
Purdue Proposal Enhancement Tools

Clear, succinct descriptions of target audiences, anticipated impact, and proposed evaluation methods are critical elements that distinguish successful proposals. Yet these elements are often given only cursory attention.

You may find these elements difficult to articulate because they fall outside your areas of expertise. You may not know how to describe them except in general and imprecise terms—but generalities and imprecision do not make for strong proposals or successful efforts.

The exercises and questions in the seven worksheets that make up the *Purdue Proposal Enhancement Tools* are designed to help you effectively identify and describe the target audiences for your proposal (or project or new course), the anticipated impact of your efforts, and the measures you propose to evaluate your success.

The worksheets will help you verify the direction you feel is necessary and clearly delineate information needed to support your proposal. They'll help identify potential gaps in your basic analysis and how to fill them. They'll move you from the general to the specific, prompting you to organize and analyze disparate pieces of information you may have accumulated over time from a variety of sources and experiences.

You may invest anywhere from 20 minutes to two days working through the *Purdue Proposal Enhancement Tools*, depending on your current understanding of the audiences and issues that affect them—and on the time you can devote. However, the greater your investment, the greater your potential for success.

The *Purdue Proposal Enhancement Tools* can provide you with a succinct but detailed file of information about your target audiences that gives you the edge you need to get your proposal accepted and funded.

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Contacts

Contact your Ag Communication liaison (listed below) or any other Ag Communication staff member with whom you may be working if you want help with the ***Purdue Proposal Enhancement Tools***. They can't do it *for* you, but they're available to help you think it through.

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Initial Issue Description & Anticipated Outcome Worksheet

Directions: Describe the issue you wish to address in your proposal and how you anticipate your efforts will affect it. Ask yourself “What do I know now or think I know now about the issue? How do I want to affect it?”

Describe the <i>current</i> situation.	Describe the <i>desired</i> situation.

(OVER)

Initial Issue Description & Anticipated Outcome (continued)

- Briefly identify any “gaps” that exist between the current and the desired situation.

- List the cause(s) of the “gaps.”

- List in order of priority **who** will benefit by addressing this issue and **how** they will benefit.

Who	_____	how	_____
Who	_____	how	_____
Who	_____	how	_____
Who	_____	how	_____

- List the specific actions you anticipate will be required to address this issue.

Describe how addressing the issue will help to fulfill Purdue’s Land Grant mission in Research, Extension, and/or Teaching.



Audience Definition Worksheet

Directions: To start, use your background and knowledge to make an initial assessment of your potential target audience. Think about the characteristics of your primary audience—the people listed as top priority in the previous worksheet.

What is the average age range? _____

Where do they live?

What is their educational background?

primarily:

- less than high school
- high school graduate
- undergraduate degree
- advanced degree

- urban
- suburban
- rural
- mix, mostly urban
- mix, mostly suburban
- mix, mostly rural

Income

- less than \$20K
- \$20K-\$35K
- \$35K-\$45K
- \$45K-\$60K
- \$60K-\$75K
- \$75K-\$100K
- more than \$100K

Gender

- predominantly male
- predominantly female
- equal mix
- unequal mix, more males
- unequal mix, more females

Ethnic origin _____
(if appropriate)

- Why do members of this audience “need to know” this information?

- What unique knowledge/skills/abilities do these audience members possess now?

- What knowledge/skills/abilities will audience members possess *after* you have addressed this issue with them?

(OVER)

Audience Definition (continued)

- What is your estimate of the audience's receptiveness to this message?

very receptive					<	>	not receptive			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

If 6 or greater, how do you propose to overcome the lack of receptivity?

Directions: Using your answers to the previous questions as a guide, take a few minutes to describe briefly the characteristics of your **secondary** audience and **other potential** audiences.

Secondary Audience

- Who are they? _____

- Why are they important? _____

Potential Other Audiences (People who are interested but not directly involved in the issue)

- Who are they? _____

- Why are they important? _____

- Who are they? _____

- Why are they important? _____



Audience & Issue Verification Worksheet

Directions: To verify your initial audience assessment, contact: 1) a subset of your potential target audience and/or 2) people who know the issue and/or know your potential target audience.

