

CHAPTER 19

Internal and External Proposals

► REAL PEOPLE *in the workplace*

Mary Woltkamp jokingly calls herself the “Queen” of Effective Business Communications, Inc. “Why not?” she laughs. “Technically, I’m the owner, but I’m also the receptionist, the accountant, the marketing department, and the janitor. I’m a one-person company, so I do it all. The title ‘Owner’ or ‘President’ sounds pretentious under the circumstances. Anyway, the most important thing I do is help clients accomplish the goals they have for their print and electronic materials. I’m not sure what the title is for that.”

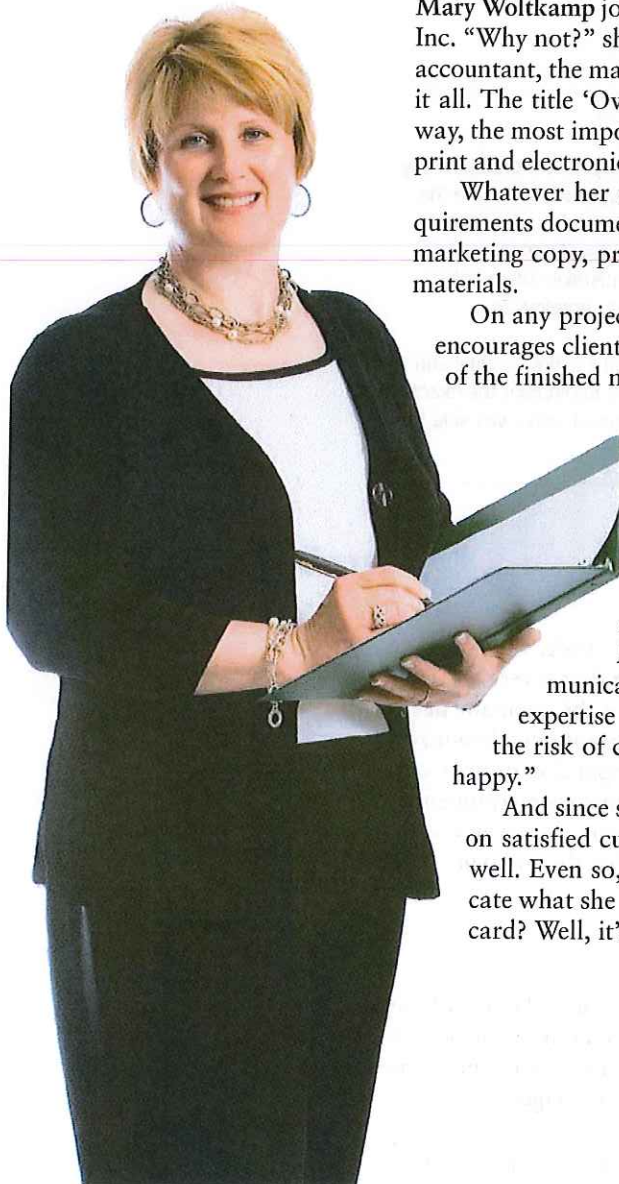
Whatever her title, Mary creates a variety of materials for her clients including requirements documentation, user manuals, training materials, job aids, newsletter articles, marketing copy, proposals, presentations, and more. Her clients are just as varied as the materials.

On any project, the client’s goal is Mary’s primary focus. Before getting started, she encourages clients to be very clear about who their audience is and what the objectives of the finished materials are. Then she uses her training and experience to create written pieces that address the audience and meet the goals.

During her work day, if Mary is not in her home office writing or doing research, she is on the phone or in a client’s office attending project meetings or interviewing subject matter experts. She also spends a good deal of time reading existing documentation in order to fully understand the subject matter of a project. Although tackling new topics can be a challenge at times, “It’s what I love best,” she says. “I’m always learning something new.”

According to Mary, no matter what the project is, clear two-way communication is critical at every step. “Obviously, clients hire me to share my expertise with them, but if I don’t listen to my clients carefully in return, I run the risk of creating materials that fail to get the job done. In that case, nobody is happy.”

And since she is a small company with a small budget for advertising, she counts on satisfied customers and word of mouth for new projects. So far, it has worked well. Even so, when given an opportunity, she makes sure to effectively communicate what she does professionally and to pass out her business card. Her title on the card? Well, it’s not “Queen,” but someday it might be. ◀



CHAPTER GOALS

When you complete this chapter, you will be able to do the following:

1. Format proposals effectively using components such as a title page, cover letter, table of contents, list of illustrations, abstract, introduction, discussion, conclusion/recommendation, and glossary.
2. Write effective internal proposals to persuade corporate decision makers to address issues and provide resources.
3. Write effective external proposals to sell a new service or product to a potential customer.
4. Distinguish among common proposal terms including RFP, T&C, SOW, boilerplate, solicited proposals, and unsolicited proposals.
5. Apply research techniques to gather information for proposals.
6. Evaluate your proposals using the proposal checklist.

WWW

To learn more about proposals, visit our Web Companion at <http://www.prenhall.com/gerson>.

Mary's Communication Challenge

Mary says, "When clients approach me about creating materials for them, they have a problem they are trying to solve. Although the client's concerns vary, my challenge is always to make sure the actual problem is clearly identified, so that I can propose the appropriate materials to resolve it."

Recently a client asked me to redesign the training manual they use to train new finance department employees on the company's expense reporting application. Costly mistakes were being made, and the client assumed that the manual wasn't clearly communicating what employees needed to do.

I suggested that the first step be a front-end analysis including a review of the existing manual and interviews with recent trainees and a manager, a step the client had not yet taken, to pinpoint the exact causes and to avoid wasting time and money on the wrong solution. The client agreed, and I was able to conduct a thorough analysis before submitting a project proposal."

See pages 561–563 to learn how Mary met her communication challenge.

WHY WRITE A PROPOSAL?

When you write a proposal, your goal is to sell an idea persuasively. Consider this scenario: Your company is growing rapidly. As business increases, you believe that several changes must occur to accommodate this growth. For example, you think that the company needs a larger facility. This new building could be located in your city's vibrant new downtown expansion corridor, be placed in a suburban setting, or entail the expansion of your current site. A new building or expansion should include amenities to improve recruitment of new employees, such as workout facilities, daycare, restaurant options, and even a gaming room. Finally, as part of new employee recruitment, you believe that the company must increase its diversity hiring practices.

Internal Proposals

How will you convey these ideas to upper level management? The topic is large and will require extensive financial obligations, time for planning, and a commitment to new staffing. A short, informal report will not suffice. In contrast, you will have to write a type of longer, formal report—an *internal proposal*—for your company's management.

Additional examples of internal proposals include the following:

- Your company needs to improve its mobile communication abilities for employees who work at diverse locations. To accomplish this goal, you write an internal proposal requesting the purchase of WiFi-compatible laptops, handheld computers, and cell phones with Internet access.
- Your company's insurance coverage is skyrocketing. As a member of the human resources staff, you have researched insurance carriers and now will propose insurance options to upper-level management.
- Your company is migrating to a new software platform. Employees will need training to use the software. In a long, formal report, you propose consulting companies who can offer the training, optional schedules, funding sources, and post-training certification.

