Proposals

Proposals v Reports

Both documents

Respond to a **problem, need, or goal**
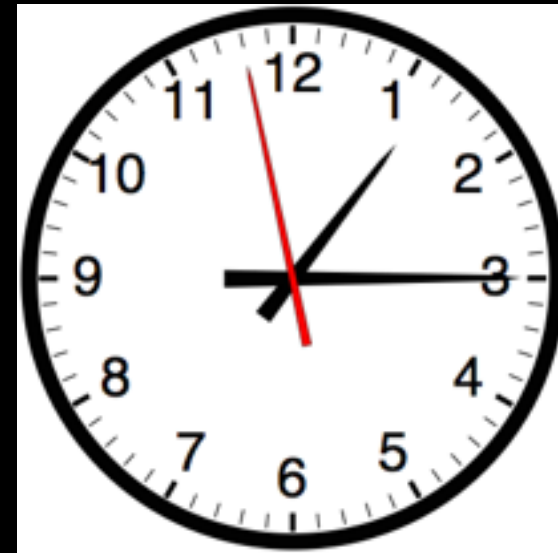
Require **research**

Factor **costs**

but...

there are key differences

proposals

$

ask readers to invest some resource to address a problem, need, or goal

proposals

audience is primarily investors

reports

help readers make informed decisions

reports

audience is primarily decision makers

What do I want next week?

you are proposing to conduct a feasibility study

"Hey client, will you support my research into your problem?"

which leads to a report

"Hey client, I did the research and here's what I recommend..."

Proposals

"dual vision"

to persuade your
client with appeals

to protect yourself
with limits

Shy on details

Not reader-centered

Problems with proposals

No plan

Wordy

Confused purpose

Disorganized

introduction

problem/need/goal

solution

costs

introduction

very brief summary

gives
background

addresses
investors

problem/
need/
goal

specifically defined
by investors

or

vaguely defined
by investors (RFPs)

or

self-defined

when possible, it's usually helpful to talk with investors **before** you write

objectives

an objective "links your proposed action to the problem by telling how the action will solve the problem" (565)

In other words...

objectives

tell your investors what your plan will do for them or the organization (not for you).

respond to criteria established by the problem

allows investors to evaluate your goals, apart from your strategies

objectives

"The objective of my report is to find you the safest, most cost-effective solution to repairing the deteriorating structure of the foundation at 623 Livingston. While building safety is your number one priority, I will explore several options that will preclude a raise in rents within the next five years."

solution/method

the plan of action
"the how"
responds to objectives
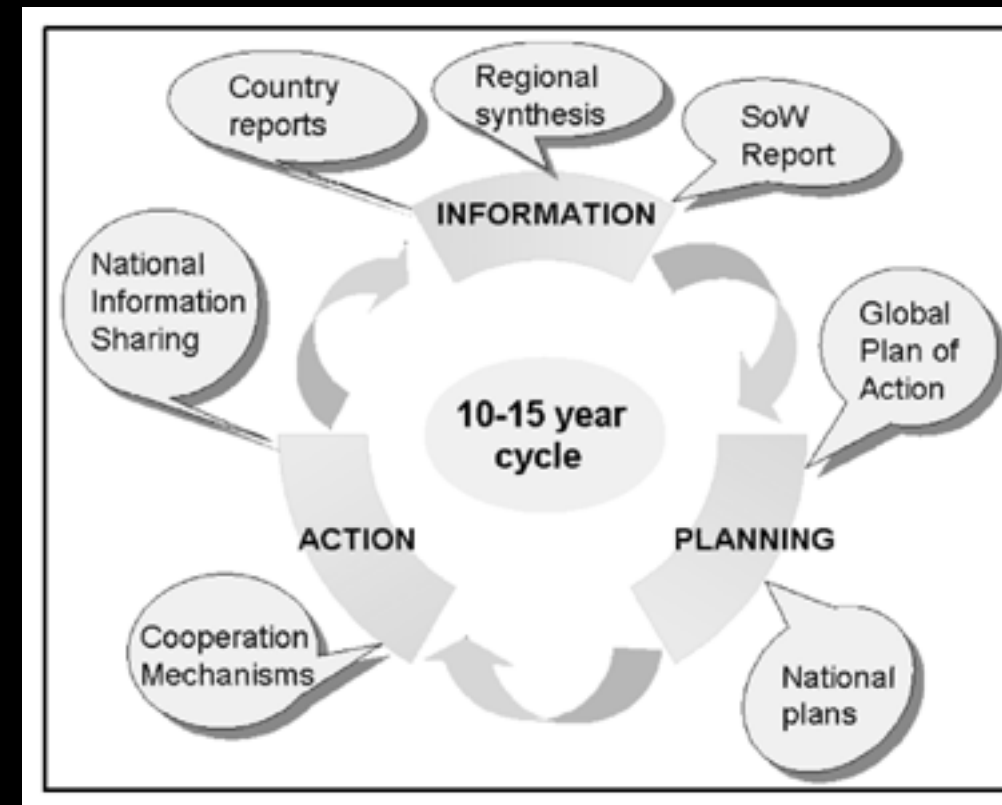
schedule

resources

qualifications

management

costs

Example

OTO Request for the Writing Center
March 10, 2011
Submitted by Jason Luther, jwluther@syr.edu

Summary: The Writing Center requests the installation of track lighting along the east and west walls of 101 HBC to accommodate co-curricular art installations that will rotate each semester.

