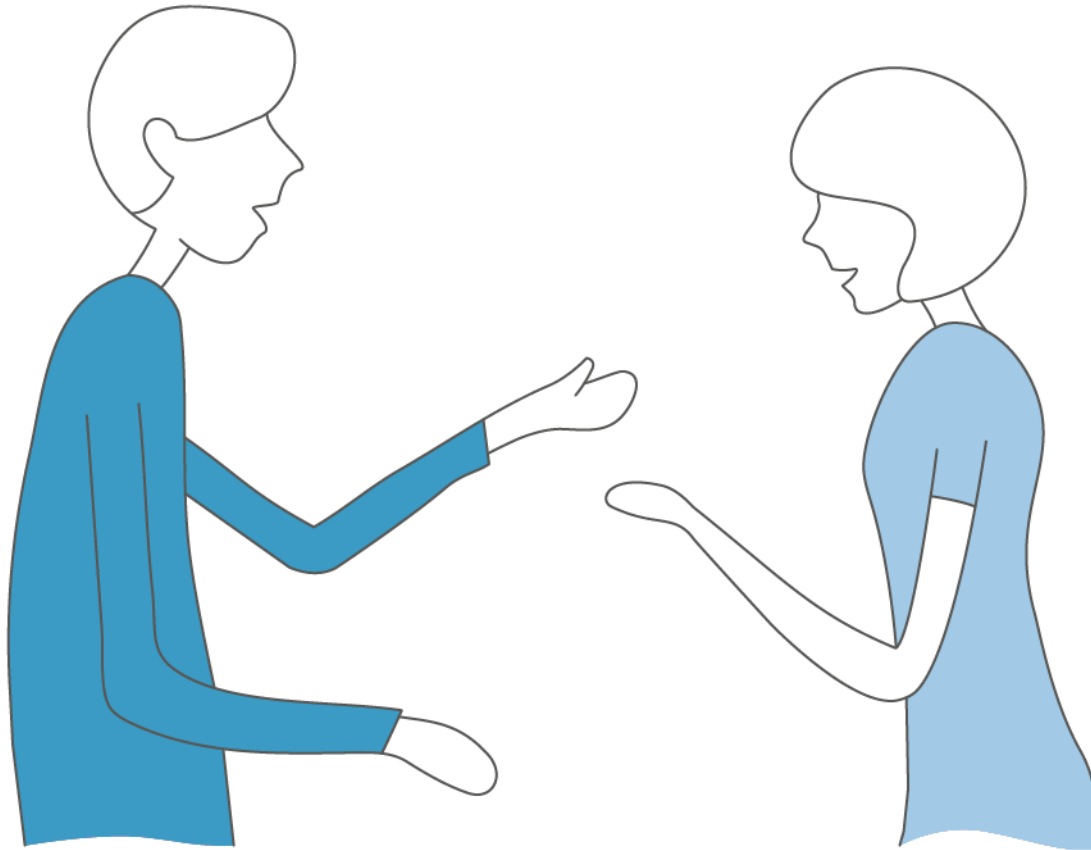


Understand the client

“Many times a client or potential client will say, ‘This is what we’re looking for.’ But when you start researching, you find out that isn’t what they’re looking for at all”

Shevrin Freed, coauthor of
Writing Winning Business Proposals (McGraw-Hill)

Understand the client



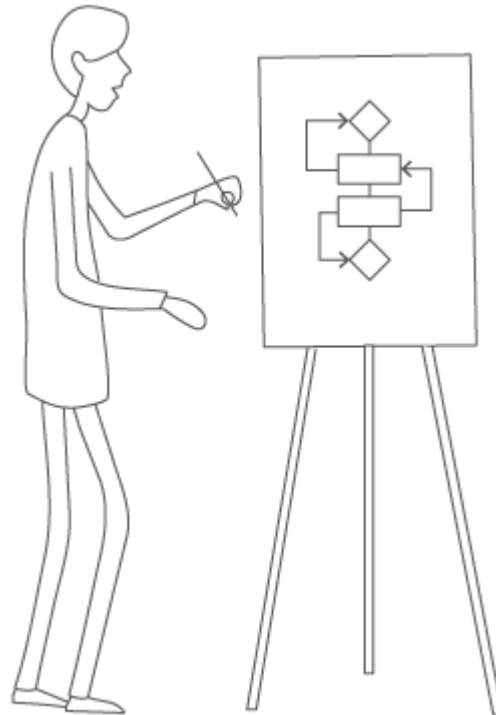
Understand the client

- How long has the company been in business?
- Who are their major decision makers?
- What are their main products or services?
- How is this company better or worse than its competitors?

Understand the client

- What are peoples concerns?
- What are their operating policies and their management philosophy?
- Have any previous attempts have been made to reach the goals outlined in the request for proposal?
- If yes - why did those earlier solutions not work?
- What do they like and dislike about dealing with consultants like yourself?
- What criteria will they be using to evaluate your proposal?

Your expertise



Now to writing...The three P's

- Problem statement
- Proposed solution
- Pricing



How to format your business proposal

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Executive summary/background
- Proposed approach and methodology
- Qualifications/case studies
- Time, cost and legal requirements
- Benefits



Title Page

- Your name
- The name of your company
- The name of the person your submitting the proposal to
- The name of their company
- The date submitted



Table of contents

- This depends on how long your business proposal is
- It is a nice touch



Executive summary/background

- This is your opportunity to restate the issue they are facing in your own words, so that they know you understand what they are looking for.
- Introduce your business with a great executive summary, one that really sells your business



Proposed approach and methodology

- Here is where the detail of the solution goes
- Beware of drowning them in minutiae!
- Keep jargon to a minimum!



Qualifications/case studies

- Fully describe why your company is the best one for this opportunity
- Testimonials and case studies are your most powerful ally



Time, cost and legal requirements

- State the time and cost involved
- Payment schedule
- This is where legal issues can be addressed



Benefits

- This is your final sell – be unafraid to detail what the client will gain by choosing you
- Be aware of stating features!



Benefits v's Features

- Features are facts about products or services; they add credibility and substance to your sales pitch
- Benefits give customers a reason to buy because they explain how your product or service improves their lives
- To translate features into benefits, answer the question “So what?”

So what benefits...

- saving time
- reducing costs
- making more money
- becoming happier, healthier, more relaxed, or more productive

Finishing touches

- Review carefully to ensure it meets the brief and the decision maker's concerns
- Make sure the information is arranged logically
- Finally have someone you trust proof read to catch spelling and grammatical errors

