

17

Proposals



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THIS CHAPTER

- Differentiate between solicited and unsolicited proposals
- Differentiate between informal and formal proposals
- Understand the different functions of planning, research, and sales proposals
- Write an informal proposal
- Write a formal proposal



LET'S GET STARTED

Proposals

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Most people have had experience making verbal proposals. For instance, a student may want a new computer but will need to propose that his or her parents share the cost. (“If I contribute XX dollars from my summer job, will you help me with the rest of the payment?”) Workplace proposals require a more detailed, research-oriented approach, but the concept is the same: You are proposing a particular plan of action, and you need to make your best case. Before reading this chapter, think of a proposal you may wish to make to your manager, the supervisor of your internship, or your instructor. What, exactly, would you like to see happen and why and how? After specifying your goal, make a list of the supporting reasons that you think will be most persuasive in this case.

Questions to ask about your proposal ideas as you review the material in this chapter may include the following:

- ▶ Do I have a strong enough case?
- ▶ How will my audience react?
- ▶ What other ideas might my audience counterpropose, and am I ready for these arguments?
- ▶ Did someone ask for my proposal, or does it originate from me?
- ▶ What sort of format (number of pages, uses of visuals, organizational structure) is best suited to my plan?

At the end of this chapter, review your initial Let's Get Started list with your instructor or with a group of students to see how much you might change or modify it based on what you have learned from the chapter.

Proposals encourage an audience to take some form of direct action: to authorize a project, purchase a service or product, or support a specific plan for solving a problem. Although proposals often contain the same basic elements as reports (see Chapters 15 and 16), they have *one* specific purpose: to persuade the audience to say “Yes, let’s move ahead with this plan.” This purpose may sound similar to the purpose of a recommendation report. However, while a recommendation

How proposals and reports differ

report answers the question “What should we do, and why?” a proposal maps out the steps for getting it done: “Here’s what we should do and here’s how we can do it.” (Note the difference, for example, between the discussion of existing studies in the long report on birth weight in Chapter 16 and the idea for a proposed study and a longer proposal outlined in that report’s appendix.)

Proposals are called for in a variety of situations: a request to fund a training program for new employees, a suggestion to change the curriculum of your English or biology department, a bid to the U.S. Defense Department on a missile contract, and so on. Depending on the situation, proposals may be short (informal) or long (formal) and may be written in the form of a report, a letter, or a memo. As a student or as an intern at a nonprofit agency, you might submit a formal grant proposal requesting financial support for a research or community project. If your job depends on funding from outside sources, proposals might be the most important documents you produce.

AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE OF PROPOSALS

Audience considerations

In science, business, industry, government, and education, proposals are written for any number of audiences: managers, executives, directors, clients, board members, or community leaders. Inside or outside the organization, these people review various proposals and then decide whether the plans are worthwhile, the projects will materialize, and the services or products are useful.

Purpose considerations

The singular purpose of proposals is to persuade your audience to say yes to your plan.

TYPES OF PROPOSALS

Solicited and unsolicited proposals

Proposals may be either *solicited* or *unsolicited*. Solicited proposals are those that have been requested by a manager, client, or customer. For example, if you represent an engineering firm specializing in highway construction, you may receive a request for proposal (RFP) from a local township asking you to bid on a road project. Typically, an RFP is issued to numerous companies, and your proposal will need to stack up against all the others. Unsolicited proposals are those that have not been requested. If you are a new advertising agency in town, you may send out short unsolicited proposals to local radio stations suggesting that they use your agency for their advertising needs.

Because the audience for a solicited proposal has made a specific request, you will not need to spend time introducing yourself or providing background on the product or service. For an unsolicited proposal (sometimes termed a “cold call” in sales), you will need to catch readers’ attention quickly and provide incentives for them to continue reading: perhaps by printing a price comparison of your fees on the first page, for example.

Proposals may also be *informal* or *formal*. Informal proposals, like informal reports, can take the form of an email or memo (if distributed within an organization) or a letter (when sent outside an organization). Formal proposals, meanwhile, take on the same format as formal reports (see Chapter 16), including front matter, the text of the report, and end matter, if applicable. Formal proposals will be discussed later in this chapter.

Informal and formal proposals

Both solicited and unsolicited proposals, whether informal or formal, fall into three categories: planning proposals, research proposals, and sales proposals.

Planning Proposals

Planning proposals offer solutions to a problem or suggestions for improvement. A planning proposal might be a request for funding to expand the campus newspaper (as in the formal proposal at the end of this chapter), an architectural plan for new facilities at a ski area, or a plan to develop energy alternatives to fossil fuels.

