Unit 3: Communication Skills for Presentation: Writing, Designing, and Speaking
Thesis and Project Report Writing, Technical Proposal Writing, How to Pitch an Idea: Process, Preparation and Structure, Elements of Speech Delivery: Passion, Poise & Illustrations.

THESIS AND PROJECT REPORT WRITING

THESIS

- **"a statement or theory that is put forward as a premise to be maintained or proved."**
- **"a long essay or dissertation involving personal research, written by a candidate for a university degree."**

A thesis is a formally written document submitted in support of candidature for an academic degree or professional qualification presenting the author's research and findings. It is also described as a long piece of writing on a particular subject, especially one that is done for a higher college or university degree.

In short, a thesis is a long scholarly paper that is typically used to sum up learned knowledge in a master's program. It is required in research-oriented degrees to apply their practical skills before culmination. For instance, a physiology major may investigate 'effects of emotions on eating habits '.

IMPORTANCE OF THESIS

Writing a thesis enhances various skills which are required for success in future working life. Writing thesis is important for various reasons like-

1. When writing a thesis, information retrieval skills are developed.

2. Critical and analytical thinking is brightened.

3. Problem solving and argumentation is strengthened

4. Thesis gives a chance to shine and prove professional capability in the chosen field.

5. A thesis gives the valuable opportunity to delve into interesting research for greater depth of learning in a career area.

6. It showcases gained writing skills, authoritative awareness of the field, and ambition to learn hence employers also prefer candidates who have a thesis in their portfolio.

7. Thesis will also fine-tune critical communication and public speaking skills, which can be applied in any career.

PURPOSES OF THESIS

The purposes of a thesis are

1. To demonstrate proficiency in academic research

2. To present appropriate academic communication, both written and oral.

3. To demonstrate mastery of a particular subject area

4. To showcase the ability to independently create new scientific knowledge.

STYLE OF THESIS

If the thesis is written in a proper format and style, then it will impress the readers and the success of the writer will be certain. A thesis must have a formal style which is -

1. Impersonal and objective in nature

2. It coherent

3. It should have clarity

4. It must be comprehensive.

5. It must follow the rules of conciseness and completeness.

6. Language must be objective free of ambiguity and redundancy.

COMPONENTS OF A THESIS

Thesis come in various sizes and shapes. The components of many theses are similar although their functions and requirements may differ according to the degree they are presented for.

Cover page

identifies topic, writer, institution, degree and date (year and, if you like, month)

Declaration

states that the material presented has not been used for any other award, and that all sources are acknowledged

states that the approval was received and gives the reference number

Acknowledgements

to thank anyone whose support has been important for your work

the supervisor generally receives the first vote of thanks. You may speak from the heart.

Table of Contents

lists all major divisions and subdivisions marked by numbers and indicates which page they are on

Lists of Tables/ Figures/ Illustrations/ Appendices

lists all of these and the pages on which they appear

a separate section is used for each of these categories

Abstract

speaks the focal points of the thesis

summarizes the thesis, mentioning aims/purposes, focus of literature review, methods of research and analysis, the findings, and implications

Introduction

provides background information related to the need for the research

builds an argument for the research (rationale) and presents research questions and aims

gives an outline of subsequent chapters

Literature Review

to show the reader that you are familiar with issues and debates in the field

to show the reader that there is an area in this field to which you can contribute

Methodology (research design)

presents a rationale for the methodological approach (using literature)

describes and justifies the methods of research and analysis (using literature)

Results

presents the data and findings, ordered/analyzed in ways justified earlier (methodology)

past tense is a feature here (usually)

data in tables should be carefully set out, checked and discussed

Discussion

discusses findings, drawing out main achievements and explaining results

makes links between aims and findings (and the literature)

may make recommendations – these could appear in the Conclusion chapter

Conclusion

draws all arguments and findings together

summarizes major findings

presents limitations and implications

suggests directions for future research

ends on a strong note

Appendices

provides a place for important information which, if placed in the main text, would distract the reader from the flow of the argument

appendices may be named, lettered or numbered (decide early)

References/ Bibliography

shows the reader which texts/materials you have consulted

is in alphabetical order

Glossary/ Index

helps reader where the context or content of the research may be unfamiliar

a list of key terms/topics.

PROJECT REPORT WRITING

A Project Report is <mark>a document which provides details on the overall picture of the proposed business</mark> The project report gives an account of the project proposal to ascertain the prospects of the proposed plan/activity. Project Report is a written document relating to any investment.

A project report summarizes a project's key aspects, including its goals, timeline, budget, progress, and outcomes. It provides project managers with critical information to monitor and evaluate the project's performance, identify potential risks and challenges, and communicate progress to stakeholders.

What is a Project Report?

A project report is <mark>a comprehensive document that provides detailed information about a specific project.</mark> It typically outlines the project's objectives, scope, methodology, progress, findings, and outcomes. A project report often includes details about the project's goals, activities, timelines, resources used, challenges faced, and the results achieved. It serves as a formal record of the project's life cycle, serving both as a documentation of the work done and as a communication tool to convey the project's status and outcomes to stakeholders, sponsors,

or interested parties. Project reports are commonly used in various fields such as business, engineering, research, and academia to assess the effectiveness and success of a project.

5 Steps to Create a Project Report From Scratch

Creating project reports is an integral part of evaluating project success. Documenting the lessons learned and sharing them with a larger team in an organized way can help with future projects. You can use different tools to put together your project report. Here are 7 basic steps involved in creating a project report -

1. Know Your Objective

Sit down, evaluate your objectives, and understand what you want to describe, explain, recommend, and prove with your report. Having set goals will not only help you proceed with your project report but also help readers understand your point of view.

2. Recognize Your Audience

Your audience plays an essential role in making your project report a success. A formal annual report differs from a financial report: the language, representation of data, and analysis changes per your target audience.

3. Data Collection

The chances of you having a solid report is when data supports it. Data plays an essential role in making people believe in your derivations. Also, support your claims by citing sources such as case studies, surveys, interviews, etc.

4. Structure the Report

A project report is further divided into certain sections. These 4 are the most common divisions of a project report:

- **Summary**: The summary gives the reader a download of all covered in the project report. Even though a summary is placed at the beginning of a project report, you can only write it once your entire report is complete.
- **Introduction:** Mention the outline of the report, give context and mention the scope and methodologies used in the report.
- **Body:** This is the lengthy section of the report as it contains background details, analysis, data, and graphics.
- **Conclusion**: This section brings the entire project report together.

5. Edit and Proofread

Once your project report is ready, read it multiple times with some time gap. You can ask your co-workers to review it.

Project Report Objectives

Every project report starts with a solid project report objective. Your objective should provide precise direction for the rest of the report. Consider what purpose you want your project report

to serve. Are you describing new risks or explaining project delays? Or will your report focus on persuading management teams or stockholders to invest additional funds into the project?

A thorough understanding of your objective will help guide you in writing the report and make the purpose of the report clear to all stakeholders.

Here are a few examples of project report objectives:

- Requesting approval for a new project
- Tracking the progress of the project
- Identifying and managing risks
- Managing costs and budgets

Project Report Components

Your project report will be bursting with essential information about your project. Although the content of your report will differ depending on the type of report you're creating, keeping your report organized will make it easy for the reader to follow along without missing any critical points. Organize your data and content into sections that allow all stakeholders to quickly reference.

Consider including some of the following project report components:

Executive Summary

The first section of your report will likely include an executive summary. The brief overview should provide all the essential takeaways from the report, allowing the reader to understand the report's contents without having to read through all of the project details.

Project Progress

This component includes real metrics that track your project's progress. It offers an overview of the project's status and budget while identifying risks or issues that may have emerged. Helping project management and other stakeholders reflect on the project schedule and make amendments as needed.

Risks and Risk Management

What risks have developed that may affect the quality, timeline, or budget of your project? How will you control these emerging elements? It's inevitable that all projects will face risks, so it's how you intend to manage those risks that's important to the project team and stakeholders. Include a detailed analysis of the risk, your proposed solutions, and how these new elements will affect the project as a whole.

Budget

Are your financials where they need to be for the current status of your project? Will more capital be required to reach your goals effectively? Provide a detailed overview of the allocation of your budget including materials, labor, and operating costs.

