Proposal Memos (Feasibility Studies, Instructions)/Letters of Intent (Proposals)

Proposal Memo Checklist (instructions)

(See “Doing Memorandums” handout)
Context and purpose
Working title
User description
Description of instructions subject
Need for time, money, etc.
Tools, materials
Preliminary ideas about steps, graphics
Sources of information (for text, for graphics)
Questions?

The company or agency can help writers by recommending changes, citing needs, and referring to other studies.

Your memo or letter should lead directly into the feasibility study, instructions, or proposal to come. What you submit doesn’t need to frame the study perfectly; I may see some needs or expenses that you didn’t. If the memo or letter is clear and apt within the general guidelines given for the later project, it might still earn all possible points.

Conceiving, planning, and writing a major report are not casual activities. So

Please Start Early

on researching, planning, organizing, etc. Your memo or letter should be a clear sketch of the full report as you intend to execute it.

Notes:

Proposal Memo Checklist (feasibility study)

(See “Doing Memorandums” handout)
Context and purpose
Working title
Brief study description
User description
Alternatives w/ model #s, prices
Criteria in priority order
Sources of information
No conc. or rec.
Questions?
Real-world information
Reader can duplicate data

Letter of Intent Checklist (proposal)

Return address, date
Inside address
Salutation
Context and purpose
Working title
Brief description
Who acts, benefits?
What
Where
When
Why (in brief)
How (in brief)
Closing and signature
Real-world information
Reader can duplicate data
No “rhetoric” (in the pejorative sense of the word)

A former colleague’s all-time favorite movie line is this: “I knew a man who took off all his clothes and jumped into a cactus patch. When I asked him later why he did it, he said, ‘It seemed like a good idea at the time.’” Proposal memos and letters of intent can keep you from jumping into the cactus patch.

Proposal memos and letters of intent are common tools in business and government. Through them, writers can organize preliminary data and study plans before committing to the full study—and thus prove that their ideas deserve support in development.