Characteristics of planning proposals

Figure 17.1 is a solicited, informal planning proposal that will be used by bank loan officers when deciding whether to grant a construction loan. Because this document is addressed to external readers, it is cast as a letter. For specific advice on how to approach planning proposals, read the annotations accompanying Figure 17.1 and see the Strategies for Proposals on pages 335–336.

Research Proposals

Research (or grant) proposals request approval and funding for research projects. For example, a chemist at a university might address a research proposal to the Environmental Protection Agency for funds to identify toxic contaminants in local groundwater. Research proposals are solicited by many agencies, including the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health. Each agency has its own requirements and guidelines for proposal format and content. Successful research proposals follow these guidelines and carefully articulate the goals of the project. In these cases, proposal readers will generally be other scientists, so writers can use language that is appropriate for other experts (as in the Appendix in Figure 16.4, page 323).

Characteristics of research proposals

Figure 17.2 is a solicited, informal research proposal from an employee in the marketing and research department to her supervisor, proposing to conduct research into management–employee relations at a single location of the company that has experienced problems in this area. Because this document is addressed to an internal reader (the supervisor), it has been cast as a memo. It could also have taken the form of an email. For specific advice on how to approach research proposals, read the annotations accompanying Figure 17.2 and see the Strategies for Proposals on pages 335–336.

FIGURE 17.1
A planning
proposal

Provides a clear
subject line

Introduction states
purpose, identifies
plan, gives
background, and
provides a timetable

Body paragraph
spells out details
(what will be done,
qualifications,
obtaining permits)

Concluding
paragraph thanks
the reader and
encourages
acceptance of the
proposal

P.O. Box 185
Amherst, MA 01002

March 15, 20XX

Ambrose Savings Bank
South Haley Street
Weaton, MA 09758

SUBJECT: *Proposal to erect a new dwelling*

Dear Mr. Smith:

As we discussed in our meeting on March 6, this letter is in application for a construction loan in the amount of \$300,000, on an interest-only basis, for the construction of the described residence (plans and specifications are enclosed) on Lot #6 of my Leverett property. Anticipated sales price of the completed home is \$398,000, including the standard realtor's commission. I have already completed clearing work and some excavation, and I expect weather conditions to permit the commencement of foundation work within the next three weeks. Construction time is projected at approximately five months, with completion targeted for September 1, 20XX.

The quality of construction materials and workmanship will be comparable to the adjacent three homes, which you have inspected. Exterior woodwork will be executed in Western Red Cedar, while interior finishes will comprise masonry, dry-wall, and Philippine mahogany. All sashes, doors, flooring, cabinets, and special millwork will be designed and custom fabricated. Water supply and waste disposal will be handled on-site; the appropriate permits have already been obtained. The heating system will be oil-fired hot air, ducted for the later addition of air conditioning. All windows and skylights will be double-glazed and insulation will be maximized.

Thank you for giving this proposal your immediate attention. I will be pleased to provide any additional information you may require.

Very truly yours,
Gerald A. Jackson

Gerald A. Jackson

GAJ/ch

Enclosures: architect's drawings
specifications

FIGURE 17.2
A research
proposal (memo
format)**MEMORANDUM**

To: James Granger, Vice President, Marketing and Research Division
From: Anne Hickett, Analyst, Marketing and Research Division *A.H.*
Date: March 4, 20XX
Subject: *Report proposal regarding the South Dennis location*

Proposed Study

In answer to your March 2 request for a research report due May 10, I propose to study the ongoing problem of low employee morale at our Foodstuff Supermarket in South Dennis. Following are the specifications:

Statement of Problem

During my two years as a part-time employee at Foodstuff, I worked at a location with similar problems. I have witnessed firsthand the high turnover and general employee dissatisfaction over the work situation and store management policies. Because we have heard continuing complaints about management–employee relations at the South Dennis location, including from top management, I propose to research the situation and offer potential solutions.

Scope of Proposed Study

My study will explore the following issues:

1. An assessment of the efficiency of Foodstuff's South Dennis management by drawing parallels and contrasts between the actual management operation and principles of effective management that I will identify and collect from my secondary sources.
2. A consideration of the direct or indirect effects that any management problem might have on employee morale.
3. An assessment of the management's effectiveness in employee motivation.
4. An assessment of the role of effective communication in all management–employee relations.

