

TOP 10

10 Common Elements of Winning Proposals

1. Winning proposals have defined needs and describe how they were identified
2. Winning proposals describe what will be done
Create a real-life scenario for the reader. The reader must understand what you intend to do.
3. Winning proposals present the material in a logical manner
Sections are clearly identified and a parallel structure is maintained. Each need has stated objective, activity, and evaluation statement.
4. Winning proposals are written in positive terms
Some writers believe that if you describe how bleak a situation is, someone will give you money to solve the problem. This is not true. Funders hedge their bets by backing proposals that describe worthwhile programs that will meet identified needs and match the criteria set forth by the granting agency.
5. Winning proposals do not overuse jargon
6. Winning proposals present detailed budgets that match your proposed program
All bases must be covered. If you are going to purchase hardware, have you purchased software? If you plan to offer training, how much, and what will it cost?
7. Winning proposals give something back
Some projects develop a product. The process you go through can become a product. Funders want others to adopt and adapt what you've learned.
8. Winning proposals follow the guidelines specified in the RFP-Request For Proposal
If a scoring rubric or evaluation checklist is given to you, read it and follow those directions!
9. Winning proposals look professional
They are word-processed and presented according to the guidelines of the RFP. Most granting agencies want a signed original and several copies. Sign your materials in blue ink to distinguish the originals from the copies.
10. Winning proposals are not too short or too long
They tend to be only as long as necessary to answer every question in the RFP. Use the scoring guidelines to determine length for sections. For example, let's say the granting agency wants the finished proposal to be no longer than ten pages. If the scoring guidelines weight the evaluation section to be 20 percent of the final score,