

HOW TO WRITE PROPOSALS THAT SELL AND BOOK MORE WEDDINGS MORE QUICKLY

A DOWNLOADABLE COURSE BY ALISON ELLIS

Hey, Floralpreneur!

Welcome to *How To Write Proposals That Sell And Book More Weddings More Quickly*. I'm so glad you're here! I'm taking you behind the curtain of my business to show you how I build a wedding proposal.

A lot of time and preparation goes into a proposal **before booking an event** and over the years I've learned how to streamline my pre-booking process while still delivering a personalized quote for my customers.

Creating a proposal takes quite a bit of time, focus and creative energy which is why florists sometimes delay them. We want to give it our best effort, but that means *time...and ideas...and we're not under deposit yet*.

Sitting down to write a proposal is a commitment. And there's no guarantee our work will result in a booking. So we push it off....

...And the longer we wait to write the proposal, the longer the client is kept waiting, and the longer it takes to finally book the job!

A template makes it easier to write proposals, which allows for a faster turn around time to your customer, and *that* will help you book clients more quickly.

You can take the tips in this proposal template and turn them into your very own customized proposal template that allows you to book more of your ideal clients more quickly. You can employ these tips with any of the proposal software programs you may currently be using.

I hope you'll enjoy the course. If you have questions for me please be in touch! Shoot me an e-mail any time. Thanks for being here.

***With love from me to you,
Alison***

GETTING STARTED

First up, ***The Anatomy of A Wedding Proposal*** explains how I approach the body of a proposal and exactly which details I share with customers prior to booking.

Then, ***A Real Wedding Proposal*** shows you how my proposal template translates into a custom event for **a real wedding with an \$11,000 budget**. This is a preliminary proposal with the exact level of detail I sent before signing a contract.

Next, ***The Wedding Invoice*** shares the *real* itemized list to correspond with the proposal. **New!**: You'll also find some tips on how you can present a proposal without itemizing your quote.

Up next, ***Presenting The Proposal*** gives you an e-mail template which you can copy or modify to suit your own style when presenting a proposal to a client. **This presentation has to both "sell" and "state your terms" so the customer can easily get to yes.**

Then, ***After The Proposal*** has tips to follow-up and close the sale including an e-mail template "How to follow up if you haven't heard back from a client."

Finally, ***A Wedding Proposal Template*** which you can use to create your own custom template to reflect your unique voice.

Take this template and run with it!

Tips to getting started:

- Give yourself a deadline to write and send proposals for new clients.
- Try to aim for 14 days from the time they first contact you to the time they sign a contract and send a deposit.
- Likewise, give yourself a deadline on how much time you'll dedicate to a proposal. I think less than 2 hours is a good goal. (Consider 1 hour to generate an invoice, 1 hour for proposal side.) The more you perfect your template the quicker you'll be!

Remember: Writing proposals should not be painful.

It should be professional. It should be representative of you/your work/your company. It should not be sloppy or rushed. And it should not take 5 hours!

THE ANATOMY OF A WEDDING PROPOSAL

This is *The Anatomy of A Wedding Proposal*. Here's the basic layout I use for every event.

First, list out all of the important client info.

Wedding date, Couple's names, E-Mail, Phone #'s, Location of ceremony & reception, Time, Number of invited guests, and perhaps the name of the photographer, venue coordinator, or other key players.

Description: The overall style for this wedding is natural, yet elegant with a relaxed, fun and summery feeling designed in a palette of vibrant summer colors including purples, blues, yellows, reds, raspberry pinks and oranges. Including flowers such as roses, freesia, delphinium, ranunculus, lisianthus, snapdragons, fresh greenery & herbs.

Use a description of the overall tone of the event. Choose words your clients identify with in your description. Are they earthy? chic? classic? elegant? How do they describe themselves and their style?

Bridal bouquet: Hand-tied bouquet in a natural style to complement style of bride's dress. (After booking I will add details here, but before we're under contract, this is all I say.)

4 Attendants wearing: shades of purple.
Bouquets: Smaller, but similar to bridal bouquet with perhaps a few different flowers or colors to set apart from bride.