External Proposals

While *internal proposals* are written to management within your company, *external proposals* are written to sell a new service or product to an audience outside your company. Your biotechnology company, for example, has developed new software for running virtual cell cultures. The software simulates cell runs and displays synchronous strip charts for sterile monitoring. Data from the runs is graphed for comparison purposes. Not only will your company sell the software but also the company provides consulting services to train clients in the software use. Your responsibility is to write an *external proposal* selling the benefits of this new corporate offering to a prospective client.

Requests for Proposals

Many external proposals are written in response to RFPs (*requests for proposals*). Often, companies, city councils, and state or federal agencies need to procure services from other corporations. A city, for example, might need extensive road repairs. A government agency needs Internet security systems for its offices. A hospital asks engineering companies to submit proposals about facility improvements. An insurance company needs to buy a fleet of cars for its adjusters. To receive bids and analyses of services, the city will write an RFP, specifying the scope of its needs. Competing companies will respond to this RFP with an external proposal.

In each of these instances, you ask your readers to make significant commitments regarding employees, schedules, equipment, training, facilities, and finances. Only a long, formal proposal, possibly complete with research, will convey your content sufficiently and successfully.

FAQs

Q: Whenever I read about proposals, I hear terms like RFP, T&C, SOW, boilerplate, solicited, and unsolicited. What do these words mean?

A: Here's a table defining these common proposal terms:

Proposal Terms	Definitions
RFP	Request for proposals —means by which external companies and agencies ask for proposals
T&C	Terms and conditions —the exact parameters of the request and expected responses
SOW	Scope of work or statement of work —costs, dates, deliverables, personnel certifications, and/or company history
Boilerplate	Any content (text or graphics) that can be used in many proposals
Solicited Proposal	A proposal written in response to a request
Unsolicited Proposal	A proposal written on your own initiative

CRITERIA FOR PROPOSALS

To write an effective proposal, you will need to provide the following:

- Title page
- Cover letter
- Table of contents
- List of illustrations
- Abstract or executive summary
- Introduction
- Discussion (the body of the proposal)
- Conclusion/recommendation
- Glossary
- Works cited (or references) page
- Appendix

For detailed information about title pages, cover letters or cover memos, tables of contents, lists of illustrations (pie charts, tables, photographs, line drawings, etc.), discussion, glossaries (to define terminology), works cited (to credit source material), and appendices (for additional material or technical specifications), look at Chapter 18 in this textbook. Each of these components typical of long, formal reports is thoroughly covered in the chapter and illustrations are provided. Following is additional information specifically related to a proposal's abstract, introduction, discussion, and conclusion/recommendation.

Additional information:

See Chapter 10, "Traditional Correspondence: Memos and Letters," and Chapter 18, "Long, Formal Reports."

Abstract

Your audience for the proposal will be diverse. Accountants might read your information about costs and pricing, technicians might read your technical descriptions and process analyses, human resources personnel might read your employee biographies, and shipping/delivery might read your text devoted to deadlines. One group of readers will be management—supervisors, managers, and highly placed executives. How do these readers' needs differ from others? Because these readers are busy with management concerns and might have little technical knowledge, they need your help in two ways: they need information quickly, and they need it presented in easy-to-understand terminology. You can achieve both these objectives through an abstract or executive summary.

The abstract is a brief overview of the proposal's key points geared toward a semi-specialist. If the intended audience is composed of upper-level management, this unit briefly contains specific details. To accomplish the required brevity, you should limit your abstract to approximately three to ten sentences. These sentences can be presented as one paragraph or as smaller units of information separated by headings. Each proposal you write will focus on unique ideas. Therefore, the content of your abstracts will differ. Nonetheless, abstracts should focus on the following: (1) the *problem* necessitating your proposal, (2) your suggested *solution*, and (3) the *benefits* derived when your proposed suggestions are implemented. These three points work for external as well as internal proposals.

For example, let's say you are asked to write an internal proposal suggesting a course of action (limiting excessive personnel, increasing your company's workforce, improving your corporation's physical facilities, etc.). First, your abstract should specify the problem requiring your planned action. Next, you should mention the action you are planning to implement. This leads to a brief overview of how your plan would solve the problem, thus benefiting your company. If you were writing an external proposal to sell a client a new product or service, you would still focus on problem, solution, and benefit. The abstract would remind the readers of their company's problem, state that your company's new product or service could alleviate this problem, and then emphasize the benefits derived.

In each case, you not only want to be brief, focusing on the most important issues, but also you should avoid highly technical terminology and concepts. The purpose of the abstract is to provide your readers with an easy-to-understand summary of the entire proposal's focus. Your readers want the bottom line, and they want it quickly. Therefore, either avoid all technical terminology completely or define your terms parenthetically.

The following is an example of an abstract for an internal proposal.

example

An effective abstract highlights the problem, possible solutions, and benefits in the proposal.

ABSTRACT

Due to deregulation and the recent economic recession, we must reduce our workforce by 12 percent.

Our plan for doing so involves

- Freezing new hires
- Promoting early retirement
- Reassigning second-shift supervisors to our Desoto plant
- Temporarily laying off third-shift line technicians

Achieving the above will allow us to maintain production during the current economic difficulties.

Executive Summary

The terms “abstract” and “executive summary” often are used interchangeably. However, the distinction between the two terms is usually dependent upon length. Whereas an effective abstract should be very brief, an executive summary can be one to five pages long. Not every proposal requires an executive summary. In some instances, the more concise abstract is sufficient. If you choose to include a longer and more detailed executive summary, in addition to the abstract, this summary will accomplish the following goals:

- Highlight the proposal's objectives.
- Detail the proposal's significance.
- Outline the proposal's main points.
- Help the readers understand the recommendations.
- Let the reader know what to do next.

Key Parts of an Executive Summary

To accomplish these goals, an executive summary can include the following topics. To limit your summary to no more than five pages, choose the most important elements and omit those that are secondary:

- Purpose and scope of the proposal, stating the problem or need and your ability to improve the situation
- Research or methods used to develop your content
- Conclusions about your analyses of the topic
- Your qualifications showing that you can resolve the issue
- A project management plan and timetable
- The total project budget
- Recommendations based on your findings

Introduction

Your introduction in the proposal should include two primary sections: (1) purpose (overview, background, or goal) and (2) problem.

Purpose

In one to three sentences, tell your readers the purpose of your proposal. This purpose statement informs your readers *why* you are writing or *what* you hope to achieve. This statement repeats your abstract to a certain extent. However, it's not redundant; it's a reiteration. Although numerous people read your report, not all of them read each line or section of it. They skip and skim.

The purpose statement, in addition to the abstract, is another way to ensure that your readers understand your intent. It either reminds them of what they have just read in the abstract or informs them for the first time if they skipped over the abstract. Your purpose statement is synonymous with a paragraph's topic sentence, an essay's thesis, the first sentence in a letter, or the introductory paragraph in a shorter report.

The following is an effective purpose statement.

Purpose Statement: The purpose of this report is to propose the immediate installation of the 102473 Numerical Control Optical Scanner. This installation will ensure continued quality checks and allow us to meet agency specifications.

example

A purpose statement expresses the goal of the proposal.

Problem (Needs Analysis)

Whereas the purpose statement should be limited to one to three sentences for clarity and conciseness, your discussion of the problem must be much more detailed. For example, if you are writing an internal proposal to add a new facility, your company's current work space must be too limited. You have got a problem that must be solved. If you are writing an external proposal to sell a new piece of equipment, your prospective client must need better equipment. Your proposal will solve the client's problem.