Description: For the past few years the Writing Center Task Force/Committee has explored the possibility of using its highly visible space on the Quad for rotating works of art that reflect the values of the support that takes place in the Center. Last year the Committee developed a values statement and shared it with Assistant Prof. Andrew Havenhand, who is the Director of Art at Schaffer and at XL Projects, the University's gallery on Clinton St. in downtown Syracuse. Prof. Havenhand has agreed to work with the Writing Center to coordinate installations that would feature the artwork of various constituents, including undergraduates, graduates, faculty, and staff. However, he noted that track lighting is necessary in order to erase undesirable shadows cast by the current overhead florescent lighting. Without this standard gallery lighting, the art will look dull, unprofessional, and in some cases, distorted.

As an added benefit, the lights would potentially stay on overnight to showcase installations (and the space) to alumni and community members even when the building is closed (i.e. during Dome events).

Cost: Richard Bowles, Facilities Supervisor in the West Zone, estimates that it would cost **$1,176 for labor and materials** to install 50 feet of track lighting. The tracks will follow the existing florescent lights that run along the east and west wall, with 25 feet per side.

Date: March 11, 2011

To: Dean Langford

From: Eileen E. Schell, Writing

Re: One-Time Only Requests

We submit two one-time only requests for the Writing Program, one for the Writing Center and the other for a department-wide copier. Thank you for considering these requests.

1) Writing Center: We request installation of track lighting along the east and west walls of 101 HBC, the Writing Center, to accommodate co-curricular art installations that will rotate each semester.

Rationale:
For the past few years the Writing Center Task Force/Committee has explored the possibility of using its highly visible space on the Quad for rotating works of art that reflect the values of the Center. Last year the Committee developed a values statement and shared it with Assistant Prof. Andrew Havenhand, who is the Director of Art at Schaffer and at XL Projects, the University's gallery on Clinton St. in downtown Syracuse. Prof. Havenhand has agreed to work with the Writing Center to coordinate installations that would feature the artwork of various constituents, including undergraduates, graduates, faculty, and staff. However, he noted that track lighting is necessary in order to erase undesirable shadows cast by the current overhead florescent lighting. Without this standard gallery lighting, the art will look dull, unprofessional, and in some cases, distorted. As an added benefit, the lights would potentially stay on overnight to showcase installations (and the space) to alumni and community members even when the building is closed (i.e. during Dome events).

Cost: Richard Bowles, Facilities Supervisor in the West Zone, estimates that it would cost

- **$1,176 for labor and materials** to install 50 feet of track lighting. The tracks will follow the existing florescent lights that run along the east and west wall, with 25 feet

2) Department-wide copier: We propose a one-time purchase of a new multifunction photocopier/scanner to replace the machine currently in service in the department mailroom, which is used by all 100+ members of the Writing Program.

Rationale:
- The current copier available for program-wide use was purchased in 2003, and has made over 1.8 million copies to date. As the machine nears the end of its

Activity: Browse the RFPs, find an example from your field, and skim the synopsis, full announcement and/or application materials to identify:

(1) Investors -- Who are they? Who do they represent?
(2) Problem/need/goal -- Why are they posting this RFP?
(3) Objectives -- What would a good proposal promise to do?
(4) Solutions/Methods -- How could might a proposal insure it keeps that promise? What must an applicant say about their qualifications, scheduling, resources, and capacity to manage?

Activity: Browse the various projects on Kickstarter, find an example that interests you, and skim the page to identify:

(1) Investors -- Where & how does the maker address them?
(2) Problem -- What need or desire does this thing satisfy?
(3) Solution -- What is the thing and what does it promise to do?
(4) Methods -- What appeals does it make to insure it will keep those promises? What does the page say about the maker's qualifications, scheduling, resources, and capacity to manage making this thing?

Your proposal will:

- be emailed to your client (I should be cc'd)
- propose a feasibility report that addresses a problem
- demonstrate a thorough understanding of the client's problem
- briefly discuss the criteria necessary for solving the problem
- provide a detailed plan for research, including methods, a schedule/timeline, potential costs to completing the study, your qualifications
- summarize objectives -- a promise on what the report should deliver

2-3 single-spaced pages