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SEMINARS FOR
EXCELLENCE IN
Nonprofit
MANAGEMENT

The Successful Grant Proposal

Presented by Cynthia Bargar

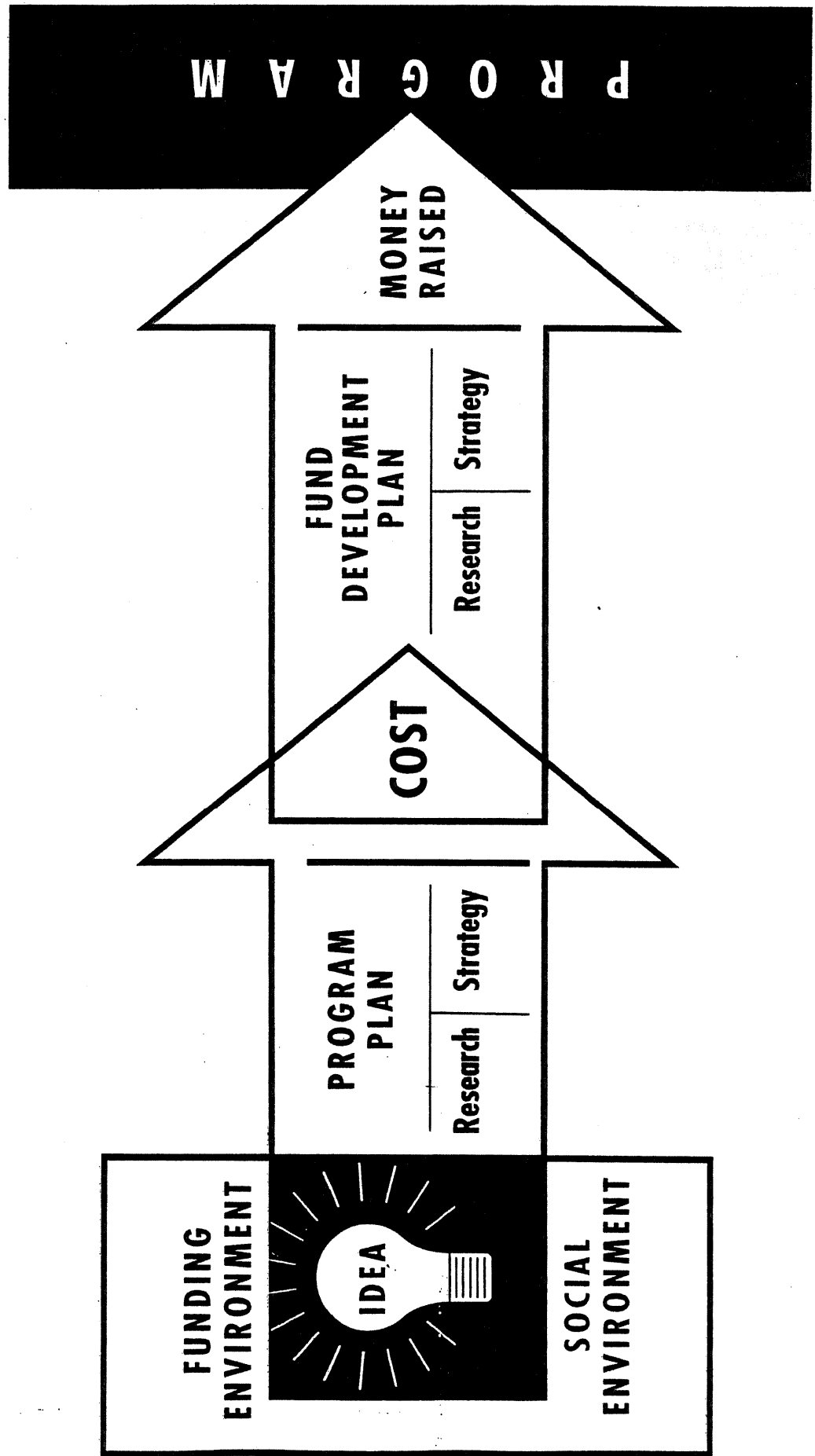
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The Successful Grant Proposal Workshop: What you need to know