Timelines

Reflect on your project goals. Is the project behind, ahead, or on schedule? How will any changes to your timelines affect your budget or resources? Include an overview of tasks that have already been completed and a comprehensive schedule of remaining tasks.

Resources

Resources may include materials, machinery, or even funding required to complete your project. Provide a detailed summary of your current resource allocation. What are detrimental resources for your project running low? Are there any excess amounts?

Team Performance

Is your team completing tasks efficiently? Are there any skill or knowledge gaps that need to be addressed? Compare your team's performance to your initial goals to identify the group's progress.

Common Project Report Types

A project report is a simple and detailed description of the essence of the project and its aims and aspirations. The business management team and stakeholders are kept updated on every development regarding the project; based on that, they prepare their strategy. This vital information keeps the communication line open between the management team and the stakeholders, providing them with a complete picture of every action concerning the project.

A project report includes the necessary recommendations for all types of businesses, established and start-ups. Moreover, organizations use project reports to procure financial help

from institutions. Project reports can be of various types that help everyone complete a project successfully. Based on the report, your team can take up any activity that benefits the project.

Status Reports

It <mark>talks about the progress going on with a project.</mark> It also states various significant activities associated with the project. This status report organizes the communication medium between the team and the stakeholders. It summarizes the finished tasks on the project at hand. It includes the budgetary details and the timeline of the project. It also helps identify the risks related to the project and measures to tackle them beforehand. The status report also keeps track of the events or actions or any activity taken in the past. Status reports are carried out weekly, daily, monthly, or quarterly. They help collect and distribute information about crucial activities in a project in a smooth manner.

Progress Report

While executing a project, a progress report is inevitably carried out to update everything about the project. It usually includes things like if the project baseline is fulfilled. It indicates the initial plan you prepared along with your stakeholders about a project regarding the expectations, schedules, cost, deliverables, and scope of it. A progress report informs your stakeholders how much progress has been made in the above directions.

You should prepare this status report in a specific manner by stating the project title, contact information, a summary of the status, and providing all the information about the budget, timeline, and expected completion date of the project. You can take the help of several such free templates available online to make the status report.

Risk Reports

This type of report explains the risks associated with the project in a documented form. It covers details about risks that are managed already and the emerging ones. It includes the overall risk profile of the project. Risk reports identify and state potential risks that could alter the duration of the project and tips to manage them.

Board Executive Reports

An executive report is a summary of the business plan of an organization for lending partners. It enables the team members to collect and combine the results of numerous research studies to help them decide on the project. It is the starting point of arranging a dialogue with the investors. It should be written in such a way that it creates the best impression in the minds of the lenders. It should be short and precise and comprehensively analyze the project.

Cost Benefit Analysis Report

This kind of report helps organizations know if a particular project is possible or not. It will show you how much the project will benefit your organization against the investment. It will help you decide if a project is worth taking on for your organization and how much business profit it will get you at the end of the day. Alternatively, it will also help your organization better utilize its resources while progressing with the project. You can monitor your project expenses and spending to manage your funds better.

Resource Reports

This report highlights the distribution of resources according to the project tasks. The team members and the investors get the necessary information by reading this report on how well the resources are distributed in the project. It will give detailed narration about which team is assigned to which task according to the date wise. This type of report is beneficial for an

organization to know if there is over allocation of resources as this could harm the project. Overall allocation happens when there are insufficient resources to complete all the crucial activities of the project.

Variance Reports

This report helps you compare your overall project plan with the project's end result. It uses metrics to inform you if your project is running according to the timeline, ahead of time, or running late. Moreover, it will streamline the data based on the comparisons you have made on the project. With the availability of various project management tools, preparing this kind of report has become easier now. It cuts down your hard work by creating the project activity report and conveying it to the stakeholders.

Gap Analysis Report

This report will examine the project's current status in the context of schedule, cost, and labor and, subsequently, compare the targeted status. It discovers and examines the gap between these two aspects and prepares a strategy or action plan on how to do the needful to reach the targeted objectives. Every business, whether a budding one or an established one, will need this kind of gap analysis report to perform better in terms of projects. This report will tell you how to take the successful step to graduate to the next level of your business. This will tell you whether you are fulfilling your business objectives and using your resources carefully.

TECHNICAL PROPOSAL WRITING

PROPOSAL

The word proposal has been derived from the word 'propose' that means ==to offer or put forward for consideration- a suggestion, plan or scheme.== Proposal thus means =='something proposed':== plan or scheme. It is often defined as a plan or scheme that persuades its readers to accept the writer's idea. In other terms, a proposal is a properly conceived idea or plan, an action-oriented report. But it is different from a report.

"The proposal is a suggestive plan of future task where the proposer aims at getting the acceptance or the approval of the authorities but a report deals with what has already been done."

TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

A technical proposal is simply one of the business proposal examples & samples that specifies all the technical needs and requirements of a project. This allows the clients to have an idea of what approach or strategy is essential to be implemented to ensure project success. Just like in a management proposal, the technical plan formulation for a project should be presented transparently for a technical proposal to truly work and be effective.

TYPES OF PROPOSALS

Proposals are written for business enhancement, scientific enquiry, technical knowledge and so on. Some of the main types of proposals are mentioned below: -

1. Business Proposals

Proposals dealing with any aspect of business, trade and commerce are called business proposals.

2. Research Proposals

Proposals concerned with a project requiring scientific enquiry or systematic investigation are known as research proposals.

3. Technical Proposals:

Proposals relating to technical knowledge and skills are known as Technical Proposals. Note: - Proposals related to an organization may be categorized into following two types: -

1. External Proposal

A proposal written by a firm in order to win contracts for work is called External Proposal.

2. Internal Proposals

The writer prepares an internal proposal with a motive to convince the person or group in authority to allow him to implement his ideas. Internal proposals are thus, submitted within a company.

All the above proposals may be broadly classified into following two categories: - 1. Solicited Proposal

When a proposal is prepared in response to an invitation from a firm or some government or non-government organization, it is known as a solicited proposal. In such forms of proposals, the proposer receives a form from the firm inviting the proposals. The writer is required to supply the relevant particulars as demanded by the firm. Solicited proposals are generally prepared in response to some advertisement.

2. Unsolicited Proposal

Sometimes a proposer prepares a proposal about the solution of a problem. This type of proposal is developed by an individual without being asked or without any external encouragement. Such proposals are commonly known as unsolicited proposals where the proposer tries hard to rouse the interest of the people to whom he has sent his proposal.

QUALITIES OF A GOOD PROPOSAL OR FACTORS CONSIDERED FOR WRITING A GOOD PROPOSAL

Following points should be followed for writing a good proposal: -

1). Proposer should keep in mind his customer's needs as well as his own product or

Service.

2). Proposer should suggest the benefits, likely to accrue to the customer.

3). Certain visual aids may be appropriately used by the proposer to present his proposal in an effective way.

4). Proposer should describe the approach to solve the problem.

5). The proposer must explain the expertise of the people responsible for the project.

6). Time and money required for the execution of the proposed project should be estimated and clearly mentioned.

7). Proposals should be written in simple language.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PROPOSAL

A-Attention   I-Interest   D-Desire   A- Action

STRUCTURE / FORMAT OF PROPOSAL

The structure of a proposal is determined according to the type of proposal, if it is solicited or unsolicited, internal or external. The structure of the solicited proposal is determined by the organization inviting it.

A good proposal however, has four important parts: -

a. Front Matter b. Technical Section c. Managerial Section   d. Financial Section

a. Front Matter

It includes the following elements:

1. Cover Page: Title of Proposal, Name of Proposer, Address & Date

2. Title Page: Title of Proposal, Name of Proposer, Date & Company Name

3. Table of Contents: It lists various sections of the proposal and page numbers on which that appear. Lists of headings and subheadings into which the content of the proposal has been organized.

4. Abstract or Summary: Summary or abstract is the shorter version of the proposal. b.

b. Technical Section

In this section the proposer highlights two things: -

(i) Problem and;

(ii) Its solution.

The writer should organize the proposal around four questions: - 1. What is the problem?

2. What is the solution?

3. Can the solution be implemented?

4. Should the solution be implemented?

c. Managerial Section

The managerial section describes the personnel who will work directly on the project. All the details such as their qualifications, achievements and experiences are mentioned in this section.

d. Financial Section

It includes a chart of anticipated expenditure. The estimate should be realistic and complete. There should be a detailed account of the amount required for several items such as equipment, lab testing, salaries of personnel, office contingencies and infrastructural facilities such as building, water, electricity, machines and so on.