I either list flowers the client has pinned or leave the bouquet language somewhat vague. For example, "Using flowers as mentioned above."
If you include inspiration photos you need fewer words to explain the vision.

Flower girl (Age 5): Small basket of petals to toss.

Boutonnieres

Groom: to match bride.

Groomsmen: similar.

Father of Bride: similar.

Father of Groom: similar.

Grandfathers: similar.

If there's a specific request for colors or greens or succulents or berries, I note it here, but I'm just looking for a head count at this point on bouts & corsages.

Clutches & Corsages

Mother of Bride: Small clutch bouquet.

Mother of Groom: Small clutch bouquet.

Grandmothers: pin-on corsages or wrist corsages.

Ceremony Flowers

For an outdoor ceremony: Birch arbor (on-site) with fresh flowers and greenery along the top of the arbor.

2 Large arrangements to place on either side of altar. Tall and showy arrangements including flowers to coordinate with the rest of the wedding party. These can be used for an indoor ceremony or placed near the entrance to the reception after the ceremony.

Repurpose items that can be used more than once to highlight their value.

Aisle flowers: Small glass jars to tie to chairs down aisle. These can be moved to windows on the porch after ceremony.

Reception

15 Tables (seat 8 per) Centerpieces: Designed in the vessel of your choice in colors and flowers selected by clients. We can add votive candles if you'd like.

I can leave clear glass vases of water for your bouquets.

Bar: Small vase for a little color.

6 Cocktail tables: Small vases for color.

Restroom: Small vase to add a little color to ladies' room.

I keep it non-specific unless specific palette & flower choices were provided by client. I want to show I understand the direction, but not give away a complete description. Ideas can still change at this point & we're not under contract yet.

Additional details you may consider

Escort card display: We can add moss & fresh blooms or a few metal lanterns (rental items).

Flowers for mantelpiece: Garland of fresh greenery and flowers to coordinate with reception decor.

Cake flowers: A few fresh blooms for color.

A thoughtful proposal includes additional services you can provide or requests from the client that may fall outside their ideal budget. This is a great place to include rental items, candles, arbor, etc.

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding!

Please call or e-mail with any questions or concerns you may have.

Below are a few inspiration images we can use as a jumping off point.



A REAL WEDDING PROPOSAL



info@floralartvt.com

www.floralartvt.com

Wedding date: Sunday, July 5, 2015

Couple's names: Anne & Adam

Contact: Mother of Groom

E-Mail: _____

I always include the day of the week and the date as a double-check.

Phone #: _____

Location of ceremony & reception: Private home.

Time: 5:00 pm

Delivery time: 12:00ish

of guests: 140

Description: The overall style for this wedding is "rustic meets romantic" with a classic palette of green and white including blooms such as white and green garden roses, gardenias, freesia, succulents, snapdragons, green and white hydrangea and lots of fresh greenery. Reception will be tented with a gardeny feeling and lush floral designs on the tables.

Bridal bouquet: Hand-tied bouquet of whites and green including flowers such as green and white garden roses, white freesia, white peonies if available, succulents and a few touches of foliage such as geranium.

Floral wreath for bride: delicate halo of white blooms.

Maid of Honor wearing: black.

Bouquet: Smaller white and green bouquet to match bride.

2 Children in wedding: Grandson (age 2), Granddaughter (age 1) Wagon detail and small basket to sit in wagon.

Boutonnieres

Groom: to match bride, green & white (probably spray roses or freesia).

Father of Bride: similar.

1 Groomsman: similar.

2 Brothers & 1 Brother in law: similar.

2 Ushers: similar.

Clutch bouquets & Corsages

Mother of Bride: Pin-on corsage.

Mother of Groom: Small clutch bouquet with gardenias & a hair flower.

Groom's sister & sister-in-law: hair flowers & small clutch bouquets.

Ceremony Flowers

Planning for an outdoor ceremony, but same/similar plan will be used under the tent in case of inclement weather.

