Hello Diana Brown (HDB)
specializes in helping architects, engineers, and contractors win work through the proposal and presentation process.
Our passion for the industry drives us to collaborate with professionals who share our commitment to excellence and innovative problem-solving.

At HDB, we believe in the power of partnership. Our team of proposal and design professionals works alongside you to produce winning proposals, coach presentations, create engaging marketing materials, and develop strong, cohesive teams. Think of us as your marketing experts, seamlessly integrated into your team.

SAY HELLO

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Diana Brown, CPSM Proposal Principal

20 years of AEC industry experience

$6.2+ billion worth of projects won

CPSM identifies an expert and professional who transforms marketing knowledge into results

How Proposals Are Read

In the early 2000s, Microsoft did a study and found the human attention span was only about 12 seconds long. Several years later, they conducted the study again and found that our attention dropped by 4 seconds, leaving the average person with only 8 seconds of focus.

And after years of working with AEC companies to win projects, we can tell you that proposals must capture the reviewer's attention in less than 8 seconds. Eight seconds is how long a bull rider has to stay atop their bull. So, how can you make sure you're not throwing your readers off the page too soon?

Layout proposals for the two types of people reading them: the skimmer and scanner.

Skimmers
- Look for enough key points and specifics to create a high-level view
- Use deductive logic, skimming over most of the content and looking for ideas, not specific details

Skimmers prefer
- Small, standout pieces of information
- Key statements
- Headings and subheads
- Bullet points

Scanners
- Have two or three definitive pieces of information they're looking for
- Use inductive logic, scanning of specific content, ideas, and specific details

Scanners prefer
- Concise and specific information
- Graphs
- Charts
- Visual aids

Know The Average TxDOT Proposal Reviewer

- They have a mountain-sized stack of proposals to review.
- Reviewers have other work they must complete.
- Reviewers have an average of 5 years of technical experience.
- With limited time to make a connection, your proposal must engage the reviewer immediately.

Want To Make Your Proposal Stand Out?

It's all about formatting and tailoring your proposal layout to the reviewer's reading style.

Challenges with this Layout

1. The three-column layout leaves little white space, overwhelming the reader's eyes and brain.

2. Small font, tight kerning, and leading make the content difficult to read.

3. The harsh black font color strains the eyes.

4. The absence of graphics means the reviewer must slow down to develop context.

5. The lack of visual hierarchy makes it difficult for skimmers and scanners to find the content they need.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL TO CONTRACT

TECHNICAL APPROACH

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PROJECT EXAMPLE: SH 97 TO US 82

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ELEVATED PROPOSAL LAYOUT
TxDOT Proposal Layout Comparisons

Success with this Layout

1 A two-column layout allows for white space and increased line spacing and font size.

2 Differing font treatments create a visual hierarchy.

3 Simple graphics help guide the reader's eye and help build context quickly.

4 The use of bullet points streamlines information, making it easier for skimmers and scanners to review

5 A black tint is used instead of full black text on the page to enhance readability.

Ready to take the next step towards an elevated TxDOT proposal experience?

Schedule a complimentary discovery call.