

How to Write Compelling Executive Summaries

Executive Summaries need to be short, succinct and need to clearly articulate two things:

- 1) Why the reader should invest in your proposition; and**
- 2) How they proceed.**



Executive Summaries need to do the selling for you as you won't be there.

They therefore need to take the reader through the sales process.

They need to:

- a) Get the attention of the reader (the Why);
- b) Summarise the need for change (the What);
- c) Summarise your proposition and the transition process (the How);
- d) Summarise the high-level investment (the Investment); and
- e) Confirm how they proceed (the Next Step).

SECTION 1 - "WHY" (1-3 paragraphs – shorter the better): Get the attention of the reader

In this section you need to include the following information:

- The top level strategic objective you are affecting – there are only ever three: Increased revenue; Reduced costs; and Reduced risk
- What **pre-defined Strategic Priority** your proposition is aligned to (so one step down from the strategic objective)
- A quantitative RoI statement (eg, by investing £x you'll save £y)

For Example:

- The top level strategic objective may be to grow revenue. The pre-defined Strategic Priority may be to improve the customer experience and win more new or repeat customers. YOUR proposition therefore may help improve the customer experience.
- The top level strategic objective may be to reduce costs. The pre-defined Strategic Priority may be to leverage economies and buy smarter. YOUR proposition therefore may be to provide a broad portfolio of goods/services that historically were provided by multiple suppliers/partners.
- The top level strategic objective may be to reduce risk. The pre-defined Strategic Priority may be to implement a system to improve controls. YOUR proposition therefore may be to build a system that standardises workflows.

Sample text

(based on the "Grow revenue" scenario above)

The Executive Committee (ExCo) of The Jalapeño Food Company (JFC) have raised concerns over declining revenues. Fewer new customer orders and a fall in the number of repeat business sales have been identified as the main causes for the drop. A preliminary report commissioned by the ExCo concluded that a deterioration in the quality of the overall customer experience was at the root of the problem.

To reverse the decline the ExCo has launched a new initiative, "ICE" ("Improved Customer Experience"). The ICE initiative is headed up by JFC's CEO and is tasked with successfully identifying, classifying and remedying the core problem areas. One of the ICE areas that has been classified as "needs improvement" concerns JFC's customer service team and the time it is taking them to answer and process customer calls. [Our Organisation] has been asked to help JFC tackle this specific issue.

SECTION 2 - "WHAT" (2-4 paragraphs – shorter the better): Summarise the need for change

In this section you need to elaborate on the pre-defined Strategic Priority (one step down from the strategic objective) that your proposition is positively affecting. You should:

- Reference the Current state and why it's no longer fit for purpose
- Summarise what the Future state will look like
- Include quantitative and qualitative data. Remember, quantitative data **defines** and qualitative data **describes**

Sample text

(using "Customer Experience" as the basis of discussion – as above, this ultimately relates to the "Increased Revenue" strategic objective)

To help us better understand and quantify the magnitude of the call-waiting issue we surveyed 150 of JFC's customers. When asked "How satisfied were you with the level of service you receive?", 65% of respondents said they were either "highly unsatisfied" or "unsatisfied". As expected, one of the reasons given for dissatisfaction was the time it takes representatives to answer the phone.

The survey's findings are supported by data [Our Organisation] collected and analysed from JFC's phone system. The analysis shows that 45% of customers have to wait over a minute for their call to be answered and more concerning is that 20% of callers hang up while waiting.

The poor customer experience is leading to negative customer reviews on social media sites; a reduction in new customer orders; and a reduction in repeat business. As a consequence JFC's market share is being eroded.

Based on [Our Organisation's] experience, together with relevant Client references and quantifiable data collected from various sources, [Our Organisation] is confident that by implementing a new call-answering strategy JFC's call waiting times will halve - thereby positively improving the customer experience; the number of new customer orders; and the level of repeat business – all of which will help improve sales revenues.

SECTION 3 - "HOW" 2-4 paragraphs – shorter the better): Summarise your proposition and the transition process

In this section you need to briefly explain how you will transition your Client from their Current state to the proposed Future state. You should:

- Briefly summarise what your proposed solution comprises
- Explain, at a high level, the people you'll need access to
- Reassure that the transition will be professionally managed

Sample text

The solution [Our Organisation] recommend JFC adopt, and as proposed in this document, comprises a new call-management system which offers better call-routing options; better reporting; and better & more intelligent call handling.

To ensure a smooth on-budget implementation and transition to the new environment, JFC's impacted employees will be professionally trained and on-boarded, thereby minimising the time-to-value process.

Assuming the high level project plan contained in this document is accepted and adhered to, the solution will be fully operational within 6 weeks of the award of contract.

SECTION 4 - "INVESTMENT"

(1-2 paragraphs): Summarise the high-level investment

In this section you need to clearly outline the full Capex and Opex investment associated with your proposition. State any associated timeframes, milestones or payment terms. If your proposition has options simplify the presentation of them so they are clear - crystal.

SECTION 5 - "NEXT STEP"

(1-2 sentences): Confirm how they proceed

In this section you need to clearly explain what your Client needs to do to proceed. Sign this, do that.

That's it.

To recap your Executive Summary needs to include the following 5 stages (in this order):

Why;

What;

How;

Investment;

Next step.

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