Note: Use the “Audience & Issue Verification Aids” that follow this worksheet to develop questions for your contacts.

Directions: Listed below are example categories of people who might potentially help you define your audience and their needs more clearly. Use this list of categories to stimulate your thinking about whom you might contact.

Examples of Categories

- Local/State/Federal Agencies
- Corporations/Companies
- Organizations/Associations
- Schools/Departments
- Colleagues
- Alumni
- General Public
- Retailers
- Similar students
- Professionals
- Social Service Agencies
- Local/State/National Decision Leaders

Directions: Use the “Working Contacts List” section of this worksheet to record information you accumulate about the people you contact and what you learn from them.

For example:

<p>Contact</p> <p><u>John Doe, Kraft Foods</u></p> <p>name/affiliation</p> <p><u>Corporation, Telephone Interview</u></p> <p>category/contact method (See “Audience & Issue Verification Aids.”)</p> <p><u>Consumer uncertainty about food safety is big problem.</u></p> <p>what learned (See “Audience & Issue Verification Aids.”)</p> <p><u>(See notes.) Educating consumers will solve problem. Many worried consumers call him each month with questions.</u></p> <p><u>Better on solutions than causes. High-credibility contact.</u></p>
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Working Contacts List

<p>Contact</p> <hr/> <p>name/affiliation</p> <hr/> <p>category/contact method</p> <hr/> <p>what learned</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

<p>Contact</p> <hr/> <p>name/affiliation</p> <hr/> <p>category/contact method</p> <hr/> <p>what learned</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

(OVER)

Working Contacts List

Contact

name/affiliation

category/contact method

what learned

Contact

name/affiliation

category/contact method

what learned

Contact

name/affiliation

category/contact method

what learned

Contact

name/affiliation

category/contact method

what learned

Contact

name/affiliation

category/contact method

what learned

Contact

name/affiliation

category/contact method

what learned



Audience & Issue Verification Aids

Directions: Ask contacts the kinds of questions listed in the left-hand column below to help you elicit the kind of information described in the right-hand column.

What to Ask & Why

Types of Questions to Ask	Information You May Elicit
General Picture	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a problem/issue? • What do you wish was happening? • What do you think led to this problem/issue? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of the problem/issue • Extent of “gap” • General cause(s)
Details	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you give me more details? • Who cares about this? • Why do you think they care? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is going on (in greater detail) • What ought to be going on (in greater detail) • Who has opinions on the details • Where attention should be focused
Feelings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you feel about the issue? • Do you feel that people would be able to learn things that would help them address the issue? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How people feel about the issue • How big a priority this problem/issue is in relation to other problems/issues on which attention could be focused
Proof	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What, specifically, makes you think this? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of the accuracy of contact’s perceptions
Causes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think is creating or contributing to the issue? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What contacts think is causing the problem/issue • What, among all the possible explanations, created this problem/issue

(OVER)

Directions: When considering which methods to use to elicit information from your contacts, use this grid to help you review factors about each method of information gathering.

Factors/Type of Inquiry

Factors	Type of Inquiry							Literature Review
	Telephone Interview	In-Person	Focus Group	Questionnaire		Large Number	Small Number	
				Small Number	Large Number			
Anonymity of Sources	None	None	None	Some	High	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cost	Depends on length, number, and cost of calls	Depends on number, distance, length	Depends on number, distance, length	Low	Usually high, especially in development of the questionnaires	Variable but relatively low	Variable but relatively low	Variable but relatively low
Follow-up Issues	Good opportunity	Good opportunity	Fair opportunity	Little or no opportunity	No opportunity	N/A	N/A	N/A
Response Rate	Usually high	High	High	Depends on quality of issues and anonymity	Usually low	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ease of Analysis	Depends	Depends	Depends	Easy, with some preparation	Requires advanced data analysis preparation	Depends on the sources and access to libraries	Depends on the sources and access to libraries	Depends on the sources and access to libraries
Risk	Some	Some	High, need group skills	Some, print endures	High, many people receive and print endures	None	None	None
Why Use	Relatively quick	Face-to-face information	Comparative information	Thoughtful information	More comparative details across responses	Understanding of current and valid sources, and prevention of duplication of effort	Understanding of current and valid sources, and prevention of duplication of effort	Understanding of current and valid sources, and prevention of duplication of effort

Source: Adapted from *Training Needs Assessment*, Allison Rossett.