SIMPLIFIED STRUCTURE / FORMAT FOR WRITING A PROPOSAL

1. Date

2. To

3. From

4. Subject

5. Summary or abstract

6. Purpose

7. Problem

8. Solution

9. Procedure

10. Methodology

1) Design unit - Details of personnel working in Design Unit

2) Material unit - Details of personnel working in Material Unit

3) Management unit - Details of personnel working in Management Unit

11. Benefits

12. Cost estimate

RFP – 'REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL' OR 'STATEMENT OF REQUEST'

The RFP - Request for Proposal or the statement of Request forms the main body of the proposal. Often a request for proposal is issued by some Government Agency or small and large corporation. This RFP explains the project details and also its significance precisely. The companies that receive RFP now work hard to find out the ways to develop the project. After developing the project, the companies reply to the RFP sent by various organizations by their RFP, which helps them to win the contract for the Project.

EXAMPLE OF RFP- REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

OR

EOI– EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Global Computer Solutions

Plot No. 24, Sector 32

Noida, U.P.,

0120348449

Globalcomputers@gmail.com

04 April, 2015

The Director

Institute of Management Studies

Plot No. 10, Sector – 62

Noida, U.P.

Subject: SETTING UP OF COMPUTER LABORATORY

Sir,

1. In response to your advertisement published in The Times of India dated 10 July, 2020, I would like to submit a proposal enclosed herewith.

2. IYours faithfully,

-sd

XYZ

Senior Manager

Encl: Proposal

 shall be very grateful to you, for an early reply at your end

SIGNIFICANCE OF PROPOSAL WRITING

Proposals are important for the progress of any profession and professional. The progress of any organization to a great extent depends on good proposals. Some of the advantages of good proposals are as following: -

i) Good Proposals win contracts for work

Good Proposals help to win contracts for carrying out various project and infrastructure works

ii) Increases Business Activity

Proposal improves the business activity as it is written in order to propose a product or service to a prospective customer or buyer. It helps businesses to compete without even needing to send marketers or representatives physically to the prospective customers to pitch or to try and sell their products or services. The business proposal, if written very well would on its own be able to do all the promotion and selling.

iii) Offer solution to problems

Business proposals are written in order to offer solutions to the problems faced by prospective customers.

iv) Improves Interpersonal Communication Skills

The proposal writers better their interpersonal communication skills by writing various types of proposals.

v) Enhances Personal Growth

The good proposal writer gets appreciated by the authorities which fetches him better pay and promotions.

vi) Saves Time

The project work is executed in a well-planned manner through proposals which saves the man hours in the project completion.

vii)Saves Money

The execution of projects through well planned proposals saves money by employing only required human resource on the project.

TECHNICAL PROPOSAL WRITING

Writing a technical proposal entails an <mark>in-depth understanding of the proposed solution, the main pain points, and, ultimately, your audience.</mark>

In technical writing, writing the content of a proposal can be overwhelming and time-consuming, even more so if you don't have a technical background.

However, a successful proposal can result in a new project and/or client when done well.

What is a technical proposal?

A technical proposal is a <mark>type of document that outlines the precise details of a proposed product or service.</mark>

This document may contain any of the following:

- **Technical requirements**
- **Design considerations**
- **Functional specifications**
- **Bills of materials**
- **Overall cost estimation**

Technical proposals are often tailored for specific projects and must be comprehensive in order to be successful.

In addition to outlining the core elements of the project, a technical proposal should also include supporting evidence such as data from research studies or reports from industry experts.

By leveraging data and professional experience in a precise way, a technical proposal introduces products and initiatives while also explaining how they address the recipient's problem and the company's execution plan.

While this type of proposal is often brief, it can quickly become very complex.

While writing, remember that the proposal needs to explain a complex product in relatively simple terms.

What is technical proposal writing?

Technical proposal writing is translating technical requirements into a customer-facing proposal used to pitch your solution or offerings.

Considering the situation in which your proposal occurred and depending on its nature, technical proposal writing might encompass only a small section of the proposal — particularly regarding project execution, the intended scope of work, and the equipment or materials involved.

However, that isn't always the case.

Some business sectors and proposals are technical by nature from start to finish, and this becomes more common as the cost of a project increases.

As you might expect, multimillion-dollar projects will be reviewed with far greater scrutiny than small sales projects costing a few hundred dollars.

Keep in mind that different proposals require different methodologies and concepts, depending on the nature of the project and its requirements.

Often, technical proposals will be guided by a request for proposal (RFP) from the potential client or stakeholder.

The proposal writer will use the guidelines in the RFP to construct a technical proposal that meets specific project requirements and explains how your organization can meet those needs.

Technical proposal formatting: How to format a technical proposal?

Quick tip before you start: If you don't want to spend your time writing technical proposals from scratch each time a project comes your way, you can always turn to the technical proposal template in the PandaDoc library.

It's a great starting point, being both beautifully designed and arranged with a framework that you expand into your own unique template.

Our technical proposal template covers many technical proposal sections you need in a successful document of this type; in addition, we give you useful information on how to fill it out effectively.

As you read through the rest of the article, bear in mind that the majority of companies working up proposals do so using templates and similar fast formatting tools.

To stay competitive, be prepared to write content for your technical proposal that can be quickly copied and personalized to fit a new client.

With those essentials out of the way, here are essential elements of technical proposal formatting.

1. Prepare your proposal introduction

Ensure that your introduction does all of the following (not necessarily in this order):

- State that the memo contains a proposal for a specific project. (Quote an RFP number or a project number if you have one.)
- Address the needs of the project, the company, and the stakeholders directly and position the proposal content as a solution that meets the requested criteria.
- Give an overview of the proposal's content, what readers should expect, and why you feel that your proposed solution is the best way forward.
- If your proposal is unsolicited, the introduction needs to convince the reader that your proposal is an opportunity that should be explored.

2. Background information on the issue

A summary background often follows the introduction and outlines the necessity for the project.

This section typically defines the problem, the opportunity for improvement, and the scenario.

While the specified audience of the proposal may be familiar with the issue, writing the background section helps demonstrate your unique perspective.

3. Project benefits and feasibility

Most proposals briefly explain the project's benefits and its success rate in the form of a pro-project argument.

In an unsolicited proposal, this section is critical to "sell" the project to the audience.

4. Proposed task description (results of the project)

Most proposals must describe the final product.

Proper technical proposal formatting entails identifying the document's audience and purpose, providing an overview, and considering length, graphics, binding, etc.

Most proposals also explain how you will complete the work.

This adds to your persuasiveness and demonstrates you have done your homework. It also shows that you know the field well enough to finish the project.

5. Schedule

Most proposals include a section detailing the project's completion date, as well as significant milestones.

If you're working on a long-term project, the timeline will include due dates for progress reports. If you can't give dates, give time frames for each phase of the project.

6. Resources and costs

Most proposals include a section on project costs and require you to include your hourly rates, expected hours, equipment and supply prices, and so on before calculating the final project cost.

If you need to run any Internal projects in order to fulfill your proposal, keep in mind that those resources aren't free.

You should still disclose the project costs: time spent on the project, equipment and supplies used, and factor that in as an operating expense.

5. Conclusions

The closing paragraph or portion of the proposal should remind readers of the project benefits.

Your last section should entice them to contact you to discuss the project in detail and perhaps make one last case for why you or your firm is the best candidate for the job.

Pro tip: **Remember that the preceding parts are guidelines, not mandatory sections or requirements.**

Always consider what more your audience would need to comprehend the project, its necessity, its benefits, your position in it, and your qualifications.

Always ask yourself: What else does a potential client need to know in order to approve the project, and what do you need in order to complete the work?

How long should a technical proposal be?

Creating a great proposal is always a classic Goldilocks problem.

It can't be too long or too short. It needs to be precisely the correct length.

Your pitch should be brief, but not so short that it omits important information.

It should not be excessively long, either, as this may cause your client to skim or skip sections.

Proposals of 10 to 20 pages are typical, but some clients prefer short concept notes, while others rather go for extensive proposals of 50 pages or more.

This is, however, merely a framework metric.

Often, you can get a good idea of the desired length based on the information than an RFP is asking for.