Your introduction's focus on the problem, which could average one to two pages, is important for two reasons. First, it highlights the importance of your proposal. It emphasizes for your readers the proposal's priority. In this problem section, you persuade your readers that a problem truly exists and needs immediate attention. Second, by clearly stating the problem, you also reveal your knowledge of the situation. The problem section reveals your expertise. Thus, after reading this section of the introduction, your audience should recognize the severity of the problem and trust you to solve it. One way to help your readers understand the problem is through the use of highlighting techniques, especially headings and subheadings. Figure 19.1 shows an introduction with purpose statement and needs analysis.

Discussion

When writing the text for your proposal, you need to sell your ideas persuasively, develop your ideas thoroughly through research, observe ethical workplace communication standards, organize your content so the audience can follow your thoughts easily, and use graphics.

Communicating Persuasively

A successful proposal will make your audience act. Writing persuasively is especially important in an *unsolicited* proposal since your audience has not asked for your report. A *solicited* proposal, perhaps written in response to an RFP, is written to meet an audience's specific request. Your audience wants you to help them meet a need or solve a problem. In contrast, when you write an *unsolicited* proposal, your audience has not asked for your assistance. Therefore, in this type of proposal, you must convincingly persuade the audience that a need exists and that your proposed recommendations will benefit the reader.

To write persuasively, you should accomplish the following:

- Arouse reader interest—focus on your audience's needs that generated this proposal.
- Refute opposing points of view in the body of your proposal.

FIGURE 19.1 Introduction with Purpose Statement and Needs Analysis

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose Statement

This is a proposal for a storm sewer survey for Yakima, Washington. First, the survey will identify storm sewers needing repair and renovation. Then it will recommend public works projects that would control residential basement flooding in Yakima.

1.2 Needs Analysis

1.2.1. Increased Flooding. Residential basement flooding in Yakima has been increasing. Fourteen basements were reported flooded in 2008, whereas 83 residents reported flooded basements in 2009.

1.2.2. Property Damage. Basement flooding in Yakima results in thousands of dollars in property damage. The following are commonly reported as damaged property:

- Washers
- Dryers
- Freezers
- Furniture
- Furnaces

Major appliances cannot be repaired after water damage. Flooding also can result in expensive foundation repairs.

1.2.3. Indirect Costs. Flooding in Yakima is receiving increased publicity. Flood areas, including Yakima, have been identified in newspapers and on local newscasts. Until flooding problems have been corrected, potential residents and businesses may be reluctant to locate in Yakima.

1.2.4. Special-Interest Groups. Citizens over 55 years old represent 40 percent of the Yakima, Washington, population. In city council meetings, senior citizens with limited incomes expressed their distress over property damage. Residents are unable to obtain federal flood insurance and must bear the financial burden of replacing flood-damaged personal and real property. Senior citizens (and other Yakima residents) look to city officials to resolve this financial dilemma.

Provide specific details to explain the problem. Doing so shows that you understand the reader's need and highlights the proposal's importance.

Additional information:

See Chapter 13, "Persuasive Workplace Communication."

- Give proof to develop your content, through research and proper documentation.
- Urge action—motivate your audience to act upon your proposal by either buying the product or service or adopting your suggestions or solutions.

Researching Content for Proposals

As in any long, formal report, consider developing your content through research. This can include primary and secondary sources such as the following:

- Interviewing customers, clients, vendors, and staff members
- Creating a survey and distributing it electronically or as hard-copy text
- Visiting job sites to determine your audience's needs

- Using the Internet (online access to libraries, search engines, corporate Web sites, and so on)
- Reading journals, books, newspapers, and other hard-copy text

Additional information:
See Chapter 16 "Research and Documentation."

Communicating Ethically

When you write a proposal, your audience will make decisions based on your content. They will decide what amounts of money to budget, how to allocate time, what personnel will be needed to complete a task, and if additional equipment or facilities will be required. Therefore, your proposal must be accurate and honest. You cannot provide information in the proposal that dishonestly affects your decision makers. To write an ethical proposal, you must provide accurate information about credentials, pricing, competitors, needs assessment, and sources of information and research. When using research, for example, you must cite sources accurately to avoid plagiarism, as discussed in Chapter 16. In addition, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 16, when using in-house, company boilerplate material (content and templates), you may not need to provide documentation. However, any material taken from external sources (the Internet, books, journals, etc.) must be documented. Documentation ensures that you are communicating ethically.

Organizing Your Content

Your proposal will be long and complex. To help your audience understand the content, use modes of organization. These can include the following:

- **Comparison/contrast**—Rely on this mode when offering options for vendors, software, equipment, facilities, and more.
- **Cause/effect**—Use this method to show what created a problem or caused the need for your proposed solution.
- **Chronology**—Show the timeline for implementation of your proposal, reporting deadlines to meet, steps to follow, and payment schedules.
- **Analysis**—Subdivide the topic into smaller parts to aid understanding.

The discussion section of your proposal lends itself to many different modes of organization. Consider applying various modes of organization to the key components of your proposal's body. See Table 19.1.

Using Graphics

Graphics, including tables and figures, can help you emphasize and clarify key points. For example, note how the following graphics can be used in your proposal's discussion section:

- **Tables**—Your analysis of costs lends itself to tables.
- **Figures**—The proposal's main text sections could profit from the following figures:
 - **Line charts** (excellent for showing upward and downward movement over a period of time. A line chart could be used to show how a company's profits have decreased, for example.)

Table 19.1 Key Components of the Proposal's Discussion Section

Analyses of the existing situation, your suggested solutions, and the benefits your audience will derive.	Spatial descriptions of mechanisms, tools, facilities, or products	Process analyses explaining how the product or service works	Chronological instructions explaining how to complete a task
Comparative approaches to solving a problem	Comparing and contrasting purchase options	Analyzing managerial chains of command	Chronological schedules for implementation, reporting, maintenance, delivery, payment, or completion
Corporate and employee credentials	Years in business	Satisfied clients	Certifications
Previous accomplishments	Biographical sketches of personnel	Projected milestones (forecasts)	Comparative cost charts

Additional information:

See Chapter 8, "Visual Aids in Workplace Communication."

- Bar charts (effective for comparisons. Through a bar or grouped bar chart, you could reveal visually how one product, service, or approach is superior to another.)
- Pie charts (excellent for showing percentages. A pie chart could help you show either the amount of time spent or amount of money allocated for an activity.)
- Line drawings (effective for technical descriptions and process analyses)
- Photographs (effective for technical descriptions and process analyses)
- Flowcharts (a successful way to help readers understand procedures)
- Organizational charts (excellent for giving an overview of managerial chains of command)

Conclusion/Recommendations

Sum up your proposal, providing your readers closure. The conclusion can restate the problem, your solutions, and the benefits to be derived. Your recommendation will suggest the next course of action. Specify when this action will or should occur and why that date is important. Figure 19.2 is a conclusion/recommendation from an internal proposal.

FIGURE 19.2 Conclusion/Recommendation for Internal Proposal

Summarize the key elements of the proposal.

3.0 SOLUTIONS FOR PROBLEM

Our line capability between San Marcos and LaGrange is insufficient. Presently, we are 23 percent under our desired goal. Using the vacated fiber cables will not solve this problem because the current configuration does not meet our standards. Upgrading the current configuration will improve our capacity by only 9 percent and still present us the risk of service outages.

