



**BODLEY &
ASSOCIATES, INC.**

How to generate a winning proposal

Presented By

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BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS

ERIC BODLEY, *Principal Consultant, Bodley & Associates, Inc.*

Eric Bodley has more than twenty-five years experience in the consumer electronics industry. His most recent position was Director of Corporate Sales at an upscale retailer of consumer electronics products operating twenty-one showrooms with over \$160 million in annual sales.

Over the years Eric held the position of Store Director, Regional Sales Director, Primary Sales Trainer, Merchandising Manager, Audio Products Buyer, Director of Custom Design & Engineering, and Director of Corporate Sales. As a consultant, he has worked with over 200 specialty retailers and custom installation companies on business challenges in the areas of management, sales, operations, and installation

Eric Bodley is President and Founder of ***Florida Home Entertainment Design, Inc.***, a residential custom electronics design and installation company located near Naples, Florida. ***FHED*** specializes in the systems integration of audio, video, home theatre, lighting control, security, telecommunications and control systems in residential and commercial environments.

Eric is Past President of CEDIA, the Custom Electronics Design & Installation Association,, an international association of over 1,000 member companies involved in residential electronics system design and installation. He is currently Chairman of CEDIA's Member Benefits Committee and serves on the Board of Directors.

Eric is a guest speaker and course lecturer at many industry events for the Consumer Electronics Manufacturers Association (CEMA), the Professional Audio/Video Retailers Association (PARA), American Society of Interior Designers (ASID), and the Custom Electronic Design & Installation Association (CEDIA).

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WINNING PROPOSALS!

By the time you're asked to make a proposal to a prospective client, you've done all the hard work.

You've generated the leads. You've qualified them. You've built rapport with your contact. You've identified a need you're uniquely positioned to fulfill, and the client is ready to act now. Better yet, maybe you've worked with this client before—to the benefit of their organization and yours. And naturally, your contact is either the ultimate decision-maker—the one who can say Yes—or has the ear of that person. (Skipped any of these steps? You're probably not in a position to win the business. Better get some more face time and some more information.)

As you get ready for the presentation, you put together your plans for the project. You rehearse. You have artwork done. It's going to be a real blockbuster.

By comparison, the proposal document you'll leave behind is a soft lob. The client knows what you can do—and will be walking around in a daze after you've blown them away in the meeting. You know you're the best one for the job. Your biggest concern for the leave-behind is not to mess it up—and to load it up with as many facts and figures as you can.

Yet judging by the proposal documents themselves, this is also the point at which some of the world's most talented communicators forget everything they know about good packaging and persuasive positioning. Their view: "Well, nobody ever reads those anyway."

So they throw them together in whatever time they have, then run them through the word processor and drop in some clip art, make fifteen copies and run out the door.

But it just may be that they're missing a valuable opportunity to deliver the coup de grace. To take advantage of their client's best memories of the presentation. To reinforce the message and build even higher their own credibility, not only with their champion in the client company but also the rest of the decision-making team.

When your client reads the proposal, it's just the two of you, in a highly intimate moment. The better the document looks and sounds, the better you look and sound. Demonstrate here that you're innovative, competent and credible, and the argument in favor of buying from you—right now—gathers even more weight.

FIVE TIPS TO TURN MORE OF YOUR PROPOSALS INTO WINNERS:

1. Build the entire proposal around your client's objective. State it in his or her own words at least once early on, then later rephrase it as briefly as possible. Repeat that phrase often, like a mantra.

2. Build your case, step by step, with your plan. Show how your capabilities uniquely qualify you to put every piece of the puzzle in place to achieve your client's objective.

3. Write in the first person, in the active voice. You'll involve your client in what you're saying and make him or her the centerpiece of the dialogue.

Who would you rather buy from—someone who says, "At every stage, client approval will be secured by our company before work proceeds." A sound a little distant doesn't it? Particularly from someone who's going to be your client's best friend for the next three months. Instead, try, "You'll have a chance to approve every step in the process while there's still time to make changes.."

