



## Tips and tools FOR THE WRITING WORLD

# The ART of Customer-Focused Proposals

Writing a customer-focused proposal is challenging. We want the customer to choose us — so our natural instinct is to focus on how awesome we are, all the relevant experience we have, all the things we can do. But hearing you blather on about yourself is a customer turnoff. Here's how to flip your script and focus on the customer instead.

## A

### ASK KEY QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMER'S WORLD.

- Who are they? Who do they want to be in the future? What are their aspirations, dreams, visions?
- What specific problem are they trying to solve?
- Why are they trying to solve it right now? Is the need urgent or is it just “time for a change”?
- How have they addressed this problem in the past? Have they tried other solutions? What happened when they did?
- How is the problem affecting them? How are they being limited or constrained?
- Where do they see themselves in the future if this problem were solved? What would success look like for them?

Only with a deep understanding of your customer's situation and goals can you move forward.

## R

### REFLECT WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED IN YOUR PROPOSAL, WITH PARTICULAR FOCUS ON:

- The issue your customer is trying to solve
- Your recommendation for their specific situation, based on your experience and knowledge
- The benefits they will reap from following your recommendation
- Proof they can trust that you've done this exact work before, for other customers, successfully

Notice how the customer's concerns are reflected in each of these four areas.

## T

### TIE EVERY SECTION OF THE PROPOSAL BACK TO THE CUSTOMER.

Don't slip back into focusing only on how great you are. As you write, keep asking yourself:

- How does this section relate to the customer's specific challenges and goals?
- Does this section describe what life will be like for them after implementing our solution?
- What are their stressors? What keeps them up at night? Am I addressing these head-on in this section?

