



Project Proposal Writing

What is a project proposal?

Project proposals are documents that define your project, including things such as start and end dates, objectives and goals. They tell stakeholders why your project ideas should be executed. Reading about your ideas in a well-written document should convince stakeholders to support them. You may **use project proposals for the following purposes**:

- To secure funding
- To win new clients
- To get existing clients to sign a extend their contracts
- To convince manager or employer to allocate resources to a new initiative

Types of project proposals

Different project proposals have different goals and therefore **distinct requirements**. These are the most common types of project proposals you are likely to write.

- **Solicited.** Sent to respond to a Request for Proposal. You must conduct thorough research and write very persuasively, as your project proposal will be in competition with others. You may also need to adhere to a strict format outlined in the Request for Proposal.
- **Unsolicited.** Sent without an RFP. While you are not in competition with others, you must still be very persuasive to convince your recipient to act, as they did not ask for your proposal.
- **Informal.** Sent in response to an informal client request. As there is no Request for Proposal, your proposal can follow your preferred format.
- **Renewal.** Sent to an existing client to encourage them to renew your services. Emphasize past results and predict future benefits to persuade a client to act.
- **Continuation.** Sent to remind an investor that the project is underway and to provide progress updates. This proposal should focus on communicating information rather than persuading.
- **Supplemental.** Sent to remind an investor that the project is underway and ask for additional resources. It should be persuasive to encourage the investor to give more.

The first three proposals are typically the longest, as they deal with new projects. As the final three project proposals focus on established projects and relationships, they can typically be shorter.



How to write a project proposal

Remember that the reason you're writing a proposal is to obtain executive buy-in. You want key people to support your project. You need decision-makers on your side to turn a vision into reality.

You want the proposal to speak to them, and then motivate them to take the next step, which is to greenlight the project.

Step 1: Define the problem

What's the problem your project is trying to address? Why is it a problem? Why is it worth solving? Make your audience see the problem the way you see it.

Tips for defining the problem:

- **Start strong.** Decision-makers usually don't allot much time to look over a proposal, so make sure that the **pain point is succinctly described** and in a manner that **resonates** with them.
- **Use facts, not opinion.** Although you want your audience to understand the severity of a problem, you **don't** want to **exaggerate**. Instead, use data from your **research to back up your assertions**.

Step 2: Present your solution

How will your project solve the problem? Why is your solution the better option over other similar solutions? Discuss why other solutions won't work for the situation.

Tips for presenting your solution:

- **Anticipate questions and objections.** Be prepared to defend your solution from all angles. Be ready to explain why your more expensive solution is better than a less expensive one, for example.
- **Present the solution's larger impact.** Stakeholders generally get more excited about projects with wide-ranging effects than those with limited impact.
- **Again, facts over opinion.** Provide as many research-backed examples as you can.

Step 3: Define your deliverables and success criteria

This section provides a picture of the functions and attributes of the deliverable, plus how to know if the project is successful.

Tips for defining deliverables:

- **Include a delivery date.** Define what your project will deliver and what users can expect from it, such as a cloud-based phone system that's accessible 24/7 from anywhere if it's



a customer service project you're proposing. Also, indicate when you plan to complete each deliverable.

- **Your solution must be SMART.** Your success criteria will signal whether the project has been successful. Remember to keep your solution SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound.)

Step 4: State your plan or approach

This is the most critical section of the proposal and discusses how to achieve the project's objectives. It starts with an explanation of the approach and why it's relevant and effective. It also explains how problems will be managed.

Tips for planning:

- **Introduce project strategies.** Will you be using the traditional waterfall approach? Why? Will you be using third-party contractors, in-house staff, or consultants? What will their objectives and responsibilities be? This is your opportunity to discuss the "why" behind the decisions you're making to get the project completed.
- **Explain how problems will be addressed.** This explains your project management plan's risk mitigation strategies.

Step 5: Outline your schedule and budget

This is the section where you break down project costs and detail how you will meet deadlines.

Tips for defining a schedule and budget:

- **Provide as much detail as possible.** Break your budget down into categories, such as supplies, tools, salary, etc. Include all overhead and indirect costs. A detailed financial breakdown will signal to stakeholders that you've done your research and don't intend to waste their money. Note that certain projects may require financial statements and funding sources.
- **Be concrete.** Don't guess. Provide project start and end times, and if certain sections of the project can be done simultaneously.

Step 6: Tie it all together

End your proposal with a conclusion that briefly summarizes the problem, solution, and benefits. Emphasize the significant parts, and make your proposal stand out by restating ideas or facts you want your audience to remember.

Check your proposal for consistency of ideas and whether the elements support each other.

Tips for tying everything together:

- **Your proposal should read like a book.** Your proposal should tell a story. Every section and element must work together to form a cohesive whole.



- **Refrain from introducing anything that doesn't fit.** Be careful not to introduce anything that seems off or doesn't contribute to the overall objectives of the project.
- **Make sure all project proposal elements are present.** Check your document and ensure all the necessary elements have been addressed.

Step 7: Edit/proofread your proposal

Rewrite your proposal as necessary to make it interesting, helpful, clear, and persuasive. **Ask for feedback**, and ensure the proposal is organized and visually appealing.

Tips for editing:

- **Check the tone and language.** Your proposal is intended for a certain audience type, so make sure the tone and language used are reflective of that. Don't forget to proofread for grammar, punctuation, or spelling mistakes. You want your proposal to look professional.

You can learn more about project proposal writing in the video.

- <https://youtu.be/szzBRcxhYVg>

You can see the template and some tips in the following link.

- <https://visme.co/blog/project-proposal/>
- <https://slite.com/learn/how-to-write-project-proposal>

References

- <https://www.fool.com/the-ascent/small-business/project-management/articles/project-proposal/>
- <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-write-a-project-proposal>
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