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How to Write an Executive Summary for a Proposal

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A proposal is a sales pitch intended to convince your reader to do something or, in some cases, to select you to do something. You might be invited to submit a proposal for a job or project, and the request for proposal will most likely state whether the recipient wants you to include an executive summary. If so, you must write a brief overview of your proposal -- typically no more than a few pages -- capturing its high points. Your reader won't have to wade through the details of your entire report to find what he needs to make a decision.

When to Write

- Two schools of thought exist as to whether you should write your executive summary before or after you create the proposal itself. Doing it after allows for greater ease in creating the summary, because you'll have the existing sections of your proposal to guide you. Take care to avoid parroting your proposal's information word for word in your summary if you write it last. If you experience a brainstorm, make sure you go back and add the new information to your proposal as well. Writing the summary first may help you formulate ideas for your proposal, but you'll probably have to go back and tweak it after you write the longer, more comprehensive document.

What to Include

- Identify the issue you're addressing first. If you're pitching an idea, explain why it's so great. If your goal is to be selected for a job, tell your reader why you're the best choice. Don't write out every detail of your credentials -- they'll appear in your proposal itself. But if you won a major award somewhere along the line, you can use a sentence to bring this to your reader's attention right at the start, before he gets to the proposal. Depending on the nature of your proposal, you might also want to include an overview of any research you've done and how you intend to reach your goal. If you're asking for money, mentioning this in your summary depends on whether the recipient has asked for it in the request for proposal. If not, save the nickels and dimes for the proposal and conclude your summary with a polite but assertive statement urging your reader to choose you or your idea.

How to Structure It

- The highlights you include in your summary should appear in the same sequential order as they do in your proposal. If your reader wants to know more than the brief information you include in your summary, this will give him some guidance as to where in your proposal he can find what he needs. The purpose of your summary is to make reading and digesting all this information as easy as possible for him.

Writing Tips

- Focus on making your first paragraph -- and particularly your first sentence -- the best it can be. You want to hook your audience immediately; you don't want your reader yawning and wondering if he wants to go to lunch or read on to the second paragraph. Don't start by tooting your own horn. Instead, focus on why your idea or solution -- not necessarily you or your company -- is perfect for the job or situation. Your reader is going to want to know what you can do for him, not what you've done for the rest of the world, at least not in your summary. You can tell him what you've done for the rest of the world in your proposal.

http://www.ehow.com/how_2089069_write-executive-summary-proposal.html



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