

3 Ways to Improve Your Proposal Win Rates

by Victoria Tenny

Proposal writing takes a lot of time and coordination, and it can be difficult to know why one proposal succeeds and another doesn't. Are you happy with your win rate? Or could your proposals use a little sprucing up? Here are three ways to help catch—and keep—your client's attention.

1. *Personalize, personalize, personalize.*

No one wants to read the same boilerplate copy over and over. It's boring, it shows you took shortcuts when throwing the proposal together, and it's just plain lazy. You don't have to reinvent the wheel for every response—just make the client think you did! Cultivate a library of existing copy that can be easily adapted. Then craft these components into something unique reflecting this specific client and project.

Help the people who work for the client firm feel special and seen. Convey that you get the complexities of this project and that you intend to deliver a unique solution that addresses the client's concerns and goals. Connecting with the client's employees as people is a smart way to be remembered and can give you the win when it is a close race between multiple well-qualified contenders.

2. *Connect the dots.*

Make it obvious to the client why you are the best firm for the job. Don't assume that because you've worked together before the decision-makers will remember you or that awesome job you did back in 2021. What makes your company right for this unique task? Show them what you can do through specific examples, especially previous interactions with the client.

Remind them of that project in Thames Hall where the original schematics were lost in a flooded basement. Talk about that award you received for your innovative thinking on the Route 403 interchange, the successes of your talented staff, how long your firm has been in the business and why. Demonstrate exactly how you can meet all the RFP requirements and why your company is the best choice for the client.

3. *Replace text with images whenever possible.*

Did you know that many reviewers only spend a few minutes on each proposal? When you have to stand out from a whole pile of similar firms in such a short amount of time, your key takeaways have to jump out to the client. Graphics are a great way to do this! Convert any text you can into colorful images and graphics—summary tables, pie charts, photos of completed projects, you name it. Brainstorm ideas that might work best for your business.

Avoid walls of text at all costs. (Would you want to read that?) Where images aren't feasible, be sure to use white space as well as headlines to summarize key points. Even a bulleted list can vastly improve a daunting paragraph! Keep your copy tight and concise.

You might be surprised by the difference these three things can make for your win rates! Remember to focus on connecting with the client, making your capabilities clear, and keeping your proposal easy to take in. What would you add to this list? Have you found any tips or tricks to help keep clients interested? Tell me in the comments!