



# Writing Proposals

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# Purpose

- The general purpose of any proposal is to persuade the readers to do something
  - persuade a potential customer to purchase goods and/or services
  - persuade your employer to fund a project
  - implement a program that you would like to launch



# Who writes proposals

- Undergraduate Students
  - Convince faculty to accept project as appropriate for the course
    - Example: Micro II and Capstone
- Graduate Students
  - Persuade a committee to approve research plan.
- Faculty
  - Convince funding agency to fund research work.
- Engineers in General
  - Convince sponsor that my company/group provides the best solution for \_\_\_\_\_.



# Characteristics of a Successful Proposal

- For undergraduate courses
  - Solid background
    - Read, read, read
  - Feasible
    - Well planned
  - Relevant
    - Associated to the course



# Answers questions

- WHAT you are proposing
- HOW you plan to do it
- WHEN you plan to do it
- HOW MUCH it is going to cost



# Basic elements

- **Beginning**
  - Introduction
- **Middle**
  - Body of material to be presented
- **End**
  - Conclusion/recommendation



# Introduction

- Summarizes the problem you intend to solve and your solution
- Include the benefits the reader/group will receive from the solution and the cost of that solution





# The BODY

- Explain the complete details of the solution
  - how the job will be done, broken into separate tasks
  - what method will be used to do it, including the equipment, material, and personnel that would be required
  - when the work will begin
  - when the job will be completed
  - It should also present a detailed cost breakdown for the entire job.





# CONCLUSION

- Emphasize the benefits that the reader will realize from your solution to the problem and should urge the reader to action
- It should be encouraging, confident, and assertive in tone.



# Persuasive writing

- *Proposals are informative and persuasive writing because they attempt to educate the reader and to convince that reader to do something.*



# Characteristics

- *The goal of the writer is not only to persuade the reader to do what is being requested, but also to make the reader believe that the solution is practical and appropriate.*
- *Facts must lead logically and inevitably to the conclusion and/or the solution presented.*
- *Evidence should be given in a **descending order of importance**, beginning with the most important evidence and ending with the least important.*



# Format

- **Front Matter**
  - **Letter of Transmittal**
  - **Title Page**
  - **Executive Summary**
- **THE PROPOSAL**
  - **Introduction**
  - **Body**  
Project Proposal: (Includes Statement of the Problem, Project Antecedents, Objectives, Outcomes and Metrics, Proposed Solution(s), Schedule, Assessment, Risk management, Impact, Market Overview, Program of Implementation)
  - **Conclusion/Recommendations**
- **Back Matter**
  - **Bibliography and/or Works Cited**
  - **Qualifications** (of writer(s) and/or project implementers)
  - **Budget**  
(Itemization of expenses in the implementation and operation of the proposed plan, and detail of materials, facilities, equipment and personnel)
  - **Resources**
  - **Appendices**

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- **Appendices**

Use well known relevant references, cite them

Your BIO!!

What interferes with the flow



# Analysis of the Situation Requiring a Proposal

- What is the subject of the proposal?
- For whom is the proposal intended?
- How do you intend the proposal to be used?
- What is the deadline date for submission of the proposal and for tentative implementation of the proposed solution?
- Have you reviewed the literature that would provide supports for your proposal? (Include a literature review.)





## The title

- Choose a title that conveys information about your project.
- Avoid acronyms that have negative connotations.
  - Ex: Qwiki





## Executive summary

- A condensed version of the longer work, and it summarizes and highlights the major points of the report.
- It includes:
  - High level description of the problem
  - Stakeholders
  - Deliverables and product
  - Milestones
  - Key economical aspects



# Problem Statement

- Clearly describe the problem to be solved by the product or service
- Variables involved in the problem
- Stakeholders
- How does the project provides a solution to the problem
- Scope
- Describe what has and has not worked in the past.

# The rationale and significance

Convince the reviewer  
that the problem is  
**IMPORTANT!**

Why would others be  
interested?

The reader does not know  
what you know.



# Literature review

Display your awareness of the problem or need as well as the contributions that have been made by others—some of whom may be reviewers of your proposal!



# Show you understand the problem!

- Use the adequate "Terms" and "Vocabulary" to Describe the Problem.
- Provide the most recent data and/or information about the problem.



# Show you know the solution!

- Describe a solution to improve the situation.
- Back up your solution with data if possible.
- Quote or cite well known authorities on the topic.





