

# How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™

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## On-Site Proposal Training Class and Optional Workshop

How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™ teaches salespeople and sales support staff how to structure and write persuasive sales proposals.

- Students learn to produce better, more persuasive sales proposals in less time.
  - Bonus proposal tools and templates will get you started producing sales proposals as soon as the class is over.
  - Half day class minimizes time away from the office and your customers.
  - Proposal training does not conflict with most sales methodologies.
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## Class Description

### Overview

“Send me a proposal.”

When salespeople hear those words, they groan. They groan because they know how much time and effort it's going to take. Whether you are a salesperson, business owner, administrative assistant—whatever your role—writing a proposal can take anywhere from a few hours to a couple days. It's not easy, either. Salespeople may be talented when it comes to communicating with their customers, but most are far more talented when communicating face-to-face than when communicating on paper.

Sales managers hate hearing those words, too, because they understand the impact that sales proposals can have on the organization.

- **Productivity.** If one salesperson takes four hours or a day to write a proposal, that represents 10% - 20% of that person's work week. Across an entire organization, this can represent a significant amount of lost selling-time.
- **Liability.** If salespeople write their own sales proposals, it may not be possible to know everything they are promising, in writing, to your customers. This can come back to haunt you later.
- **Effectiveness.** Most salespeople know their customers well, and their products intimately. But unless they've learned how to write proposals, they may not know how to take all that product and customer knowledge and format it into a proposal that is persuasive and compelling.

*How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals*<sup>™</sup> offers solutions to these problems, and more. The class teaches students how to produce pre-written content so that you can easily and quickly produce customized proposals that are unique to each client opportunity. Students also learn ways to minimize unintentional liabilities. Finally, students learn how to structure proposals to maximize persuasiveness and overall effectiveness.

### Class Outline

*How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals*<sup>™</sup> teaches students how to write compelling, business-to-business sales proposals designed to differentiate your solution from other solutions the client may be considering. The class emphasizes persuasiveness because the ability to communicate persuasively is fundamental to the proposal writing process.

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Indeed, the objective of any sales proposal is to propose a solution, then *persuade* the reader to accept the solution you are proposing.

*How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™* covers these topics:

- **Common mistakes to avoid.** There are a number of common mistakes that people make when they write proposals. We'll show you how to recognize them and avoid them.
- **Purpose and objectives of a proposal.** One of the most important steps in writing effective proposals is having a clear understanding of what you want your proposal to accomplish.
- **Learning the basics of persuasive communications.** Sharing information is important. But at some point in the sales process, the salesperson's task shifts from sharing information to persuading the buyer. To write persuasive proposals, students have to understand some of the basics of persuasive theory.
- **Preparing to write your proposal.** The first step in any writing project is capturing and organizing your information. We'll show you what information to capture and how to organize it so you'll have everything you need to produce persuasive proposals.
- **Identifying the best way to produce your proposals.** There are multiple approaches to produce proposals; you can produce each one custom or you can use pre-written content. Further, you can generate them manually or by using proposal software. We'll help you understand the differences.
- **How to write the components of a proposal.** The class teaches students how to write the various components of a proposal.
  - *How to write a cover letter*
  - *How to write a title that gets them to open the first page*
  - *How to write an executive summary*
  - *How to build an argument*
    - *How to summarize their needs*
    - *How to write a recommendation*
    - *How to support your argument*
  - *How to undermine the competition*
  - *How to write success stories*

## Who Needs This Class

*How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™* is designed for salespeople, business owners, proposal writers, sales support staff, and anyone else who needs to know how to write persuasive sales proposals.

- Ideal for people who sell in highly competitive markets.
  - Targeted towards business-to-business sales, but applicable to many business-to-consumer markets, as well.
  - Ideal for organizations with reseller channels. At your next reseller meeting, we can teach you partners how to write proposals that will help them to sell more of your product.
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## Bonus Proposal Tools

Each student who attends the class will receive access to a web page from which they can download these proposal resource tools:

- **Proposal Examples.** Students receive an example of a formal proposal and a letter proposal.
- **Proposal Template.** Students receive formal proposal template. A proposal template is a structured proposal that contains blank text. All students have to do is to replace the blank text with content that is specific to your products and your customers' needs.

The proposal template is designed to make it easy for students to immediately apply what they've learned in class. Further, because the template is built in Microsoft Word using Word styles, it is easy for you to modify the look of the template to more accurately reflect your corporate image.

