Proposal Writing & Smart Use of AI (Upwork & Direct Clients)

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Before We Start (Read This Like a Conversation)

Let me be very honest with you.

When I started freelancing, I thought good English and skills were enough.
They weren't.

- I sent proposals
- I waited
- No replies

Over time, after failing again and again, I realized something important:

- Proposal writing is not English.
- It is psychology.

This guide is my **field-tested system** — built from rejections, corrections, and real client replies.

Welcome to:

The Shenavar Proposal System™

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1. Why I Teach Proposal Writing This Way (My Experience)

- I’ve written hundreds of proposals.
- Most of them never got replies.

That is exactly why I teach proposal writing differently.

Over time, I learned one simple truth:

- Freelancers don’t lose jobs because of lack of skills.
- They lose jobs because their proposal never gets read.

Everything in this guide is based on:

- What failed for me
- What I stopped doing
- What finally started getting replies

This is not theory. This is experience.

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2. My Core Rule: Proposal Is Not an Essay

Let me tell you something I learned late.

- Clients are not waiting for your proposal.

- You are interrupting them.

Earlier, I used to write long proposals:

- Polite openings
- Background stories
- Skill lists

And the result was:

- They looked professional.
- They didn’t get replies.

Now I follow one simple idea:

- A proposal is a short sales interruption, not a presentation.

So I write for the **first 3 lines** only.
If those lines work, the rest gets read.

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3. The Hooks I Actually Use (And Why)

I’ll be straight with you.

- If you start with “Hi” or “Hope you’re well”, most clients won’t read further.
- I’ve tested this.
- That’s why I start differently.
- I use one clear, human hook.

Here are hooks that have worked for me:

- “This is not an AI-templated proposal, as you have already received many.”
- “Let me start with something bold. This is not a copy-and-paste proposal.”
- “Let’s make this the last proposal you need to read today.”
- “Here is a proposal written by a human who actually read your job.”
- “If you are tired of long explanations, you will love how simple I make it.”

My rules are simple:

- No emojis in the first line
- No greetings before the hook
- No overacting

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4. How I Decide Whether to Apply on Upwork

Before I even think about writing a proposal, I pause.

I quickly check a few things:

- Has the client hired before?
- Are there already too many proposals?
- Is the job description clear or confusing?

Here’s my honest approach:

- New client? I still apply.
- Payment not verified? Not a deal breaker.
- Proposal count under 10? I pay attention.
- USA / UK clients? I prefer them.

I don’t apply everywhere.
I apply where it makes sense.

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5. The Shenavar Proposal System™ (How I Actually Write)

This system has four parts:

1. **Client Thinking First**
2. **The 3-Line Rule**
3. **The 5-Step Proposal Framework**
4. **AI Assist Rule**

This is the exact process I follow.

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6. What I Think Before Writing a Proposal

Before writing a single word, I pause and ask:

- Why is this client hiring right now?
- What will happen if they choose the wrong freelancer?
- What kind of proposal would waste my time if I were the client?

This thinking shapes everything that follows.

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7. How Clients Actually Read Proposals (The Truth)

Clients do not read proposals.
They scan them.

Here’s what they subconsciously look for:

- Can this person solve my problem?
- Do they sound real?
- Will they create more work for me?

That’s why clarity always beats intelligence.

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8. The 3-Line Rule (Non-Negotiable)

If your first 3 lines fail:

- The rest doesn’t matter
- Your skills don’t matter
- Your experience doesn’t matter

I write every proposal assuming:

- The client will only read 3 lines.

Everything else supports those lines.

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9. The 6-Step Proposal Framework

Step 1: Read Like a Client

I don’t read the job as a freelancer.
I read it as someone with a problem.

If I can’t explain the job in one clear sentence, I don’t apply.

Step 2: Start Strong (The Hook)

One line that stops scrolling.

This is where most people fail.

No greetings.
No warm-up.

Just one strong line that makes the client stop scrolling.

Hook (1–2 Lines)

I start strong so the client stops scrolling.
No greetings. No emojis. No drama.

Step 3: Say the Solution Clearly

I don’t talk about myself.

I say exactly what I will do, using the client’s words.

Say What You’ll Do (Clearly)

I don’t talk about myself here.

I say exactly what I will do, using the client's own words.

Instead of saying:

- I am an SEO expert.

I say:

- I can build 50 permanent backlinks from travel websites with DA 80+.

Step 4: Show Proof (Only If Relevant)

One line.
Same niche or same task.

Add Proof (Only If Needed)

If I have relevant experience, I mention it.
If not, I don't force it.

One line is enough.

Proof (1–2 Lines)

I add proof only if it helps:

- Similar niche
- Similar project

Step 5: Simple Breakdown

This is where trust is built.

Break It Down Simply

My bullets are:

- Technical
- Specific
- Job-focused

I use check emojis only here.

Execution Plan (4 Bullet Points)

Must feel **job-specific**, not generic.

Example format:

- What
- How
- Tool (if SEO-based)
- Control factor

Use **check emojis only here** ✅

Step 6: Human Close CTA

Short.
Respectful.

Close Like a Human

No pressure or marketing language.
Just a human close.
No sales talk.

Just a simple close.

CTA (Simple & Human)

Good CTAs:

- “Let’s discuss this on chat.”
- “Happy to explain this in 5–10 minutes.”
- “Shall we start with one URL first?”

Avoid:

- Marketing language
- Urgency pressure

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10. Words I Stay Away From (Trust Me on This)

Some words instantly make a proposal sound fake or AI-written.

I avoid these completely:

- tailored
- deliver
- ensuring
- embrace
- data-driven

If you remove these words, your proposal will already sound more human.