4.0 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

We suggest laying new fiber cables for the following reasons. They will

- Provide 63 percent more capacity than the current system
- Reduce the risk of service outages
- Allow for forecasted demands when current capacity is exceeded
- Meet standard configurations

Recommend follow-up action and show the benefits derived.

If these new cables are laid by September 1, 2009, we will predate state tariff plans to be implemented by the new fiscal year.

PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

Have you included the following in your proposal?

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ 1. Title page (listing title, audience, author or authors, and date) | ☐ 6. Introduction (providing a statement of purpose and a lengthy analysis of the problem) |
| ☐ 2. Cover letter (stating why you're writing and what you're writing about; what exactly you're providing the readers; what's next—follow-up action) | ☐ 7. Discussion (solving the readers' problem by discussing topics such as procedures, specifications, timetables, materials/equipment, personnel, credentials, facilities, options, and costs) |
| ☐ 3. Table of contents (listing all major headings, subheadings, and page numbers) | ☐ 8. Conclusion (restating the benefits and recommendation for action) |
| ☐ 4. List of illustrations (listing all figures and tables, including their numbers and titles, and page numbers) | ☐ 9. Glossary (defining terminology) |
| ☐ 5. Abstract (stating in semi-specialist terms the problem, solution, and benefits) | ☐ 10. Appendix (optional additional information) |

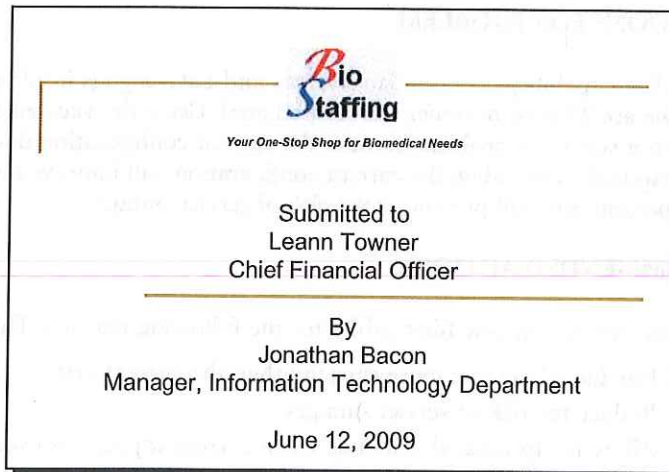
ISBN 1-269-66905-1

SAMPLE INTERNAL PROPOSAL

Figure 19.3, an internal proposal emphasizing a company's need for technology upgrades and new computers, was created in PowerPoint. This software package can be used for both oral and hard-copy proposal presentations. Many companies rely on PowerPoint for their proposals. Commerce Bank's Trust Department, for example, prepares its proposals using PowerPoint. They say that PowerPoint makes proposals easier to read as well as to write. Whereas traditional 8½" × 11" hard-copy text can be wordy and demanding to read, PowerPoint printouts, using six to ten lines of text, are more reader friendly. In addition, once the PowerPoint slides have been made and bound for a hard-copy handout, the same slides can be used for the bank's oral presentation.

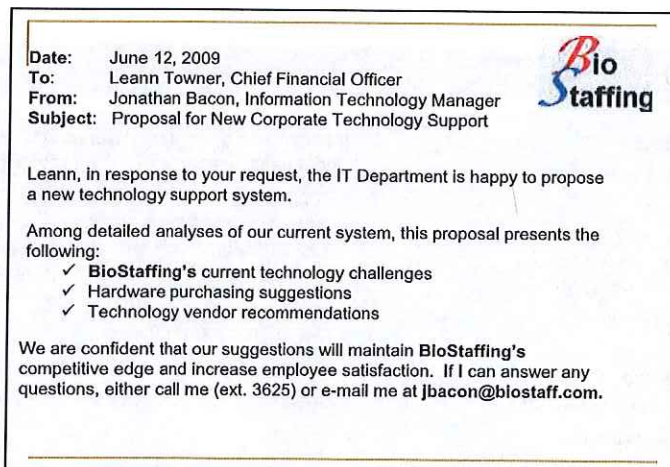
For a sample external proposal, go to our WebCompanion at <http://www.prenhall.com/gerson>.

FIGURE 19.3 Proposal Written in PowerPoint



Many companies create proposal boilerplates using PowerPoint. Companies have found that PowerPoint is a valuable tool for writing and submitting proposals for the following reasons:

- Easy to create
- Easy to transport as a disk vs. multiple-paged documents
- Easy to send either electronically or as hard-copy mail
- Easy for an audience to read and access
- Allows for color and animation
- Allows for easy-to-create handouts



(Continued)

FIGURE 19.3 Proposal Written in PowerPoint Continued

Table of Contents	
1.0	Abstract
1.1	Problem
1.2	Solution
1.3	Benefits
2.0	Introduction
2.1	Purpose
2.2	Problem
2.2.1	Technology Policies
2.2.2	Outdated Hardware
2.2.3	Vendor Changes
3.0	Discussion
3.1	Revised Technology Replacement Policy
3.1.1	Biannual Rotating Replacements
3.2	Hardware Purchases
3.2.1	Hardware Allocation Analysis
3.3	Technology Vendor Options
3.3.1	Assessment of vendor options
4.0	Conclusion
4.1	Conclusion
4.2	Recommendation
4.3	Benefits
5.0	Glossary

List of Illustrations	
Figure 1:	Increase in Costs Due to Repairs and Retrofitting per Workstation
Figure 2:	Time Spent Printing Based on PPM
Figure 3:	Vendor Evaluation Matrix
Table 1:	Biannual Rotating Technology Replacements
Table 2:	Business Application Hardware Costs
Table 3:	Technology Vendor Options

Both Figure/Table numbers and titles are given for easy reference and clarity.

1.0 Abstract	
1.1	Problem
BioStaffing's current technology policies are not responsive to our evolving needs, our hardware is outdated, and our current vendor is changing ownership.	
1.2	Solution
To solve these problems, the Information Technology (IT) Department suggests the following:	
▪ Upgrading our technology needs biannually rather than every five years ▪ Purchasing new computers, printers, scanners, and digital cameras ▪ Hiring a new vendor to supply and repair our hardware	
1.3	Benefits
A biannual replacement schedule will allow us to stay current with hardware advancements. Purchasing new technologies will help our staff more effectively meet client needs. Hiring a new vendor is key to these goals. Our current vendor agreement ends June 30, 2009. A new vendor will provide better turnaround, pricing, maintenance, and merchandise.	

An abstract often presents the problem necessitating the proposal, provides the proposed solutions, and shows the potential benefits.

FIGURE 19.3 Continued

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this proposal is to improve BioStaffing's current technology. By revising our policies, purchasing new hardware, and hiring a new technology vendor, we can increase both customer and worker satisfaction.

2.2 Problem

BioStaffing faces three key challenges:

2.2.1 Technology Policies

2.2.2 Outdated Hardware

2.2.3 Vendor Changes

Pronouns such as "our" and "we" are appropriate for an internal proposal written to coworkers.

2.0 Introduction cont. Problems

2.2.1 Technology Policies

Since 1987, we have replaced hardware and software on a five-year, rotating basis. This was an effective policy initially since new-computer costs were expensive.

However, the current policy is no longer responsive to our needs, for the following reasons:

- Prices have gone down. Today's hardware costs are more affordable. In addition, vendors will offer BioStaffing buyer-incentives. We can buy hardware on an as-needed basis by taking advantage of special sales pricing.

