

BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

How to Build and Use an RFP Response Template

Brought to you by **RFPIO**

This guide provides instructions on how to build an RFP response template, including examples and templates of some of the most common sections that appear in most submitted proposals. It also reviews a standard RFP response process, complete with advice on how to use the template, when to engage other response team members, and where RFPIO can give you an advantage.

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PART ONE

How to Build Your RFP Response Template

This RFP response template gives you a head start on developing your own template that includes all of your brand elements.

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RFPIO's enterprise-level capabilities enable multiple business units, including partners, to collaborate on a single platform. It also reduces communication channels during the proposal development process.

PAGE SNIDER,
Director of Business
Program Management,
Microsoft Consulting
Service

[Read how Microsoft uses RFPIO](#)



Cover Letter

Follow these 7 steps to write your cover letter.

1. Thank the issuer.

Open by acknowledging the opportunity. Include mention of the RFP broker, when applicable.

2. Recite your understanding of the opportunity.

Validate that you reviewed the RFP requirements.

3. List your abilities to meet requirements.

If you can meet all of them, lead with that fact.

4. Describe your value propositions.

You're trying to portray that, "This is what we bring to the table, and that's why we're the best choice."

5. Provide a high-level future snapshot.

Help reviewers and stakeholders envision what their business will look like after your solution is chosen.

6. Conclude with a persuasive delivery of your understanding of next steps.

"We look forward to the opportunity to discuss our proposal further." Show that you're able and willing to move forward in the sales lifecycle.

7. Sign it from the frontline sales representative or executive sponsor.

This should not look like a form letter from the organization as a whole.



[See a cover letter example](#)



Executive Summary

Follow these 5 steps to write your executive summary.

1. Create a title using a dynamic verb.

Sadly, the most popular title for an executive summary is "Proposal for Prospect Company." Use the title as an opportunity to capture the executive's attention. "Increasing lead-generation...", "Visualizing revenue forecasting...", "Streamlining cloud storage..." or whatever it is that your solution is going to do for them.

2. Use the recipient's actual name whenever possible.

It makes recipients feel important and personally attended to when they see their name on the front page.

3. Aim for a 3:1 ratio of recipient company name versus your company name.

Make the document feel customized to them, not you.

4. Show how well you understand your prospect's needs.

Sales or business development representatives should provide this information either from experience or from a formal discovery phase that needs to happen prior to your building a proposal with an executive summary. List only 3-5. Six and beyond are dismissed by the brain as trivia, and are almost never read.

5. Make sure your key functionalities match your prospect's desired business outcome.

If they don't, it's probably not a good fit.



[See an executive summary example](#)

[Get an executive summary template](#)



Questions & Answers

This is the lion's share of the RFP. Expect questions on the following topics.



Scope

Do you have similar past experience?



Tech requirements

Are you—or can you be—a good fit?



Budget requirements

Can we afford you?



Client references

Who else do you work with?



Security, compliance, and privacy

Are you a risk?



Functional requirements

How can you help us?



Integration

How will your solution work with our existing solutions?



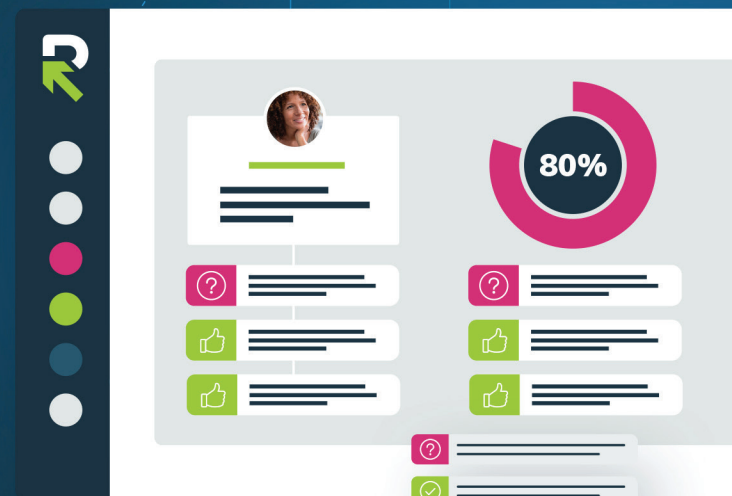
Competitive differentiators

Why is your solution the best?



