KEY TO SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL WRITING
Virtual Training Series with SGP Malaysia

26 April 2022
ABOUT THE FACILITATOR

Hj Mohamad Fairus bin Shidi (Coach Perez)

Director – Talent Development, Efficient Frontier Consulting Sdn Bhd
MOHAMAD FAIRUS BIN SHIDI

- Director – Talent Development, Efficient Frontier Consulting Sdn Bhd
- Certified Associate Coach – International Coaching Federation (ICF)
- Certified Trainer – HRD Corporation
- Certified Training Professional – American Society of Training & Development (ASTD)
- Certified Training Professional – Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD), UK
- Certified Trainer – National Dual Training System, MOHR
- Certified Assessor – Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning, MOHR
OBJECTIVES

At the end of the session, learners will be able to:

• handle written communication with confidence

• write with ease, omitting stiff and overly formal words

• apply design thinking methods in writing proposals

• prepare proposals that win the deal
WHY DO WE WRITE?

• Record information that may have legal significance
• Persuade a hostile audience
• Praise someone
• Give complex information for ongoing reference
• Formulate and “flesh out” new ideas
WHY DO WE WRITE INEFFECTIVELY?

• We don’t think clearly

• We write only from our point of view

• We don’t organise our thoughts

• We write to impress

• We don’t edit enough
EXERCISE: 7 Cs OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

• C __________ (include all information)
• C __________ (simple and ‘to the point’)
• C __________ (think of the reader)
• C __________ (definite, not vague)
• C __________ (easy to understand)
• C __________ (polite)
• C __________ (no mistakes)
ANSWER: 7 Cs OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

• COMPLETE (include all information)
• CONCISE (simple and ‘to the point’)
• CONSIDERATE (think of the reader)
• CONCRETE (definite, not vague)
• CLEAR (easy to understand)
• COURTEOUS (polite)
• CORRECT (no mistakes)
A research team of two proceeded towards the apex of a natural geologic protuberance, the purpose of their expedition being the procurement of a sample fluid hydride of oxygen in a large vessel, the exact size of which was unspecified.

One member of the team precipitously descended, sustaining severe damage to the upper cranial portion of his anatomical structure. Subsequently, the second member of the team performed a self-rotational translation oriented in the same direction taken by the first team member.
Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water
Jack fell down, and broke his crown
And Jill came tumbling after
THE READER & THE PURPOSE

How do you want the readers to feel?

What do you want the readers to do?
5 STEPS FOR EFFECTIVE WRITING

STEP 1: Consider your AUDIENCE

STEP 2: Anticipate special reader’s REACTION

STEP 3: Outline your MESSAGE

STEP 4: Develop your first DRAFT

STEP 5: EDIT for content, grammar, clarity, conciseness, style
WRITING EFFECTIVELY

MESSAGE

ACTION

DETAILS

EVIDENCE
DESIGN THINKING

• A creative and collaborative iterative process in which you seek to understand your users, challenge assumptions, redefine problems and create innovative solutions which you can prototype and test.

• The overall goal is to identify alternative strategies and solutions that are not instantly apparent with your initial level of understanding.
ESSENCE OF DESIGN THINKING

• Revolves around a deep interest to understand the people for whom we design products and services.

• Helps us observe and develop empathy with the target users.

• Enhances our ability to question - the problem, the assumptions and the implications.

• Useful when you tackle problems that are ill-defined or unknown.

• Involves ongoing experimentation through sketches, prototypes, testing and trials of new concepts and ideas.
WINNING WRITING THROUGH DESIGN THINKING

Have empathy in writing
Remember our greater purpose as writers. Define your audience. Know their purpose.

Experience the audience’s ‘world’
Get into their ‘world’. Build relationships with the audience. Know their interests, experiences and needs.

Pick up momentum bit by bit
Build ‘stamina’ by testing and revising your writing one small portion at a time. This allows earlier recovery.

Be flexible and dynamic
Be ready to move back and forth to find the best format and outcome.

Innovate and improvise
‘Play around’ with the form, mix modes and try out new approaches for improved results.
INTEGRATING DESIGN THINKING INTO WRITING

IDEATE:
PRE-WRITING
GAMESTORM

BUILD:
DRAFT
BLOCK BIT BY BIT

IMPROVE:
REVISION/ITERATION
TINKER

TEST:
PEER PREVIEW
LISTEN AND REFLECT

FEEDBACK
A business proposal is a written offer of services tailored to a client.

A business proposal is created for a specific request or opportunity. It is not prepared as a cold call to a client. There is always an indication provided by the client as to the business needs.

The reason that a proposal cannot arrive as a cold call is because it must be tailored to the client’s needs. The document will clarify how your services can best resolve the client’s problems.

If you do not know the client’s problem, you cannot propose a solution.
5 Guidelines for Writing Winning Proposals

1. **Focus on the client immediately:** Engage from the first word.

2. **Focus on your discussions:** Stay on the topic at hand.

3. **Focus on clarity:** Keep your language easy to understand.

4. **Focus on the value of the solution:** Give the Funder reasons to move forward.

5. **Focus the client on next steps:** Include a call to action.
6 QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What is their role?
2. Who is the decision-maker?
3. What are their main concerns?
4. What supports or resources do they already have?
5. Are they familiar with your solution and company?
6. What is their industry background?
# WINNING PROPOSALS TEMPLATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. TITLE</td>
<td>Should be snappy; engaging and a one-line overview of the entire proposal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</td>
<td>It should synthesize all of the key information of the proposal. It should introduce relevant information on the proposal and highlight how it solves the client’s problem. The summary should be persuasive, clear, and include only concepts from the proposal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT</td>
<td>This section dives into the client's problem and your solution. Clarify how each facet or stage of your proposed strategy will add to the overall solution. Define the scope of the solution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINES</td>
<td>Clarify the specifics of ‘what’ and ‘when’. The deliverables should be clearly identified as to what the client will expect to receive or have accomplished. Have a clearly defined and realistic timeline. Never over- or under-promise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. PROPOSAL BUDGET</td>
<td>It should be accurate, competitive, and easy to understand. The total bid value should be broken down into smaller items to allow clients to understand higher investment areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. ‘ABOUT US’</td>
<td>Should only come later, after solutions are presented. Can be ‘WHY US?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. TERMS &amp; CONDITIONS</td>
<td>Details may be negotiated upon selection. The client will define the content.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHOOSING A WRITING STYLE

• Be persuasive, positive (and realistic!).
  Use strong, convincing language.

• Be precise and concise.
  Use specific terms to identify the strategy and results.

• Use active voice and simple wording.
  Write to express; not to impress!

• Keep a professional but warm tone.
  Be formal but friendly.
PROPOSAL FORMATTING TIPS

• **Tiered information**
  Make headings and sub-headings your friends.

• **Wonders of white spaces**
  Allow some control of your reader’s focus within your proposal.

• **List and tables**
  ▪ they are easy to read
  ▪ they provide an eye-catching change on a page of text
  ▪ they emphasize the listed or tabled information as important.

• **Visual appeal**
  Use color, images, fonts, and layout design to create an important first reaction.
3 Rs BEFORE SUBMISSION

• REVIEW! REVIEW! REVIEW! REVIEW!

WORSE THAN BAD REVIEW IS TO BE IGNORED

Neil Diamond