May 11, 2006
Agenda

Introductions and Agenda Review	9:30 to 9:40
It's All About the Program	9:40 to 10:00
Elevator Story	10:00 to 10:30
Proposal Puzzle	10:30 to 11:15
Proposal Format	11:15 to 11:45
Finding Funders	11:45 to 12:15
Questions	12:15 to 12:30



P R O G R A M

**MONEY
RAISED**

**FUND
DEVELOPMENT
PLAN**

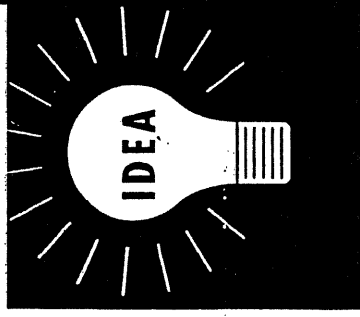
Research | Strategy

COST

**PROGRAM
PLAN**

Research | Strategy

**FUNDING
ENVIRONMENT**



**SOCIAL
ENVIRONMENT**

THE PROPOSAL PUZZLE

NEED

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

ACTIVITIES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

EVALUATION

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Proposal Writing

The Need Statement

This is the statement of the problem your organization/program wants to solve.

- Use accurate facts, statistics, and findings from census data, police and court data, public health information, reputable research studies, newspaper articles, as well as anecdotal information to describe the severity of the problem.

Save newspaper articles that pertain to your work.

Search the World Wide Web for information.

Subscribe to professional journals that relate to your work.

Collect stories from people affected by the problem you are trying to solve.

- Describe your constituents in this section and show why their situation warrants attention.
- Use relevant data about the city you are in and your particular locale or neighborhood to argue the need for your program.
- National statistics can help to place a problem in a context, but local data that pertains specifically to the problem you will be addressing is best.

(Adapted from Guerrilla Grantwriting, prenticezinn.com)

Writing The Need/Problem Statement

The problem statement:

- ③ Defines the nature of the problem
- ③ Describes what the problem is and
- ③ Argues for what the solution should be

Use real data and start by answering the following questions:

- ◆ Who are the people with the need?
- ◆ Where are the people?
- ◆ When is the need evident?
- ◆ What is the need?
- ◆ Why does this need occur?
- ◆ What evidence do you have to support your claim?
- ◆ What are the consequences of not meeting the need?
- ◆ How is the need linked to your organization?

Ways to fine-tune your need statement:

- ◆ Identify the most critical needs of target populations or groups
- ◆ Indicate relationship between a larger set of issues to help justify your focus
- ◆ Support it with evidence from your experience and authoritative sources
- ◆ Establish the theoretical or conceptual base for your project
- ◆ Identify any approaches that have been tried that were inadequate
- ◆ Highlight any social and economic costs if the need is not addressed
- ◆ Summarize related projects
- ◆ Demonstrate how your project will build on earlier efforts
- ◆ Provide a compelling introduction to the rest of the proposal
- ◆ Organize the issues by priority

Proposal Writing

Goals and Objectives

The goals state in broad terms what you want your organization to accomplish. They incorporate the purpose and the outcomes.

To provide the opportunity for low-income homeowners to attend to needed home repairs.

To foster community activism within the xyz community so that residents participate fully in decisions about key development issues.

The objectives state in measurable terms the desired outcomes of the organization.

- The objectives relate directly to the needs statement and are achievable in a specific amount of time.
- The objectives are realistic and do not predict unreasonable outcomes. You want your objectives to be the basis for evaluating the program and you want to be able to meet those objectives in order to have a successful program.
- A process objective describes the way in which you do something.

To recruit 25 residents to participate in a training on community organizing among high risk youth.

- An outcome objective describes a change or a result.

Thirty high risk youth annually will stop using IV drugs and will develop the skills to work in part-time employment.

- Although you may have a mix of process and outcome objectives, funders are interested in outcomes and results. Design your program with realistic outcomes that can be the basis for evaluating your organization's progress.

