

## Master the Art of Proposals

You've sent another proposal to a client. Hooray! Now you sit and wait for the potential customer to reply to your email and accept your unique proposal. After 24 hours you get anxious, but decide to wait a bit more. After two days, you still think that they might be busy and that's alright. It's never alright! Do you know if the prospect has actually opened your proposal?

In sales, time is of the essence! You have to react fast, be first, and constantly on your client's radar.

When you send a proposal, treat it as one of the final steps in your communication, as you either win or lose. To make it a memorable experience, always present your business proposal! Don't just send it in an email and wait for an answer, because most of sales don't bother with FUP unless it's too late.

### Success formula for presenting proposals:

write actionable emails + have a clear next step + follow up + over-deliver

#### 1. Actionable Emails

Never send an email without a suggested action at the end. People are lazy and like to be guided. In other words, most of the humans don't like to take the responsibility. They prefer other people to tell them what to do, define agenda and follow the lead.

This is our chance! When you are sending a proposal, don't make it a possible final contact with a prospect. Always include an action line, e.g.:

- John, I'd like to call you tomorrow and present our proposal via Skype. Will 10am work for you?
- Martha, I've booked a table for us at Green Lakes for 3pm this Thursday so we can meet and discuss the proposal in details. I will call you Thursday morning to remind.
- Chris, let's have a quick phone call tomorrow at 11am, so I can present our proposal in details and answer all the questions you might have. Should I call this phone number 555 123-4567?

Here is a tip for you: **ask a question in your email.**

Your recipient doesn't want to look rude and will 99% of the time reply to this kind of emails. That's what we are aiming for, as we need to know that the client has opened this email and read the proposal.

#### 2. Clear Next Step

It's evident from the previous component that you need to state clear next steps. Always explain to your customers what to expect next. If a ball is on their side, make sure you know what to anticipate and get ready.

Make a habit of using attractive subject lines in your emails, which would look like a to-do list in any email client, e.g.:

- SIGN: Suggested workload for Iteration 1.
- CALL: Agreement terms discussion.

Ideally, your subject line should contain 80% of the message. Believe me, your interlocutor will thank you for brevity and clear style.

### 3. Follow up

If you don't follow up your clients on a regular basis you are missing tons of opportunities. Building trusting rapport takes time and requires a constant effort to maintain presence of your company in a client's head.

Do you follow up in these situations?

- Call or a meeting,
- Important documents sent/received,
- No response for an unusually long time,
- Regular monthly FUP of lost leads,
- Monthly FUP of previous clients.

The list is truly endless. The rule states: Try to remind the prospect as much as possible about yourself. If it's a big tender, chances are dozens of companies are in and you don't want to be 'just another company'.

### 4. Over-Deliver

Want to make great impression fast? Over-deliver!

E.g. you promised a proposal package to be sent on Thursday. Is it ready on Wednesday? Send it right away! Your client will be genuinely surprised and you get extra points.

However, if over-delivery is a part of your USP, you have to maintain it constantly. Once you set high expectations for your clients, they will be very hard on you in case you under-deliver even once.

To be on a safe side, add an extra day to your promise or several hours to an estimate to be able to compete it on time, rather be late.

Remember, good proposal doesn't mean deal is in your pocket automatically. Employ best sales practices to make it's a 150% win:

- Present your proposal
- Use actionable emails
- Define next steps
- Follow up
- Over-deliver

Source: Sasha Kovaliov, QuoteRoller