If you don't have an RFP to use as a guideline, any information you can gather from the client about their needs will give you a better understanding of the space you need to address the problem.

How to write a technical proposal

In this section, we'll walk you through the process of preparing a technical proposal one step at a time. We'll cover every major section of your proposal, what it should include, and how you should approach it.

Keep in mind that proposal formats may vary — both in RFP specifications and due to the nature of your business — so use these steps as guidelines and tailor your final proposal to the needs of your business.

Note: This section is focused primarily on external proposals. Internal proposals, even when technical, are often more informal and may follow relaxed guidelines.

For the format in this section, our team relied on a great proposal guideline from the John and Marcia Price College of Engineering.

Your format may vary, but this is a great starting point.

1. Prepare an executive summary, abstract, or cover letter

Provide a summary of your proposal in one page or less, presenting an overview of the proposed work.

Make sure your proposal writing is carefully put together and **covers all elements and deliverables you plan to tackle:**

1. Indicate that your memo content revolves around a proposal for a specific project.
2. Develop at least one direct, to-the-point, motivating statement that will compel the recipient to read on and consider supporting or approving the project.
3. Provide a brief overview of the contents of the proposal.

It is not necessary you lay things out in this order, but be sure to include each element in your summary.

If you are writing a proposal on your own, you can expedite this process by using a proposal template.

Follow the outlined workflow and formatting, and stay on point.

Make modifications where necessary to fit the needs of your business or project.

Here's a good example of how you can put together an executive summary for a website development proposal.

2. Put together a table of contents

A table of contents (TOC) shows readers what topics the technical proposal covers, how the document is arranged, and where they can find specific sections and subsections.

A well-organized table of contents provides an at-a-glance way of finding information in the proposal. In that sense, it is crucial you apply proper formatting in your TOC design structure.

Keep in mind that stakeholders may not read your proposal from cover to cover.

They are likely to skip and skim sections and to consider the document in an asymmetrical manner, with more time spent on solutions, costs, and other key factors.

When preparing your document, consider the following:

1. Levels of headings

If your proposed project is longer, consider including more than the top two levels of headings.

Your header structure will dramatically impact the look and feel of your TOC and can keep it from becoming unwieldy or overwhelming.

2. Indentation, spacing, and capitalization

Make sure all levels of headings and page numbers are aligned with one other.

For capitalization, ensure that you follow the same heading structure on a per-level basis.

If your H1 headings are fully capitalized, be sure that all headings designated as H1 follow this format.

The same is true for other header styles.

3. Vertical spacing

For increased readability of your entire proposal, format the first-level sections so they have extra space above and below.

3. Technical background, opportunity, or situation

Provide background that identifies the problem; discuss what has inspired the need for the project, and provide motivation explaining why such a task would be essential or beneficial.

Reflect on the present opportunity to improve things in your proposed project while explaining the basic situation.

If you have an RFP, use the information provided by the RFP document to build this section.

Speak directly to the needs indicated by the client documentation and use those problems to explain the benefit of your solution.

While most of the proposal's named audience may already be familiar with this very well, writing the background section is valuable as it demonstrates your particular view of the situation.

If this is an unsolicited proposal, a background section is a must.

You will have to convince the audience that this is the right time for your proposal assignment (as the opportunity exists) and that it should be addressed.

3.1 Justification, benefits, and feasibility of the proposed work

How you approach the justification for the work will vary based on the nature of the proposal.

For proposals responding to an RFP, project stakeholders have already decided to undertake a project and won't need an explanation of why the project is good or feasible for their business operations.

However, they will expect a justification for why your solution is the best option compared to your competitors.

Use results from past projects, technical data regarding your equipment, and similar information that makes your solution stand out.

If you are submitting an unsolicited proposal, take the extra time to discuss your justifications for the project, why the client should undertake such a venture, and what the likely outcomes will be.

Unsolicited proposals often hit a roadblock in this area because the company has not yet made the internal decision to spend money.

You may be selling to a company that lacks the budget or initiative to fund a project. It's also possible that, even if you uncover a need, the organization may only hire through a competitive process.

This section is often the largest and tends to contain numerous subsections such as:
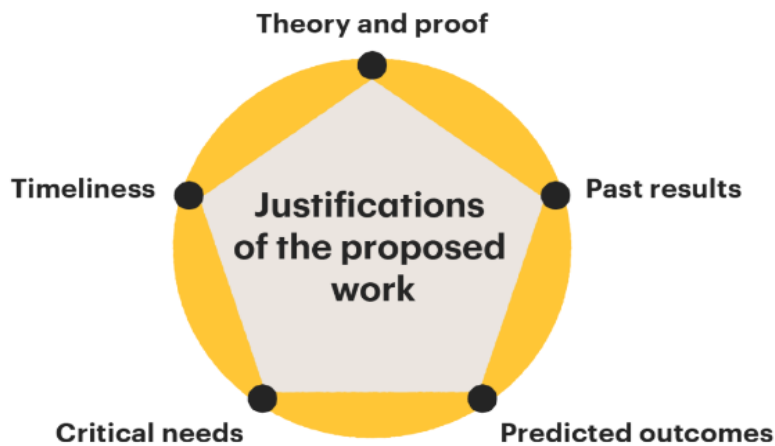
1. Theory and proof

This section may tackle your argument or reasoning regarding the benefits of your proposed work and provide data that supports your solution as the best option available to potential clients.

2. Past results

Often, this section is used to offer outcomes from past results (case studies, measurable improvements, etc.) from previous projects with similar needs.

3. Predicted outcomes

This category, often tailored to fit the needs of the business or speak to a specific set of problems, tries to give realistic expectations (and supporting data) that stakeholders can use to set expectations and gauge ROI.

4. Critical needs

Here, writers often highlight critical needs that should be addressed as part of the work.

This section may address the needs put forward in an RFP, but it can also cover the critical needs of the project or unforeseen needs that the client has overlooked.

5. Timeliness

This section aims to justify the project based on timeliness.

A common argument is that the industry is changing or evolving, and a specific solution is needed to ensure business longevity.

The "why now?" The argument is answered here, and the concept of "future-proofing" is often a topic of discussion.

4. Technical approach, resources, and costs required

Most proposals contain a section resembling a progress report detailing the approach to the projects, resources, objectives, and costs required.

This may require a detailed list of costs of equipment and supplies, your hourly rates, projected hours, and so forth, and then calculate the total cost of the entire proposal.

Though often less formal, this approach may also be true for internal proposals, especially if you require a budget allocation or need to convince internal stakeholders to invest time and effort into a major initiative.

Internal projects are often misconstrued as "free" projects, but they incur costs in resource, labor, and opportunity.

Here is a part of the proposal that is typically included in this section:

4.1 Objectives

Pinpoint the specific things you plan to achieve with this project.

This section might exact changes you intend to make, equipment you intend to install, or processes and workflows that may need to be optimized, or work that you intend to perform.

If your goals are metric-based, such as lowering a specific metric or improving performance in a given area, this section should detail those targets and why they matter.

4.2 Statement of work

The statement of work (SOW) is a document that covers and defines all components of a project's scope of work.

It is legally binding and notes the project's activities, deliverables, and timeline.

It's a very detailed work contract that establishes the framework for the project plan.

Keep in mind that a statement of work is almost a document unto itself. (You can find several examples in the PandaDoc template library or in the community library.)

The SOW is one of the first, and most important documents you'll create before planning and executing a project. Writing one can be intimidating due to the quantity of detail required.

You can learn more about statements of work and how to write them over here.

4.3 Project tasks

Provide a detailed list of itemized tasks (Task 1, Task 2, etc., with sub-tasks (if any), numbered Task 1.1) that need to be performed for the objectives listed above to be met.

Each task and subtask should come with a brief description.

You can also include additional information about which tasks can be performed simultaneously and which tasks must be performed chronologically.

4.4 Project calendar/schedule

Especially important for long-form projects, a project calendar or schedule will provide timelines regarding overall project completion.

Often, the final dates are dictated by the RFP. Depending on their own deadlines and initiatives, the client may have some flexibility.

In some instances (particularly if the RFP is based around time-limited funds or resources), the proposed deadline may be inflexible.

Your schedule will need to align with those proposed deadlines.

Note: Bear in mind that some contracts include penalties if projects aren't completed within a given deadline. To avoid paying penalty fees or forfeiting some of your costs, be sure to offer deadlines that you can realistically meet.

