

7 Steps for writing a business proposal to win new clients

Writing a business proposal is a key part of a successful business. You believe your product or service can solve a problem, but it does no good if it doesn't reach those individuals. Your business proposal is designed to promote your offer to potential clients. Additionally, it should do so in a way that speaks directly to how you can meet your potential client's needs.

Whether you're writing an unsolicited or solicited business proposal, your process should be similar. The 3 primary components to incorporate are:

1. The problem the organization is facing.
2. Your proposed solution to those problems.
3. Pricing and logistical information so the potential client can make an informed decision.

However, even if you're passionate about your product or service, getting prospective clients on board isn't necessarily easy. Fortunately, there are 7 clear steps you can take for writing a winning business proposal. Follow them, and you'll be able to highlight your unique ability to solve the needs of your would-be client.

Step 1: Writing an introduction for your business proposal

The first part of your business proposal is the introduction. Use the introduction to set the tone for your business. During this initial component of your proposal, you will communicate an overview of your company. Be sure to focus on what differentiates you from others in your market.

Your summary should include the most important details about your company while being straightforward. Try saying as much as you can with few words, a lengthy introduction can be a turn-off.

Step 2: Include a table of contents

Next, include a table of contents. With the table of contents, you'll outline what to expect throughout the proposal and on what page you can locate the information. You may question if this is necessary. However, simple formatting components make it easier for clients to find the key information they're looking for.

If your proposal is electronic, which many are these days, add hyperlinks. This makes the links are clickable and the reader can easily navigate between each section.

Step 3: Highlight your value proposition in the executive summary

Your executive summary highlights the relevant who, what, where, when, why, and how questions of your proposal. Address questions like why you're sending the proposal and why your solution is the best option.

It's in this section that you should convey that you understand the potential client and their needs. You can view the executive summary section similar to your value proposition, highlighting how your product or service

benefits this potential client.

Upon reviewing the executive summary, the reader should be clear about how you can help them, even if they don't finish reading the proposal in its entirety.

Step 4: Don't skimp on the project details when writing a business proposal

Now it's time to get into the meat and potatoes of writing your business proposal. Within the project details stage, you will explain with specificity your proposed solution and how you'll deliver it. Additionally, include other information like who on your team will be involved in the project. Experienced employees can add credibility to your proposal.

Finally, add any other relevant details the reader needs in order to make an informed decision.

Step 5: Outline the deliverables and milestones

Within the project details section, you'll outline deliverables and milestones.

This is important because the potential client needs more than just an overview of what you'll complete. They need to understand the specifics of what they're signing on to in order to make a confident decision. That's why a line-by-line breakdown of the deliverables is a necessary component.

So, for example, say you'll provide six 30 minute training sessions by the first business day of Q3. Include the specific details about those training sessions, how long they'll be, and what they'll include. This not only helps the company determine if your proposal is a good match, but it shows you're taking the proposal seriously. A well-thought-out proposal makes a good impression and reflects the quality of your work.

Also, within this section, outline the project's scope, including what you won't include in the deliverables. If you believe your client might want additional support that will fall outside the price you're quoting, use this section to outline those related products or services.

Step 6: Be clear on the budget

When writing a business proposal, you may feel uneasy about putting price front and center, but it needs to be included. Approach pricing in whichever way best suits your company, but be clear regarding the price you expect. You should set pricing so that you're appropriately paid for the value you'll bring to the company if they accept your proposal.

You can list the cost for the project as one project-based fee. Alternatively, you can list each of your deliverables along with their specific price, so there's an understanding of how much each part costs before listing the total price. You can also list your pricing in tiers showing package options if the client picks pricing option 1, 2, or 3. It's best to include some detail in the pricing structure. A high price may result in sticker shock, but a detailed breakdown helps them understand the value behind the number.

If you have the tech tools available, you can also include a pricing calculator in which the potential client can mark all services they're interested in, and the tool will calculate their final price. This will allow them to make adjustments in case there are any budget concerns. If you choose to do so, you'll likely want to include a note that this pricing estimate is a quote and may vary slightly in the final contract.

Step 7: Seal the deal in the conclusion

The final component of your winning business proposal is the conclusion. In this section, you want to make one last case for why your proposal should be accepted by summarizing your understanding of the problem, your solution, and the pricing to complete it.

Optional appendix

You have the opportunity to add an appendix section to your business proposal if it makes sense and adds value to the reader and overall proposal. Within the appendix, feel free to add information that didn't fit in the main section of the proposal or would have interrupted the flow while reading it. Some items to consider including in an appendix are charts detailing relevant data and work-related examples that would be of interest to the potential client.