

# What is a Fundraising Proposal?

Learn what a fundraising proposal is and what you should include in it.

## Introduction

Rob: Proposals are an organizing document, in one sense.

It's where the entire picture for that particular project, that particular portion of the project comes together with story, explanatory video endorsements whatever it is.



# What is a Fundraising Proposal?

Proposals are an encompassing document where you organize everything you need to know and other people need to know about the work you're doing.

Quite a few organizations hire proposal writers in fact.

Again this medical mission that I was coaching yesterday, they have a proposal writer and they gave him their [white paper](#) exercise, and he hated it they said, at first, because it forced him to go about his work in a different way.

And what did that mean? Well it meant that they were much clear on what they were trying to say and he, instead of inventing it, had to follow their document now, their white paper, and make sure that his proposal was consistent with the, with all of the elements in the white paper.

Remember: **it's the elements in the white paper that you pull out and then expand on in your proposals.**

And so, then after a while of using it, he came back to him and he said, I'm using this in my practice now I'm getting people to create white papers for me, so that I can write their proposals.

So, here again we see the power of a white paper to even change this guy's business, in how he approaches writing proposals that's the exact thing we want to see.



## Proposals Don't Fundraise

And, one other thing on proposals and you heard me say this before I'm sure cause I almost can't say it without saying this other thing as well.

And that is proposals don't fundraise, you do. The fundraising is usually occurred before the proposal is received.

By that I mean, for someone to take the time to read a three or four or five page proposal that might have pages of addendum with it takes a commitment.

And that commitment is what you're looking for.

And so you have to build the commitment the proposal doesn't build the commitment the proposal only explains what he needs to know or she needs to know to make their decision.

It only encourages them through the story to see how it all works.

It only drives their passion to a deeper level when they realize what happens when the good things that you're trying to do occur.

That's what the proposal tells them. But there's a commitment for them to learn that. And that is fundraising.

That's the acquisition and nurture and, and discovery that you're doing. All of that happens before the proposal goes out.

So the proposal just becomes an organizing document that can explain all of those things.



# The Elements of a Fundraising Proposal

And its elements are, I believe, personally if you have freedom to write the proposal in any way you want most investors some investors will tell you how they want proposals.

What I did at [First Fruit](#) and what I did at [Fieldstead and Company](#) and what I've coached other foundations to do and have, taught on for, I don't know, a while is **three to five pages**.

If you can't tell the story in three to five pages then you've gotta go back to work again it's just like taking a paragraph and making it a sentence, how do you do it?

You go after it, you go after every element you make sure it's tight, you can use an addendum and that is you can reference other reference.

So, for example if you're describing your need so at least, you when you're talking about sexual abuse and and sexual trafficking in the Houston area, you probably have some research that the police department and other social agencies that you interact with have produced.

Well you don't stick all that stuff in the proposal. You stick the distillation of it in the proposal.

So you say things like research is showing us, statistics are showing us and then there's an asterisk and then if they wanna know more about your, what you're saying to them they can follow the asterisk out and actually see the research or follow a link out and and and get the police report that they want or whatever they think they need to get further explanation.

So that's one of the ways you keep a proposal into three or four or five pages, is by directing them to other materials.

But by presenting them a clear enough understanding of the point that you're making that they don't need the other materials to make the decision.

But if they want them to flash out and give them more confidence in their decision they can go to the other materials.



## Closing Thoughts

So for me a basic proposal is three to five pages.

It has a good story, a well done story that shows the impact of the work and shows how you go about your job it has a quick and strong description of [the three questions](#) and how you answer those and then an expansion of the [letter of inquiry](#).

So that, the those three elements that I told you about in the letter of inquiry actually get expanded out and where you can go into the nuances and gain more depth about what's actually occurring in the training?

Who's coming to the classes? Why are they doing this? What are we actually doing on a daily basis for you know, whatever project it is a shelter that you're putting together at least or whatever it is.