



Proposal Writer – Technology

SALARY RANGE (2017): \$58,000–\$72,000

My job is to sell the value of my organization, and its products, services and people. I manage a transdisciplinary team from writers to engineers who collaborate to prepare complex winning proposals to clients. As part of this job, I need to understand our client’s needs and then coordinate, synthesize and articulate the value of my organization in a way that is easy to understand and persuasive to our audience, whether that’s a senior executive or a government procurement manager. In my job, I need to thrive on competition because winning is what I am paid to do.

The Tip: Find your professional community and engage in it actively while in school. Every professional has been where you are and wants to help. Book a coffee with one person a week and ask them this single question: “What is the one thing you’d tell your 18-year-old self?”

PRIORITY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:

Advanced Research & Analysis Skills

- Formulating research questions
- Ability to critically analyze literature
- Ability to synthesize key themes from multiple sources

Contextual Knowledge

- Knowledge of human behaviour
- Understanding of context and values of audiences
- Essential understanding of a past or present topic and the key audiences it relates

Advanced Communication Skills

- Formulate and defend positions
- Sensitivity to how communications is shaped by circumstances, authorship and intended audience
- Formulate and defend positions
- Apply written vocabulary to audience

Evidence-based Storytelling Skills

- Ability to use research to develop an evidence-based story
- Ability to identify target audiences
- Ability to create compelling narratives across media

Additional Skills

- Excel in defined core transferable skills with a focus on transdisciplinary systems thinking, adaptive thinking, effective listening, organizational and interpersonal skills
- Fundamental business acumen
- Professional project management certification
- Contextual knowledge of specific industry
- Contextual knowledge and skills associated with grant or proposal writing

BUILDING BLOCK EXPERIENCES:

Education & Learning:

- Bachelor of Arts (English) with a minor in business
- Have completed numerous continuing education courses associated with proposal writing via Lynda.com and Coursera
- Professional Project Management (PMP) certification via the Project Management Institute

I found that great proposal writers are great strategists. Great strategists know that communications is a means to an end, not an end by itself. My BA in English combined with my minor in business provided me the ability to develop skills in both communications and strategy. Doing my PMP certification was critical to my professional development as it provided me the skills (and credentials) to manage large cross-functional proposal teams.

Employment Experiences:

- Worked part time in telecommunications sales in university
- Work term at a marketing agency as copywriter intern
- Work term at large marketing agency as junior project coordinator
- Hired as an account coordinator with a small agency. Promoted to new business proposal coordinator.
- Recruited by one of my clients (a global technology company) as regional proposal manager. I am responsible for managing the development of client proposals in North America.

Being a proposal writer is about understanding sales and persuasion. For me, a core element of this is learning how to be an active listener. Many of our clients don't know exactly what they are looking for; my job is to know their needs better than they do. I developed this skill as a sales representative in university, where I learned how to support my customers. I combined this with developing my written communications skills during work terms at marketing agencies where I worked on diverse client projects from smartphones to tourism to running shoes. This taught me the important role of context.

Community Experiences:

- Very active in student government in university. Was VP – Administration my final year.
- I volunteer and am on the board of the local food bank. I write all government and private sector grant applications.
- Alumni mentor at my university

I have always been very active in different communities from student government to my local food bank. Giving back is not only good for my community, it also feels good to make a difference.

Contextual Experiences:

- Did semester abroad in Australia in my third year at university
- Passionate about rock climbing

My semester abroad reframed my definition of what's possible. My passion for rock climbing requires discipline and focus. Two essential skills for a proposal writer.

Relationships:

- My professional network is intentionally diverse, including salespeople, engineers and marketers

I seek people who push boundaries in their field. I view the status quo as a creativity killer and need to be inspired by others.