

Request for Proposal: A Guide to Effective RFP Development

By Bud Porter-Roth

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The expert guide to writing successful RFPs -- from the worlds leading RFP consultant! A systematic guide to constructing RFPs that encourage productive, useful vendor responses -- and avoiding the common pitfalls of RFP development. Detailed example language, analysis tools, and practical resources for jumpstarting RFP development. An invaluable resource for everyone creating RFPs in business or government for any purchase. When done right, RFPs enable businesses and government agencies to fairly evaluate competing proposals while reviewing the broadest possible range of potential solutions. All too often, however, RFPs fail to meet these goals, because their creators simply dont understand how to create them effectively. In this book, the worlds leading RFP consultant offers realistic, specific, start-to-finish guidance for every professional called upon to write RFPs. Bud Porter-Roth covers every step of the RFP process, offering specific language examples that demonstrate both best practices and worst practices to avoid. He shows how to ensure that RFPs contain information that is sufficiently accurate and detailed; how to ensure clarity of presentation, structure, and organization that encourages productive responses; and how to avoid the most common pitfalls of the RFP process. The book includes detailed coverage of writing each section of the typical RFP, including administrative, technical, management, pricing, and evaluation sections; as well as extensive practical guidance on planning and preparation. Appendices present complete RFP examples, preparation instructions, analysis tools, calendars, and other resources for jumpstarting RFP development.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

Praise for *Request for Proposal*

“Bud Porter-Roth is an expert in the field of preparing RFPs, and we could not have successfully completed our project without his skill and knowledge. This book is a clear guide to an otherwise complex and difficult process. If you can’t hire Bud Porter-Roth to write your RFP, then you should buy this book.”

—**Lori Deibel**, Manager, Library Services

“This book is priceless. It is a must for a novice writing an RFP.”

—**Doris Lopez**, Senior Systems Engineer, O-Cedar Brands, Inc.

“This book brings a structure to a process that is too often unstructured. There have been no standards (outside of government) that I know of that apply to RFP preparation. I also believe that vendors (sellers) would welcome a more uniform and consistent style of RFP.”

—**Frank Tillman**, API Systems Group

“This book provides overall coverage on a subject that deserves some real guidance. I like very much the sentiment concerning the RFP as the basis for a team and the idea that the RFP is the beginning, not the end. His emphasis on the need for clarity in the RFP and for measurable requirements needs to be heard and understood by many within the target audience. He takes an excellent position on ‘Why Write an RFP’.”

—**Patricia Oberndorf**, SEI

“This book is well written and insightful. It provides good information on what makes a good requirement, how proposals are evaluated, and what precautions to take to prevent early elimination.”

—**Linda Fernandez**

“Just a note to tell you thank you for providing some tips on how to structure an RFP. I work for a small company who does not have a specific template for this purpose and found your guidance a very useful starting point.”

—**Dan Salo**

Despite its importance as an initial step in the development of major technical projects, the Request for Proposal (RFP) process rarely receives the professional attention it deserves. Used by government agencies and by private corporations to solicit proposals from contractors and vendors, the RFP document is the foundation for a successful project. A clearly written and properly organized RFP clarifies technical goals, communicates administrative and financial expectations, and sets the tone for good communication and a trusting and productive relationship between customer and contractor.

This experience-based handbook offers a systematic, comprehensive, and professional approach to writing

RFPs. It guides you step-by-step—from initial planning to selecting the winning proposal—through the RFP process, demonstrating the most effective ways of structuring the document and expressing technical, administrative, and financial requirements. ***Request for Proposal: A Guide to Effective RFP Development*** focuses on the major goals of the RFP process—to elicit high-quality responses from potential contractors and promote effective communication between the client and the chosen vendor.

prepare for the post-RFP activities such as site visits and reference checks, plan and schedule implementation activities, and put in place project management plansThere is no prerequisite for reading this book&8212;you do not need to be a senior IT manager or a certified purchasing agent. The text provides a standard format for the recommended sections in an RFP and includes examples for each section, as well as examples of how to write the technical and nontechnical requirements for each section.The text also provides guidelines for evaluating proposals and selecting a winning vendor once proposals have been received. Evaluation guidelines include evaluating technical and management content as well as pricing.*Acknowledgments* As with any endeavor this large, many people have provided help, constructive criticism, encouragement, and support. I would like to thank all of the reviewers who took the time to review and comment on the manuscript. The finished book is much better as a result of their efforts.Ralph Young has been especially helpful in providing detailed suggestions and encouragement and in graciously agreeing to write the foreword. Thank you, Ralph. Special thanks go to Addison-Wesley for publishing this book and to my editor, Debbie Lafferty, for her professionalism, great suggestions and attitude, and lots of behind-the-scenes hard work that I will never know about.Finally, my wife Anne and daughter Lizzie endured many early mornings, late nights, and missed weekends as I toiled away writing and revising the manuscript. Their support helped make this book possible.Bud Porter-Roth
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