

A Guide to Writing a Request for Proposal

How to let providers propose creative, relevant, and cost-effective solutions by focusing on the end, not the means.

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Structure of an RFP

1.1. Key sections of an RFP

You can easily identify the key sections you should include in your RFP by simply answering each and any of the following questions:

1. **Why?** Reasons why your organization need to buy a new solution.
2. **Who?** Description of your organization.
3. **What?** Nature of your project.
4. **How?**
Contract.
Information needed from suppliers.
Proposal evaluation criteria.
Contract award criteria.
5. **When?**
Selection process timeframe and deadlines.
Persons to contact.

1.2. Statement of Purpose

Describe the extent of products and services your organization is looking for, as well as, the overall objectives of the contract.

1.3. Background Information

Present a brief overview of your organization and its operations, using statistics, customer demographics, and psychographics. State your strengths and weaknesses honestly. Don't forget to include comprehensive information on the people who will handle future correspondence.

1.4. Scope of Work

Enumerate the specific duties to be performed by the provider and the expected outcomes. Include a detailed listing of responsibilities, particularly when sub-contractors are involved.

1.5. Outcome and Performance Standards

Specify the outcome targets, minimal performance standards expected from the contractor, and methods for monitoring performance and process for implementing corrective actions.

1.6. Deliverables

Provide a list of all products, reports, and plans that will be delivered to your organization and propose a delivery schedule.

1.7. Term of Contract

Specify length, start date and end date of the contract, and the options for renewal.

1.8. Payments, Incentives, and Penalties

List all the terms of payment for adequate performance. Highlight the basis for incentives for superior performance and penalties for inadequate performance or lack of compliance.

1.9. Contractual Terms and Conditions

Attach standard contracting forms, certifications, and assurances. You may include requirements specific to this particular contract.

1.10. Requirements for Proposal Preparation

A consistent structure in terms of content, information, and documents types simplifies things for the people evaluating the proposals. Therefore, you should request a particular structure for the proposal and provide an exhaustive list of documents you want to receive.

1.11. Evaluation and Award Process

Lay down the procedures and criteria used for evaluating proposals and for making the final contract award.

1.12. Process Schedule

Clearly and concisely present the timeline for the steps leading to the final decision, such as the dates for submitting the letter of intent, sending questions, attending the pre-proposal conference, submitting the proposal, etc.

1.13. Points of contact for future correspondence

Include a complete list of people to contact for information on the RFP, or with any other questions. Incorporate their name, title, responsibilities, and the various ways of contacting them into this list.