How to Frame Goals and Objectives in a Project Proposal

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Goals and objectives form the most important part of a project proposal and one should pay great attention while framing them. Setting the goal is often the first step towards developing a proposal as it lays the foundation for the project. Next in process is defining objectives that would help in achieving the goal. Program managers should not overlook both these steps as, well drafted goals and objectives facilitate in developing an articulate proposal that has high chances of getting funded.

A well written proposal always has clearly defined goal and SMART objectives to attain the desired goal.

To begin with, let us understand what a Goal and an Objective means and the difference between them.

1. Goal: It is a broad statement that defines what you plan to do in a project. It gives an idea to the reader of what problem your organization intends to address.
2. Objective: These are detailed statements describing the ways through which you intend to achieve the goal.

Difference between Goal and Objective

Goals	Objectives
• Broad statements	• Detailed statements
• Abstract	• Specific and concrete
• Intangible	• Tangible
• Difficult to measure	• Measurable
• Usually one for a proposal	• 3-4 objectives to achieve a certain goal
• Accomplished through 3-4 objectives	• Accomplished through a series of activities planned for each objective

Now that the difference between a goal and an objective is clear, we will look at ways to write quality goals and objectives.

Framing a quality Goal

1. ***Do not write a vague goal***: Even though Goal is a broad statement, it does not mean that the project goal should be vague. Your goal should be clearly written so that the reader understands your purpose towards proposing a project.
2. ***Goal should be in line with the problem statement***: Goal of the proposal shows the reader your intention towards solving a particular problem

and therefore the goal should be in line with the problem statement. For instance if your problem statement relates to aspects of <u>poverty</u> and issues related to poor and marginalized families in a particular region then your goal should state that you seek to alleviate poverty in the area through the proposed project.

3. ***Goal should be consistent with your <u>organizations</u>mission and vision statement:*** As your organization addresses certain social and developmental issues, keep these in mind while you draft <u>proposals</u> and write goals. For example if your organization works for street <u>children</u>then the goal of the proposal should be relevant to your primary stakeholders.

4. ***Use simple language to write a goal:*** Avoid use of jargons and technical words to write a goal. Use language that is easy to understand by people, not something for which people have to use a dictionary.

5. ***Keep only one goal for a proposal:*** Try to keep one goal for the proposal as having multiple goals in a particular project only creates confusion. As the goal is a broad statement it will surely encompass multiple things which would be addressed through the various objectives.

Framing quality Objectives

Once you have a logical and well reasoned goal, you have to frame three/four objectives that would help you in achieving the particular goal.

1. ***Objectives should address the 5 Ws***: While framing the objectives ensure that they provide answers to the 5Ws:

- Why: are you proposing a particular thing?
- What: approach will you adopt to reach the desired goal?
- When: will you conduct the particular project?
- Where: will you implement the project?
- Who: will be the primary stakeholders/beneficiaries or who will be doing a particular thing in a project?

This is an easy way to frame objectives that provide detailed strategy for accomplishing the desired impact.

2. ***Objectives should support the goal:*** it is very important that each of your objectives contributes and supports in achieving the goal. For instance if the goal of the project, *is to improve maternal <u>health</u> in XYZ* area, then each of the objective should contribute and suggest measures for improving maternal health.

3. ***Objectives should follow a logical order:*** while framing the objectives, one should always remember that objectives should be logically

placed, which simply means that while implementing a project a step by step procedure should be in place. This will also help you in planning all the activities accordingly.

4. **Frame SMART objectives**: most of the program mangers might have heard about this acronym for framing quality objectives. SMART mean objectives that are

- Specific: This means that the objectives should be clear and unambiguous, giving details of how and what you intend to achieve.
- Measurable: This means that the objectives should be quantifiable so that one can see if they are being achieved or not. This can be done by assigning a numeric value to your objective by answering questions like: How many? How much? By when?
- Achievable: This means that the objective should be feasible, viable and within the control/capacity of the organization. While drafting the objective, the organization should keep in mind its own capacity, constraints and abilities to achieve the objective.
- Realistic: When you draft the objective ensure that they are realistic and can be attained within the available resources and time frame.
- Time – bound: It is important to give a time-frame for completing a particular objective. This helps in

timely delivery of the outputs and outcomes without unnecessary delays.

5. ***Use action verbs while drafting objectives***: whenever you frame objectives use active verbs like create, identify, promote, enhance, increase, and develop etc.. These verbs help in describing the course of action and give clarity to your object.

6. ***Keep 3-4 objectives***: Most experts recommend keeping three to four objectives in a proposal. Each objective will further have several activities and tasks to be undertaken and therefore having many objectives will just complicate project implementation.

Let us take a few examples to explain what we actually mean by quality goal and objectives.

Example 1.

Goal: Improve <u>livelihood</u> of tribal population of 5 villages in XYZ District using local resource based approach.

Objective 1. To promote local community based institutions by formation of 5 Primary Collectors Group to empower the tribal communities, in XYZ District by the end of first quarter.

Objective 2. To build capacities of 500 tribal families through 10 <u>training</u> sessions on collection, grading

and primary processing of identified products in the first year.

Objective 3. To enhance income of the trained population by 30% through establishment of sustainable market linkages for the sale of the NTFP collected, by the end of second year.

Example 2.

Goal: Ensuring quality <u>education</u> to the deprived urban children living slums of ABC city through a participatory and responsive community action.

3.2 Project Objectives:

Objective 1. To enhance awareness of parents in target locations on importance of education, through 5 sensitization camps to be organized in the first month.

Objective 2. To develop child friendly education system for imparting quality education to 200 children aged between 6- 14 yrs, and motivating them towards formal education system through our evening classes.

Objective 3. Fifty percent of program participants are registered in government schools by the end of their first year of participation in the program, through networking and liaising with school authorities.

The examples above have broad statements as their goals, but both of these clearly indicate to the reader what the project intends to do. They are not vague as they mention about the geographical location, target beneficiaries and the approach for achieving the respective goals. The three objectives supporting the goal also clearly define ways of how they would contribute in improving the livelihoods and ensuring quality education of the primary project beneficiaries respectively. They follow the SMART principle, answering all the details of why, what, where, when and who of the project.

Remember that framing goals and objectives is the most important section of the proposal and it takes time to create meaningful proposal. Setting logical and articulated objectives will help you to develop a proposal that will have higher chances to get funded and thereby help you in creating a positive impact in the society. The simple steps suggested in the guide will help you in taking the first step of developing a successful proposal.

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About Upasana Joshi

Upasana Joshi is a development professional with over six years of experience in project management, community mobilization, donor engagement and fundraising. She has worked with International Agencies like International Union for Conservation of Nature and World Business Council for Sustainable Development. Currently she is