4.5 Expected costs

Determine costs per each task and the overall project completion.

Include estimates for all labor involved as well as any supply and equipment costs.

Overages and deviations from the budget price aren't necessarily a dealbreaker.

Stakeholders may not have properly estimated the work required to complete the project.

Keep in mind that if your estimates are higher and every other proposal comes in at a lower cost, you could still lose the project.

5. Personnel and equipment

This section defines the qualifications and expertise that your team brings to the project.

Particularly when stakeholders are reviewing similar projects, the experience and history of your organization and its people will play a major factor in the client's assessment of risk.

Typically, this section is broken into two major parts:

1. Key personnel

This section includes the members of your team who would be assigned to the project, along with their relevant expertise in a given field, any qualifications they might have, and what they can offer.

You won't need to list every single team member, but the individuals in charge of the project (or those with valuable expertise) should be included.

2. Equipment or facilities

In this section, you'll want to include any specialized equipment or unique facilities that will help you meet the project requirements.

If you have unique tools or a specialized shop to manufacture and modify components, these factors can help to set you apart from competitors.

6. Anticipated benefits

Here, you'll want to focus on the benefits that the client can expect from your work.

This could include improved safety, increased efficiency, long-term cost savings, and a positive environmental impact.

The purpose of this section is not only to further justify the time and expense of carrying out this project but also to confirm that your project is superior to similar solutions offered by competitors.

Take the time to write a concise list of benefits and advantages that demonstrate the value of your project.

In doing so, this section can do the following:

Set yourself apart from the competition

The most significant goal of a project proposal is to showcase the advantages of your company over competitors.

A project proposal helps you clearly articulate these benefits and impact the potential client's decision if your organization offers cheaper costs, stronger processes, or better-projected outcomes.

Ensure that everyone is on the same page about the project

Project proposals ensure that both parties understand what the project includes by stating the project's goal and scope.

This shared understanding improves communication in the future and builds trust between a client and a sponsor.

Establish trustworthiness

A well-written project proposal explains how the vendor plans to execute the project and meet the client's expectations.

Project proposals may also identify potential dangers and provide ways to mitigate them.

This high degree of communication persuades potential clients to know what goes into a project and what it takes to complete it.

Draw attention to a problem

Project proposals can also be utilized to draw attention to a problem that a corporation was previously unaware of.

Your document could describe why a client's problems are urgent and why they need to be resolved in the shortest time frame possible.

For example, a freelance writer writing a project proposal to build a blog could highlight how much traffic their website is losing since they don't have one.

Propose a budget and a timetable for the project

Although a project proposal isn't a legally binding contract, it establishes the budget and timeline for a project's completion.

Vendors and stakeholders can use the document to reach a preliminary agreement on the resources and time required to complete a project.

Assist with project planning

The project proposal serves as an outline to assist you schedule resources and decide on a strategy to meet the project's objectives once you've signed a contract with a client.

Developing project proposals is an unavoidable part of any project manager's job, but it doesn't have to be tough or time-consuming.

You can make that procedure a lot easier if you look for it. Yes, you've guessed it – templates!

The project proposal template does more than just provide you with some ready-to-use language.

PandaDoc is laying out some **benefits of using a project proposal template:**

Benefits of using a project proposal template

+ Make your document structure
+ Establish the proper, identifiable graphics
+ Have the right, cohesive tone
+ Save a lot of time
+ Reduce/eliminate rework time

It also helps you:

- **Make your document structure** obvious so that the prospect can easily explore your grasp of the client's problem, your proposal, approach, skills, schedule, and additional activities.
- **Establish the proper, identifiable graphics** that would prompt your prospect to engage you for the next project, too.
- **Have the right, cohesive tone** that makes it easy for the prospect to see you are already involved with them and are ready to solve their problem.
- **Save a lot of time** so you may concentrate on more important things.
- **Reduce/eliminate** rework time because you've already got a ready-to-use template on standby.

7. Conclusion

The conclusion of a technical proposal is the final paragraph or section of the proposal and is designed to bring readers back to the central idea of the proposal.

This final section should, once again, list all positive aspects of the project.

If you want to end your proposal on a solid note, urge the reader to contact you to work out project details further, remind them of this project's benefits, and maybe remind them why you (and your team) are the right person to lead this project.

8. References and sources

References section lists resources cited in the body text and diverts readers to those sources should they need additional reading or checking of facts.

This tends to be more useful if you aren't submitting electronic documents and can be used as a replacement for document footnotes.

However, if you can hyperlink stats, statistics, white papers, etc., this section may not be necessary.

Often, writers include documents and data here in the event that the proposal is printed and handled as a physical document.

9. Appendices

Nonessential but potentially helpful, an appendix contains supplementary material that provides a more comprehensive understanding of the research/topic at hand.

Appendices sections usually contain relational or technical information that is too complex or off-topic to be included in the body of the paper.

Often, this hyper-specific information may be more of interest to subject matter experts on the client side than project stakeholders who are more interested in a holistic view of your project or initiative.

Valuable tips and hacks for writing a successful technical proposal

Winning a project takes more than having a good idea. You need to have a captivating, persuasive approach that will convince a panel of reviewers your idea is worth considering and is likely to succeed.

With that in mind, here are eight extra tips for a winning technical proposal.

1. Write/present with your reviewers in mind

Make sure they understand your point. Use a clear and engaging writing style.

2. Address common questions clearly

Introduce them early in your proposal, especially if they were posed in the client RFP or reference documentation, and use them to connect with the reader.

3. Be sure of your relevance

Explain how your work, your history, and your experience impacts the bigger picture.

This will help to set your team apart from competitors offering similar solutions.

4. Refer to supporting research

Refer to supporting research relevant to your current idea.

This might include statistics, trends and patterns, or even case studies from past clients.

5. Address potential limitations

Address potential limitations and problems to show you understand the entire scope of the project.

Sometimes, this will lead to additional opportunities. It also serves to keep the client fully informed.

6. Have others review your proposal

Have others review your proposal for grammar, style, and argument.

Have readers compare the proposal to the RFP documentation and confirm that your offer meets the requirements and offers a compelling solution.

7. Briefly summarize your goals and methods

Briefly summarize your goals and methods.

Anticipate conclusions; avoid technical language that would make your abstract confusing or difficult to understand.

Final thoughts: Proposal creation done right

If you are looking to have your proposal error-proof, clean, and automatized, we recommend including a proposal software solution into the mix.

With the right tools, a proposal can be a pleasure to write.

You can also use a proposal template and review proposal examples to sharpen your writing skills and develop winning proposals.

And don't forget the next steps!

If your proposal is accepted, you may need quotes, contracts, e-signature solutions, and more.

Fortunately, PandaDoc has everything you need to accelerate your documentation process and help you get projects started quickly.

With a technical proposal that's seamlessly put together, there's very little that won't go your way.

How To Pitch an Idea in 6 Steps

Whether you're presenting a new business idea to potential investors or suggesting a new process to streamline communication in your office, delivering your idea effectively is crucial. A well-planned idea pitch will concisely convey the right information to decision-makers. In this article, we discuss the elements of an idea pitch, the benefits of pitching and the steps you can take to sell your idea.

What is an idea pitch?

An idea pitch is when you present a business idea to others. You may be pitching in a more formal capacity, where you deliver a full presentation, or you may be pitching a simple idea about how to improve processes to a colleague in an informal setting.

Benefits of pitching an idea

There are a number of benefits for pitching an idea:

- **Creating improvements:** If you have an idea for how to improve something, whether it's a product already in existence of a system, delivering your pitch successfully can help you achieve that objective.
- **Generating revenue:** In some cases, the pitch may allow a company to generate more revenue. For example, you could be pitching a potential new customer or pitching your manager on an idea that creates more revenue for your company.

- **Developing relationships:** If you're working on a startup, developing a strong idea pitch can allow you to develop relationships with potential partners, which could ultimately help you procure more resources for the business.

How to give an idea pitch

Here are the steps you should take in order to deliver a successful idea pitch:

1. Think through your idea

Before you pitch your idea to anyone, the first step you need to take is to think through the details. The idea you share with others should be both specific and actionable. As you think through your idea, ask yourself what problem the idea solves and whether the problem is significant enough to justify the cost of your solution.