## Recommended Add-on: Proposal Writing Workshop

The Proposal Writing Workshop is an optional two-hour workshop scheduled in conjunction with *How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals*<sup>TM</sup>. Its purpose is to give students more opportunity to develop content under the guidance of the instructor. The Proposal Writing Workshop is important because most students don't have many questions until they actually begin the process of organizing and structuring the proposal. By helping students get started before the instructor leaves, most of the major questions can be answered. Just as important, students walk away with a proposal structure that they can use as an example to continue developing their proposal.

## Frequently Asked Questions

Here is a short list of frequently asked questions.

Is this a writing class?	Yes and no. The class is about how to write proposals, not how to write. As a result, students learn how to identify and organize the information to put in their proposal, and how to structure their proposal. However, the class does not delve into discussions about grammar, style, etc.
Why is this proposal class only four hours long?	Salespeople are the primary link between your business and your customers, so it impacts your customers—and your business—when your salespeople are out of the office for too long. This class is four hours long to minimize how long salespeople are out of the office.

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<p>Since the class is only four hours long, is it less effective than a longer class?</p>	<p>No. In fact, we think it's more effective than comparable but longer sales training programs. That's because we worked hard to eliminate all the fluff that is often so common in these types of training seminars. The information that is presented is all relevant and well-organized. Further, the handouts and proposal templates are designed to make it easy for students to learn, then remember, and then apply what they've learned.</p>
<p>Does this class teach students about RFPs?</p>	<p>Responding to RFPs is addressed, but not in significant detail. This class focuses primarily on teaching students how to write proactive sales proposals, also called unsolicited proposals. If your primary interest is responding to RFPs, or if your primary customer is the government, this class is probably not what you're looking for. However, if you want to learn how to use proposals proactively within the sales process, this class is ideal.</p>

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## Why Your Employees Should Attend This Class

Your employees should attend this class because what they learn will give them a competitive advantage the very next time they go on a sales call.

### Outcomes You Can Expect from Attending This Seminar

#### Improve Sales Productivity

When salespeople are faced with writing a sales proposal, they often spend hours or even days composing the document. This necessarily means they are spending less time with your customers. It's bad enough when one salesperson is so unproductive, but across an entire sales organization, this can significantly impact sales productivity.

*By attending How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™, your salespeople will learn how to write a master sales proposal that they can then customize for each new opportunity in under an hour. Across your organization, this can save many hours and days that could be invested in other activities—like searching for new customers.*

#### Differentiate Your Solution

Every proposal should have a title page. The problem is that most proposal writers use a very generic title that does little or nothing to differentiate your solution. For example, many proposals are titled something like this: "A proposal for ACME Coffee Cups." This kind of title is accurate, but it's not very compelling. Even worse, since every other proposal on the buyer's desk is written the same way, this title cements your role as "just one of the pack."

*By attending How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™, your people will learn how to structure and title a sales proposal so it stands out from other proposals, and so it showcases and differentiates your solution.*

#### Improve Proposal Effectiveness

Salespeople are professional communicators, but just because they can communicate well in person does not mean they can communicate as effectively on paper, especially when it's something complex like a sales proposal.

*By arranging for your salespeople and sales support staff to attend How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™, the instructor will show your salespeople how to follow a*

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*simple structure that maximizes persuasiveness, and that takes the guesswork out of building a proposal.*

## Overcome Common Proposal Writing Problems

When salespeople write sales proposals, they tend to make the same mistakes. Listed here are four of the most common mistakes they make.

- **Too long.** Most sales proposals are fifty, sixty, even seventy-five pages long. This is far too long for most busy business people to read. And that's a problem. After all, if your customer doesn't read your proposal, how likely is it that they're going to buy what you're selling?
- **Blatant Errors.** Most sales people write proposals by borrowing text from previously written proposals. This *seems* reasonable, but it inevitably results in an accidental reference to another company. Further, since few salespeople are professional writers, their writing sometimes includes glaring spelling and grammar errors. These types of careless mistakes reflect poorly on your company.
- **No Recommendation.** In an ironic twist of fate, most proposals don't actually propose anything. They just present a lot of information and assume the reader knows what is being proposed. The problem is that a proposal without a recommendation is like a car without an engine—it doesn't go anywhere.
- **Me, Me, Me.** One of the biggest problems when salespeople write sales proposals is that their proposals are seller-focused rather than customer-focused. They typically start with a section about the seller, then they include page after page of information about your products, the awards you've won, biographies of your management team—even directions to your corporate headquarters. This type of proposal would make for a great documentary, but it isn't very persuasive.

