

# Getting your Challenge Submission Right



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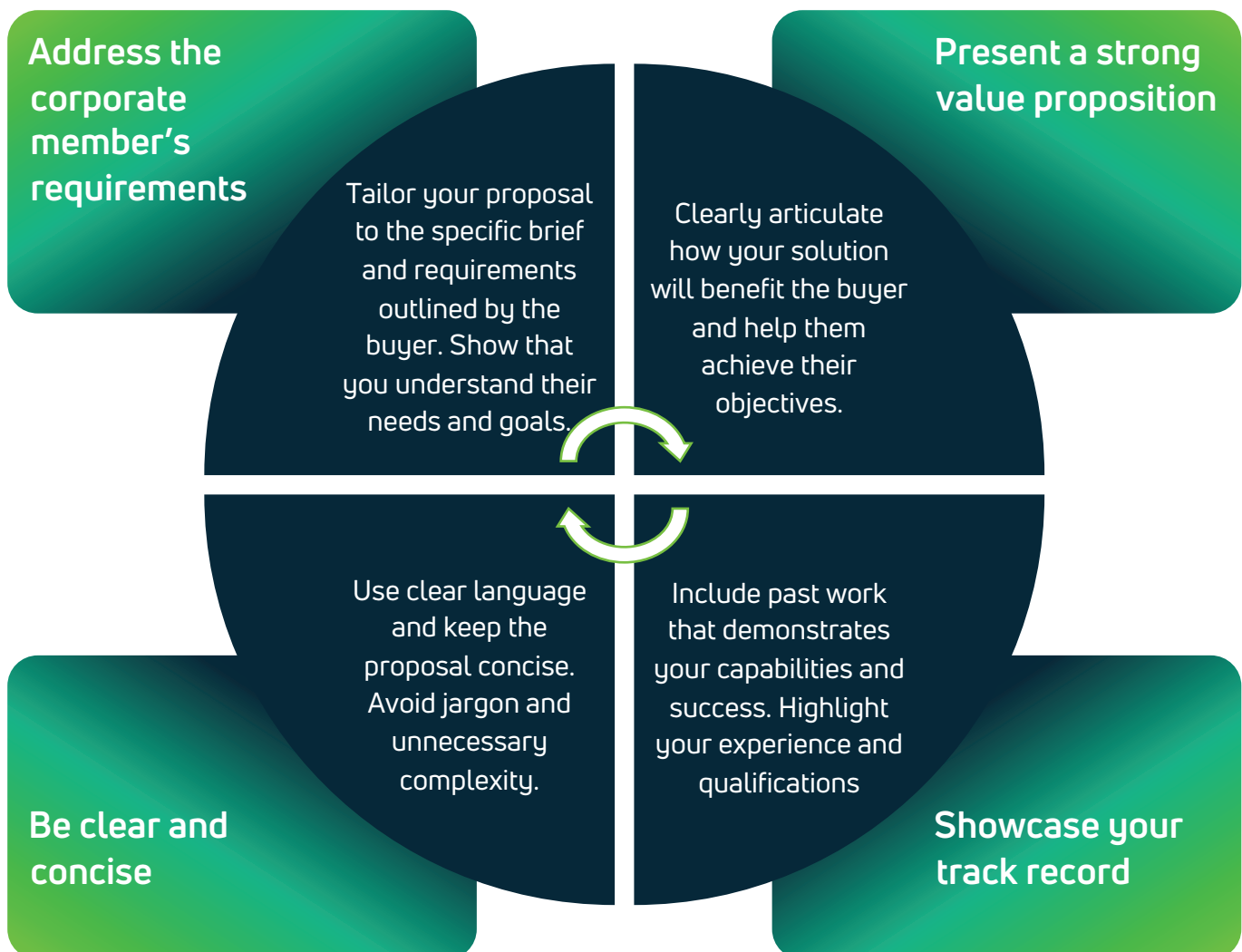
The importance of a great proposal cannot be overstated. It's your opportunity to show the corporate member how well you understand the challenge and show how your solution can add value. A well-crafted response stands out from your competition by showing your expertise, credibility and commitment to delivering results.

Getting this stage of the process right can lead to you being selected to pitch directly to the corporate member and, all going well, secure a contact!

## What makes a great proposal?

A great proposal goes beyond presenting your services; you must showcase your understanding of the challenge and clearly describe a tailored solution that can achieve the desired outcomes.

To deliver a great proposal you need to:



## Storytelling: your secret weapon



Using storytelling techniques in writing your proposal is an effective way to make your submission stand out and be memorable. Weaving a narrative through is a skill that, when done well, makes your offer more compelling.

You can use a simple framework called POPP (Problem, Opportunity, Practical Steps and Promise).

Problem	Opportunity	Practical Steps	Promise
Identify and clearly articulate the problem the client is facing. Show that you understand the challenges they are dealing with and why it's important to address them.	Describe the opportunity for the client if they choose your solution. Explain how your approach will lead to positive outcomes and provide value.	Outline the practical steps you will take to address the problem and seize the opportunity. Provide a clear plan with actionable steps, timelines and deliverables.	Make a promise to the client about the results they can expect from your solution. Emphasise your commitment to delivering quality work and achieving the desired outcomes.

## The Submission structure

It's common practice amongst corporates to have consistent tendering and procurement processes. That means you must tailor your response to their structure - failing to meet the requirements of the tender can put you out of the running.

For that reason, The Innovation Exchange has created a submission structure to reflect what you might encounter with other businesses:

1. Company Overview (50 Words)
2. What is the problem you will solve (100 words)
3. What is your solution (100 words)
4. What is the upside? (100 words)
5. Summary (50 words)



Yes, the word allowance is low and we know that delivering a compelling narrative in a series of short paragraphs is no easy task. But by learning to communicate ideas in a concise way, you will keep the buyer's attention.

## Some tips on concise copy

Here's two tips to help you reduce your word count.

### Every word costs €100

Take a look at your draft proposal and count the number of words. Now imagine that every word in that email cost you €100 - what is the total cost? Take a moment to re-write each section with the objective of making it cost as little as possible but retaining all the key information. You'll probably find that you can quickly remove lots of unnecessary words and sentences that are repeating what's already said.

### Second set of eyes



It's a great idea to ask a trusted colleague to review and suggest edits to your submission that will make it clearer and more concise. You can also use new tools like generative AI. ChatGPT and Google Bard are great at tidying up your writing, giving you quick and easy ways to shorten your responses.

*Note - It may be tempting to use AI tools to craft whole sections of your response, but it is not advisable. The lack of authenticity can be apparent. Enjoy exploring these tools but use sensibly & double-check everything.*

## So finally, it's time to craft your submission

The challenge can be won or lost on how well you can communicate your solution to the customer. This is a critical stage that requires time, care and careful planning.

Remember

- **Plan your response** - Use the POPP framework to draft your proposal & check it covers everything you underlined from the brief & additional info from the discovery call
- **Customise each proposal** - Tailor your proposal to the specific brief and buyer's requirements. Avoid generic proposals that lack specificity.
- **Highlight unique selling points** - Emphasise what sets you apart from competitors and why you are the best choice for the project.
- **Include relevant case studies** - quotes or testimonials from previous clients to build credibility and trust.
- **Proofread and edit** - Ensure your proposal is free of errors and flows logically. Have someone else review it for a fresh perspective.
- **Include your purpose** - Briefly include some background to your company & vision.
- **Don't over-promise** - Avoid making unrealistic promises that you may not be able to deliver. Honesty is key to building trust.

**Good Luck!**