# Objectives

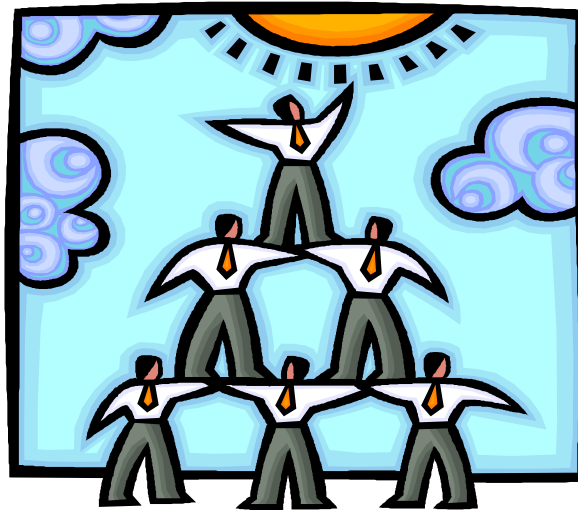
- SMARTER

- Specific
- Measurable
- Agreed upon
- Realistic
- Time framed
- Ethical
- Resourced (economic, human, time, and technical resources)





# Project design



Goals, Objectives and Activities Should Always  
Relate to One Another

# Approach

- Describe technical details/ solution
- Describe the team organization, tasks distribution, quality control, standards.
- Work breakdown structure, gantt, critical path, resources.



# Key personnel

Describe the people that will help to make decisions in how the project is carried out.

Provide a description of their background, training, and expertise.



How are tasks assigned to the right person?

# Facilities & resources

Describe where the project will be conducted.

Describe any special equipment or resources you will have access to.

Describe any special capabilities or experiences possessed by your group to carry out the project.





# Budget



Estimate the funds that you need to be successful.

Be aware that proposal reviewers know how much things cost!

If you ask for too little money to do the work you propose, you will appear naïve and inexperienced.

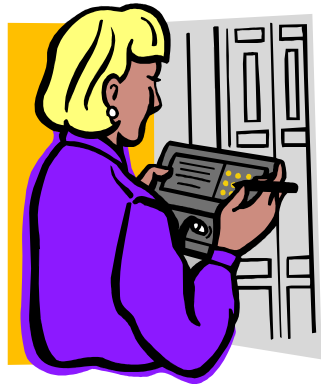
# Time lines

Sponsored project activities can take longer than anticipated.

Do not propose to do too much in any given project period.



# Evaluation

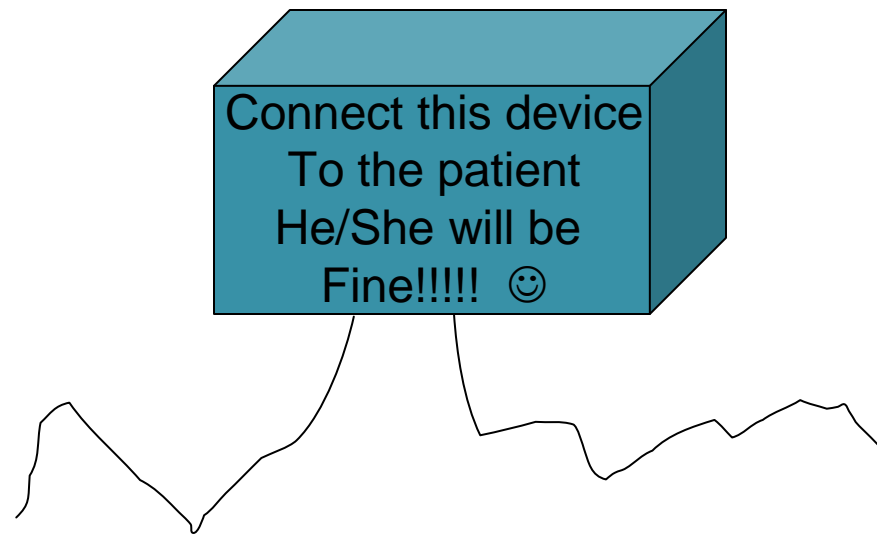


- Describe how you will find out if your project is working.
- Describe how you will know if you have succeeded when the project is over.
- Describe how you will adjust your procedures and timelines to deal with real life events.
- Tell the proposal reviewers who will conduct the evaluation and review the information collected.



# Validation

- How are you going to make sure that everything works as expected?





# Final comments

- Read proposal guidelines
- Back up strong statements
- Good proposals have references that are NOT web pages
- Read, read, read
  - If you can articulate with the correct vocabulary, you know the subject
- Writing skills
  - No one will take you seriously if you have a proposal full of typos, wrong sentences, etc.
- The first person you have to convince is yourself.



# References

- The presentation “Elements of Successful Proposals”, by Pam Miller, Director of Sponsored Projects, University of San Francisco has been modified for the preparation of this presentation.
- Seely, John, 2005, Oxford Guide To Effective Writing & Speaking, Oxford University Press.
- Pinkerton, WJ, 2003, Project management : achieving project bottom-line success, McGraw-Hill, New York.