You should know exactly how your idea will resolve the problem and, if relevant, why you're the right person to solve the issue. Look at the situation from the other person's perspective as well and as yourself why they are the right person or the right company to get involved in solving the problem.

2. Consider the scope of the idea

The next step you should take is to consider how big your idea is, as the size of the idea impacts the amount of preparation you need to do, the number of pitches you need to make, the decision-makers you need to reach and the amount of time you can expect it to take to reach your goal.

For example, your idea may be to simply tweak something that's already in existence. When the scope is small, like this, pitching your idea to the right people and convincing them may be easy. In contrast, if you're proposing a new, large and possibly complex idea, you may need to get approval from multiple decision-makers and it could take a lengthy period of time to reach your goal.

Once you identify the scope of your idea, you can then research instances where other people have pitched ideas of similar size. That can give you a better understanding of the success they had and you can learn from their mistakes to improve your own pitch.

3. Identify the decision-maker

The next step you need to take is to identify which person has the ability to approve your idea. If the scope of your idea is very small, this could mean you or even a peer within your company has the power to approve your idea. If the scope is large, you may need to get approval from a manager or even executive in your company.

If you don't have direct access to the decision-maker, you should make a list of the people who do have access to them and find ways to connect with those individuals. You may need to make several idea pitches to people within this network to achieve the goal you're striving for.

Related: Decision-Makers: Definition and Why They're Important

4. Consider the other person's perspective

As you're starting to think through your pitch, it's a good idea to start by considering the perspective of the person to whom you're making your pitch. For example, you should consider why they are going to be interested in your idea and what their primary concerns are. You should also take into consideration the number of unsolicited pitches they receive each day. The better your pitch fits the perspective, needs and interests of the person you're pitching, the more effective it will be.

5. Plan your pitch

The next step is to plan your idea pitch. It's a good idea to have three variations: a five-second version, a 30-second version and a five-minute version. The five-second version should consist of a single sentence that concisely conveys your idea. That sentence should, in very simple

terms, express both the problem and the solution. For example, "I'm proposing that we start doing group training sessions over one-on-one training to increase camaraderie among new hires and save the manager time."

The longer versions of your idea pitch can come naturally from the original five-second version. Once you're done creating the different versions of your pitch, think about how you would handle pitching someone on your idea if you don't have visual aides available. A visual aid can help provide clarity and enhance your pitch, however there are situations where you may not have any available. Consider what you could create on the spot to help better explain your idea. For example, think about whether you could draw something on a napkin if you're speaking to someone over lunch.

6. Practice your pitch

After your idea is fully vetted and your pitch is complete, the final step is to practice your pitch for others who can give you honest feedback. Constructive feedback can help you improve upon your idea and how you present it to others so it has an even greater impact. You can also use these practice sessions to create a list of questions that you may be asked when you're pitching your idea.

How to structure your pitch deck to win over investors

It doesn't matter whether you're a first-time founder or a serial entrepreneur — effective storytelling is key to raising startup capital. After all, fundraising isn't exactly something you can delegate. That's why it's essential to know how to craft a winning pitch deck. By closing a fundraising round quickly and efficiently, you can get back to what really matters: building your business.

Being prepared with the right pitch deck structure can free up your time and mental space to focus on your fundraising strategy. In this article, we'll walk you through the nuts and bolts of

building a pitch deck — slide by slide — using successful startup decks and popular template examples as a benchmark.

6 essential components of a pitch deck

No matter what stage of funding your company is at, your pitch deck will need to cover each of these topics:

1. Your mission or vision
2. The problem you're solving
3. The market size of the opportunity
4. Your product — and what makes it unique
5. Traction and revenue
6. Evidence that your team can execute

Your pitch presentation should also back up each topic with hard data and insights, and show proof that people are willing to pay for your product. The goal is to strike a balance between providing evidence that instills investor confidence and piquing their interest with the vision for your business's future.

How do you pitch an idea presentation?

A good pitch presentation needs to be clear and concise, while getting the most important information over. Introduce your idea and the team briefly at the beginning. Follow this up with the most important facts and figures, as well as information on how you intend to implement your business plan.

HOW TO PREPARE YOURSELF FOR PITCH IDEA/ 9 TIPS FOR MAKING A GREAT PITCH

Even if you're not a born salesperson, you can promote your ideas effectively with a well-planned pitch. Take a look at these easy-to-follow pitch tips to make an impression.

1. Prepare with care

Making a pitch is all about preparation. List the ingredients of your pitch to make sure it's foolproof. What goes into all great pitches? Well, there's the elevator pitch – more on that in a moment – which is a great starting point. It gives your audience the kernel of your idea and leaves them eager to find out more.

Mention your market research – show that there is an audience for your project or product, and back up your findings with hard data or consumer testimonials if possible. You'll also need to summarize your business plan. A good pitch covers all the key points of your plan. Get into the practicalities of how you will execute your big idea, including things like supply chain, logistics and product manufacture. Make sure the audience knows you're about details as well as big ideas.

Touch on your customer lifecycle and how you'll market, promote and build loyalty around your product or service. If you have ideas about loyalty schemes, offers and promotions or the kind of marketing channels and strategies you'll use, mention these too.

You'll find lots more helpful tips in our article on how to <u>prepare for your presentation</u>.

2. Have an elevator pitch

The elevator pitch is a one-sentence summary of your proposition – the thing you want people to remember after they leave the room. It needs to explain what your idea does, who it's for, and why it's great. To give an example, here's an (imaginary) elevator pitch for the Rubik's Cube:

"A colorful pocket-size puzzle box for all ages that can be twisted in every direction."

A really effective elevator pitch should be just detailed enough to intrigue the audience and leave them wanting more, while staying as succinct as possible. To really boil your idea down to

its bare bones might take a little bit of head-scratching, but luckily you have plenty of time to finesse it before the big day.

3. Practice your pitch

Your pitch isn't a performance, exactly – you don't need to learn a speech off by heart or choreograph exactly where you're going to stand. In fact, if your sales pitch is too polished it can start to feel artificial. But with a bit of rehearsal, you can make your delivery more confident and be ready to answer questions when the big day comes.

Ask a friend, colleague or family member to act as your dummy audience and run through your pitch in front of them, complete with slides. Have them time your pitch, so you're aware of how long each part takes and make sure you stay within your target timeframe. Encourage your "practice audience" to ask questions too – they'll probably come up with some angles you haven't considered yet, and help you understand how to pitch better.

4. Don't skimp on basic explanations

When you live and breathe an idea, it's easy to overestimate how easy it is for others to understand. Even if it feels like you're spelling out the obvious, make sure you include the basic details of your proposal, including the background to how you came up with it, and any specialized knowledge you gained on the way to developing it.

Again, practicing your pitch on a friend or family member who hasn't been involved in your work can be really helpful here. They can help you gauge whether you're pitching at a level that's too high, too low or just right for your target audience. A good pitch has to be accessible to anyone!

5. Know what makes a presentation boring

It's a fact of life – some presentations have your attention from the start, while others leave you watching the clock after a few minutes. How do you make a pitch one of the good ones? Here are some pointers for how to make a presentation engaging and improve your pitching skills.

Make eye contact

This is one of the most important pitch tips to connect with your audience. However intimidating that sea of faces might be, remember they're all just people. You can use eye contact strategically to develop a sense of connection with the audience as a whole. Choose a few areas in the audience and make brief eye contact during your presentation. Just a glance now and then will show that you're talking to them, not at them.

Tell your story

Narrative structures have an almost-magical way of holding people's attention. What's the story of how you developed your idea? Who are the characters? What obstacles did you face, and what did you learn along the way? Use these kinds of stories to bring life and color to your pitch and make the audience feel really connected to the action.

Use interactive techniques

How do you make a pitch that holds people's attention? Get your audience thinking and responding during your pitch, and you're more likely to hold their attention. Try asking them to guess a figure or a result that you'll go on to display on the next slide. Or get them to vote on some different options for brand colors or logos. This will make them feel more invested in what you're saying, and get them into the mindset of making business decisions with you.

Remember to pause

Many people make the mistake of talking at the speed of thought when presenting. Using a pause in between your sentences allows your audience time to take in and process what you're saying. It might not feel natural at first, but when you get used to it, it gives you some valuable extra breathing-space as well.

