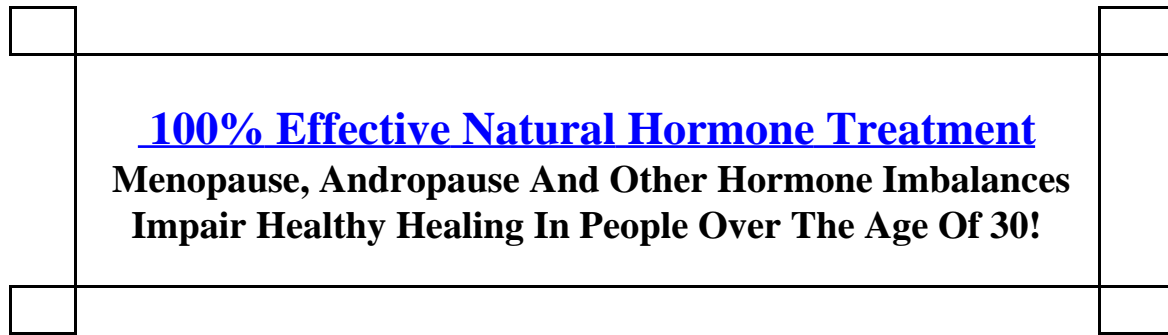


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Close the Sale With Proposal Kit

By Kalena Jordan

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I never read banner ads. That's why I was surprised to find myself clicking on a banner the other day. The ad intrigued me because it offered to fulfill a pressing need I had.

Over the years, I had developed what I thought was a fairly slick proposal template for my search engine optimization business. But still the document lacked an edge. I knew I had lost a couple of recent pitches to my competitors and I wondered if there was something about their proposals that I was missing in mine.

You know that a good proposal can make or break a sale. This is particularly the case when your only communication with potential clients is via the Internet. But how do you know you've covered all the important aspects of your services? How can you be sure you've covered all project estimates? What if you need to include some legal contract information in your document but you can't afford to hire a lawyer? How do you make your proposal stand out from your competitors if you don't have any graphic design skills? Are you forgetting an important section in your proposal that your potential client was expecting? I found myself asking all these questions when preparing quotations for potential clients.

The banner ad from Proposal Kit offered a solution to my problem. It advertised "Turn-key contract, estimating and proposal kits for today's Internet professional". That's exactly what I was looking for, so I clicked on the banner ad, fully expecting to find some ultra-hyped, over-rated, disappointing backyard software. Boy was I wrong!

What I found was probably the most cost-effective and useful tool for online business that I have EVER come across. Seriously!

Sample Proposal Kit Table of Contents Template

Proposal Kit takes the guesswork out of drafting a proposal or contract. It automates the chore of putting together a complex business proposal. Basically, Proposal Kit provides a comprehensive range

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of templates to suit any business requirement and helps you build a framework for your proposal to match virtually any product or service offering. You then flesh out the templates with your own data and contact details. Templates are particularly suited to online businesses and include documents for the initial sales pitch, the planning stage, estimating, contracting, project timelines, analysis and even invoicing.

Want to include a Cost/Benefits analysis in your proposal? How about a Production Schedule or a Web Site Design Storyboard? With Proposal Kit, you have a huge range of professional documents available within instant reach to make up your perfect Proposal, tailored specifically for each client. You can even choose a colour scheme or graphic design theme to match your corporate image or that of your client. The style you see in the screenshots on this page is just one of almost 30 different styles

available.

The Proposal Kit Wizard Interface

But Proposal Kit is not just about creating "knock 'em dead" proposals. Use the included Contract Pack and you have access to legal binding contracts, sign off forms, copyright agreements and more. Find a web site stealing your content? Use Contract Pack's "Cease and Desist" letter template to draft your response. Want to provide users of your software with a easy way to report bugs? Use Contract Pack's Bug Report Template. Once I read the Quick Start Guide, it took me less than 5 minutes using Proposal Kit Wizard to set up a sophisticated Master Proposal framework to suit my business, incorporating 31 different templates from the recommended list.