Methods and Data Sources

My secondary research will include library resources on the topic of management, as well as reliable Web resources. Primary research will include personal observation at the South Dennis site, which I will visit next Thursday; a survey (see attached) to be distributed to all of the South Dennis management and employees; and interviews with both employee and management representatives at the South Dennis location. All conclusions and any recommendations for positive change will be based on the collected evidence in my report.

If you have any further questions, I will be happy to discuss this proposal with you at your convenience.

← Opens with general description of the problem and a proposed study

← Describes the problem in detail, as well as the writer's qualifications

← Details overall scope of study

← Details specific approaches to the research

← Encourages reader acceptance

Sales Proposals

Characteristics of sales proposals

Sales proposals offer services or products and may be solicited or unsolicited. If solicited, several firms may be competing for the same contract, so submitted proposals may be ranked by a committee. Sales proposals can be cast as letters if the situation calls for them to be brief. If the situation requires a longer proposal, include the various parts and elements of formal proposals. A successful sales proposal persuades customers that your product or service surpasses those of any competitors. What you include in a sales proposal is determined by the guidelines from the client or by a thorough analysis of the kinds of information your audience needs.

Figure 17.3 is an example of a solicited, informal sales proposal, in which the writer explains why her machinery is best for the job, what qualifications her company can offer, and what costs are involved. As with Figure 17.1, because this document is addressed to external readers, it is cast as a letter. For specific advice on how to approach sales proposals, read the annotations accompanying Figure 17.3 and see the Strategies for Proposals on pages 335–336.

ORGANIZATION OF INFORMAL AND FORMAL PROPOSALS

Follow a problem-solution or situation-resolution pattern

No matter the type, all proposals must move in a logical direction from problem/situation to solution/resolution. All effective proposals typically include a clear title or subject line; background information; a statement of the problem or situation; a description of how to solve the problem or resolve the situation; a breakdown of costs, timing, or qualifications (if applicable); and a conclusion that induces readers to act.

Include front matter and end matter as needed

Formal proposals typically require *front matter* including a title page, a table of contents, an abstract or executive summary, and possibly a letter of transmittal. *End matter* would include appendices and a list of sources cited (if the formal proposal has entailed research, which it usually will). For more information on these components, see Chapter 16 (pages 309–312); front matter and end matter are presented in the same way in a formal proposal as in a formal report.

Clear Title or Subject Line

Clearly announce your proposal

State the proposal's purpose with a clear and complete title, such as "Recommended Wastewater Treatment System for the MudPie Resort and Spa," (for a formal proposal) or a subject line (in an informal proposal). Avoid being vague or overly general. An overworked decision maker facing a stack of proposals might very well decide that one that lacks a clear, focused title or subject line probably will be unclear and unfocused in its content.

FIGURE 17.3
A sales proposal

Modern Landscaping
23–44 18th Street
Sunnyside, NY 11104

October 4, 20XX

Martin Haver
35–66 114th Avenue
Jamaica, NY 11107

Subject: *Proposal to dig a trench and move boulders at Bliss site*

Dear Mr. Haver:

I've inspected your property and would be happy to undertake the landscaping project necessary for the development of your farm.

The backhoe I use cuts a span 3 feet wide and can dig as deep as 18 feet—more than an adequate depth for the mainline pipe you wish to lay. Because this backhoe is on tracks rather than tires and is hydraulically operated, it is particularly efficient in moving rocks. I have more than twelve years of experience with backhoe work and have completed many jobs similar to this one.

After examining the huge boulders that block access to your property, I am convinced they can be moved only if I dig out underneath and exert upward pressure with the hydraulic ram while you push forward on the boulders with your D-9 Caterpillar. With this method, we can move enough rock to enable you to farm that now inaccessible tract. Because of its power, my larger backhoe will save you both time and money in the long run.

This job should take 12 to 15 hours, unless we encounter subsurface ledge formations. My fee is \$200 per hour. The fact that I provide my own dynamiting crew at no extra charge should be an advantage to you because you have so much rock to be moved.

Please phone me any time for more information. I'm sure we can do the job economically and efficiently.

Sincerely yours,
Sharon Ingram
Sharon Ingram

- ← Describes the subject and purpose
- ← Gives the writer's qualifications
- ← Explains how the job will be done
- ← Maintains a confident tone throughout
- ← Gives a qualified cost estimate
- ← Encourages reader acceptance by emphasizing economy and efficiency

Background Information

Provide your readers with background context

A background section can be brief or long. In Figure 17.1, the writer's opening sentence ("As we discussed in our meeting on March 6...") provides a quick reminder of the context for the project. This sentence is brief because the reader is already familiar with the project. For a new audience or in an unsolicited proposal, you may need to provide a longer paragraph (or, in the case of a formal proposal, a full introduction) with background information on the project. If the topic warrants, the background section may take up several pages.