Why Program Evaluation is Important

Program evaluation can help to:

1. Understand, verify or increase impact of products or services on clients

Outcomes evaluations increasingly required by funders as verification that nonprofits are indeed helping constituents

Too often, service providers rely on own instincts and passions to conclude what clients really need and determine whether their products or services are appropriate

2. Improve delivery mechanisms to be more efficient and less costly

Over time, service delivery can end up to be an inefficient and costly collection of activities

Evaluations can identify program strengths and weaknesses leading to program improvements

3. Verify that you're doing what you think you're doing

Plans for service delivery often change substantially as they are put into place

Evaluations can verify if the program is operating as originally planned

4. Facilitate management thinking about what program is all about

Evaluations look at program's goals and how staff knows if goals are being met

5. Produce data or verify results used for public relations and outreach

6. Produce valid comparisons between programs

Can help decide what programs to retain, e.g., in the face of pending budget cuts

7. Fully examine and describe effective programs for duplication elsewhere

(adapted from Free Management Library, www.managementhelp.org)

AGM Common Proposal Form

Before writing your proposal using AGM's Common Proposal Form, please read this page carefully. These tips and suggestions are written with you, the writer, in mind.

When writing a proposal, make sure that the goals, objectives, and amount requested match the criteria of the funder you are approaching. **Be strategic!**

Understanding that many foundations have small staff sizes, calling a foundation or corporate giving program to seek their advice if you do have a concern about a particular question may be useful. For a list of foundations that accept the Common Proposal Form, [click here](#).

Do Your Homework!

Keep these following tips in mind

- 1. Research each funder's grant making philosophy, program interests, and criteria.**
- 2. Be aware of each funder's application process, including timetable and preferred method of initial contact.**
- 3. Include a cover letter, introducing your organization and stating the dollar request. (check with each funder to see if they have a separate cover sheet)**
- 4. Follow any specific instructions from the funder.**

There are many resources to help you in your research. Utilize them! Following are some suggestions:

- * **Call or write each funder to obtain a copy of its funding guidelines**
- * **Use the AGM Grant Makers Directory, profiling 466 funding organizations**
- * **Use National Directories and Databases**
- * **Visit AGM's Resource Center for Philanthropy in Boston, New England's premiere funding research library**
- * **Join AGM's Partners Program and receive the quarterly publication Partners' Update, invitations to meeting and program, discounts on registration fees and library purchases**
- * **Utilize AGMConnect found at www.agmconnect.org**

Associated Grant Makers (AGM) is a regional association of corporate and foundation grant makers. AGM's mission is to support the practice and expansion of effective philanthropic giving.

AGM DOES NOT MAKE GRANTS. PLEASE DO NOT SEND FUNDING REQUESTS TO AGM.

COVER SUMMARY

Date: _____

1. Legal name of organization, address, and name of executive director:

2. IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit? (Please circle) **YES NO**

2a. If no, identify your fiscal agent and attach the written agreement from the fiscal agent. (Funders using this form may have special requirements as to the use of a fiscal agent, or may not permit such use.)

3. Contact person and title: _____

4. Phone: _____ FAX: _____ Email: _____

5. **AMOUNT REQUESTED:** \$ _____

6. **TYPE OF REQUEST** (operating, project, capital, other): _____

7. State your organization's mission:

8. No more than four sentences summarizing the proposal and its strategic link with this funder (Include the name of the project or capital campaign, if applicable):

9. List the proposal's target population, constituents, and geographic communities:

10. Total number of board members: _____ Total number of volunteers: _____

11. Total number of staff: Full-time _____ Part-time _____

12. Total annual organizational budget: \$ _____ Fiscal Year End ___/___/___

13. Project or capital budget (if applicable): \$ _____

14. The period this grant will cover: ___/___ to ___/___

15. United Way affiliate? (Please circle) **YES NO**

16. List any previous support from this funder in the last five years.

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Up to 10 pages is suggested. Check to see that the goals, objectives, and amount requested in your proposal match the criteria of the funder you are approaching. The following questions are ones that funders have identified as important information to answer. **While it is necessary to encompass all the following information in the proposal narrative, you may want to change the order in which you answer these questions.**