Caretaker is building a birch arbor which we'll decorate with 2 large corner pieces.

Reception

Place card display: Fresh flowers & garlands for place card table.

10 Rectangular Wooden Tables (seat 10 per) with faux burlap runners and pea pod green napkins. Centerpieces: Floral "runners" of fresh greens and white flowers to extend down length of table. Including flowers such as white hydrangea, white & green garden roses, peonies, gardenias, freesia and snapdragons.

Mother of groom has candles: 12 votives per table and we'll also incorporate 7 pillar candles (mix of 6-9" tall) throughout the design.

I suggest you display the bridal bouquet at reception. You may do the same with ladies' bouquets if you'd like. I can leave clear glass vases of water for your bouquets.

3 Bars + 4 Cocktail tables: We talked about small ferns in glass vases with moss.

Mantelpiece: Large branchy piece with moss, succulents and a few blooms to accent mantel.

Congratulations, Adam and Anne!

I include a personalized congratulations in the proposal.

Please call or e-mail with any questions or concerns you may have.

floral ARTISTRY



It's an honor to be chosen to play a part in your wedding day.

Floral Artistry Core Values

As a creative business I strive to provide high quality flowers & superior design technique along with integrity & honesty by committing to these core values:

1. **Service.**

My clients are #1. Each couple is unique, as are their needs. I design my service experience around my clients because no two weddings are alike. I'm proud to provide expert advice & personalized service.

2. **Communication.**

I treat my customers with respect, honesty & transparency. I aim for prompt responses. My couples are important to me. It's important that they know this from our first e-mail to our first proposal & all the way through the wedding day.

3. **Details.**

Details create the experience. Weddings require precision & timeliness. There are no do-overs. Details matter. I do details.

4. **Environment.**

Floristry is tough on the environment. It's my aim to be as eco-friendly as possible from the moment the flowers enter my studio to the time they arrive at an event. This entails sourcing eco-friendly product if possible, composting, reducing use of chemical solutions & a commitment to grow more of my own blooms each year.

5. **Share.**

Every wedding booked provides at least 165 meals through the Vermont Foodbank. Last year, Floral Artistry provided 5,400 meals to Vermonters in need.

Sample Inspiration photo for bride's bouquet...provided by bride!



Note to Floralpreneurs: This is the only inspiration photo we worked from for the entire wedding. I don't know who to credit so if anyone knows the designer who made this give me a shout! xo. -A

THE WEDDING INVOICE

The Wedding Invoice is a template I made in Numbers on my Mac. I used to include itemized pricing directly in each proposal. A couple of years ago, I started giving an estimated total without any itemization before booking. Now, I send a proposal and a separate itemized invoice to potential customers. Next year, who knows how I'll do it, but for now I like the simplicity of a proposal to describe the vision and an invoice that corresponds to it.

Invoice			
Customers:	Anne & Adam	Delivery time:	12pm
Wedding Date:	Sunday, July 5, 2015	Second delivery location:	NA
Location:	Private Home	Ceremony time:	5pm
Deposit to secure date:	\$1,000 + signed contract		
Full payment due by:	Sunday, June 14, 2015		
Description	Quantity	Unit Price	Cost
Bridal bouquet	1	\$300.00	\$300.00
Floral halo for bride	1	\$60.00	\$60.00
Maid of Honor bouquet	1	\$125.00	\$125.00
Flower girl basket & wagon detail	1	\$95.00	\$95.00
Boutonnieres	8	\$14.00	\$112.00
Clutch bouquets with gardenias	3	\$55.00	\$165.00
Wrist corsage	1	\$35.00	\$35.00
Hair flowers	3	\$15.00	\$45.00
Arbor decor	1	\$500.00	\$500.00
Mantelpiece decor	1	\$300.00	\$300.00
Garnishes for passed trays (appetizers)	10	\$25.00	\$250.00
Cocktail tables & Bar	7	\$25.00	\$175.00
Centerpieces-Floral Table Runners	10	\$775.00	\$7,750.00
Escort card display	1	\$200.00	\$200.00
Vases for bouquets	1	\$7.00	\$7.00
Delivery & set-up	1	\$950.00	\$950.00
		Subtotal	\$11,069.00
		Tax	6.00%
		Minus deposit	\$1,000.00
		Total due	\$10,733.14

Please don't hesitate to be in touch with any questions you may have. Full payment is due no less than 21 days prior to wedding date. Flowers will be ordered after final payment has been received.

