



cultivating elite
fundraisers

Crafting a Winning Proposal

October 5th, 2023



EQUIPPING
LEADERS AND
FUNDRAISERS TO
CULTIVATE BOLD
ORGANIZATIONS.

TODAY'S OBJECTIVES

1. Evaluate the key ingredients of winning proposals.
2. Evaluate your organization's proposal writing using this list.
3. Identify one change you can make that will improve your proposals holistically.

WINNING PROPOSALS

WARM UP

Please click on the sample grant application in the chat and answer these questions:

1. Identify the sentence on this page that is the most compelling to you.
2. Identify the sentence on this page that proves the experience of the team.
3. Identify the sentence on this page that conveys the strongest impact.

TYPES OF PROPOSALS

- Grant Letters of Intent
- Grant Applications
- Collaborative Grant Applications
- Contract Applications
- Major Gift Proposals
- Impact Investor Proposals

WINNING PROPOSALS

OUR THEORY

A winning proposal of any kind hinges on a **clear** promise of **impact**.

MY INFLUENCERS

Non-Profit

- My experience as a grant officer
- My experience as a grant manager
- My experience as a ESE start up entrepreneur

For Profit

- My experience as a student of Y Combinator's Startup School

KEY INGREDIENTS

1. **CLARITY:** You draw a bold line between the problem you are solving and your chosen solution.
2. **BOLD IMPACT:** You are making a definitive change in the world, not just a dent in the problem.
3. **EXPERIENCE:** You can prove your team is the right team for the job.

WINNING PROPOSALS

KEY INGREDIENTS

CLARITY

BOLD IMPACT
EXPERIENCE

CLARITY: You draw a bold line between the problem you are solving and your chosen solution.

A bold line between the problem and solution is a legible idea.

A dotted line between the problem and solution requires readers to know the content area, understand complexity of your field, or use their imagination.



WINNING PROPOSALS

KEY INGREDIENTS

CLARITY

BOLD IMPACT
EXPERIENCE

CLARITY: You draw a bold line between the problem you are solving and your chosen solution.

Your idea is so clear that your grandmother understands it and shares it with her friends who also understand it.



WINNING PROPOSALS

KEY INGREDIENTS

CLARITY

BOLD IMPACT
EXPERIENCE

CLARITY: You draw a bold line between the problem you are solving and your chosen solution.

Ex: Airbnb is the first online marketplace that lets travelers book rooms with locals, instead of hotels.

Ex: Dropbox. Synchronizes files across your or your team's computers.



WINNING PROPOSALS

KEY INGREDIENTS

CLARITY

BOLD IMPACT

EXPERIENCE

BOLD IMPACT: You are making a definitive change in the world, not just a dent in the problem.

A definitive change begins with an impact statement.

- We will end Veteran homelessness in Marin County.
- Young adults will realize their ability to transform their future and lead their communities.
- For all incarceration, decarceration.
- We will develop a solution to a just and equitable transition to renewable energy within our lifetime.



WINNING PROPOSALS

KEY INGREDIENTS

CLARITY

BOLD IMPACT

EXPERIENCE

BOLD IMPACT: You are making a definitive change in the world, not just a dent in the problem.

A definitive change uses *outcome* language more than *output* language.

- *Outcome:* How effective you've been.
- *Output:* How busy you've been.



WINNING PROPOSALS

KEY INGREDIENTS

CLARITY

BOLD IMPACT

EXPERIENCE

BOLD IMPACT: You are making a definitive change in the world, not just a dent in the problem.

Outcome Examples:

- By 2024, we will diversify employment outcomes for formerly incarcerated individuals into two new industries.
- By 2024, 80% of participants will increase measures of socio-economic stability.
- By 2025, 85% of the youth we serve will demonstrate increased capacity for innovation.
- By 2025 we will build a scalable model for refugee workforce integration to be scaled nationally.



WINNING PROPOSALS

KEY INGREDIENTS

CLARITY

BOLD IMPACT

EXPERIENCE

EXPERIENCE: You can prove your team is the right team for the job.

When you are selling a *product*, people are buying an identity.

When you are proposing an *investment or a gift*, people are buying a promise. They need to trust that your team will do what it says it will do.



WINNING PROPOSALS

KEY INGREDIENTS

CLARITY

BOLD IMPACT

EXPERIENCE

EXPERIENCE: You can prove your team is the right team for the job.

Use any opportunity to describe your organization's track record of success, evidence-based practices, awards, nominations, community credibility.

Credibility isn't earned through a strong staff bio section or "meet the team." It's based on how you answer other questions throughout the proposal.



WINNING PROPOSALS

YOUR TURN:

Use the Winning Proposal Checklist to evaluate your organization's chosen proposal.

YOUR TURN:

Please share an example of how you are improving or wish to improve:

- A. Clarity
- B. Impact
- C. Experience

YOUR TURN:

Which of the following changes will be most beneficial to your organization's proposal writing?

- A. Improve the **clarity** of our proposals. Use more distilled language to describe the problem and our chosen solution.
- B. Improve the **impact** messaging we use. Identify our organization's outcomes.
- C. Improve the messaging that supports our **experience** as a team.