Profile of your organization and of your request

- * *If you are requesting operating support, please provide information about your organization's overall programs and activities.*
- * *If you are requesting project or capital support, please provide information for that specific project or capital request.*

1. Brief summary of organization's history, goals, and key achievements.
2. Overview of organization's structure and programs, including board, staff, and volunteer involvement.
3. Describe your organization's constituents for the organization overall, or, for a specific project. For example, total number and breakdown by age, gender, race/ethnicity, income levels, disabilities, geography, language spoken, or other criteria relevant to your organization or project.
4. Describe the community or regional need(s) and/or challenges that this effort will address. What is the level and nature of involvement of the community-at-large?
5. Description of the specific request that includes goals and objectives. (If it's a project request, provide a profile of the project)
6. Specific activities and timetable for meeting your stated objectives.
7. Future plan for sustaining this effort and strategy for building your funding base.
8. Who are your staff and volunteers and what are their qualifications?
9. If applicable, identify organizations that you collaborate with to address the issue(s) in this proposal.

Evaluation

10. Define your criteria for success for the organization, project, or capital campaign. State how you will measure your success in the short-term and in the long-term. What tool(s) will be used to evaluate your program or organization? What is your strategy for implementing the evaluation process?

REMEMBER => REFER TO EACH FUNDER'S GUIDELINES TO SEE IF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS REQUIRED

ATTACHMENTS: All of the following attachments must accompany the proposal

1. IRS letter confirming tax-exempt status - 501(c)(3) and 509(a).
2. Current board list with relevant background, affiliations, town residence, and number of times a year it meets
3. Financial information:
 - * Total board approved organizational budget for the fiscal year(s) (see page 4 for details)
 - * If seeking project or capital support, include project or capital budget for fiscal year(s)
 - * Most recent independent audit or account review (as required by law)*
 - * Year-to-date financial statement for the current fiscal year
 - * List companies and foundations being approached to fund this proposal, with dollar amounts indicating which sources are committed, pending, or anticipated

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IMPORTANT => REFER TO EACH FUNDER'S GUIDELINES TO SEE IF ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS, SUCH AS DIVERSITY FORMS, IRS FORM 990, OR RESUMES ARE REQUIRED.

*Footnote: according to the Massachusetts Attorney General's Division of Public Charities, nonprofits with revenues of equal to or more than \$250,000 must conduct an annual independent audit. Those with revenues between \$100,000 and \$249,999 may conduct an account review in lieu of an independent audit. Any nonprofit with revenues of \$99,999 or less is not required to conduct an independent audit or an account review. For more information, call the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office at 617.727.2200.

PROPOSAL BUDGET/BUDGET NARRATIVE

2 PAGES MAXIMUM

Before You Begin! Important Note:

If you already prepare organizational, project, or capital budgets which include revenues and expenses, you may submit them in their original form, or use the following sample.

1. Time period budget covers:

2. Revenue: provide a line item revenue statement for all applicable budget categories.

a. Grants and Contracts

- * Local Government
- * State Government
- * Federal Government
- * Foundations and Corporations
- * United Way and Other Federated Campaigns

b. Other Fundraising and Earned Income

- * Individuals
- * Events

c. Earned Income

- * Publications and Products
- * Membership Income
- * Fees

3. Expenses: provide a line item expense budget, with narrative footnotes for those applicable items, which need further explanation. Typical line items might include:

- * Salaries (specify number of full time equivalents)
- * Payroll Taxes
- * Fringe Benefits
- * Consultants and Professional Fees
- * Insurance
- * Travel/Transportation
- * Equipment
- * Supplies
- * Printing and Copying
- * Telephone and Fax
- * Postage and Delivery
- * Rent
- * Utilities
- * Maintenance
- * Evaluation
- * Staff Development and Training
- * Child Care
- * Administrative Overhead

4. In-Kind Support

Feel free to share the Common Proposal Form with a nonprofit colleague!