Owning a business gives you the ability to adapt and change with the times. Do things as you like. Use an accounting program or make your own template. Streamline your processes to save yourself time!

WHAT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO ITEMIZE?

Some florists prefer to give a lump sum or an estimated total, instead of an itemized quote.

I've sent non-itemized invoices/proposals and it's worked just fine. I still book weddings and I haven't experienced any pushback. However, I like to itemize my quotes.

I simply decided that itemizing works best for my business and my brand. Transparency is what I'm offering to my clients and itemizing is in line with that promise.

Now, that said, there are certainly times when I may choose to NOT itemize.... like when I can tell that someone's vision is far out of line with their budget, for example. **Instead of itemizing every floral piece, I might give them an "estimated minimum purchase" and let them try it on for size....**this way, I'm still engaging with them and offering them accurate pricing info, but I'm not investing more time than is needed before confirming we're a budget match.

Sometimes I'll give an "estimated total purchase before tax" if I get an inquiry at a particularly busy time of year (like mid-wedding season!), but I want to turn the proposal around quickly...OR...if I can tell someone is shopping based on price...OR if I know that budget isn't an issue and the customer just "wants what they want", well, I may give a lump sum total in order to book the gig and then itemize the invoice after they've booked.

Note: I always itemize the invoice at some point; if not in the initial quote, then after they've booked.

Here's how you might present a "lump sum" instead of an itemized quote:

Create a proposal following this template, but instead of sending an invoice, simply add a line at the bottom of the proposal that says:

"Estimated total purchase: \$11,000 (6% sales tax must be applied to total)"

OR

"Estimated grand total= \$11,000 + tax"

There's something cool about the term "grand total"...it doesn't shy away from the fact that this number may be big....this quote includes many custom made items.... that's why the total is "grand".

So...should you itemize or just offer a "grand total"?

This is going to depend on several factors, which means you will likely have to do some experimenting to truly find out for yourself!

Here are 3 questions to consider before choosing your proposal method:

First, ask:

1. What does your ideal customer need from you in order to get to "yes"?

For each florist the answer will be different.

For some, the customer really needs to see how everything breaks down and adds up in order to move forward.....

while other florists will easily book a \$25,000 floral design job based solely on reputation, credentials, "street cred" and overall awesomeness with very few specific details required....

each business/brand must recognize the currency in which they deal.

Next, answer the following 2 questions:

2. What are your customers' money shoes?

Meaning....Is this a HUGE purchase for them? Or do they spend this money happily with you?

If your client has an easy relationship with money, if they spend freely, they may actually prefer less detail....they're used to paying for "experiences". On the other hand, clients who can't spend as readily may make more careful consideration when choosing a wedding vendor and therefore itemized pricing is more comfortable for them.

3. Does your customer trust you?

The trust factor is crucial when it comes to booking with ease....the more a client knows, likes & trusts you/your brand, **the easier it is to get to yes.**

It can take years to earn (and deserve!) this trust; it's an ongoing process.

The answers to these 3 questions can help you understand how to best sell to your ideal customers and help them get to **yes**. Easily. Happily. And quickly.

PRESENTING THE PROPOSAL

After preparing a quote, I promptly send an e-mail to present the proposal to the client along with my invoice and contract.

Here's an example of an e-mail to a potential customer:

Dear Lisa,

It was really nice to talk with you about some of the details of your wedding day. I put together a proposal for your wedding flowers based on the details we discussed and you should find it attached. Please look it over and don't hesitate to be in touch with any questions you may have. We can still make any necessary changes up until 35 days before your wedding.

You will also find an itemized invoice and a copy of [my contract](#) attached. If you decide you'd like to work with me a signed contract and \$700 deposit will secure your date. A \$3,500 minimum is requested for your event.