Aggregation Worksheet

Directions: Using the information you compiled in the previous worksheets as a starting point, follow the instructions below.

Note: This is where you can start aggregating your information and using it to answer new questions. This is where you can get a big enough picture to make some important decisions.

- Describe what your primary audience will be better able to do if you address this issue.

- Describe the knowledge/skills/abilities your primary audience will be able to demonstrate after you address this issue.

- List or describe others who are addressing this issue currently or are likely to address it within the next year.

- Describe how you/we are better able to address this issue.

- Describe how you/we will know this issue has been addressed successfully.

- Describe the probabilities of success.

(OVER)

Aggregation (continued)

- Describe any barriers to success.

- List or describe the audience(s) that have verified the demand to address this issue. What is the size of this audience? How long will the audience maintain interest in this issue?

- List all potential partners who may effectively collaborate with you on this effort.



Review all the information you compiled in the previous worksheets.

Have you identified an audience with a need that you/we are best suited to fulfill?

This is your go/no go point.

Projecting Anticipated Impact & Costs/Resources Worksheet

Issue & Audience: _____

Directions: Remember, a strong anticipated impact statement is a **SMART** Anticipated Impact Statement: it's Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Trackable. Use the formula below to help you develop your **SMART** Anticipated Impact Statement(s). Don't forget your secondary audience.

Audience	+	Action Verb	+	Specific Area	+	Measurement	+	Completion	=	Anticipated Impact Statement
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Note: The Anticipated Impact Statement may not be expressed in the *exact* sequence described above. However, each element of the formula must be represented in each Anticipated Impact Statement you create.

Completion + Audience + Measurement + Action Verb + Specific Area = Anticipated Impact Statement

- *By the end of the program, producers who participate in the Marvelous Marketers program will realize an extra \$10,000 to \$20,000 in annual returns through improving their marketing skills.*

Action Verb + Measurement + Audience + Specific Area + Completion = Anticipated Impact Statement

- *The Brighter Futures program will reduce the repeat pregnancy rate in Lucky County from 50 percent to 10 percent by targeting young, at-risk mothers with a two-year education campaign.*

Audience + Action Verb + Specific Area + Measurement + Completion = Anticipated Impact Statement

- *The number of older women participants in the Financial Empowerment program who feel they have the ability/power to affect their own financial positions positively will increase from under 50 percent to 75 – 90 percent over the course of the eight-week program.*

Completion + Audience + Action Verb + Measurement + Specific Area = Anticipated Impact Statement

- *Through successfully completing our Food Safety Plus educational program, food service workers will demonstrate at least a 50-percent increase in their knowledge of food safety.*

Anticipated Impact Statement

Anticipated Impact Statement

(OVER)

Projecting Anticipated Impact & Costs/Resources (continued)

Issue & Audience: _____

Directions: *Some* of the basic, initial costs to consider are listed below. Place a check mark next to all potential costs that apply, record an approximate amount, and provide a brief rationale for the cost in the space provided.

Note: An expanded version of this form is available through your business office.

Potential costs:	Amount	Provide rationale for these costs below.
<input type="checkbox"/> Development costs	\$ _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Instructional design (if appropriate)	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Technology Access/Acquisition	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Program materials	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Instructor/Facilitator costs	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Facilities costs	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Travel/lodging/meals	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative/overhead costs	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> FTE(s)* Number of FTE(s) x time on task x salary = project cost.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	_____	_____
*Total	\$ _____	_____



Input/Output Worksheet

Issue & Audience: _____

Directions: Describe the benefits of addressing the issue in the space provided below. Remember, the benefits may accrue over time.

Inputs: Provide a rationale for the resources. (Estimate total cost/resources, including human resources, as you described them on the “Projecting Anticipated Impact & Potential Costs/Resources” worksheet.)	Outputs: Describe the value of addressing this issue, quantifying whenever possible. (Consider economic value [input/output], environmental value, and human value as well as the potential short- and long-term results.)