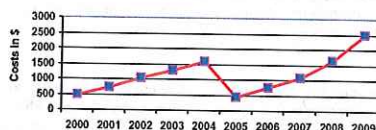
In contrast, our current five-year hardware replacement policy is not responsive. It disregards today's changes in technology pricing, and it disallows us from taking advantage of dealer incentives.

A variety of highlighting techniques, such as boldface headings, underlined subheadings, and bullets, make the text easier to read.

2.0 Introduction cont. Problems

- Repair costs have gone up. By replacing technology only every five years, BioStaffing has resorted to repairing and retrofitting outdated equipment. Costs for these repairs have increased more than five-fold over the last ten years, as noted in the following line graph (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Increase in Costs Due to Repairs and Retrofitting per Workstation



The line graph adds clarity and provides visual appeal.

(Continued)

FIGURE 19.3 Proposal Written in PowerPoint Continued

2.0 Introduction cont.

Problems

2.2.2 Outdated Hardware

We need to purchase new technology items because our current hardware and software are outdated.

- Our computers have insufficient memory. Most of our computers have only 2.0 GHz processors with approximately 256 MB of RAM versus the current minimal standard 3.0 GHz and 512 MB. This negatively impacts speed of document retrieval.*

2.0 Introduction cont.

Problems

- Our ink jet printers are slow and produce poor quality documents. Our current black and white printers produce only 7 ppm with a dpi resolution of 1440 x 720.* In contrast, new black and white laser printers will produce up to 20 ppm at a dpi resolution of 5760 x 1440.

NOTE: At 7 ppm (times 60 minutes per hour), BioStaffing personnel can print 420 pages per hour. Current printing requires **9.5 hours**.

In contrast, at 20 ppm (times 60 minutes per hour), improved printers can produce 1200 pages per hour, requiring only **3.3 hours**.

Laser printers can save our company over 6 hours of lost time each day.

The proposal uses specific details to persuade the audience.

2.0 Introduction cont.

Problems

To clarify the importance of ppm, look at Figure 2.

Figure 2: Time Spent Printing Based on PPM

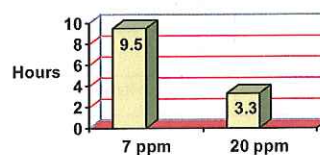


FIGURE 19.3 Continued

2.0 Introduction cont. Problems

2.2.3 Vendor Changes

Our current technology vendor is changing ownership. After having been in business for 20 years, *Business Sourcing* is being sold to an offshore company, *International Technologies*. Our technology agreement will end, as of June 30, 2009. We must renegotiate a technology contract.

This offers is a window of opportunity. Through a new vendor, we can improve quality of service as well as pricing.

3.0 Discussion

3.1 Revised Technology Replacement Policy

We must revise BioStaffing's technology replacement policy. It is not responsive to our growing technology needs. We suggest this approach.

3.1.1 Biannual Rotating Replacements

We propose that BioStaffing divide its 12 departments into two categories. The "Red" team would receive technology upgrades one year (even numbered years), while the "Blue" team would receive technology upgrades the next year (odd numbered years).

IT has divided the departments into teams alphabetically for fairness, as shown in Table 1:

3.0 Discussion cont.

Table 1: Biannual Rotating Technology Replacements

Red Team (even numbered years)	Blue Team (odd numbered years)
Accounting	Manufacturing
Administrative Services	Personnel
Corporate Communication	Sales
Information Technology	Shipping and Receiving

The table, color, and white space show how formatting aids readability.

(Continued)

FIGURE 19.3 Proposal Written in PowerPoint Continued

3.0 Discussion cont.

3.2. Hardware Purchases

After researching department requirements, IT determined that BioStaffing needs to upgrade business application hardware as follows:

3.2.1 Hardware Allocation Analysis

Based on survey results from each department, IT suggests that the hardware listed in Table 2 be allocated as follows:

- Accounting—2 desktops, 1 laptop, 5 handhelds, and 1 laser printer
- Administrative Services—3 desktops, 1 laptop, 1 handheld, and 1 laser printer
- Corporate Communication—1 laptop, 7 handhelds, 1 scanner, 1 laser printer, and 2 digital cameras
- Information Technology—1 laptop, 7 handhelds, 1 scanner, 1 laser printer, and 2 digital cameras
- Manufacturing—2 desktops, 1 laptop, 2 handheld, and 1 laser printer
- Personnel—2 desktops, 1 laptop, 4 handhelds
- Sales—2 desktops, 1 laptop, 10 handhelds, and 1 digital camera
- Shipping and Receiving—1 desktop, 1 laptop, 2 handhelds

3.0 Discussion cont.

3.2.2 Hardware Costs

Table 2: Business Application Hardware Costs		
Hardware	Individual Costs	Total Costs per Item
12 Desktop Computers	\$1,000 each	\$12,000
8 Laptop Computers	\$700 each	\$5,600
38 Handheld computers	\$150 each	\$5,700
5 Laser printers	\$400 each	\$2,000
3 Scanners	\$170 each	\$510
5 Digital cameras	\$200 each	\$1,000
Total Costs for all Items		\$26,810

3.0 Discussion cont.

3.3 Technology Vendor Options

Because BioStaffing's vendor agreement with *Business Sourcing* ends June 30, 2009, Information Technology has researched new vendor options. Our primary criteria included

- pricing
- quality
- delivery time
- maintenance
- warranties
- customer service

Based on these criteria, following is an overview of our findings:

FIGURE 19.3 Continued

3.0 Discussion cont.

Companies	Pricing	Quality	Delivery Time	Maintenance	Warranties	Customer Service
BizTech Warehouse	20% bulk discount Hardware: \$21,448	Re-manufactured name-brand hardware	Same-day delivery at no extra cost.	24-hours maintenance Options at additional hourly cost—negotiable 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Maintenance for products under warranty	90 days Renewable at negotiable price	24/7 hotline, Fleet of maintenance trucks.
Technologies Today	No discount Hardware \$26,810	New name-brand hardware	Same-day delivery for home office, Overnight FedEx for other sites.	Manufacturer's maintenance (1-800 number and/or nearest dealership)	1-year Mnf's warranty	8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. M-F office help.
SOS (Super-Saver Office Supplies)	10% bulk discount Hardware \$24,129	In-house, store-brand hardware	Overnight FedEx.	1-800 number and/or nearest dealership	3-year extended warranties, parts and labor	8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. M-F Office help. Answering service on weekends.

3.0 Discussion cont.

3.3.1 Assessment of Vendor Options

- **Pricing**—BizTech Warehouse provides the best pricing.
- **Quality**—Technologies Today provides new, name-brand hardware. This is appealing. However, remanufactured hardware can be as good as new.
- **Delivery Time**—With 25 locations nationwide, including Topeka, our home office's city, BizTech provides same-day delivery.
- **Maintenance**—BizTech provides the most prompt maintenance service. They charge a maintenance fee, but we will receive a substantial discount as well as product rebates if we choose their company.
- **Warranties**—SOS's three-year warranty is outstanding, as it Technologies Today's 1-year guarantee. However, with plans to upgrade our hardware biannually, a three-year warranty loses its value.
- **Customer Service**—BizTech's 24/7 accessibility is perfect for our workplace.

