

"Nobody does a better job of showing how to use design to build relationships than Roger C. Parker"

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Roger C. Parker's

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Marketing with one-page proposals

Shorter is not only easier, but it's also better!

Patrick Riley's recent book, *THE ONE-PAGE PROPOSAL*, provides a welcome perspective on a problem many business owners face: proposal writing.

THE ONE-PAGE PROPOSAL simplifies this often frustrating and time-consuming task and offers a formula that increases the likelihood of more positive results.

Problem

Each year, business owners spend too much time preparing proposals that either *don't win the business* or give away valuable information that proposal recipients should have paid for.

In addition, proposals are often viewed strictly as *sales closers*, when they should be viewed as *marketing tools* that can open doors and create opportunities.

Why proposals fail

There are several reasons most proposals fail:

- *Length.* Most proposals are too long. They take too much time to *write*, and they take too much time to *read*.
- *Focus.* Proposals typically focus on too much on how services will be provided, and cost justifications, instead of the *problems* the proposal solves and the *benefits* prospect will enjoy.

In *THE ONE-PAGE PROPOSAL*, Patrick Riley points out that the higher you go in organizations, the *less time* your prospect have available to read long and detailed proposals.

Perspective

Riley's approach is based on direct response marketing techniques, where *every word written is carefully selected* to argue for the proposal's acceptance.

This approach stresses *preparation* over *quantity*: start by carefully analyzing your prospect's needs and potential obstacles, before beginning to write.

Then, write *so tightly* and *so convincingly* that you only need *one side* of a *single sheet of paper* to make your offer *irresistibly attractive*, while also describing the investment required and the next step to be taken.

Present your proposals earlier, rather than later, in the sales cycle

Proposal elements

Proposals include six carefully written elements:

1. *Title and subtitle.* Ideally limited to one line each, these identify what the proposal is about and the desired goal.
2. *Target and secondary target.* Targets are the goals, or benefits, acceptance of the proposal will deliver.
3. *Rationale.* This section, usually the longest, explains why the proposed action is needed. It covers the background and symptoms of the problem as well as the reasons for probable success.
4. *Financial.* This describes the dollars and cents cost of the proposed program.
5. *Status.* The section can add urgency by emphasizing the costs of inaction.
6. *Action.* What is the next step the proposer wants the recipient to take?

Assumption

Behind the above is the assumption that the brevity of the One-Page format ensures that a) the proposal will be read, and b) that all aspects of the proposal are on the table, stimulating further discussion.

If the prospect has questions, they will ask them. If further details are needed, the prospect will ask for them. But, if the proposal is totally unacceptable, they

will say so—saving everyone a lot of wasted time.

According to this view, proposals should be presented *earlier*, rather than *later*, in the sales cycle. Proposals are not the “written in stone,” but are intended to communicate competence and provoke discussion.

Longer versions, with more details, can always be provided later, if needed.

5 steps to success

Riley emphasizes the need for careful research before writing. During the first stage, research, he encourages you to create file folders for organizing appropriate for each of the proposal elements.

The remaining steps—downsizing, prioritizing, writing, and taking a break—should only be undertaken after you have thoroughly organized your research and your thoughts.

The book ends by discussing production values and why you should personally deliver proposals, so you can immediately address any prospect concerns.

Conclusion

THE ONE-PAGE PROPOSAL will change the way you approach new business.

For more information

Contact Roger C. Parker at 603-742-9673 or Roger@GMarketing-Design.com for more marketing ideas.



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