Proposal

Proposals are persuasive documents that are created to make an offer. You will either convince someone that they need something that you can provide, or you convince them the existing something isn’t as good as the thing that you can provide. The purpose of a proposal is to make something happen. Proposals can be an offer to do research, to provide a product or service, or to be given money (grant) for various types of projects.

Proposals contain specific information. In order to cover every area of what you need to put into a proposal, think of who, what, when, where, how, and why. Also, present your proposal in a logical order and provide your reader with facts. The most persuasive edge will be your writing, your organization, and how your document looks.

The two determining forces behind writing a proposal are the audience (who) and the purpose (what):

1. **Audience**: One of your first areas of research will be to know your audience or the who.
   - Two questions to ask:
     1. What is his or her knowledge? Having this information dictates what technical language you can use effectively and how much description and explanation you will be required to provide.
     2. What is his or her attitude? If you know his or her attitude, you will know how persuasive you will need to be, or what areas that you are going to have to push and what areas you can gloss over.

2. **Purpose**: You must know what you are doing and why. If you do not know the “what” and the “why”, you are not going to be effective in persuading your audience of your agenda. Do the research.
   - You must do your research in order to make a persuasive argument.
     1. What the audience needs, what they have, what they can afford, and what you are offering them.
     2. What is the bottom line or the value of the deal or the amount of savings in the long term?

The what, where, how, and why are important elements of the proposal that play a persuasive role in convincing your audience members that they need the thing you are offering.

1. The “what” are the deliverables and are what the end result will produce: goods, research, publications, etc. The what is the purpose of the proposal.
   - These must be specific. If you are providing research, your deliverables will need to provide your audience with goods. For instance, you will deliver a conference presentation, a publication, information that will improve policy.

2. The “when” is all the scheduling that is used to produce the deliverables.
   - You will provide schedules of the various stages of development of the project.

3. The where, how, and why are those elements of the proposal that provide your audience members with added information.
   - Where usually represents the location or site in which something will be delivered.
• *How* represents your explanation of any installations or site preparations. You provide your credentials to validate that you and your team know how to do what is expected for the proposed project.

• When you explain the *why*, you are using your persuasive skills to convince your audience that they need this service or product.

*Proposals are legally binding, so it is important that you do your research, so that you provide your audience members with the correct information.*