Statement of Problem or Situation

Clearly describe the problem or situation

The problem or situation and its resolution form the backbone of any proposal. Describe the problem or situation statement in either the background portion of your proposal or in its own headed section. For example, a good statement of the problem or situation might be: "Complaints about noise in our college library call for a plan that will make areas of the library quiet enough for serious study."

Description of Solution or Resolution

Fully explain how you plan to solve the problem or resolve the situation

The bulk of the proposal should map out your plan to solve the problem or resolve the situation. Include in this section as much detail as needed for your audience to evaluate the soundness of your plan. If the plan is vague or unrealistic, the proposal will be rejected.

Costs, Timing, and Qualifications

Spell out any particulars involving money, time, and expertise

If your proposal involves financial outlay, timing sensitivity, or proof of your qualifications, provide separate sections dealing with these factors. Make sure that your breakdown of costs and timing is accurate, easy to understand, and realistic. If you work with an accountant or other financial specialist, ask that person to check your cost figures. If the proposal is solicited, make sure you follow the client's guidelines for establishing a budget and/or schedule.

Conclusion

End with a call to action

The conclusion reaffirms the need for your plan and induces the audience to act. A conclusion does not need to be more than a sentence or two in an informal proposal (longer, of course, in a formal proposal), but no matter the length, always end on a strong note, with a conclusion that is assertive, confident, and encouraging.



STRATEGIES for Proposals

- ▶ **Consider your audience and purpose.** Remember that your audience consists of decision makers; therefore, the purpose of any proposal must be to convince the decision makers to say yes to what you propose.
- ▶ **Understand the audience's needs.** The proposal audience members want specific suggestions to meet their specific needs. Their biggest question will be "What will this plan do for me?" Make your proposal demonstrate a clear understanding of the audience's problem or situation, and then offer an appropriate solution or resolution.
- ▶ **Perform research as needed.** To make your plan convincing, do your research. For example, you might research the very latest technology for solving a problem or resolving a situation; compare the costs, benefits, and drawbacks of various approaches; contact others in your field for their suggestions; find out what competitors are up to; and so on.
- ▶ **Be sure to credit information sources and contributors.** Complex proposals rarely emerge from thin air, and proposals are often a result of a team effort. If anything in your proposal represents the work or input of others, document the sources or acknowledge fellow contributors.
- ▶ **Use an appropriate format.** For an informal proposal distributed internally, use email or memo format. For an informal proposal distributed externally, use letter format. For a formal proposal, include all the required components, including a title page, table of contents, abstract or executive summary, introduction, body, and conclusion. If applicable, include a letter of transmittal and appendices.
- ▶ **Provide a clear title or subject line and background information.** Draw readers into your proposal with a title or subject line that describes the content of the proposal exactly, and orient your readers with the appropriate background information.
- ▶ **Follow a problem-to-solution or situation-to-resolution organizational pattern.** All proposals should move in this sequence from beginning to end.
- ▶ **Spell out the problem (and its causes) or situation clearly and convincingly.** Provide enough detail for your audience to appreciate the importance of the problem or situation. Answer the implied question, "Why is this such a big deal?"
- ▶ **Point out the benefits of solving the problem.** Answer the implied question, "Why should we spend time, money, and effort to do this?"
- ▶ **Offer a realistic solution or resolution.** Stick to claims or assertions you can support. Answer the implied question, "How do we know this will work?" If the solution or resolution involves accounting for costs, budgeting time, or proving your qualifications, include this information.