*By arranging for your salespeople to attend How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™, they will learn how to avoid the common mistakes listed above. They will learn how to structure a master sales proposal so it is cleaner, more precise, and in general, more likely to persuade the reader to accept the solution you are proposing.*

## Minimize Legal Liabilities

When salespeople write their own sales proposals, you have limited control over what they write. When this happens, you don't always know what your salespeople are promising in their proposals. The problem with this is that they could be creating a legal liability for your company if they promise something that you can't deliver. For example, suppose that in their exuberance, one of your salespeople promises that your product will increase the customer's sales. Of course, this is nothing you would ever promise because you can't guarantee it, but like it or not, this salesperson just obligated you to deliver. This situation is uncomfortable, at best. Or suppose they forget to put a date limit on the pricing. It's no fun when a customer shows up and expects you to honor a price that is two years old.

*By attending this class, we will teach your people how to structure their proposals to minimize unintended legal liabilities.*

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## Promote Consistency Across the Organization

Writing is a difficult skill to master. Though some of your salespeople write well, others struggle. Further, though some of your salespeople may be comfortable writing proposals, others don't know where to begin. As a result, the quality of the proposals they produce is inconsistent across the organization.

*By teaching all of your people how to write persuasive sales proposals, everyone who writes a proposal will be using the same basic format. In addition, your people will be able to share well written sections, further improving the quality of what is written. This approach improves the overall quality and consistency of the proposals you produce.*

## Why This Class is Better Than Other Sales Training Programs

### Gets to the Important Points Quickly

When salespeople are faced with writing proposals, they don't want to learn about conceptual frameworks, esoteric ideologies, or 120 step procedures—they want specific instructions for producing good proposals quickly. As one salesperson once said it, "Tell me how to write proposals, but get me back to work as quickly as possible."

*How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™ was designed to give salespeople and business people exactly what they want—enough how-to information so they can begin writing sales proposals, delivered in a format that minimizes time away from the office.*

### Proposal Tools are Included

Many sales training classes present lots of information, not all of which is easily applicable to everyday selling situations. How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™ is different.

How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™ is specifically designed to be applicable to everyday selling situations. In addition to practical information, each student who attends the seminar will receive access to a web page from which they can download an example of a formal proposal and a letter proposal, and a formal proposal template.

*Students can use these proposal examples and the proposal shell to begin producing their own persuasive sales proposals as soon as the seminar is completed.*

### Easy to Use Handouts

Many students complain that they miss important comments from the instructor because they're too busy trying to copy important bullet points from the slides. In response, we modified the workbook that each student receives to include the content from each relevant slide. Further, we include sufficient room to take notes.

*By including relevant slide content in the handout, students are less distracted by taking notes, and better able to focus on the comments of the instructor. Further, by being able to go back and reference particular slide content—within the context in which the content was delivered—students can more easily review and understand material long after the class is over.*

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## Lasting Effect on Sales

Many sales training programs are as much motivational as they are educational. While this type of training can have a positive impact on sales, the positive impact is typically short-lived. That's because motivational trainers get a response by appealing to emotion, but emotion only motivates as long as the emotions are running high. So while salespeople who attend these classes may leave the room energized and recharged, their newfound energy will wane after a few days or a week. As a result, the sales training has no lasting effect.

*By teaching skills rather than focusing on an emotional presentation, How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™ has a more lasting effect on sales.*

## Improves Your Competitive Advantage

Veteran sales managers know that you don't necessarily have to be the best, but you do have to be better than the other guy. That's the nature of competition. The problem is that few sales training programs teach methods that provide you with a clear advantage over your competition.

*Unlike other sales training programs, How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™ offers your salespeople a unique competitive advantage. Since most salespeople have never learned how to write proposals, your salespeople will be armed with an advantage the very next time they compete for business.*

## Quantifiable Return on Investment

Some training programs promise a return on investment, or imply that you will receive a return on your investment, but the return they promise is often convoluted or unclear.