As a courtesy I will honor this quote for 7 days, until September 1st, unless I hear from you before then.

Please let me know if you have any questions for me. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

My best,

Alison

Note: Include all of the "business info" the customer will need in order to move forward with you. This includes a requested minimum order, contract, payment details, a deadline/expiration date on the proposal and all of your contact info including e-mail, phone and mailing address.

Make it easy for them to book! Line up all the pieces so the booking process is clear.

AFTER THE PROPOSAL

After you send the proposal, it's important to follow up! I know that sometimes it isn't easy to check in and follow up—some florists are really intimidated by the idea of hearing a “no”, so they just send a proposal and wait, and wait, and wait....

I've heard floral designers say that they haven't heard back in “a month” from a potential client.....well, why not? Did the client hear from you this month? If not, it's time to follow up.

A good business owner doesn't leave loose ends. Tie up those loose ends and follow through with proposals you've sent so you can close the book and move on....either by accepting a deposit, or crossing them off your list.

Here's an example from my 12 E-mail Templates for Florists on how to follow up if you haven't heard back from a potential client:

Dear Lisa,

I'm writing to follow up on the proposal I sent last week to see if you made any decisions about your wedding flowers. If you have any questions or need some additional info from me please feel free to be in touch.

If you are still interested in working with me I'd be happy to honor my original quote until next Friday. If you've decided to work with another florist I wish you all the best with the rest of your planning.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Alison

Up next: A Wedding Proposal Template you can copy & paste.

A WEDDING PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

This is **A Wedding Proposal Template**. What you'll see here is a stripped down version of how I write proposals in about an hour (or less). I hope it will help create a more seamless proposal writing process for you **and** help you to book more events. Use this template to create a custom template for your company.

Instructions for use:

1. You can copy this file into your own Word or Pages doc or Copy and "Save as" a file you'll name "wedding proposal template".
2. Adjust your template to reflect your visual branding. Add your logo to the top of the first page to create your own letterhead, along with your tag line and complete contact info.
3. Read line by line to adjust the template for each customer. Add or delete line items as required. Make the proposal your own by adding your voice & style where you can.
4. Add photos that are specific to each client. Images help the client visualize. It assures that you & the client *both* understand the style & feeling of the day.
5. Optional: Create a "closing page" to highlight your company's voice or brand, list additional services, or policies you'd like to share with your customers.
6. Save the updates you make to this basic template and *voilà*, you have your own unique proposal template.

Your new template will allow you to move more quickly through each quote. (You can delete the instructions page from your template once it's set up.)

Remember: Step 1 is always to copy & "Save as" before editing your template so you don't lose your original file. I use the couples' last names and wedding date to name my proposals. You'll make adjustments to your new template for each customer, as well as an invoice or total estimated budget.

Note: If you work at the same venues multiple times per year make templates with the decor requirements specific to each location.

I wish you a successful upcoming season. Keep doing beautiful work!

With love from me to you,
Alison

Put your logo here to create letterhead!

Add your tag line here...Rep your brand!

List your contact info here including:

Mailing Address (so they can send a check), **Website** (so they can re-visit your portfolio, discover your blog, re-read your "policies", etc.), **Phone** (so they can call you if they need to reach you), **E-mail address** (so it's clear!)

Wedding date:

Couple's names:

E-Mail:

Phone #:

Location of ceremony: Time: 4:00

Location of reception: Time: 6:00

Location of ceremony & reception: Time: TBD

of guests: Delivery time: TBD

Description: The overall style for this wedding is ...

Bridal bouquet: Hand-tied bouquet in a natural style to complement style of bride's dress.

Attendants wearing: TBD.

Bouquets: Smaller, but similar to bridal bouquet with perhaps a few different flowers or colors to set apart from bride.

Flower girl (Age?):

Boutonnieres

Groom: to match bride.

Groomsmen: similar.

Father of Bride: similar.

Father of Groom: similar.

Grandfathers: similar.