STRATEGIES *continued*

- ▶ **Address anticipated objections to your solution.** Decision makers typically approach a proposal with skepticism, especially if the project will cost them money and time. Answer the implied question, “Why should we accept the things that seem wrong with your plan?”
- ▶ **Include all necessary details, but don’t overload.** Include as much supporting detail as you need to induce readers to say yes to your proposal. Leave nothing to guesswork. At the same time, don’t overload your readers with information that is not directly relevant.
- ▶ **Write clearly and concisely.** Make sure your document is easy to read, uses action verbs, and avoids puffed-up language or terms that are too technical for your audience. If necessary for a mixed audience with differing technical levels, include a glossary.
- ▶ **Express confidence.** You are trying to sell yourself, your ideas, or your services to a skeptical audience. Be upfront about the supporting facts (“For the third year in a row, our firm has been ranked as the number 1 architecture firm in the Midwest”) and state your case directly (“We know you will be satisfied with the results”).
- ▶ **Make honest and supportable claims.** Because they often involve large sums of money, investments of time, and contractual obligations, proposals require a solid ethical and legal foundation. False promises not only damage the writer’s or company’s reputation but also invite lawsuits. If the solutions you offer have limitations, make sure you say so.
- ▶ **Induce readers to act.** Decide exactly what you want readers to do, and give reasons why they should be the ones to act. In your conclusion, answer the implied question, “What action am I supposed to take?”

A SAMPLE FORMAL PROPOSAL

Figure 17.4 has been written because a state university’s newspaper is struggling to meet rising costs. The paper’s yearly budget is funded by the Student Fee Allocation Committee, which disburses money to various campus organizations. Because of drastic budget cuts for all state schools, the newspaper has received no funding increase for three years. Bill Trippe, the *Torch*’s business manager, must justify a requested increase of 20.6 percent for the coming year’s budget.

Before drafting his proposal, Bill constructed a detailed profile of his audience and purpose: He determined that the primary audience (the Allocation Committee) would use the document as perhaps the sole basis for deciding whether to grant the additional funds and that his primary purpose must be to provide a convincing rationale. To achieve his goal, he has included a detailed plan for reducing existing operating costs, a section outlining next year’s projected costs, and an appendix comparing the *Torch*’s performance with that of other nearby college newspapers. All these materials demonstrate how Bill has anticipated his audience’s possible objections.

FIGURE 17.4
A formal proposal

SMU *Torch*

Old Westport Road
North Dartmouth, Massachusetts 02747

May 1, 20XX

Charles Marcus, Chair
Student Fee Allocation Committee
Southeastern Massachusetts University
North Dartmouth, MA 02747

Dear Dean Marcus:

No one needs to be reminded about the effects of increased costs on our campus community. We are all faced with having to make do with less.

Accordingly, we at the *Torch* have spent long hours devising a plan to cope with increased production costs—without compromising the newspaper's tradition of quality service. I think you and your colleagues will agree that our plan is realistic and feasible. Even the "bare-bones" operation that will result from our proposed spending cuts, however, will call for a \$6,478.57 increase in next year's budget.

We have received no funding increase in three years. Our present need is absolute. Without additional funds, the *Torch* simply cannot continue to function as a professional newspaper. I therefore submit the following budget proposal for your consideration.

Respectfully,

William Trippe

William Trippe
Business Manager, SMU *Torch*

← Letter of transmittal provides additional context and persuasion

FIGURE 17.4
(Continued)

Provides a clear
title

**A Funding Proposal
for
The SMU *Torch***
(20XX–XX)

Prepared for
The Student Fee Allocation Committee
Southeastern Massachusetts University
North Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Writer, affiliation,
and date always
appear on the
title page

by
William Trippe
Torch Business Manager

May 1, 20XX

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FIGURE 17.4
(Continued)

Table of
contents orients
readers and
demonstrates
proposal's
structure

FIGURE 17.4
(Continued)

Abstract
accurately
encapsulates
entire document

Funding Proposal iii

INFORMATIVE ABSTRACT

The SMU *Torch*, the student newspaper at Southeastern Massachusetts University, is crippled by inadequate funding, having received no budget increase in three years. Increased costs and inadequate funding are the major problems facing the *Torch*. Increases in costs of technology upgrades and in printing have called for cutbacks in production. Moreover, our low staff salaries are inadequate to attract and retain qualified personnel. A nominal pay increase would make salaries more competitive.

Our staff plans to cut costs by reducing page count and by hiring a new press for the *Torch's* printing work. The only proposed cost increase (for staff salaries) is essential.

A detailed breakdown of projected costs establishes the need for a \$6,478.57 budget increase to keep the paper a weekly publication with adequate page count to serve our campus.

Compared with similar newspapers at other colleges, the *Torch* makes much better use of its money. The comparison figures in the Appendix illustrate the cost-effectiveness of our proposal.

FIGURE 17.4
(Continued)

Funding Proposal 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Our campus newspaper faces the contradictory challenge of surviving ever-growing production costs while maintaining its reputation for quality. The following proposal addresses that crisis. This plan's ultimate success, however, depends on the Allocation Committee's willingness to approve a long-overdue increase in the *Torch*'s upcoming yearly budget.