*How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals offers a return on your investment in two ways. The first is related to productivity. Instead of spending hours in front of their computers, students who attend How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™ will learn how to write and then customize a master sales proposal. This approach minimizes the time that your salespeople spend writing sales proposals. In fact, from what they learn in the class, your people will be able to build a master sales proposal that they can then customize in under an hour.*

*Second, students who attend this class will learn how to communicate more persuasively. This improves the effectiveness of the proposals they produce, which should help to increase their close ratio.*

## Does Not Conflict With Your Current Sales Methodology

Many sales training courses teach selling methodologies that are mutually exclusive with other selling methodologies. In other words, many sales training programs may compete or conflict with the selling methodology you currently use. *How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™ is different.*

*How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™ does not teach a methodology, it teaches proposal writing and persuasion skills. This skills-based approach does not contradict or compete with most sales methodologies. This allows you to provide sales skills training to*

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*your salespeople without undermining or minimizing the importance of the sales system you have already implemented.*

### Addresses Multiple Skill Levels

Finding a sales training program that appeals to the needs of all your salespeople is difficult. That's because in most sales organizations, the skill level can vary greatly from one salesperson to the next. A sales class that teaches questioning skills may be new and beneficial to the more junior members of your sales staff, but repetitive and boring to the veteran sellers.

*How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™ will appeal to your entire sales staff, from rookie to veteran. This is because very few salespeople have ever been taught how to write proposals. As a result, your veteran salespeople will learn as much as your junior-level salespeople.*

## Pricing & Logistics<sup>1</sup>

### How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™

Price	\$149/person
Minimum Fee	\$1,490
Maximum Class Size	30 students. Alternate arrangements can be made with the permission of the instructor.
Facilities	Client provides suitable learning facilities.
Travel Expenses	Client pays for reasonable travel and living expenses for the instructor.
Preparation	Includes up to two hours of preparation. Where possible, the instructor will use examples that are relevant to students.
Class Length	Approximately four hours
Workbook	Each student receives a workbook. Each workbook includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Copies of all relevant slides that are used in class. Experience shows that this is the easiest way for students to follow along.</li> <li>▪ Example proposal text.</li> <li>▪ Plenty of room to take notes.</li> </ul>
Bonus Proposal Tools	At the conclusion of each class, students are given a web page address from which they can download sample sales proposals and a proposal template.

### Proposal Writing Workshop

Price	\$500
Maximum Class Size	10 students. Alternate arrangements can be made with the permission of the instructor.
Facilities	Client provides suitable learning facilities.
Travel Expenses	Client pays for reasonable travel and living expenses for the instructor.
Prerequisite	<i>How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™</i>
Scheduling	Must be scheduled during the same training engagement that we deliver the proposal class, <i>How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™</i>
Class Length	Approximately two hours

<sup>1</sup> Pricing and terms are for informational purposes only, and subject to change without notice. There may be a surcharge for international travel. Contact The Seibert Group for a firm quote.

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## The Next Step

### 1. Contact Us with Questions

Businesses don't talk to businesses; people talk to people. If you have questions, or would like to discuss proposal training for your organization or for your next reseller training meeting, please contact us.

The Seibert Group  
P.O. Box 11053  
Cincinnati, OH 45211

Phone: 513-598-4647  
Email: [training@persuasionselling.com](mailto:training@persuasionselling.com)  
web: [www.persuasionselling.com](http://www.persuasionselling.com)

### 2. Schedule a Proposal Training Class

To schedule a proposal training seminar for your firm, please contact us at 513-598-4647. We will be happy to answer your questions. We will then send you an agreement that outlines all the terms.

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## About The Seibert Group

### About The Seibert Group

The Seibert Group is a sales consulting agency that specializes in persuasive communications and sales proposals. Our mission is to show sales organizations how to increase sales by maximizing the ***persuasiveness*** of their sales proposals.

At The Seibert Group, proposals are our business. If you have a question, or simply would like to discuss a project, please call us at 513-598-4647 or send an email to [info@persuasionselling.com](mailto:info@persuasionselling.com).

### About the Instructor

Dave Seibert is the founder of The Seibert Group, and the chief architect of the Persuasion Selling™ method of producing sales proposals. Dave is an accomplished writer and enthusiastic speaker with expertise in persuasive communications and proposal writing. He is a sales veteran with over fifteen years experience in sales, sales management, and sales education—much of it in high tech, computer-related industries.

As an adjunct professor at The College of Mount Saint Joseph in Cincinnati, Dave taught classes on selling and marketing. It was during this time that he began compiling research for a book, the subject of which is teaching persuasive communication skills to salespeople.

Dave launched The Seibert Group in 2001 as a proposal writing services firm, and has since assisted many sales organizations to write persuasive sales proposals. In late 2002, he expanded the organization to include a line of training products that are based on his research into persuasive communications. The two classes, *How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals™* and the *Proposal Writing Workshop*, are currently available.

Mr. Seibert is a member of APMP, the Association of Proposal Management Professionals. When he is not writing proposals, he is coaching soccer or volunteering for various educational and charitable organizations.

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