Implementation

How hard is your solution to onboard? Train? Support? Can you meet our timeline?



Automate up to 80% of the RFP process with RFPIO.

[Read how Crownpeak did it](#)



Pricing

Not all RFPs call for pricing, but be prepared for those that do.

Explain how you price your solution and why it will cost the amount you will quote (possibly later, separate from this RFP response).

Business Profile

Convert your “About” website page into an RFP-friendly format.

This will be boilerplate information about your organization's size, financial health, awards, locations, and possibly community, charitable, and DEI initiatives. Even though it's boilerplate, make sure someone is assigned responsibility to update information on at least a quarterly basis.

References

Assemble customer logos, especially those in the same industry as your target.

Even better, include quotes from some of those logos. Even better, include name, title, and contact information of customer contacts willing to speak on your behalf.

Contract/Agreement

Likely for informational purpose only, but it will help set expectations.

Provide a contract for your solution or service so the contracts department can review it to see if there are any red flags.

Responding to RFPs in a consistent, accurate, and comprehensive way is central to winning more business. The RFPIO tool, coupled with the Content Library refresh project, supports our growth ambitions.

MICHELLE JOHNSON,
VP of Growth Marketing,
GEODIS Americas

[Read how GEODIS uses RFPIO](#)



How to Use Your RFP Response Template

Your RFP response template will be more useful when it's supported by powerful systems and processes.

● Qualify RFP

Insert a go/no-go evaluation at the beginning of the RFP response process. Sales will be the loudest voice, but proposal teams, SMEs, and executive sponsors will need to weigh in to evaluate risk, timing, and strategic fit.

RFPIO Advantage: Check data from past similar RFPs. What took weeks without RFP software may only take hours with it. All things being equal, is this RFP winnable?

● Kick Off Project

Provide clarity and accountability to the full response management team, including strategic objectives that everyone can work toward.

RFPIO Advantage: Let the tool create a checklist of open items based on what remains incomplete in your RFP response template after the automated first pass conducted at intake by your Content Library.



● First Response

Make an initial response pass based on reusable content. This step is much faster with RFP software.

RFPIO Advantage: RFPIO RFP technology consolidates all your previous Q&A pairs into an intelligent Content Library, so you can automatically respond to repeat questions in just a few clicks.

● Second Response

Tap into resources for new questions, and assign segments that require customization to respective SMEs.

RFPIO Advantage: Assign each RFP question or section as a task to individual collaborators from the project dashboard in RFPIO. They'll then receive a notification from where they're already working (e.g., email, Slack, or Teams).

● Review & Revise

Conduct internal reviews to ensure a high-quality proposal. Link review requests to specific purposes (i.e., Are strategic objectives met? Are responses accurate and high quality? Did we fully answer the question?).

RFPIO Advantage: Simplify the review and approval process with automated reminders and cues across multiple platforms. From intake, working within your branded RFP response template—along with populating it with already-approved content—will decrease how much you have to proofread.

● Submit

Deliver polished RFP with reviewed supporting materials. Follow up to confirm receipt. Keep internal stakeholders abreast of progress.

RFPIO Advantage: Push send from RFPIO or your integrated CRM!

● Save & Audit

Save finalized responses in a centralized location and commit to regular content audits.

RFPIO Advantage: Automatically add any new Q&A pairs or content to the Content Library for future use.

● Post-mortem

Winning doesn't always mean content was perfect. Losing doesn't mean it was a bad response. Evaluate what worked and what didn't.

RFPIO Advantage: Reference Content Library Insights Report, the Content Library Timeline, and the Content Library Search Terms Report to drive the conversation with your response team.



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About Us

RFPIO develops technology that advances the B2B purchase lifecycle and accelerates growth by making knowledge accessible and collaboration simple. The world's leading response management software can complete up to 80% of an RFP in seconds, turn around higher quality responses 40% faster, and increase win rate by 15%. With more than 250,000 global users, RFPIO customers rely on AI with a human touch to improve sales outcomes, add transparency to the B2B purchase lifecycle, and do their best work. RFPIO supports response management for growing organizations of all sizes including Google, Adobe, Atlassian, Microsoft, Tenable, and Zoom Video.

To learn more about RFPIO, visit rfpio.com, or [schedule a demo](#).

SCHEDULE DEMO