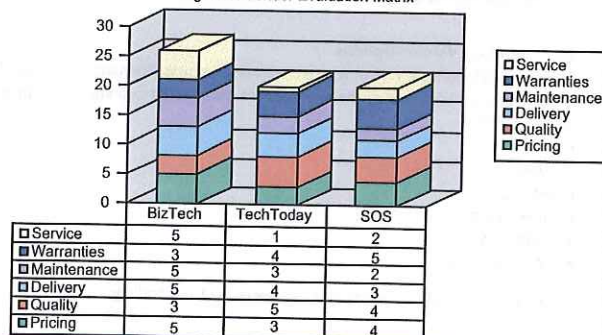
3.0 Discussion cont.

Information Technology evaluated the vendor options as follows:

5 = Excellent 4 = Good 3 = Average 2 = Poor 1 = Unacceptable

Based on this scale, Figure 3 shows our evaluation findings:

Figure 3: Vendor Evaluation Matrix



(Continued)

FIGURE 19.3 Proposal Written in PowerPoint Continued

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 Conclusion

BioStaffing's technology needs are critical.

- Repair costs due to old hardware have risen five-fold per workstation, from as low as \$500 to as high as \$2,500.
- Outdated printers, producing only 7 pages per minute, require up to 9.5 hours a day to print BioStaffing's 4,000 pages of documentation.
- Expired technology vendor contracts need to be renegotiated.

Key to the above challenges is our current 5-year technology replacement policy. Technology advances demand a more responsive policy.

4.0 Conclusion cont.

4.2 Recommendation

The Information Technology Department, based on research and surveys, proposes the following:

- A biannual technology replacement policy—this would allow BioStaffing to meet employee technology needs more responsively as well as benefit from vendor pricing incentives.
- New communication hardware—this would include desktop, laptop, and handheld computers; laser printers; scanners; and digital cameras.
- A new technology vendor—based on our research, we suggest that BizTech Warehouse will best meet our technology needs.

4.0 Conclusion cont.

4.3 Benefits

These changes must occur before June 30, 2009, when our current vendor contract ends. By acting now, BioStaffing will benefit in several ways.

- We can save up to 20% on hardware and maintenance costs.
- We will maintain our competitive edge in the marketplace.
- Most importantly, our employee satisfaction and productivity will increase as they work with the latest technology and software upgrades.

Positive words and phrases such as "benefit," "save," "competitive edge," "provide employee satisfaction," and "increase productivity" help sway the audience toward the writer's stance.

FIGURE 19.3 Continued

5.0 Glossary	
Acronym/Abbreviation	Definition
dpi	Dots per inch
GHz	Gigahertz
GB	Gigabyte
HD	Hard drive
MB	Megabyte
MHz	Megahertz
ppm	Pages per minute

Though all readers might not need terms defined, a glossary provides clarity to a less specialized audience.

Mary Met Her Challenge

To meet her communication challenge, Mary used the P^3 process.

Planning

To plan her proposal, Mary considered the following:

- Goals—rewrite a manual to improve its ease of use
- Audience—customer
- Channels—face-to-face interviews, questionnaires, and a proposal
- Data—drawn from interviews and questionnaires



Conducting the front-end analysis is the planning portion of Mary's P^3 approach to writing her proposal. As Mary says, "I can't even begin to write without some information. Getting the appropriate information from the client is an essential part of my communication process. I find that I usually need to meet with the client face-to-face and then use primary research in the form of discussion or questionnaires as the basis for the proposal."

In order to get the information she needed, Mary says, "I did a complete review of the existing manual and spent time talking with and observing several employees and their manager. I created the following questionnaire, limited to no more than ten questions. I keep my questionnaires short so that I don't overwhelm my client with additional work." Figure 19.4 shows Mary's questionnaire.

Packaging

After reviewing the notes from her front-end analysis, Mary drafted the "Findings" section of her proposal, as shown in Figure 19.5. Mary says, "I submitted this rough draft to my client for input and commentary. I wanted to make sure we were in agreement about my approach to the project. Whenever I work with clients, I always find their suggestions invaluable to the success of our effort. This interaction allows us to arrive at a mutually agreeable 'perfected' proposal that meets the needs of the client. A happy client helps to ensure the continued success of my small business."

Perfecting

Before incorporating the "Findings" section into her proposal, Mary sent the draft of the section to the individuals she interviewed. She wanted to be sure that she had included everything they felt was important.

Mary says, "With their approval of the draft, I completed a proposal for the client that included, among the legal paragraphs that I include in all proposals, the following sections:

- A summary of the client's request
- The goal of the project
- The findings

(Continued)

FIGURE 19.4 Questionnaire for Planning a Proposal

ABOUT THE MANUAL

- Are instructions for completing tasks set off clearly from the other text and written in a numbered, step-by-step format?
- Are graphics and screen shots used when appropriate to enhance the instructions?
- Does the material have a table of contents and/or index to help learners find the information they need?
- Are terms and acronyms clearly defined?

FROM INTERVIEWS WITH EMPLOYEES

- What tasks do you perform without making mistakes? How often do you perform those tasks?
- What tasks do you struggle with? How often do you perform those tasks?
- Do you refer to the training manual when you are having trouble?
- If you do, can you find the information you need easily? Or at all?

FROM INTERVIEW WITH MANAGER

- What mistakes are causing the most problems?
- How often are these mistakes made?

FIGURE 19.5 Partial Draft of “Findings” Section

FINDINGS:

- Employees perform 80 percent of the tasks in Application X with 100 percent accuracy. Each of these tasks is performed at least once a week if not daily.
- Employees consistently identified five tasks that they have trouble completing. Three of these tasks are complicated, multi-step tasks with costly consequences when errors are made. Two of the tasks are performed only once a quarter.
- The instructions in the existing training manual are well-written. Graphics and screen shots are used often to enhance the clarity of the instructions.
- Employees found the manual to be very thorough and helpful in the classroom training sessions.
- The manual does not have an index, and the table of contents is skeletal.
- Employees do not use the manual as a reference when they are having trouble with a task because the manual is cumbersome to handle and instructions are hard to find.

- The recommended solution
- Description of the recommended solution (including a prototype)
- A timeline for completing the project
- An estimate of the time and cost for each step of the project

Before any document is ready to be sent out the door, I then have a colleague proofread every word for clarity, spelling, and punctuation. I value this part of the *P³* process, for no matter how experienced I am as a writer, I can always benefit from another person's opinion.” Figure 19.6 is Mary's perfected proposal excerpt.

FIGURE 19.6 Perfected Proposal Excerpt—Four Sections of the Total Proposal

CLIENT REQUEST

Company ABC (Client) has asked Effective Business Communications, Inc. (EBC) to submit a proposal for the redesign of an existing training manual. The manual is used to train new finance department employees on Application X, the company's expense reporting application.

Employees are currently making costly mistakes, and the client believes that the manual is failing to communicate what employees need to know or do. The client's request for proposal (RFP) does not indicate what information the client relied on when deciding to have the manual revised.

PROJECT GOAL

The goal of the project is to eliminate the mistakes employees make when using Application X.

FINDINGS

In response to the RFP, EBC asked for and received permission to conduct a front-end analysis to confirm the cause of the mistakes being made in the application.

