

Chapter 16

In a Nutshell

The goal of a proposal is to persuade readers to accept a course of action as an acceptable way to solve a problem or fill a need. Internal proposals show that the situation is bad and your way will clearly make it better. External proposals show that your way is the best.

Basic proposal issues. Four issues for you to discuss convincingly in a proposal are

- ▶ The *problem*—how some fact negatively affects positive expectations (high absenteeism on manufacturing line 1 is causing a failure to meet production goals) and that you know the cause (workers are calling in sick because of sore backs).
- ▶ The *solution*—actions that will neutralize the cause (eliminate bending by reconfiguring the work tables and automating one material transfer point).
- ▶ The *benefits* of the solution—what desirable outcome each person or group in the situation will obtain.

- ▶ The *implementation*—who will do it and how, how long it will take.

Develop credibility. To accept your solution, your readers must feel you are credible. Your methods must be clear and sound—an expert’s assessment of the situation. Your analyses of the problem, the cause, the benefits, how long it will take, the cost, etc., must show a reasoned regard of each concern, one that will not cause surprises later on.

Basic guidelines. Follow these guidelines:

- ▶ Use a top-down strategy.
- ▶ Describe the situation and use visual aids.
- ▶ Provide context in the introduction.
- ▶ Provide a summary that clearly states the proposed solution.