Don't read from your slides

If you're presenting with slides, be clear about their role in your pitch: they're there to illustrate your words, not act as a cue card. If you're feeling nervous or lost for words, it's easy to use the phrases on a slide to keep your flow going. But the experience for the listener isn't comfortable if they're reading the same thing as they're hearing.

Instead, try using simple, pared-down slides that are image-based with no more than a few short bullet points. You can use them as a cue to remind you of your point, rather than a script to read from.

6. Give buzzwords a swerve

It's so tempting to use business jargon or fall back on board-room style turns of phrase, especially when you're nervous. But you'll make much more of an impact on your prospective customer if you can use plain, direct language to make your case. Most seasoned investors and decision-makers know that business jargon can hide a multitude of sins, and they're unlikely to be impressed or convinced when they hear it.

Instead, be a breath of fresh air by speaking clearly and definitely about your plans, goals and the journey you've been on with your project. Focus on making an effective sales pitch that answers questions and promotes confidence, not confusion.

7. Use your enthusiasm

Your idea is great, right? So don't be afraid to shout it from the rooftops. You're not going to seem arrogant, boastful or abrasive if you sing your own praises in a pitch – the customer wants to know what you have to offer and how it could benefit them.

If you genuinely believe in what you're pitching, let your own enthusiasm for your idea shine through and don't hold back on explaining why it's got you so excited.

8. Build in question and answer periods

A good pitch should prompt some questions from your audience. Make sure you add some leeway for ad hoc queries when planning the timing of your pitch, and be ready to address them openly and honestly when they pop up.

If you'd prefer to avoid too many interruptions, let the audience know up front that you'll have time for questions at the end of the pitch. A question and answer period helps you keep the main body of your pitch well-structured, and gives the audience a chance to have their say.

Knowing that a Q&A is coming up can help them set their questions to one side and focus on what you're saying.

How much time should you leave for question and answer periods? That depends on how long you have for the pitch as a whole, but as a general rule, try to leave 5 to 10 minutes. If someone in your audience wants more time to go into depth on a question – great. That's your cue to set up a second meeting, which can only be a good thing.

9. Listen and respond

A business pitch is like a conversation – a rather lopsided one where you do most of the talking. Despite your careful planning, your audience members might bring up ideas, questions and perspectives that you might not be ready for, and that's totally OK.

If you don't have an answer, it's better not to make up something on the spot. It's much more authentic – and less risky – to say something like "great question! I don't have the answer right now, so let me email you to follow up when I've looked into it."

After you've delivered your great pitch, make it easy to get in touch by giving everyone a beautifully designed Business Card.

Elements of Speech Delivery: Passion, Poise & Illustrations.

What are the elements of speech delivery?

These include **rate, volume, pitch, articulation, pronunciation, and fluency.** Our voice is important to consider when delivering our speech for two main reasons. First, vocal delivery can help us engage and interest the audience. Second, vocal delivery helps ensure that our ideas are communicated clearly.

Speaking for Engagement

We have all had the displeasure of listening to an unengaging speaker. Even though the person may care about his or her topic, an unengaging delivery that doesn't communicate enthusiasm will translate into a lack of interest for most audience members. Although a speaker can be visually engaging by incorporating movement and gestures, which we will discuss more later, a flat or monotone vocal delivery can be sedating or even annoying. Incorporating vocal variety in terms of rate, volume, and pitch is key to being a successful speaker.

Rate

Rate of speaking refers to how fast or slow you speak. If you speak too fast, your audience will not be able to absorb the information you present. If you speak too slowly, the audience may lose interest. The key is to vary your rate of speaking in a middle range, staying away from either extreme, in order to keep your audience engaged. In general, a higher rate of speaking signals that a speaker is enthusiastic about his or her topic. Speaking slowly may lead the audience to infer that the speaker is uninterested, uninformed, or unprepared to present his or her own topic. These negative assumptions, whether they are true or not, are likely to hurt the credibility of the speaker. Having evaluated thousands of speeches, I can say that, in terms of rate, the issue speakers face is speaking too fast. The goal is to speak at a rate that will interest the audience and will effectively convey your information. Speaking at a slow rate throughout a speech would likely bore an audience, but that is not a common occurrence.

Some people naturally speak faster than others, which is fine, but we can all alter our rate of speaking with practice. If you find that you are a naturally fast speaker, make sure that you do not "speed talk" through your speech when practicing it. Even if you try to hold back when actually delivering your speech, you may fall back into your practice routine and speak too fast. You can also include reminders to "slow down" on your speaking outline.

Volume

Volume refers to how loud or soft your voice is. As with speaking rate, you want to avoid the extremes of being too loud or too soft, but still vary your volume within an acceptable middle range. When speaking in a typically sized classroom or office setting that seats about twenty-five people, using a volume a few steps above a typical conversational volume is usually sufficient. When speaking in larger rooms, you will need to project your voice. You may want to look for nonverbal cues from people in the back rows or corners, like leaning forward or straining to hear, to see if you need to adjust your volume more. Obviously, in some settings, a microphone will be necessary to be heard by the entire audience. Like rate, audiences use volume to make a variety of judgments about a speaker. Softer speakers are sometimes judged as meek, which may lead to lowered expectations for the speech or less perceived credibility. Loud speakers may be seen as overbearing or annoying, which can lead audience members to disengage from the speaker and message. Be aware of the volume of your voice and, when in doubt, increase your volume a notch, since beginning speakers are more likely to have an issue of speaking too softly rather than too loudly.

Pitch

Pitch refers to how high or low a speaker's voice is. As with other vocal qualities, there are natural variations among people's vocal pitch. Unlike rate and volume, there are more physiological limitations on the control we have over pitch. For example, males generally have lower pitched voices than females. Despite these limitations, each person still has the capability to intentionally change their pitch across a range large enough to engage an audience. Changing pitch is a good way to communicate enthusiasm and indicate emphasis or closure. In general, our pitch goes up when we are discussing something exciting. Our pitch goes down slightly when we emphasize a serious or important point. Lowering pitch is also an effective way to

signal transitions between sections of your speech or the end of your speech, which cues your audience to applaud and avoids an awkward ending.

Of the vocal components of delivery discussed so far, pitch seems to give beginning speakers the most difficulty. There is a stark difference between the way I hear students speak before and after class and the way they speak when they get in front of the class. It's like giving a speech temporarily numbs their ability to vary their pitch. Record yourself practicing your speech to help determine if the amount of pitch variety and enthusiasm you think you convey while speaking actually comes through. Speakers often assume that their pitch is more varied and their delivery more enthusiastic than the audience actually perceives it to be. Many of my students note this on the self-evaluations they write after viewing their recorded speech.

Vocal Variety

Overall, the lesson to take away from this section on vocal delivery is that variety is key. **Vocal variety** includes changes in your rate, volume, and pitch that can make you look more prepared, seem more credible, and be able to engage your audience better. Employing vocal variety is not something that takes natural ability or advanced skills training. It is something that beginning speakers can start working on immediately and everyone can accomplish. The key is to become aware of how you use your voice when you speak, and the best way to do this is to record yourself. We all use vocal variety naturally without thinking about it during our regular conversations, and many of us think that this tendency will translate over to our speaking voices. This is definitely not the case for most beginning speakers. Unlike in your regular conversations, it will take some awareness and practice to use vocal variety in speeches. I encourage students to make this a delivery priority early on. Since it's something anyone can do, improving in this area will add to your speaking confidence, which usually translates into better speeches and better grades further on.

Speaking for Clarity

In order to be an effective speaker, your audience should be able to understand your message and digest the information you present. Audience members will make assumptions about our competence and credibility based on how we speak. As with other aspects of speech delivery, many people are not aware that they have habits of speech that interfere with their message clarity. Since most of our conversations are informal and take place with people we know, many people don't make a concerted effort to articulate every word clearly and pronounce every word correctly, and most of the people we talk to either don't notice our errors or don't correct us if they do notice. Since public speaking is generally more formal than our conversations, we should be more concerned with the clarity of our speech.

