

How to Write Better Proposals



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How to Write Better Proposals

Outline

- A. Responsible vs. Responsive
- B. How to Properly read the RFP
- C. Core Proposal Components
 1. Introduction and Executive Summary
 2. Technical Proposal
 3. Past Performance References
 4. Cost Proposal
- D. Close (Q&A)

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How to Write Better Proposals

Are you a Responsible and Responsive Bidder?

A responsible bidder – fully capable to meet all of the requirements of the solicitation and subsequent contract.

A responsive bidder - follows instructions as written in the bid or RFP.



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How to Read the RFP

READ THE RFP OR BID IN IT'S ENTIRETY !

1. Note any milestones / deliverables and due dates, special requirements, equipment, certifications, or key personnel required.
2. Note any notice requirements (termination, funding, amendments, pricing, invoices, auto-renewals).
3. Be sure you can meet all requirements and schedule guidelines. (Will you need a partner or subcontractor?)
4. Submit your response in accordance with the RFP / Bid instructions.

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Common Mistakes

- Failure to show understanding of the problem
- Failure to show basis of pricing
- Not providing prior related experience information
- Inadequate project research or business development
- No proposal signatures or inclusion of all forms

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How To Write Better Proposals Core Proposal Components

• Introduction and Executive Summary*

Your introduction should be about the customer, not about you.

The RFP told you what they want, why disengage them discussing anything else?

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How To Write Better Proposals Core Proposal Components

Plan the Readers Journey

- What is the situation?
- What is the challenge?
- State the resolution.
- State when the resolution will be realized.



****Establish an audience connection!***

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Create a STAR Moment

- Significant
- Sincere
- Motivating

Moment that magnifies your big idea and makes your solution stand out.

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How To Write Better Proposals Core Proposal Components

Introduction and Executive Summary*

- Provide an overview of your understanding of the problem
- Start by telling them how you will meet their needs. How are you going to meet the requirements?
- What benefits will they gain from using your solution?
- Speak clear, easy to understand language
- Avoid jargons and clichés

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Conveying You Can Do the Job Core Proposal Components

Technical Proposal

1. Explain your solution and how it will meet the requirements.
 - State this information in the same order as the RFP and in accordance with the instructions.
2. Use a variety of narrative information and graphics
 - Narratives should be used to explain features and benefits of your solution.
 - Graphics can be used to explain technical details and processes
3. Do you have success stories to share of your solution?

*"Stories are the currency of human relationships."
Robert McKee*

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Conveying You Can Do the Job Core Proposal Components

Management Approach / Plan

- Structure
- Schedule
- Communication
- Key Personnel – be sure to use the same resume format when providing resumes
- Outsourcing, subcontractors, or partners role
 - Be sure to discuss subcontract management and the role subcontractors will play

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Conveying You Can Do the Job Core Proposal Components

Partners and/or Subcontractors

- Letter of Commitment
- Subcontract Agreement
- What percentage of work will they perform
- How will they be paid
- Do they have a history of success in this area
- Do they have a relationship with the customer
- Have they been debarred, suspended, terminated
- Have there been any civil claims filed against them recently
- Who will manage them

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Conveying You Can Do the Job Core Proposal Components

Past Performance

- Briefly discuss 2-3 prior projects to demonstrate relevant experience
- These projects should be:
 - Similar scope, size, requirements
 - Not more than 3 years old
 - Discuss period of performance and solutions
 - State if you were the lead or subcontractor

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Conveying You Can Do the Job Core Proposal Components

Costs Proposal – Follow instructions !

- Always identify direct costs and other direct costs
- List special notes or assumptions for costs related to items not clearly defined but that should be taken into consideration.
- Is travel included?



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Conveying You Can Do the Job Core Proposal Components

Costs Proposal – Follow instructions !

- Are there extra charges for special requests or repetitive services?
- Are there set up fees?
- Are there penalties or late fees?
- Do project delays cause additional fees to be incurred?
- List optional or related value-added services

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Reviewing Your Proposal

- Is there a big idea?
- Do small, incremental decisions lead to the big idea?
- Are there clear, factual evidence for assertions listed to support all points?
- Is your call to action clear?
- Have all issues in Section L, Section M, and Section C been addressed?

Proposal Review Tools

Cross Reference Matrix							
CLIN	SOO	SOW	CDRL	QASP	Section L	Section M	Proposal Reference

Solicitation Exceptions			
Solicitation Document	Page/ Paragraph	Requirement	Rationale for Exception
1			
2			
3			
4			

Proposal Review Tools

Solicitation Number and Name

Question Number	Reference	Question	Answer	Solicitation Change
1	Section _____ -Service Contract Act Wage Determination.	The Offeror shall use the DOI wage determination for the National Capital Area in developing the CONIS labor rate ranges." Would the government please provide the Wage Determination, Wage Determination number or a web link to it?	The web link is www.nadid.gov . See revised section _____.	Section _____ has been modified to include _____.
2	Round 1 Q&A #51	Can the Government please clarify that the hardship and danger differential pay set by the Department of State for contractor personnel traveling or stationed in potentially hostile areas will be an ODC?	Confirmed.	None.

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Proposal Delivery

Electronic or Hard Copy or In-person delivery?

Multiple Copies?

Who is responsible for putting the complete proposal together and packaging?

How much time should be allowed to:

- Put the final proposal together
- Submit the proposal

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Follow Up

Always follow up with the potential client

Ask for a debriefing or meeting to discuss why you did not win?

Ask if they will continue to inform you of similar projects

Ask if they are any special items they are interested in you could keep them abreast of in the future?

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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