← Opens with an overview of the situation

Background

In ten years, the *Torch* has grown in size, scope, and quality. Roughly 6,000 copies (24 pages/issue) are printed weekly for each fourteen-week semester. Each week, the *Torch* prints national and local press releases, features, editorials, sports articles, announcements, notices, classified ads, a calendar column, and letters to the editor. A vital part of university life, our newspaper provides a forum for information, ideas, and opinions—all with the highest professionalism. This year we published an online version as well.

← Provides relevant background

Statement of Problem

With much of its staff about to graduate, the *Torch* faces next year with rising costs in every phase of production and the need to replace outdated and worn equipment.

← Describes the problem concisely

Our newspaper also suffers from a lack of student involvement: Despite gaining valuable experience and potential career credentials, few students can be expected to work without some kind of remuneration. Most staff members do receive nominal weekly salaries: from \$20 for the distributor to \$90 for the Editor-in-Chief. But salaries averaging barely \$5 per hour cannot possibly compete with the minimum wage. Since more and more SMU students must work part-time, the *Torch* will have to make its salaries more competitive.

The newspaper's operating expenses can be divided into four categories: hardware and software upgrades, salaries, printing costs, and miscellaneous (office supplies, mail, and so on). The first three categories account for nearly 90 percent of the budget. Over the past year, costs in all categories have increased: from as little as 2 percent for miscellaneous expenses to as much as 19 percent for technology upgrades. Printing costs (roughly one-third of our total budget) rose 9 percent in the past year, and another price hike of 10 percent has just been announced.

FIGURE 17.4
(Continued)

Proposes a logical solution to the problem, based on evidence

Previews the plan before getting into details

Itemizes realistic ways to save money and retain staff

Funding Proposal 2

Need

Despite growing production costs, the *Torch* has received no increase in its yearly budget allocation (\$37,400) in three years. Inadequate funding is virtually crippling our newspaper.

Scope

The following plan includes

1. Methods for reducing production costs while maintaining the quality of our staff
2. Projected costs for technology upgrades, salaries, and services during the upcoming year
3. A demonstration of feasibility, showing our cost-effectiveness
4. A summary of attitudes shared by our personnel

PROPOSED PLAN

This plan is designed to trim operating costs without compromising quality.

Methods

We can overcome our budget and staffing crisis by taking these steps:

Reducing Page Count. By condensing free notices for campus organizations, abolishing “personal” notices, and limiting press releases to one page, we can reduce page count per issue from 24 to 20, saving nearly 17 percent in production costs. (Items deleted from hard copy could be linked as add-ons in the *Torch*’s online version.)

Reducing Hard-Copy Circulation. Reducing circulation from 6,000 to 5,000 copies barely will cover the number of full-time students, but will save 17 percent in printing costs. The steadily increasing hits on our Web site suggest that more and more readers are using the electronic medium. (We are designing a fall survey to help determine how many readers rely on the online version.)

Hiring a New Press. We can save money by hiring Arrow Press for printing. Other presses (including our present printer) bid at least 25 percent higher than Arrow. With its state-of-the art production equipment, Arrow will import our “camera-ready” digital files to produce the hard-copy version. Moreover, no other company offers the rapid turnover time (from submission to finished product) that Arrow promises.

FIGURE 17.4
(Continued)

Funding Proposal 3

Upgrading Our Desktop Publishing Technology. To meet Arrow's specifications for submitting digital files, we must upgrade our equipment. Upgrade costs will be largely offset the first year by reduced printing costs. Also, this technology will increase efficiency and reduce labor costs, resulting in substantial payback on investment.

Increasing Staff Salaries. Although we seek talented students who expect little money and much experience, salaries for all positions must increase by an average of 25 percent. Otherwise, any of our staff could earn as much money elsewhere by working only a little more than half the time. In fact, many students could exceed the minimum wage by working for local newspapers. To illustrate: The *Standard Beacon* pays \$60 to \$90 per news article and \$30 per photo; the *Torch* pays nothing for articles and \$6 per photo.

A striking example of low salaries is the \$4.75 per hour we pay our desktop publishing staff. Our present desktop publishing cost of \$3,038 could be as much as \$7,000 or even higher if we had this service done by an outside firm, as many colleges do. Without this nominal salary increase, we cannot possibly attract qualified personnel.

Costs

Our proposed budget is itemized in Table 1, but the main point is clear: If the *Torch* is to remain viable, increased funding is essential for meeting our projected costs.