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11. How I Personally Use AI (And How You Should)

I use AI to:

- Clean my language
- Improve clarity
- Save time

I never let AI:

- Write blindly
- Guess job details
- Decide strategy

Rule: AI assists my thinking. It does not replace it.

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12. AI Prompt I Use for SEO Proposals

You are helping me rewrite a human-written SEO proposal.
Job description:

"[PASTE JOB]"

Start with one strong human hook.
Then clearly say what I will do using the client's words.
Add 4 technical bullet points explaining execution.
Mention SEO tools only if relevant.
End with a simple CTA and one short question.

Avoid fancy words and avoid:
(tailored, deliver, ensuring, embrace, data-driven)

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13. AI Prompt I Use for Backlinks Jobs

Rewrite my backlinks proposal for this job:
"[PASTE JOB]"

Rules:
- First line must hit the main pain point
- No introductions
- Mention DA/DR, traffic, and niche
- Mention a similar project
- Add 3–4 technical check points
- Keep language simple
- End with a short CTA

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14. Example – Clean Backlinks Proposal (Teaching Sample)

Opening Lines Matter Most:

> I will provide 50 permanent, dofollow backlinks from real travel websites with DA 80+ and 10k+ traffic, exactly as you mentioned. I have already done similar work for Travel Goals and Aspen Travel.

Execution Breakdown:

- ✅ Contextual links placed inside travel-related articles
- ✅ Manual outreach only, no PBNs or spam
- ✅ Anchor variation based on your target keywords
- ✅ Personal list of 200+ real travel sites
- ✅ 6+ years working with backlinks and guest posts

CTA:

> Let's discuss this briefly on chat.

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15. What Failed for Me (And Why I Stopped Doing It)

Let me share a hard truth.

For months, I believed:

- Longer proposals look professional
- Fancy English builds trust
- Explaining my background helps

None of this worked.

The moment I stopped:

- Introducing myself
- Writing paragraphs
- Trying to impress

My reply rate improved.

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16. Bad Proposal vs Good Proposal (Side-by-Side)

❌ Bad Proposal (Why Clients Skip)

> Hi Sir, I hope you are doing well. I am an SEO expert with 5+ years of experience. I have worked with many clients worldwide and can deliver high-quality results. I understand your requirements and will ensure timely delivery.

Why this fails:

- Generic opening
- No job language
- Sounds AI-written
- No execution clarity

✅ Good Proposal (Why Clients Reply)

> This is not an AI-templated proposal. I can build 50 permanent, dofollow backlinks from travel websites with DA 80+, exactly as mentioned in your job. I have already done similar work for Travel Goals.

- ✅ Contextual links inside travel articles
- ✅ Manual outreach, no spam
- ✅ Anchor variation based on keywords

- ✅ Personal list of 200+ real sites

Let’s discuss this briefly on chat.

✅ Good Proposal (Why Clients Reply)

This is not an AI-templated proposal. I can build 50 permanent, dofollow backlinks from travel websites with DA 80+, exactly as mentioned in your job. I have already done similar work for Travel Goals.

- ✅ Contextual links inside travel articles
- ✅ Manual outreach, no PBNs or spam
- ✅ Anchor variation based on your keywords
- ✅ Personal list of 200+ real travel sites

Let’s discuss this briefly on chat.

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17. My 30-Second Proposal Template (Field-Tested)

This is what I use when time is limited:

This is not an AI-templated proposal. I can **[EXACT TASK FROM JOB]** for your **[NICHE / WEBSITE TYPE]**.

I have already done similar work for **[PROJECT / CLIENT NAME]**.

Here is how I will handle this:

- ✅ **[TECHNICAL STEP 1]**
- ✅ **[TECHNICAL STEP 2]**
- ✅ **[QUALITY CONTROL STEP]**

- ✅ **[TOOLS / EXPERIENCE – IF RELEVANT]**

Let’s discuss this briefly. **[ONE SHORT QUESTION]**

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18. AI Assist Rule (Very Important)

I never let AI write proposals alone.

I use AI to:

- Clean sentences
- Shorten text
- Remove repetition

I never use AI to:

- Decide strategy
- Guess client intent
- Write blindly

AI assists thinking.
It does not replace it.

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19. Unpopular Truths About Freelancing

- More proposals do not mean more clients
- Fancy English reduces trust
- Clients can smell AI-written proposals

Clarity wins.
Always.

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20. Practice Section (This Makes You Better)

Practice Task

- Take one real Upwork job
- Write a proposal using this system
- Limit yourself to 120 words

Shenavar Scoring Checklist (10 Points)

- Hook clarity (2)
- First 3 lines strength (3)
- Job keywords used (2)
- Execution clarity (3)

Score below 7? Rewrite.

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21. What Gets You Ignored on Upwork (Warning Section)

Avoid these mistakes:

- ❌ Greetings before the hook
- ❌ Emojis in the first line
- ❌ Long self-introductions

- ❌ Listing skills instead of solutions
- ❌ Fancy or corporate words
- ❌ Copy-pasting AI output without editing

👉 **If it sounds impressive, it probably won't convert.**

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22. Final Advice from Experience

- Simple English beats impressive English
- Short proposals beat long ones
- One strong proposal beats ten weak ones
- AI should clean your thinking, not replace it

If you follow this guide exactly, you won't sound like a freelancer.
You'll sound like someone who knows what they're doing.

Homework I Give My Students:

- Rewrite one old proposal using the Shenavar 5-Step Framework
- Cut 30% of the words
- Read the first 3 lines out loud

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End of Practical Guide