Successful Grant Proposals Grantseeking

(from Guerrilla Grantwriting, prenticezinn.com)

Find the right directory

The key to grantseeking is to know where the funding directories are and how to track down information on funders.

Ask your local librarian to help you find print directories of foundations and government funding.

Visit Associated Grantmakers of Massachusetts* or do a quick search on the Internet of the sites below that list funding sources.

*The **Associated Grant Makers** library in downtown Boston at 55 Court Street, Suite 520. AGM has print directories, CD-ROM directories, and newsletters for grantseekers. Call 617-426-2606 to register for a library orientation. If you are live far from Boston, your local college or public library's reference librarian can point you to all of the grantseeking resources.

Grantseeking Steps

1. **Choose your project.**
2. **Search a directory -- start locally then look nationally.**
3. **Zero in on 5-10 foundations that look promising.**
4. **Call (don't write) and request application information.**
5. **Narrow down your choices as you get better information.**
6. **Call up the top candidates to get more information.**
7. **Lock on your target and tailor your request to the funder.**

Resources

Associated Grant Makers of Massachusetts

www.agmconnect.org

Council on Foundations

www.cof.org

Foundation Center

www.fdncenter.org

Federal Register

www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces/aces140.html

NonProfit Gateway Network

www.firstgov.gov

20 COMMON PROPOSAL ERRORS

1. Grammatical errors—subject/pronoun agreement; verb tenses etc.
2. Run-on sentences—putting two separate sentences together as if they were one.
3. Sentence fragments: “We will reach the entire area. The community, the neighborhood, and the block.”
4. Typographical errors (typos)
5. Passive voice: “The members were recruited through door to door contact.”
6. Informal tone: “Well, as you know, in the next couple of years....”
7. Colloquial language: “take back the streets”
“fed up with” something
8. Use of first person: “we will do this or that”
9. Using first names when referring to staff: “Mary has done an excellent job at...”
10. Crossing out by hand
11. Using abbreviations before spelling out the whole name: “HUD provided funds for ...”
12. Unclear formatting and outlining
13. Typeface too small and not enough letter spacing
14. Not following the funder’s format
15. Vagueness, lack of clarity and specificity—not telling the story
16. Repeating the same idea over and over again
17. Unclear and incomplete financial information and budget narrative: budgets without an income side, no year to date financial data, etc.
18. Too many objectives, not clearly stated, not measurable (often they are really activities, not objectives)
19. Promising more than the organization or project is able to deliver
20. Lack of a convincing evaluation plan

The Successful Grant Proposal Useful Websites

Grantwriting

Grant Proposal.com

<http://www.grantproposal.com>

Strategic advice on pitching your project to funders

The Foundation Center's Short Course on Grant Writing

www.fdncenter.org

Comprehensive on-line course

A Guide for Writing a Funding Proposal

www.LearnerAssociates.net/proposal/

Simple guide — basic examples of proposal parts

Grantseeking

Associated Grant Makers of Massachusetts

www.agmconnect.org

Council on Foundations

www.cof.org

Foundation Center

www.fdncenter.org

The Successful Grant Proposal Workshop

Bibliography

Winning Grants: Step by Step, 2nd edition,
Mim Carlson, The Alliance for Nonprofit Management
Jossey-Bass
www.josseybass.com

Fundraising for Social Change, Kim Klein, Chardon Press
www.chardonpress.com

Grassroots Grants: An Activist's Guide to Proposal Writing, Andy
Robinson, Chardon Press
www.chardonpress.com

Writing for a Good Cause
Joseph Barbato and Danielle Furlich, Simon and Schuster
www.simonsays.com

The Foundation Center's Guide to Proposal Writing, 3rd Edition,
Foundation Center
www.fdncenter.org

**Securing Your Organization's Future: A Complete Guide to
Fundraising Strategies, Revised Edition,** Foundation Center
www.fdncenter.org

Chronicle of Philanthropy
www.philanthropy.com

The Successful Grant Proposal Workshop: Polishing your proposal

May 11, 2006
Agenda

Introductions and Agenda Review	1:30 to 1:40
Proposal Puzzle	1:40 to 2:00
Writing: Form and Style	2:00 to 2:30
Pen to Paper	2:30 to 3:30
Proposal Critique	3:30 to 4:15
Questions	4:15 to 4:30