The findings include

- Employees perform 80 percent of the tasks in Application X with 100 percent accuracy. Each of these tasks is performed at least once a week if not daily.
- Employees consistently identified five tasks that they have trouble completing. Three of these tasks are complicated, multi-step tasks with costly consequences when errors are made. Two of the tasks are performed only once a quarter.
- The instructions in the existing training manual are well-written. Graphics and screen shots are used often to enhance the clarity of the instructions.
- Employees found the manual to be very thorough and helpful in the classroom training sessions.
- The manual does not have an index, and the table of contents is skeletal.
- Employees do not use the manual as a reference when they are having trouble with a task because the manual is cumbersome to handle and instructions are hard to find.

RECOMMENDATION

Although the manual would benefit from the addition of an index and a more complete table of contents, a complete revision of the manual is unnecessary. Instead, EBC recommends the creation of job aids for those tasks that are complicated, multi-step processes or for those tasks that are performed infrequently.

Mary says, "I always try to break text into small, readable amounts of content so that the lengthy proposal is easy to read. I know how busy my clients are, and I want to make the documents I submit to them pleasant to read—the less time they have to spend reading the proposal, the more likely it is that we'll be doing business together."

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

1. You might have multiple readers for a proposal, including internal and external audiences. Consider your audiences' needs. To communicate with different levels of readers, include abstracts, glossaries, and parenthetical definitions.
2. A proposal could include the following:
 - Title page
 - Cover letter
 - List of illustrations
 - Abstract
 - Introduction
 - Discussion
 - Conclusion
 - Recommendation
 - Glossary
 - Works cited (or references)
 - Appendix
3. Subheadings and visual aids will make your proposal more accessible.
4. Use primary and secondary research to develop your content.
5. Write persuasively to convince your audience to act. To accomplish this goal, arouse reader interest, refute opposing points of view, gather details to support your argument, and urge action.
6. Write ethically by documenting sources and making sure your content (prices, timelines, credentials, etc.) are accurate.

WWW Find additional proposal exercises, samples, and interactive activities at <http://www.prenhall.com/gerson>.

MEETING WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

CASE STUDIES

1. BEST (Bellaire Educational Supplies/Technologies) manufactures and markets school supplies for all levels of education (K–12, private/parochial, and college). BEST has been in business for 15 years, has a Triple A rating from the Educational Marketing Group, and is owned and operated by Sam and Scott Wilcox, two former educators. Some of BEST's clients include the New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Miami independent school districts. Supporting their logo—*Your **BEST** buy in the market!*—BEST promises to meet or beat any competitor's pricing.

Turtle Creek Independent School District (TCISD), 3476 Schoolway, Houston, TX 77902, has written an RFP, asking for proposals for educational supplies for their faculty, paraprofessionals, and staff. TCISD needs the following before July of their upcoming school year:

- 1,200 desks and chairs
- 180 modular computer workstations
- 54 blackboards and 26 whiteboards
- 16 cases of chalk
- 100 boxes of dry erase markers
- 30 overhead projectors
- 35 pull-down screens
- 500 gradebooks

Assignment

Write an external proposal for BEST. To do so, research pricing for the previously listed items, include warranty information, and provide delivery methods and dates.

2. Maxwell Publishing Co. has 1,500 employees who have offices in two, four-story companion buildings. The company currently has two cafeterias, although one cafeteria could support both buildings. It would be a cost savings to use the second cafeteria space for other purposes. The personnel committee has a wonderful idea for this space. Based on employee surveys, the committee plans to write an unsolicited internal proposal asking management to renovate this unused space, turning it into a daycare center for employee usage.

Maxwell Publishing Co. prides itself on being employee friendly, family friendly, and one of the city's best places to work. It already has an on-site fitness center and corporate recreational program. However, due to childcare needs, many of Maxwell's employees cannot take advantage of these benefits. Over 45 percent of the employees have children under the age of 4, 63 percent of the employees have children still in elementary school, and 12 percent of the employees are single mothers.

Assignment

Write the internal proposal to Maxwell's CEO, Wes Maxwell. In this proposal, include the following:

- Licensing requirements for a daycare facility
- Required credentials for a licensed daycare worker
- Insurance regulations and costs
- The number of children who can be cared for in a space measuring 2,400 square feet.
- Preferred hours of operation

Research to find this information.

3. RavenWood Homes, a neighborhood housing development, wants to upgrade its property. The homes association has decided to enhance its entrance with a fountain, improve the area's landscaping, and add more street lighting for security as well as esthetics. RavenWood wants the entrance fountain to be made out of black granite, to stand 12 feet high, and to have the water cascade over the housing development's name, which will be etched into the fountain's base. The name must be at least three feet high for visibility. Lighting should illuminate the fountain for night viewing.

The homes association believes it needs at least 125 ten-foot tall red maple trees to line both sides of RavenWood's main boulevard, Woodline Dr. This street also must have 50 standard street lights. RavenWood also will need a maintenance contract for grass cutting and tree pruning, as well as for the fountain's upkeep.

Assignment

As a landscaping architectural/engineering company, write the solicited external proposal for RavenWood. Include pricing, a timetable, your credentials, and a list of satisfied customers.

4. Your company, Foods & More, provides individual and corporate party-planning services. This includes food, beverages, plates, utensils, decorations (flowers, balloons, banners, and party favors), and entertainment (music and games). The company has been in business for ten years, and is owned by Rochelle Kraft, Sally Gorton, and Lisa Clark, all of whom have design degrees from the Powhattan State College of Design.

Foods & More has provided services for as few as ten guests to as many as 1,000. The company has worked with Microsoft, Boeing, Sears, The Gap, H&R Block, AMC Theaters, and more. Pricing starts at \$15 per person, but individual services and menus alter this base fee. For example, the company's "Cowboys and

Cowgirls" BBQ (with hamburgers, hotdogs, potato salad, and beans) costs \$15 per person. In contrast, their more gourmet meal, "A Taste of Italy," includes chicken Alfredo, baby vegetables, Caesar salad, marble cheesecake, and wine. It lists for \$30 per person. A DJ costs \$25 per hour, while a country-western band costs \$100 per hour. Other fees are negotiable.

Assignment

Write an unsolicited external proposal for Foods & More. Create menu items and other services. As an audience, write this proposal to your current employer, college, fraternity or sorority, or your business communication class.

ETHICS IN THE WORKPLACE CASE STUDY

Candice Miller, manager of human resources, is preparing an internal proposal to promote new training classes for her company's employees. To discover where employees can improve their job skills, Candice conducts primary research. She interviews staff and tells them how their comments will be used. After completing her research but before she writes the proposal, Candice gets the employees' approval and has them sign a release statement: "I give the company permission to use my statements in this proposal."

Months later, Candice is invited to attend the national convention of human resources managers and is asked to make a PowerPoint presentation about her company's new training options. In this presentation, she uses the interviews from her earlier proposal. She did not get permission from her fellow employees since they had already signed release forms.

Question: Is it ethical for Candice to use her colleagues' interview comments in her speech at the convention? Justify your answer based on information provided in Chapter 1.

INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM PROJECTS

1. Write an external proposal. To do so, create a product or a service and sell it through a long report. Your product can be an improved radon detection unit, a new fiber optic cable, safety glasses for construction work, bar codes for pricing or inventory control, an improved four-wheel steering system, computer graphics for an advertising agency, and so on. Your service may involve dog grooming, automobile servicing, computer maintenance, home construction (refinishing basements, building decks, room additions, and so on), freelance technical writing, at-home occupational therapy, or telemarketing. The topic is your choice. Draw from your job experience, college coursework, or hobbies. To write this proposal, follow the *P³* process provided in this chapter—plan, package your draft, and then revise to perfect.
2. Write an internal proposal. You can select a topic from either work or school. For example, your company or department is considering a new venture. Research the prospect by reading relevant information. Interview involved participants or survey a large group of people. Once you have gathered your data, document your findings and propose to management the next course of action. If you choose a topic from school, you could propose a daycare center, on-campus bus service, improved computer facilities, tutoring services, coed dormitories, pass/fail options, and so on. Write an internal proposal to improve your company's Web site; expand or improve the security of your company's parking lot; create or improve your company's physical site security in light of post 9-11 issues; improve policies for overtime work; improve policies for hiring diversity; improve your company's policies for promotion. Research your topic by reading relevant information or by interviewing or surveying students, faculty, staff, and administration. Once you have gathered your data, document your findings and recommend a course of action. In each instance, be sure to plan, package your draft, and then revise to perfect.

DEGREE-SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Marketing and Public Relations.** You are the marketing manager at the Overland Park Convention Center. You have to grow your business by \$25,000 this quarter. To expand your customer base, you will write external proposals to the local bar association, chamber of commerce, junior league, banking association, insurance organization, and so on.

Assignment

Through brainstorming, list what needs or problems these organizations might have, how your convention center can meet these needs, how your proposal can be persuasive, and what benefits your proposal might offer. Outline your findings and write a brief abstract, which would preface the proposal.

2. **Business Information Systems.** You work at Design Today, an engineering and architectural firm. Employees at Design Today depend on e-mail for their daily correspondence and on the Internet for their research. However, the employees are being bombarded by constant spam and pop-up advertisements, disrupting their work. As the business information systems director, you need to solve this problem by writing an internal proposal.

Assignment

Through brainstorming, list what problems spam and pop-up advertisements create, how your department could resolve these problems, how your proposal can be persuasive, and what benefits your proposal might offer. Outline your findings and write a brief abstract, which would preface the proposal.

3. **Accounting.** Your chain of grocery stores, FoodTime, is experiencing financial problems. Sales are down and expenses are up. Currently, the chain of ten grocery stores has 500 employees. FoodTime operates 24 hours a day, and has an in-store gourmet French bakery, sushi bar, and home food delivery service. Management has asked you and your staff of accountants to write an internal proposal for cost-cutting measures.

Assignment

Through brainstorming, list FoodTime's problems, how you propose to solve these problems, how your proposal can be persuasive, and what benefits your proposal might offer. Outline your findings and write a brief abstract, which would preface the proposal.

4. **Management.** Technology is ruling business and industry. However, your company has fallen behind the technology curve. Your employees are not as computer savvy as they need to be. For example, none of your colleagues know how to use the company's new software platform, consisting of e-mail functions, spreadsheet capabilities, online reporting, or archiving of e-mail messages. They don't even know how to access the company's online database and data library. You have been asked to write a solicited, internal proposal up to management. The proposal will suggest ways to solve this lack of technology know-how on the part of company employees.

Assignment

Through brainstorming, list what problems employee lack of technology skills can create, how your company could resolve these problems, how your proposal can be persuasive, and what benefits your proposal might offer. Outline your findings and write a brief abstract, which would preface the proposal.

5. **Finance.** A local builder is developing a subdivision with 100 home sites. The builder already has a loan from a mortgage company, but mortgage rates have

been increasing for months. Your mortgage company offers refinancing options. You know you can offer the builder better rates. To convince the builder to use your services, you must write an unsolicited external proposal.

Assignment

Through brainstorming, list what problems the builder's current mortgage loan presents, how your company could solve these problems, how your proposal can be persuasive, and what benefits your proposal might offer. Outline your findings and write a brief abstract, which would preface the proposal.

PROBLEM-SOLVING THINK PIECES

1. Stinson, Heinlein, and Brown Accounting, LLC, employs over 2,000 workers, including accountants, computer information specialists, a legal staff, paralegals, and office managers. The company requires a great deal of written and oral communication with customers, vendors, government agencies, and coworkers. For example, a sample of their workplace communication includes the following:
 - Written reports to judges and lawyers.
 - Letters and reports to customers.
 - E-mail and memos to coworkers.
 - Oral communication in face-to-face meetings, videoconferences, and sales presentations.

Unfortunately, not all employees communicate effectively. The writing company-wide is uneven. Discrepancies in style, grammar, content, and format hurt the company's professionalism. The same problems occur with oral communication. George Hunt, a mid-level manager, plans to write an internal, unsolicited proposal to the company's principal owners, highlighting the problems and suggesting solutions.

What must Mr. Hunt include in his proposal—beyond the obvious proposal components (a title page, table of contents, abstract, introduction, and so forth)—to persuade the owners to accept his suggestions? Suggest ways in which the problem can be solved.

2. Toby Hebert is sales manager at Crab Bayou Industries (CBI), located in Crab Bayou, Louisiana. In his position, Toby manages a sales staff of 12 employees who travel throughout Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and Mississippi. Currently, the sales staff members use their own cars to make sales calls, and CBI pays them 40 cents per mile for travel expenses. Each staff member currently travels approximately 2,000 miles a month, with cars getting 20 miles per gallon.

Gasoline prices, at the moment, are over \$3.75 a gallon. With gasoline and car maintenance costs higher than ever, the current rate of 40 cents per mile means that CBI's sales employees are losing money. Something must be done to solve this problem. Toby has met with his staff, and they have decided to write a proposal to Andre Boussaint, CBI's CEO.

What must Toby and his staff include in the proposal—beyond the obvious proposal components (a title page, table of contents, abstract, introduction, and so forth)—to persuade the CEO to accept the suggestions? Suggest ways in which the problem can be solved.

WEB WORKSHOP

By typing "RFP," "proposal," "online proposal," or "online RFP" in an Internet search engine, you can find tips for writing proposals and requests for proposals (RFPs), software products offered to automatically generate e-proposals and winning RFPs, articles on how to write proposals, samples of RFPs and proposals, and online RFP and proposal forms.

To perform a more limited search, type in phrases like “automotive service RFP,” “computer maintenance RFP,” “desktop publishing RFP,” “Web design RFP,” and many more topics. You will find examples of both proposals and RFPs from businesses, school systems, city governments, and various industries.

To enhance your understanding of business and industry’s focus on proposal writing, search the Web for information on RFPs and proposals. Using the criteria in this chapter and your knowledge of effective workplace communication techniques, analyze your findings.

- How do the online proposals or RFPs compare to those discussed in this textbook, in terms of content, tone, layout, and so on?
- What information provided in the textbook is missing in the online discussions?
- What are some of the industries that are requesting proposals, and what types of products or services are they interested in?
 - a. Report your findings, either in an oral presentation or in writing (e-mail message, memo, letter, or report).
 - b. Imagine that you are requesting a proposal for a product or service. Create your own online form to meet this need.
 - c. Rewrite any of the proposals that you think can be improved, using the criteria in this chapter as your guide.
 - d. Respond to an online RFP by writing a proposal. To complete this assignment, go online to research any information you need for your content.

QUIZ QUESTIONS

1. Explain the purpose of an internal proposal.
2. Explain the purpose of an external proposal.
3. What content do you include in the introduction of a proposal?
4. What is an abstract in a proposal?
5. What do you include in a purpose statement?
6. What are the typical components of the discussion section?
7. What do you include in the recommendation?
8. What is an RFP?
9. What can you include in an appendix?
10. What type of visuals can you include in a proposal?