Articulation

Articulation refers to the clarity of sounds and words we produce. If someone is articulate, they speak words clearly, and speakers should strive to speak clearly. Poor articulation results when speakers do not speak clearly. For example, a person may say *dinnt* instead of *didn't*, *gonna* instead of *going to*, *wanna* instead of *want to*, or *hunnerd* instead of *hundred*. Unawareness and laziness are two common challenges to articulation. As with other aspects of our voice, many people are unaware that they regularly have errors in articulation. Recording yourself speak and then becoming a higher self-monitor are effective ways to improve your articulation. Laziness, on the other hand, requires a little more motivation to address. Some people just get in the habit of not articulating their words well. I'm sure we all know someone who mumbles when they speak or slurs their words together. From my experience, this is a problem that I've noticed more among men than women. Both mumbling and slurring are examples of poor articulation. In more informal settings, this type of speaking may be acceptable, but in formal settings, it will be negatively evaluated, which will hurt a speaker's credibility. Perhaps the promise of being judged more favorably, which may help a person become more successful, is enough to motivate a mumbler to speak more clearly.

When combined with a low volume, poor articulation becomes an even greater problem. Doing vocal warm-ups like the ones listed in [Section 10.1 "Managing Public Speaking Anxiety"](#) or tongue twisters can help prime your mouth, lips, and tongue to articulate words more clearly. When you notice that you have trouble articulating a particular word, you can either choose a different word to include in your speech or you can repeat it a few times in a row in the days leading up to your speech to get used to saying it.

Pronunciation

Unlike articulation, which focuses on the clarity of words, **pronunciation** refers to speaking words correctly, including the proper sounds of the letters and the proper emphasis. Mispronouncing words can damage a speaker's credibility, especially when the correct pronunciation of a word is commonly known. I have actually heard someone, presenting on the topic of pronunciation, mispronounce the word *pronunciation*, saying "pro-NOUN-ciation" instead of "pro-NUN-ciation." In such a case, it would not be unwarranted for the audience to question the speaker's expertise on the subject.

We all commonly run into words that we are unfamiliar with and therefore may not know how to pronounce. I offer my students three suggestions when faced with this problem. The first is to look the word up in an online dictionary. Many dictionaries have a speaker icon with their definitions, and when you click on it, you can hear the correct pronunciation of a word. Some words have more than one pronunciation—for example, *Caribbean*—so choosing either of the accepted pronunciations is fine. Just remember to consistently use that pronunciation to avoid confusing your audience. If a word doesn't include an audio pronunciation, you can usually find the phonetic spelling of a word, which is the word spelled out the way it sounds. There will occasionally be words that you can't locate in a dictionary. These are typically proper nouns or foreign words. In this case, I suggest the "phone-a-friend" strategy. Call up the people you know who have large vocabularies or are generally smart when it comes to words, and ask them if they know how to pronounce it. If they do, and you find them credible, you're probably safe to

take their suggestion. The third option is to "fake it 'til you make it" and should only be used as a last resort. If you can't find the word in a dictionary and your smart friends don't know how to pronounce it, it's likely that your audience will also be unfamiliar with the word. In that case, using your knowledge of how things are typically pronounced, decide on a pronunciation that makes sense and confidently use it during your speech. Most people will not question it. In the event that someone does correct you on your pronunciation, thank him or her for correcting you and adjusting your pronunciation.

Fluency

Fluency refers to the flow of your speaking. To speak with fluency means that your speech flows well and that there are not many interruptions to that flow. There are two main disfluencies, or problems that affect the flow of a speech. **Fluency hiccups** are unintended pauses in a speech that usually result from forgetting what you were saying, being distracted, or losing your place in your speaking notes. Fluency hiccups are not the same as intended pauses, which are useful for adding emphasis or transitioning between parts of a speech. While speakers should try to minimize fluency hiccups, even experienced speakers need to take an unintended pause sometimes to get their bearings or to recover from an unexpected distraction. Fluency hiccups become a problem when they happen regularly enough to detract from the speaker's message.

Verbal fillers are words that speakers use to fill in a gap between what they were saying and what they're saying next. Common verbal fillers include *um*, *uh*, *ah*, *er*, *you know*, and *like*. The best way to minimize verbal fillers is to become a higher self-monitor and realize that you use them. Many students are surprised when they watch the video of their first speech and realize they said "um" thirty times in three minutes. Gaining that awareness is the first step in eliminating verbal fillers, and students make noticeable progress with this between their first and second speeches. If you do lose your train of thought, having a brief fluency hiccup is better than injecting a verbal filler, because the audience may not even notice the pause or may think it was intentional.

Common Causes of Fluency Hiccups

- **Lack of preparation**. Effective practice sessions are the best way to prevent fluency hiccups.

- **Not writing for speaking.** If you write your speech the way you've been taught to write papers, you will have fluency hiccups. You must translate the written words into something easier for you to present orally. To do this, read your speech aloud and edit as you write to make sure your speech is easy for you to speak.

- **A poorly prepared speaking outline.** Whether it is on paper or note cards, sloppy writing, unorganized bullet points, or incomplete/insufficient information on a speaking outline leads to fluency hiccups.

- **Distractions.** Audience members and the external environment are unpredictable. Hopefully audience members will be polite and will silence their phones, avoid talking while the speaker is presenting, and avoid moving excessively. There could also be external noise that comes through a door or window. A speaker can also be distracted by internal noise such as thinking about other things.

Passion, Poise & Illustrations

3 Tools To Help You Be More Confident And Effective.

The two themes that continue to run through my public speaking coaching and training workshops are, "How can I be more confident" and "How can I be more effective" when I am speaking to a group of people. While other themes around, body language, structure, use of story, being influential and persuasive are always there, the big two are confidence and effectiveness.

Passion

Passion is the exchange of energy and in public speaking it can create a real and valuable emotional connection with your audience. Being a passionate speaker means believing in your message, even when it is quietly conveyed.

Passionate speakers look confident and passion helps you to build trust and connect with your audience. Passion is not just about raising your voice and having animated gestures. Passion is having that absolute conviction in, and alignment with your message and your purpose. Passionate people come across as authentic and genuine and their focus is on helping their audience in one way or another.

The passion will drive your presentation and it will help hold the nerves at bay, or at least allow you to go about your presentation and public speaking, because you are passionate about your message. Passionate people place the importance of their message above their nerves and any fear of public speaking. The passion drives them.

If confidence and effectiveness are two of your goals in public speaking and you are clear on your message and why it matters, then Poise, Presence and Passion will go a long way to helping you get there.

Poise

Poise means ease and dignity of manner, and balance and stability of carriage as in bearing of the body and head. A poised speaker is a relaxed speaker, calm, composed, and confident because of thorough preparation and control.

Earl Wilson described poise as **"the ability to be ill at ease inconspicuously."** So as public speakers we will feel nervous and nerves are an important part of public speaking. So if we can feel uncomfortable while public speaking but look in control and look confident then we will do a great job. Poise is about keeping calm and in control while under fire or under pressure. Poise comes from being focused on the audience and being of service to your audience. If you focus on why you are there and how you are going to help your audience and focus on the issues that you will solve for your audience, then they are going to be appreciative and receptive of your message. All of this can be done confidently and effectively, even with your nerves, if you can display poise.

Illustrations

The illustration needs to be on purpose and on point. Avoid needless details that detract from the purpose you hope to accomplish. Illustrations or analogy need to be appropriate. They need to be readily understandable by the audience.

In rhetoric and composition, the word "illustration" refers to **an example or anecdote that's used to explain, clarify, or justify a point**. And the word "illustration," pronounced [IL-eh-STRAY-shun], is from the Latin Illustrationem, which means "vivid representation." "In writing an illustration," says James A.

Illustrations, on the other hand, are **visual aids that can help clarify a point or add interest to a speech**. They can include photos, charts, graphs, and other types of visual aids that help the audience better understand the speaker's message.

. Keep illustrations relevant

Whether addressing your team or a vast audience, make sure your illustrations fit with the information and are relevant. Using illustrations just to tell a story, or to talk about something personal because it resonated with you at an earlier time, is not the correct approach.

All of us have good stories in our memory vault. We experienced an event that maybe changed our outlook on business practices or even our life. Perhaps an occurrence moved us in such a way that we thrill to tell it to others.

The danger in this method is that although the story is compelling to us, it might not be an appropriate fit for our speech or presentation.

Our goal in sharing a story is to make our intent stick. When we want to emphasize something, illustrations help us to remember that point.

Why are illustrations important in speech?

Analogy, illustrations, stories and examples are powerful ways to punch up your speech. **They can stir the emotions, stimulate thinking, persuade a change in thought and motivate action**. Because of the way our minds work, they are a great tool to enable the audience to remember the speech.

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