THE PROPOSAL PUZZLE

NEED

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

ACTIVITIES

- 1.
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EVALUATION

- 1.
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CONCISE WRITING

ADAPTED FROM STRUNK & WHITE'S *THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE**

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION

Choose a suitable design and hold to it

- ① a basic structural design underlies every kind of writing
- ② the first principle of composition is to determine the shape of what is to come and pursue that shape

Make the paragraph the unit of composition

- ① ordinarily a subject requires subdivision into topics, each of which should be made the subject of a paragraph
- ② the beginning of each new paragraph is a signal to the reader that a new step in the development of the subject has been reached
- ③ as a rule, begin each paragraph either with a sentence that suggests the topic or with a sentence that helps the transition
- ④ the paragraph sometimes begins with a concise comprehensive statement serving to hold together the details that follow
- ⑤ paragraphing calls for a good eye as well as a logical mind; enormous blocks of print look formidable to a reader—breaking long paragraphs in two, even if it is not necessary to do so for sense, meaning or logical development is often a visual help

Use the active voice

- ① it is usually more direct and vigorous than the passive
- ② many mundane sentences can be made lively and emphatic by substituting a transitive verb in the active voice for expressions like *there is, the reason that, could be heard*

Put statements in positive form

- ① make definite assertions
- ② avoid colorless, tame, hesitating, noncommittal language
- ③ use the word *not* only as a means of denial, never as a means of evasion

(over)

Use definite, specific, concrete language

- ① prefer the specific to the general, the definite to the vague, the concrete to the abstract

Omit needless words

- ① vigorous writing is concise
- ① a sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences
- ① every word must tell
- ① avoid common expressions that violate this principle: *the fact that, the question as to whether, there is no doubt but that, in a hasty manner, this is a subject that*

Avoid a succession of loose sentences

- ① those consisting of two coordinate clauses, the second introduced by a conjunction

Express coordinate ideas in similar form

- ① expressions similar in content and function should be outwardly similar (parallel construction)
- ① the likeness of form enables the reader to recognize more readily the likeness of content and form
- ① correlative expressions (*both, and; not, but; not only, but also; either, or*) should be followed by the same grammatical construction

Keep related words together

- ① the position of words in a sentence is the principal means of showing their relationship
- ① confusion and ambiguity result when words are badly placed

In summaries keep to one tense

Place the emphatic words of a sentence at the end

- ① the proper place in the sentence for the word or group of words the writer wishes to make most prominent is usually the end
- ① the other prominent position is the beginning—any element in the sentence, other than the subject, becomes emphatic when placed first

* The Elements of Style by William Strunk, Jr. With revisions, an introduction, and a new chapter on writing by E.B. White, The Macmillan Co., 1959 (There is a newer edition out, available at most bookstores in the writing section or the general reference section for about \$5 or \$6--well worth the money!)

Use Persuasive Techniques

To be persuasive, your argument must be solid and reasonable. In order to be convincing, you should appropriately apply the persuasive techniques of logos, ethos, and pathos.

Logos: Appeal to reason by using facts, statistics, research, logical arguments, etc.

Ethos: Appeal to the credibility or character of the author or of the people quoted. Use credible sources, and prove your own credibility with good writing and tone.

Pathos: Appeal to emotion, values, and beliefs to support your own feelings or passion about the issue. Include personal stories from yourself or others, and use appropriate word choice to emphasize emotion. In proposal writing, this technique should be used with care.

To be persuasive you must also understand your audience, so you can find ways to support your thesis in a manner convincing to them.

Ask yourself the following questions to help you identify and persuade your audience more effectively:

- What is the audience's knowledge level about your topic?
- What is the audience's attitude towards the topic?
- What are the audience's values and beliefs?

These questions will help you identify the character of your audience and establish a tone for your proposal that is both professional and reasonable.

Assume your audience is intelligent—never sound condescending or know-it-all—but be sure to thoroughly explain concepts.

