CAN YOU ACTUALLY LISTICLE A PROPOSAL?*

In journalism and blogging, a **listicle** is a short-form of writing that uses a list as its thematic structure, but is fleshed out with sufficient copy to be published as an article. Here's 3 ways to answer that question.

✓ THE ANSWER IS YES

1. **Yes**. Of course, you can. Start with a good paragraph, and off you go to create 5-7 bullet points to describe the solution.

   - Start with the most important idea to avoid "list fatigue" so readers don't miss your points.

   - Leave space between bullets, and use sentences of a similar length so that a long sentence doesn't bury a short one.

   - Larger bullets can add color and style to the page, breaking up text and making it easier to read the list.

   - Four to seven bullets are enough – a whole page of bullets invites the reader to skip the list completely.

   - End with emphasis – save a key metric or point to include at the end. Increase your proposal readability by more than 12% and lower the grade by a full 2 levels if you use this method.

✗ THE ANSWER IS NO

2. No. Are you crazy? The "PowerPoint Style" of making everything a list undercuts your solution by stripping detail. Essential features disappear in the short form text that bullets encourage. Important proposals require substantive discussions. Let your proposal state the solution clearly, and then back it up with detail and proof points.

STRATEGY HORIZON
THE FUTURE IS IN SIGHT

Introduce your Solution. Proposals are legal documents that communicate the understanding of the customer's need, explain how your solution meets and/or exceeds certain points, and demonstrate your advantages to the customer over your competitor. If you don't know what those advantages are, stop writing and go figure it out. Your customer won't know why your proposal is better than another vendor's if you don't. Once you have that understanding, use it in your proposal introduction to set up the section and put a "halo" over your solution as the one offering the most advantages.

Describe Your Approach. The next step is to spell out your actual solution. Explain the key points one-by-one and offer details on how you'll do the work and who will do it. Sometimes tables are good for this step, but only after you've laid the groundwork by explaining your process completely. Example: Our step-by-step process begins with analysis of the Request for Proposal (RFP) and continues with exacting descriptions of each step.

? THE ANSWER IS MAYBE

3. Maybe. Strategic use of lists can open up your page, and make key points easier to read. A combined approach can win you points over either of the other two options.

INTRODUCTION

We make your proposals easier to read. You gain clarity for your solution and score higher points.

With active voice and short lists, readers can understand your benefits. They see how well your solution fits their needs and why your solution is the best choice.

"Maybe" generated the highest readability score and took only 31 seconds to read.

ENHANCING READABILITY

Our team edits your proposal in four simple steps. These steps improve ease of reading by 12% or more, reduce grade levels, and improve understanding.

Reviewers can read the section faster, grasp your benefits, and give your proposal a higher score using these steps:

1. Use editing software to streamline text and make sentences easier to read.
2. Map the page to create white space, improving appearance and ease of reading.
3. List your key points to make them stand out.
4. Highlight proof points with a call-out box to drive your benefit home.

Takeaway: Planning a page is a strategy. Plan your proposal content to win!

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