

# YOUR WINNING DESIGN BLUEPRINT

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A checklist for crafting  
impactful proposals



Your proposal's design is your first impression—make it unforgettable. This checklist will help you incorporate cutting-edge design techniques, leverage the best tools, and create visually compelling proposals that stand out from the competition.

Follow these tips to elevate your proposal's impact and increase your chances of securing the win.

## 1 Plan your visual strategy

### Understand your customer

Approach your proposal from the customer's perspective. How will they experience the design? What emotions do you want to ignite?

### Solve with visuals

Design isn't just decoration; it's about making communication easy and selling your story and value. Use visuals to make complex ideas simple and engaging.

### Prototype visually

Conceptualise visual elements early to see how they impact the flow of your proposal.

## 2 Master tools & techniques

### Explore design tools

With permission from IT, explore design tools and platforms to enhance your proposal visuals. Platforms like Google, Pinterest, and AI tools are great for sparking creativity and brainstorming new ideas.

### Make visuals come alive

Use design templates and gear up with tools like CANVA and Adobe Design, or collaborate with a professional designer to make your graphics pop. Platforms like Envato and CANVA offer template ideas that make DIY design possible, so you can easily create polished visuals.

## 3 Highlight real success stories

### Link visuals to key win themes

Use visuals directly related to your proposal's key themes and success stories. Real-life value, case studies, and solutions add credibility and support your story of why you stand out from the competition.

### Use authentic images

To make your proposal more tangible, incorporate high-quality photos of projects, people, and outcomes. These visuals show the real impact of your work, creating a stronger emotional connection.



## 4 Upskill yourself & stay current

### **Stay abreast of design trends**

The design world is constantly evolving. Resources like the APMP Body of Knowledge, nFold, CANVA, and platforms like Udemy provide free or low-cost opportunities to upskill and stay on top of the latest trends.

### **Not just for designers**

Proposal and sales professionals should be able to guide designers (if you're lucky enough to have them) to ensure fit-for-purpose design. Likewise, designers must gear up on proposal best practices to deliver results that win bids.

### **Use action captions**

Ensure that your visuals accompany action captions that set the context, link the graphic to a win theme, or highlight a crucial value for the customer. Captions are not just descriptive—they are key sales tools.

## 5 Show what success looks like

### **Visualise customer success**

The most powerful visuals in your proposal should show what success will look like for your customers after they implement your product, service, or solution. Shift the focus from your internal success to your client's expected success.

### **Clean layouts**

Ensure that your design layout is clean and easy to navigate. This helps direct attention to the most critical information

### **Track win rates**

Measure the success of proposals with strong visuals against those without to see how design improves engagement and outcomes.

## 6 Ensure clarity

### **The 10-second rule**

Aim for visuals that communicate their value clearly within 10 seconds. If a graphic is too complex or text-heavy, it loses impact. Your visuals should speak for themselves, conveying essential information at a glance.

### **Simplify, don't clutter**

Avoid overloading your visuals with text. Use visuals to complement your narrative, not replace it.



## 7 Include strong visuals

### Consistency matters

Ensure all visuals, including charts, graphs, and images, have a consistent style and complement your proposal's narrative.

### Infographics & diagrams

Convert data into visually engaging formats that simplify complex information.

## 8 Build a content library

### Standardise templates

Develop a repository of visually compelling templates to streamline future proposals.

### Visual aids

Collect useful infographics, icons, charts, and diagrams to adapt to new proposals quickly.

By mastering design tools, linking visuals to success stories, and ensuring clarity in every graphic, you'll transform your proposals from ordinary to extraordinary.

Great design is more than just a visual treat—it's a key part of your strategy to engage, persuade, and ultimately win.



nFold's expertise has assisted us in delivering high-impact pitches, comprehensive board packs, and meticulously crafted proposals. Their team has consistently demonstrated an exceptional ability to write, edit, design, and support document printing with precision and creativity.

nFold has also assisted us with a content library, template and pitch baseline that we reuse internally. nFold's agile and responsive approach has allowed us to meet tight deadlines and adapt quickly to the fast-paced demands of our industry.

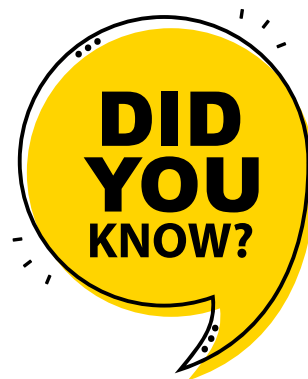
**Philani Ngcobo Manager: Officer of Group CEO  
Primedia**



# 10 PROPOSAL DESIGN TRENDS

## 2024

1. **INTERACTIVE PROPOSALS:** Proposals that include clickable elements, embedded videos, and dynamic infographics.
2. **AWESOME PACKAGING:** Visually stunning packaging for physical submissions—think bold, creative boxes or cases that reflect your brand.
3. **VIDEO & AUDIO EMBEDDING:** Directly incorporating video walkthroughs or audio messages into proposals.
4. **MINIMALISM & BOLD TYPOGRAPHY:** Your proposal should be easy to read and navigate, so use clean, spacious designs and standout fonts.
5. **GLASSMORPHISM:** Frosted glass effects with transparent layers for a futuristic, sleek proposal design.
6. **MONOCHROME & DUECHROME PALETTES:** Using limited colour schemes to create a visually striking and cohesive design.
7. **SUSTAINABLE DESIGN:** Eco-friendly, digitally native designs that align with sustainable business practices.
8. **DATA-DRIVEN INFOGRAPHICS:** More emphasis is placed on interactive and digestible data visualisation.
9. **3D GRAPHICS:** Integrating three-dimensional elements into your design to make it more visually appealing.
10. **HAND-DRAWN ELEMENTS:** Unique, creative visuals add a personal touch to your proposals.



**nFold has a dedicated creative team that can help elevate your proposals with impactful visuals, infographics, and compelling design strategies. Plus, as the only authorised APMP training organisation in Africa, nFold provides APMP Micro-certification training, empowering you to upskill and stay ahead in the ever-evolving world of proposal design.**

### TALK TO US



[www.nfold.com](http://www.nfold.com)



[info@nfold.com](mailto:info@nfold.com)



+27 (0)105970860