4. Involve an art director or a graphic designer in the proposal production process.

If your business is one where you'll be showing artwork or models at the stand up presentation, the person who designed those should also design the proposal, so that the document and the presentation materials are all of a piece. And make sure the document shows pictures of the other elements.

If your document is all type, art direction is even more critical. Good typography—the kind you get from a real designer, using a page-layout program instead of a word processor—makes the document easier to read and can add to your credibility in a way nothing else can. On the other hand, poor typography can give even the most expensive photography or illustration, and the best writing, an amateurish look that's extremely hard to overcome.

What's more, the reaction good or bad type produces is highly subliminal. Often, the client will have no idea why a particular document strikes him or her a certain way. It just does.

5. Make proposal costs a line item in your operating budget, and plan to spend a specific amount annually. Take into account your hit ratio, so you have enough to cover the proposals that don't sell along with the ones that do. Roll proposal costs into the budget for the sold project. When you recover them, use that money to replenish the proposal fund.

CUSTOM SALES STRUCTURE

Initial Meeting with Client

(Activity/Greeting/Ice Break)

Qualification What are you looking for?

May I ask you a few questions?
(Write them down!)

Where is the main entertainment area
 of your home?

Then..... What would you like it to do in each room?

Qualify for each room in a specific order:

1. Family/Media Room
2. Master Bedroom/Master Bathroom
3. Den/Living Room/Dining Room
4. Kitchen
5. Other occupied Bedrooms
6. Guest Bedrooms
7. Outdoor Areas
8. Garage

Any area we've missed?

Who else will be using it?

Have you set a budget for this project?

Is there anything else I should know?

When do you need my recommendations by?

Make appointment for presentation to customer,

AND..... Make appointment with yourself
(for "thinking time"...))

Segue 1. Thanks !
 2. Talk about your company and what it allows
 you to accomplish
 3. When your needs are unique or extensive (CEDIA)
 (Go over you companies guarantees)

CUSTOM SALES STRUCTURE

Constructing the Proposal

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Preparation | 1. Review your notes, design & engineer.... |
| and | 2. "Dot" floor plans or blueprints |
| Creation | 3. Choose Products |
| | 4. Type proposal |
| | 5. Gather literature |
| | 6. Dress Rehearsal.... |

CUSTOM SALES STRUCTURE

Presentation to the Client

Greeting & Ice Break	Hi Again ! Small Talk... don't rush...
Re-Qualification	I've had fun working on your project! Before you discuss the specifics: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Review your notes room by room, referring to your "dotted" floor plans/blueprints2. Ask if they have any new thoughts to share3. Ask if your notes are correct
Presentation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Vendor Rap - For your family and friends2. Present your proposal Go Room by room, line by line Pictures and literature... "You said" Watch and listen for approval of each item (Notate any indifference or non-acceptance and place a ✓ next to the item on your copy) At the end, read the subtotal, sales tax, and grand total to the client and immediately ask:
Close	Do you have any questions about the product? Are you comfortable with the price?
Objections	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Listen2. Empathy3. Qualify4. Close Again - The Next Step Is...
Follow up	Cards & Calls

ANATOMY OF A PROPOSAL

- Pricing Of Equipment
- Know Your Competition
- Three Ways To Determine Labor Charges
 - ⇒ Salesperson Evaluates Customer and Installer Evaluates Home
 - ⇒ Flat Rates
 - ⇒ Using Custom Software
- Setting Your Installation Rates
- Design & Engineering Fees
- Formatting The Proposal
 - ⇒ Project Description
 - ⇒ System Summary
 - ⇒ System Details
 - ⇒ Pricing Details
 - ⇒ Contracts
 - ⇒ Extended Warranty Refusal Form
- Proposal Formats
 - ⇒ Using Word Processor Software
 - ⇒ Using Spreadsheet Software
 - ⇒ Using Your Point-Of-Sale Computer System
 - ⇒ Using Custom Software
- Assembling The Proposal
 - ⇒ To Bind Or Not To Bind
 - ⇒ Folders
 - ⇒ Faxing A Proposal