

How To Write A Proposal To Get Freelance Work

By Angela Booth

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Summary: Want to get freelance work? Write a proposal.

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** This article is adapted from my new email workshop, Writing To Sell In The Internet Age. If you want to get a taste of the workshop, you can sign up for the free mini-course based on Writing To Sell In The Internet Age, on the Web site ---

<http://www.digital-e.biz/>

If you're a freelancer looking for work, drop that CV! Your primary tool for generating work is a proposal, not a CV.

Some of your proposals will be written in response to Requests for Proposals (RFPs), where businesses put out a call for proposals to provide solutions to problems.

The proposals you generate on your own, after you've identified a need the client has, are called Unsolicited Proposals. By creating lots of proposals, you get lots of work.

When I'm soliciting copywriting work, I write mini-proposals, of around a page, or 300 words. I send out these mini-proposals either as an introduction to my services, or as a follow-up to an initial call I've made to the business.

Whenever you're going through a slow period, turn out a few proposals. I promise you, within a week or two, you'll have more work than you can handle. Businesses are used to receiving proposals, so no one will think it odd when you submit one.

So what does a mini-proposal contain? A single page, with:

- * a description of a problem (or need) you conceive the business has;
- * an outline of the solution;
- * why you're the person to solve this problem --- what skills you have.

Simple, right?

When you start sending out mini-proposals regularly, you WILL get work. Lots of work. Everyone has problems; everyone is looking for solutions.

You market yourself to businesses as someone who can solve their problems.

== Spotting a need

Start by training yourself to spot problems (call them challenges when you're communicating with businesses) and needs that businesses have. You're going to become Mr or Ms Fixit.

Let's take a simple example of spotting a need. Let's say you're a writer, browsing the Web, and you come across a business Web site which has lots and lots of typos.

How do you approach the business?

Go to Better Whois, at <http://www.betterwhois.com/> and get the

business owner's contact details.

Now you're going to fax, mail or email a message.

Let's say you've decided to email the manager of the business. Your message's Subject line could be: "Proposal ---Web site proofing".

Because of all the spam on the Internet, you're going to make it clear that although this is unsolicited, it's a normal business communication, not a message that you're firing out at random to a thousand businesses on the Web.

Construct the message as you would a postal letter, with the name of the owner or manager, the business name, and the date on the first few lines.

Next comes the salutation: "Dear Mr Smith".

Introduce yourself immediately.

"My name is John Brown. I'm an independent writer. I visited your Web site at _____."

At this point, make some kind and generous comments about the site, to that show that you've actually visited it. Say anything you like here, as long as it's a compliment.

Then describe the problem --- mention the typos, in other words. DON'T be explicit. Don't mention where the typos are. (You're looking for work, remember.)

Outline the solution: you can proof the site content.

Tell Mr Brown why you're the person to handle the proofing.

Tell Mr Brown how to contact you.

Close the message in the usual way.

Add all your contact details: phone, fax, and address.

By addressing your email message clearly, and putting in all your contact details, you've established that you're not a spam artist. You're a business person sending a proposal.

Great! You've written your first proposal. Now go and write another one. And another one after that.

Proposals are great fun to write, and no matter what kind of work you're after, they will get you more work than you can handle.

Resource box: if using, please include

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