Table 1 Projected Costs and Requested Funding for Next Year's *Torch* Budget

PROJECTED COSTS

Hardware/Software Upgrades

Apple iMac w/8 GB memory, 1TB HD (Intel Core i7)	\$1,162.00
HP Pavilion 2709m 27" (second monitor)	355.00
Seagate 8 TB external hard drive (for backups)	128.99
Olympus Stylus 9000 digital camera	299.98
HP Scanjet 5000 sheet-feed scanner	799.00
Microsoft Office 2013 Professional Upgrade	499.00
Adobe Creative Suite 5 Master Collection	2,450.00
Subtotal	\$5,693.97

Provides detailed breakdown of costs—the central issue in the situation

FIGURE 17.4
(Continued)

PROJECTED COSTS <i>(continued)</i>		Funding Proposal	4
Wages and Salaries			
Desktop-publishing staff (35 hr/wk at \$6.00/hr x 28 wk)		\$5,880.00	
Editor-in-Chief		3,150.00	
News Editor		1,890.00	
Features Editor		1,890.00	
Advertising Manager		2,350.00	
Advertising Designer		1,575.00	
Webmaster		2,520.00	
Layout Editor		1,890.00	
Art Director		1,260.00	
Photo Editor		1,890.00	
Business Manager		1,890.00	
Distributor		560.00	
Subtotal		\$26,745.00	
Miscellaneous Costs			
Graphics by SMU art students (3/wk @ \$10 each)		\$ 840.00	
Mailing		1,100.00	
Telephone		1,000.00	
Campus print shop services		400.00	
Copier fees		100.00	
Subtotal		\$3,440.00	
Fixed Printing Costs (5,000 copies/wk x 28/wk)		\$24,799.60	
TOTAL YEARLY COSTS		\$60,678.57	
Expected Advertising Revenue (\$600/wk x 28 wks)		(\$16,800.00)	
Total Costs Minus Advertising Revenue		\$45,109.39	
TOTAL FUNDING REQUEST		\$43,878.57	

FIGURE 17.4
(Continued)

Funding Proposal 5

Feasibility

Beyond exhibiting our need, we feel that the feasibility of this proposal can be measured through an objective evaluation of our cost-effectiveness: Compared with newspapers at similar schools, how well does the *Torch* use its funding?

In a survey of the four area college newspapers, we found that the *Torch*—by a sometimes huge margin—makes the best use of its money per page. Table 1A in the Appendix shows that, of the five newspapers, the *Torch* costs students the least, runs the most pages weekly, and spends the least money per page, *despite a circulation two to three times the size of the other papers*.

The *Torch* has the lowest yearly cost of all five newspapers, despite having the largest circulation. With the requested budget increase, the cost would rise by only \$0.88, for a yearly cost of \$9.00 to each student. Although Alden College's newspaper costs each student \$8.58, it is published only every third week, averages 12 pages per issue, and costs more than \$71.00 yearly per page to print—in contrast to our yearly printing cost of \$55.65 per page. As the figures in the Appendix demonstrate, our cost management is responsible and effective.

Personnel

The *Torch* staff is determined to maintain the highest professionalism. Many are planning careers in journalism, writing, editing, advertising, photography, Web design, or public relations. In any *Torch* issue, the balanced, enlightened coverage is evidence of our judicious selection and treatment of articles and our shared concern for quality.

CONCLUSION

As a broad forum for ideas and opinions, the *Torch* continues to reflect a seriousness of purpose and a commitment to free and responsible expression. Its role in campus life is more vital than ever during these troubled times.

Every year, allocations to student organizations increase or decrease based on need. Last year, for example, eight allocations increased by an average of \$4,332. The *Torch* has received no increase in three years.

Presumably, increases are prompted by special circumstances. For the *Torch*, these circumstances derive from increasing production costs and the need to update vital equipment. We respectfully urge the Committee to respond to the *Torch's* legitimate needs by increasing next year's allocation to \$43,878.57.