Ring bearer (Age?): smaller, similar.

Clutches & Corsages

Mother of Bride: Small clutch bouquet.

Mother of Groom: Small clutch bouquet.

Grandmothers: pin-on corsages.

Ceremony Flowers

For an outdoor ceremony: Arbor adorned with fresh flowers and greenery along the top of the arbor.

2 Large ceremony arrangements to place on either side of altar: Tall and showy arrangements including flowers to coordinate with the wedding party. These can be used for an indoor ceremony or moved inside after the ceremony.

Wreaths for church doors: 2 wreaths at the entrance. (Can move to reception.)

Pew flowers: Small floral bundles to tie to chairs down aisle.

Reception

Cocktail tables: Small vases with a few blooms for color.

Bar: Small vase for a little color.

Tables (seat 8 per) Centerpieces: Designed in the vessel of your choice in colors and flowers selected by bride.

I suggest you display the bridal bouquet and attendants' bouquets at reception. I can leave clear glass vases of water for your bouquets.

Mantelpiece decor: Fresh garland of greenery & blooms to adorn mantel.

Additional details you may consider

Escort card display: Let me know if you'd like help with this. We can help create a nice display here.

Cake flowers: We can discuss this once you select your cake.

Restroom: Small vase to add a little color to ladies' room.

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding!

Please call or e-mail with any questions or concerns you may have.

Below you will find a few inspiration photos. This is a jumping off point.
We can still refine your vision from here.



NOTE TO FLORISTS: Here you'll include inspiration photos from Pinterest boards or samples of your own work here.

Use a photo editing program to make a collage (PicMonkey allows you to make collages for free for example), or simply left-click to copy an image, paste it and format to fit page.

If the customer is really clear on the vision and palette I may only pick 2-4 photos from the Pinterest board to make a very simply collage.

If I have a lot of cool stuff to show them or there are a few ideas up in the air, I might choose 6 images.

If you're already in the habit of providing Pinterest boards for potential clients you can include a link in your proposal here instead.

PHOTO SELECTION TIPS: I usually select 1-2 bridal bouquet shots, 1 centerpiece or centerpiece container shot, 1 photo that represents a favorite flower that may not be shown yet, and one shot that illustrates either the overall palette or a focal piece or bigger ticket item like an arbor or escort card display. Of course, if there's a photo the customer has selected as a favorite image I usually lead with that image as #1 in the series. I try to capture the mood and vision as I understand it.

Optional closing page:

This is an opportunity to communicate any other pertinent info you'd like to share with potential clients that might illustrate what makes you & your company unique.

I list my company's Core Values here.

This could be where you share additional services you offer such as linens or other rental items you might provide. If you offer additional styling or planning services you can pitch that here, too.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



photo: Ashley Largesse

Hi. I'm Alison Ellis. I'm a floral designer & creative business owner, or as I like to say, I'm a floralpreneur™.

I teach florists how rock the business-side of their business with free online training videos, downloadable courses and one-on-one coaching.

My courses are designed to help you make more money, book better gigs, type fewer e-mails, and build a long-lasting brand.

I love to help educate and empower florists to achieve their business goals and keep doing beautiful work, which is why I share heartfelt advice from my personal experience with professional florists around the world.

I've been in the floral industry for over 24 years and I started my own home-studio floral business, [Floral Artistry](#), in 2002, out of our 2nd story apartment. I have a degree in Plant & Soil Science from The University of Vermont as well as a minor in small business.

I'm the author of [FLOWER MATH](#), *The Florist's Guide To Pricing And Profitability*, [E-mail Templates for Florists](#), [Build A Better Website](#), [Contracts For Florists](#), [How To Write Proposals That Sell](#), [The Vault*](#), [Wedding Workflow](#), and [The Art of Good Business](#), as well as several FREE courses with tips exclusively for floral designers, which can all be found at: realflowerbusiness.com/free-courses

You'll find more free resources on my blog at realflowerbusiness.com.
To ask me a question or drop me a line e-mail: info@floralartvt.com
Thanks for checking out one of my courses!