

“Writing Proposals”

By: Jack Muellerleile

“Writing Proposals” is very much like *“Writing Letters”* (see prior exhibit). The differences are increased brevity and strict adherence to the point(s) being made. Proposals are ultra-formal letters.

Basic rules to follow for **“Writing Proposals”** include:

1. TO – At the top of the page, against the left margin, spell out the name & address of the recipient.
2. FROM – Next, directly thereunder, do the same for the sender.
3. DATE – Immediately thereunder, put the date.
4. PROPOSED: - Next, state the proposal (i.e. “That an additional \$100,000 capital & expense dollars be allocated to the present funding of our XYZ project not later than 08.15.05”).
5. Paragraph # 1 – BACKGROUND – Give the background facts.
6. Paragraph # 2 – REASONS – List the reasons that the recipient should approve your proposal.
7. Paragraph # 3 – RECOMMENDATION – Conclude the proposal with your recommendation that it be approved and request a written response by a date certain.
8. SIGNATURE – Sign the proposal author’s name and add the title of the position held.
9. OTHER SIGNATURE LINES – If another level of authority exists between the writer and the recipient possessing the required authority for expenditure, a “Recommended” line should be provided to the right of the writer’s signature. The proposal should already bear this intermediate person’s recommendation as evidenced by his dated signature before it arrives at the recipient’s address. These “Recommended” lines may also be used for others as may be appropriate (i.e. in-house attorney, accountant, environmental risk manager, etc.).
10. CC: (copy recipients) – List them here, if any. They are rare on proposals.

11. BCC: (blind copy recipients) – N/A on proposals.
12. ATTACHMENTS: - List them here, if any. These are discouraged.
13. ENCLOSURES: - List them here, if any. These are discouraged.
14. Spacing – Use double-spacing between the above items # 1 - # 13 and single-spacing within each of same.
15. Length of proposal – Keep it as short as possible. Try to get it all on a single page even if you must reduce the font size.
16. Response date requested – Use 3-5 business days for simple decisions; 10 business days for complicated decisions; and 15 business days as the absolute maximum.
17. Type, print or handwritten? Always type the proposal to achieve maximum clarity.
18. Paper stock / colors / fonts – To be safe, always use easily read fonts (i.e. Ariel, Verdana, Tahoma) in black ink on white paper. This assures that photo copies of your proposal will be clearly legible.

These rules may be applied to proposals sent via email as well as snail mail. There is nothing at all wrong with disregarding the standard 'email formatting' and setting forth your own (as per the above) right there in the body of your email.

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