← Assesses
probability
of success

← Addresses
important issue
of personnel

← Reemphasizes
need and
encourages
action

FIGURE 17.4
(Continued)

Appendix
provides detailed
breakdown of cost
comparisons

Funding Proposal 6

APPENDIX (Comparative Performance)

Table 1A Allocations and Performance of Five Local College Newspapers

	Stonehorse College	Alden College	Simms University	Fallow State	SMU
Enrollment	1,600	1,400	3,000	3,000	5,000
Fee paid (per year)	\$65.00	\$85.00	\$35.00	\$50.00	\$65.00
Total fee budget	\$104,000	\$119,000	\$105,000	\$150,000	\$325,000
Newspaper budget	\$18,300	\$8,580	\$36,179	\$52,910	\$37,392
					\$45,109 ^a
Yearly cost per student	\$12.50	\$8.58	\$16.86	\$24.66	\$8.12
					\$9.00 ^a
Publication rate	Weekly	Every third week	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly
Average no. of pages	8	12	18	12	24
Average total pages	224	120	504	336	672
					560 ^a
Yearly cost per page	\$81.60	\$71.50	\$71.78	\$157.47	\$55.65
					\$67.12 ^a

^aThese figures are next year's costs for the SMU *Torch*.

Source: Figures were quoted by newspaper business managers in April 20XX.



CHECKLIST for Proposals

MyWritingLab™

- ☐ Have I identified whether my proposal is solicited or unsolicited, and have I planned accordingly?
- ☐ Have I determined whether my proposal should be informal or formal?
- ☐ Have I identified whether my proposal is a planning, research, or sales proposal?
- ☐ Does my proposal follow a problem-solution or situation-resolution pattern?
- ☐ Have I done adequate research?
- ☐ Have I provided a clear title or subject line?
- ☐ Is the problem or situation clearly identified in the introduction?
- ☐ Is the background section appropriate for this audience's needs?
- ☐ Does the proposal maintain a clear focus on benefits?
- ☐ Is the proposed solution or resolution appropriate and realistic?
- ☐ Is the cost, budget, and/or qualifications section accurate and easy to understand?
- ☐ Are my claims honest and supportable?
- ☐ Are all foreseeable limitations identified?
- ☐ Are visuals, if needed, used effectively?
- ☐ Is my writing style clear, concise, and confident?
- ☐ Does the proposal end with a call to action?



APPLICATIONS

GENERAL APPLICATIONS

MyWritingLab™

1. After identifying your primary and secondary audience, write a short planning proposal for improving an unsatisfactory situation in the classroom, on the job, or in your dorm or apartment (e.g., poor lighting, drab atmosphere, health hazards, poor seating arrangements). Choose a problem or situation whose solution or resolution is more a matter of common sense and lucid observation than of intensive research. Be sure to (a) identify the problem clearly, give a brief background, and stimulate interest; (b) clearly state the methods proposed to solve the problem; and (c) conclude with a statement designed to gain audience support.
2. Write a research proposal to your instructor (or an interested third party) requesting approval for your final term project (a formal analytical report or formal proposal).

Verify that adequate primary and secondary sources are available. Convince your audience of the soundness and usefulness of the project.

3. As an alternate term project to the formal analytical report (Chapter 16), develop a long proposal for solving a problem, improving a situation, or satisfying a need in your school, community, or job. Choose a subject sufficiently complex to justify a formal proposal, a topic requiring research (mostly primary). Identify an audience (other than your instructor) who will use your proposal for a specific purpose. Complete an Audience and Purpose Profile.

TEAM APPLICATION

Working in groups of four, develop an unsolicited planning proposal for solving a problem, improving a situation, or satisfying a need in your school, community, or workplace. Begin by brainstorming as a group to come up with a list of possible issues or problems to address in your proposal. Narrow your list, and work as a group to focus on a specific issue or idea. Your proposal should address a clearly identified audience of decision makers and stakeholders in the given issue. Complete an Audience and Purpose Profile.

GLOBAL APPLICATION

MyWritingLab™

Compare the sorts of proposals regularly done in the United States with those created in other countries. For example, is the format the same? Are there more proposals for certain purposes in the United States than in another country? You can learn about this topic by interviewing an expert in international business (someone you meet on the job, during an internship, or through your adviser). You can also search the Web for information on international technical communication. Describe your findings in a short memo that you will share with your classmates.

DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATION

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Solicited proposals are usually written in response to a formal “request for proposal” (RFP). The National Science Foundation’s Web site and Facebook page have links for research funding opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students, K-12 educators, and many program areas such as engineering, geosciences, and so on. Find an area of interest to you and locate an RFP. Write a memo to your instructor explaining why you are interested in this research and what focus your proposal would take.

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Visit Chapter 17, *Proposals*, in MyWritingLab to complete this chapter’s applications, to explore this chapter’s overview, checklist, and flashcards, and to test your understanding of the chapter objectives.