Evaluation: Measurement Levels & Methods Worksheet

Issue & Audience: _____

Directions: Below are four Measurement Levels through which you can evaluate the effectiveness of your project. By the time you complete this worksheet, you will be able to select (and check) those Measurement Levels that apply.

- Level 1:** Reaction to the program - All programs.
- Level 2:** Learning - Programs that require participants to retain information or apply a skill.
- Level 3:** Application - Programs that require participants to change their behavior when they return to work, school, home, etc.
- Level 4:** Return on Investment (ROI) - Programs that are a top priority to the School of Agriculture and can be linked to financial numbers. (ROI may be calculated over time, and social/environmental/fiscal outcomes may be considered.)

Directions: Check the best answer to each question below, and follow the appropriate instructions.

1. Do “stakeholders” require evidence of results?

- Yes. Levels 3 and 4 of evaluation must be completed. Use the “Measurement Methods” table (see reverse side) to help you select the best measurement methods. Check Levels 3 and 4 above.
- No. Complete # 2.

2. Perform the exercise below, and follow the appropriate instructions.

- Rate the **scope** of this initiative (number of people who might be influenced by this initiative and the range of backgrounds these people represent). 1 = very limited; 10 = very extensive and comprehensive.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Rate the **profile** of this initiative (the type of attention this initiative will generate *and* the status of the people who will openly support this initiative). 1 = very low; 10 = very high.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Total the two ratings.

Scope rating _____
+ Profile rating _____
Total Rating _____

- Is the **Total Rating** equal to or greater than 13?

- Yes. Consider applying Levels 3 and 4 of evaluation. Use the “Measurement Methods” table to help you select the best measurement methods. Check Levels 3 and/or 4 if you determine they are appropriate.
- No. Select Level 1 evaluation, and determine if Levels 2, 3, and 4 would be appropriate. Use the “Measurement Methods” table to help you select the best measurement methods. Check the levels you determine are appropriate.

(OVER)

Issue & Audience: _____

Directions: Select the appropriate Measurement Levels, and check the best methods for performing them.

Note: You may want to use **two** or more measurement methods in order to validate the outcomes of the evaluation.

Measurement Methods

Level 1 The evaluation form you use could solicit reaction to:	Level 2 Learning could be demonstrated by:	Level 3 Application could be determined by:	Level 4 ROI could be determined by: (ROI may be calculated over time)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Content <input type="checkbox"/> Duration <input type="checkbox"/> Handout materials <input type="checkbox"/> Videos <input type="checkbox"/> Exercises <input type="checkbox"/> Simulations <input type="checkbox"/> Games <input type="checkbox"/> Learning environment <input type="checkbox"/> Instructor/facilitator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Self-assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Team assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitator assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Performance testing <input type="checkbox"/> Simulations <input type="checkbox"/> Case studies <input type="checkbox"/> Skill practices <input type="checkbox"/> Role plays <input type="checkbox"/> Exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Follow-up surveys <input type="checkbox"/> Follow-up questionnaires <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Interviews with participants <input type="checkbox"/> Follow-up focus groups <input type="checkbox"/> Program assignments <input type="checkbox"/> Action planning <input type="checkbox"/> Performance contracting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Control groups <input type="checkbox"/> Trend line analysis <input type="checkbox"/> Forecasting methods <input type="checkbox"/> Participants' estimate of impact (percent) <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor's estimate of impact (percent) <input type="checkbox"/> Management's estimate of impact (percent) <input type="checkbox"/> Use of previous studies <input type="checkbox"/> Subordinate's report of other factors <input type="checkbox"/> Calculating/estimating the impact of other factors <input type="checkbox"/> Use of customer input

Where Do You Go from Here?

Congratulations! By completing the *Purdue Proposal Enhancement Tools*, you've organized, analyzed, and compiled a valuable information file.

Incorporate the information you've developed at the appropriate points in your proposal to give you an edge in getting it accepted and funded.

To *really* stand out against the competition, put your Anticipated Impact Statement(s) right up front in your abstract, and repeat throughout.

Visit <www.agcom.purdue.edu> to find PDF files of the *Purdue Proposal Enhancement Tools* worksheets you can download and use to enhance your proposals.

Good luck!