From Utah Valley State College Writing Center. <http://www.uvsc.edu/owl/handouts>

Use the Active Voice

The active voice is usually more direct and vigorous than the passive:

I shall always remember my first visit to Boston.

This is much better than:

My first visit to Boston will always be remembered by me.

The latter sentence is less direct, less bold, and less concise. If the writer tries to make it more concise by omitting "by me,"

My first visit to Boston will always be remembered,

it becomes indefinite: is it the writer, or some person undisclosed, or the world at large, that will always remember this visit?

This rule does not, of course, mean that the writer should entirely discard the passive voice, which is frequently convenient and sometimes necessary.

The dramatists of the Restoration are little esteemed to-day.

Modern readers have little esteem for the dramatists of the Restoration.

The first would be the right form in a paragraph on the dramatists of the Restoration; the second, in a paragraph on the tastes of modern readers. The need of making a particular word the subject of the sentence will often, as in these examples, determine which voice is to be used.

The habitual use of the active voice, however, makes for forcible writing. This is true not only in narrative principally concerned with action, but in writing of any kind. Many a tame sentence of description or exposition can be made lively and emphatic by substituting a transitive in the active voice for some such perfunctory expression as there is, or could be heard.

Vary the Rhythm

Dependent markers

after, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, even though, if, if only, rather than, since, that, though, unless, until, when, where, whereas, wherever, whether, which, while

example: The campus parking problem is getting worse. The university is not building any new garages.

revision: The campus parking problem is getting worse because the university is not building any new garages.

example: The US has been overly dependent on foreign oil for many years. Alternate sources of energy are only now being sought.

revision: Although the US has been overly dependent on foreign oil for many years, alternate sources are only now being sought.

Transitional words and phrases

accordingly, after all, afterward, also, although, and, but, consequently, despite, earlier, even though, for example, for instance, however, in conclusion, in contrast, in fact, in the meantime, in the same way, indeed, just as, thus, yet

example: Fast food corporations are producing and advertising bigger items and high-fat combination meals. The American population faces a growing epidemic of obesity.

revision: Fast food corporations are producing and advertising bigger items and high-fat combination meals. Meanwhile, the American population faces a growing epidemic of obesity.

Short and long sentences

example: They visited Canada and Alaska last summer to find some native American art. In Anchorage stores they found some excellent examples of soapstone carvings. But they couldn't find a dealer selling any of the woven wall hangings they wanted.

revision: They visited Canada and Alaska last summer to find some native American art, such as soapstone carvings and wall hangings. Anchorage stores had many soapstone items available. Still, they were disappointed to learn that wall hangings, which they had especially wanted, were difficult to find.

Parallel Structure in Professional Writing

When you are expressing ideas of equal weight in your writing, parallel sentence structures can echo that fact and offer you a writing style that uses balance and rhythm to help deliver your meaning.

Incorrect: My degree, my work experience, and ability to complete complicated projects qualify me for the job.

Correct: My degree, my work experience, and my ability to complete complicated projects qualify me for the job.

Incorrect:

- ❖ Prepared weekly field payroll
- ❖ Material purchasing, expediting, and returning
- ❖ Recording OSHA regulated documentation
- ❖ Change orders
- ❖ Maintained hard copies of field documentation

Correct:

- ❖ Prepared weekly field payroll
- ❖ Handled material purchasing, expediting, and returning
- ❖ Recorded OSHA regulated documentation
- ❖ Processed change orders
- ❖ Maintained hard copies of field documentation

Practice:

Correct the following bulleted list from a final report.

On the web page there is much wasted space, which is unappealing to the viewer. Following are suggestions for eliminating the unwanted blank space:

- ❖ Move some of the text into the blank space
- ❖ Centering the picture
- ❖ Centering the picture and add text to each side
- ❖ On the right of the picture, tell a little bit about the picture (who owns the balloon, what year and where this picture was taken, etc.)
- ❖ Have pictures that stretch the length of the screen, like with a panoramic camera
- ❖ Or as a last resort even take the picture out

This page is located at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/>

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