Here's a summary of the different products Proposal Kit offers:

Proposal Kit Pro and Proposal Kit Standard

Proposal Kit Pro and Proposal Kit Standard are bundles of several products, including the most commonly used packages. Each collection (proposal, contact, estimate, planning, samples) can be purchased separately, or together in a bundle at a lower cost. These are designed specifically for web, CD-ROM, multimedia and tech professionals. Current retail price for Proposal Kit Pro is USD 197. A stripped down starter kit is available for USD 97. The starter kit is mainly designed for web developers doing small scale projects. The Pro version suits companies with larger projects and a wider range of specialized areas.

Proposal Packs

Proposal Packs contain hundreds of templates designed for general business use (both tech and non-tech) by any company selling a product and/or service to another company. Use Proposal Packs by themselves or as add-on graphic styles with Proposal Kit. Current retail price of each Proposal Pack is USD 57. Foreign language versions in Spanish, French, German and Italian are also available.

Sample Proposal Collections

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Sample Proposal Collections include examples of finished proposals. Samples illustrate how proposals have been created using various Proposal Pack styles. Sample Proposal Collection Volume 1 and Volume 2 are already included in every Proposal Pack and Proposal Kit and are also sold separately. Pricing ranges from USD 27 to USD 87 per pack.

Contract Pack

Contract Pack is a large collection of contract and agreement documents for web, CD-ROM, software, computer, multimedia and other computer software and hardware related work. Contract Pack is available in a stripped down "starter" version (Standard) and a complete version (Pro). Contract Packs are included in the Proposal Kit bundles. Pricing ranges from USD 47 (Contract Pack Standard) to USD 97 (Contract Pack Pro).

Proposal Kit Wizard

Proposal Kit Wizard is an optional add-on software interface for use with Proposal Kit templates. Proposal Pack Wizard must be used with a Proposal Kit and/or one or more Proposal Packs. Proposal Kit Wizard works as a Word Macro, automating common tasks that are usually performed manually using the proposal templates. Drag and drop your chosen templates into your Proposal Master document or simply merge them from multiple docs to create your final Proposal, ready to send. Use the Mail Merge feature to integrate your client's details. >> Add an attractive border or a custom logo or graphic using the global replace tool. Automatically create a Table of Contents and page numbering based on your merged document. Regular retail price of Proposal Pack Wizard is USD 97 but because it's a new release, they've set introductory pricing at only USD 47 for a limited time.

I've only touched on the products here, but plenty more information is available on the web site and their product comparison chart is, quite frankly, the best I've ever seen.

Proposal Kit Wizard's Template Selector

Proposal Kit requires Word 6+ for Windows/Mac or higher and supports Office XP, Mac Office and Office X. The only negative aspect of the product (and it's not actually a negative, just a necessary restriction) is that the legal contracts in the Contract Pack should not be viewed as binding legal documents. Because every business has different products, services, clients and operates in different geographical environments, legal requirements vary widely. By all means use the contract templates to draft your contract, but make sure you have the document carefully reviewed by your company law firm to ensure it meets your specific legal requirements. This is emphasized within the templates.

Proposal Kit has been available since 1999, Proposal Packs were introduced in 2002 and the Proposal Pack Wizard was just released this month. Developers of the product, Cyber Sea Inc., claim that Proposal Kit has customers world-wide, primarily in the US, Canada, UK and Australia. A large number of customer testimonials for Proposal Kit are viewable from here and I can understand their enthusiasm.

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I was so excited by my discovery of Proposal Kit that I immediately wrote to the company asking permission to write a review and share my excitement with my newsletter and web log subscribers. Here's an extract from my gushing email to them:

"The huge range of proposal and international contract templates offered on your site seem to be ideal for persons in my industry – what a delight to find them! I would love the opportunity to tell my readers and SEM colleagues all about your products".

Sample Proposal Kit Executive Summary Template

So am I still excited? Absolutely. I've created a new Master Proposal, incorporating some of the professional templates such as Company History, Non-Disclosure Agreement, Production Schedule, Cost/Benefits Analysis, Testimonials and List of Acronyms into my client proposals. I was so impressed that I've even become a Proposal Kit affiliate (links to the product in this review are my affiliate links). Judging by the feedback I'm receiving, the use of Proposal Kit has already made a huge improvement in the quality and impact my proposals have on potential clients.

So if you run an Internet-based business and want to more accurately quote your projects, impress your clients, brand yourself as a top professional and close the sale, I highly recommend you check out Proposal Kit. Just don't tell my competitors about it!

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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.

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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 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 or visit <http://www.write2thepointcom.com/articles.html>.



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Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!