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**7 Proposals to solve the Unemployment Problem**

**By Virginia Bola, PsyD**

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The subject is constantly in the news and may decide the next national elections - the infamous jobless recovery. More than 8 million Americans are out of work with another 4 million underemployed or no longer looking for work. Good manufacturing, technical and services jobs are being shipped to India, Asia, and other developing countries. The mood of the middle and working class becomes more pessimistic, the outlook for their immediate future more grim.

Politicians debate solutions: abrogating current trade treaties, providing protection for various industries, investment in retraining programs, wishful thinking that lower taxes will turn everything around, the promise of a labor shortage within 15 years.

Meanwhile, the population grows, demanding the creation of 150,000 new jobs per month just to stay even. Where are the more than 2 million 2004 jobs promised by the Council of Economic Advisers? They will come when the government truly invests in the social and financial welfare of the working public. Historically, the U.S. has looked at employment only in times of crisis - recession or alarming unemployment figures. Rather than "quick fixes," we need a national long-range policy on employment which addresses the issue, in good times and bad, with sustained interest, analysis, and support.

Here are seven proposals:

1. Create a National Office of Employment to develop long term strategies and oversight of the U.S. labor market in order to track trends, analyze data, research emerging problems, and prepare early interventions.
2. Identify growing and potential industries and the skills they will need in future staff.
3. Design a plan which allows for the rapid retargeting of training courses as Community Colleges and vocational schools are traditionally 5 to 15 years behind current needs.
4. Provide substantial tax incentives for businesses to hire in the U.S. rather than shipping their jobs to low income countries.
5. Devise "red-tape-less" programs to reward employers with significant tax credits for hiring the long-term employed and new trainees.
6. Overhaul the processes of State Unemployment Offices by implementing coordinated support programs in which workers participate as part of receiving unemployment benefits and employers participate as a means of meeting their future needs for staff.
7. Provide incentives for employers to hire more part-time workers. Simultaneously, America must

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reframe its social policy to promote a new work ethic of reduced work hours, along with increased leisure and volunteer activities, to allow more workers to be employed, albeit for fewer hours. Due to the negative emotional effects of living without work, our society needs to stress high employment rather than high productivity which often translates into fewer workers, working harder and longer.

Dr. Bola operated a rehabilitation company, developing innovative job search techniques for disabled workers, for 20 years. A licensed clinical psychologist, she developed vocational programs for the mentally ill, served as a Vocational Expert for Social Security, Civil Court, and pioneered vocational testimony in Workers' Compensation Hearings. She is author of *The Wolf at the Door: An Unemployment Survival Manual* (Authorhouse.com)

### **Ten Steps to a Power–Packed, Persuasive Proposal**

**By Linda Elizabeth Alexander**

#### **Ten Steps to a Power–Packed, Persuasive Proposal by Linda Elizabeth Alexander**

Writing proposals is a skill no businessperson should be without. Often clients will put out a request for proposal from three or more companies at the same time. In order to get their business, yours has to be the most convincing one -- the one that demonstrates the most value for clients' dollars. Here are ten steps to constructing compelling proposals that ensure your success.

1. As with any writing project, you first have to understand the purpose of your proposal and the people reading it. Usually with a proposal it is to get business, while they find the right vendor to solve a problem.
2. Understand your readers. Learn all you can about their needs. Ask lots of questions. The more needs of theirs that you address, the better your chance of getting the sale.
3. Underpromise and over deliver. Do NOT overpromise just to close the deal. For example, by pricing yourself too low, you will lose profit. Offering an unrealistic deadline will put your reputation at risk when you are unable to deliver on time.
4. Do your homework. Ask lots of questions during the course of your research. Make sure to fully understand your client's needs, and how your product will meet their needs. What are their expectations? How will they use your product or service? Also, learn their views on pricing and quality – are they willing to pay a premium for quality, or would they rather get a

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sloppy job for cheap? Also find out: \* What problem are they trying to solve? \* What would their ideal solution be? \* What is the most important aspect of this project to them: price, quality, timing? \* Who is the final decision maker? Will you have to deal with a large committee of decision makers? This might pose problems for you if you receive conflicting feedback.

5. Ask clients for a wish list. Tell them you can't deliver everything on their list of ideals, but you want to get as close as you can. Next, ask them to prioritize the items in order of importance. This way you will be able to realistically meet their expectations.

6. Organize the proposal to persuade. Focus on making the sale. Act as if everything is already in place and this is a contract about to be signed.

7. With research in hand, begin writing the proposal. This step should run fairly quickly now that you have done your homework.

8. Get to the point quickly – this doesn't have to be in the first sentence, but make it close to the top. Be sure they get your meaning quickly. If you don't do this correctly, your proposal will wind up in the circular file before it is read.

9. Make sure to tell clients how your solution meets their needs. As with any marketing piece, be sure to define for them how **THEY** will benefit from your services. ("What's in it for me?")

10. Add a sense of urgency. A proposal can sit on somebody's desk for months before they decide to do anything with it. By adding an expiration date on your offer, you will encourage them to make a decision sooner.

Be sure to include a cover letter and cover page with longer proposals. Adding a line for a signature at the end of the offer easily turns the proposal into a contract. With these guidelines in mind, you are sure to be a winner at any job you bid on.

Linda Elizabeth Alexander is a business writer and marketing consultant based in Longmont, Colorado, USA. Improve your writing skills at work! Subscribe to her FREE ezine. Write to the Point at [lalexander@write2thepointcom.com](mailto:lalexander@write2thepointcom.com) or visit <http://www.write2thepointcom.com/articles.html>.



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