



Lakehurst

Small Business Roundtable (LKE-SBR)



The Importance of Developing Good Proposal Outlines

Whether you're responding to a Sources Sought Notice, Request for Information (RFI) or formal Request for Proposal (RFP), developing a comprehensive proposal outline is essential to the success of your response document.

Here's why

The Government most likely will receive multiple responses to their requirement and will need to read, understand and fully evaluate all of them. To do so Government evaluators look for responses to the specific questions/requirements presented in the requiring document noting responses and non-responses to each.

This is tedious work so it behooves you to make sure that:

- A) All Government questions/requirements are fully answered,
- B) All responses can be easily identified by the Government evaluator.

Achieving this is easier than you think.

Here's how

- 1) Read the requiring documents carefully - usually the FBO Synopsis, Solicitation documents (Statement of Work, Specifications, RFP Sections L & M), RFI Request Letter, etc.
- 2) Note every "will/shall" statement. These are what need to be specifically responded to and will, therefore, become the framework of your proposal outline.
- 3) Use the Government's wording in each proposal paragraph heading no matter how much you may want to reword it. Your trying to making the evaluator's job of finding responses to each "will/shall" statement easier – not composing an article for a literary society.

Examples of "will/shall" statements that need to be responded to:

*"The Offeror **shall** provide a detailed narrative discussing the testing approach that will be taken to meet the requirements for the Pilot Production and Production Unit testing provisions as specified in the Solicitation. The Offeror's proposal **shall** follow the paragraph-by-paragraph order of the PS section 4.0 (Quality Assurance Provisions) in order to show that each testing requirement is met or exceeded. The Offeror **shall** provide detailed information explaining their testing standards and methods including any unique test equipment required. The discussion **shall** include a schedule for each of the Pilot Production Units and locations for performing all planned tests."*

Something to keep in mind while putting meat on the bones of your proposal outline - answer completely with factual and definitive statements. Generalized responses that just state "requirement understood" or "we will comply" don't cut it. Explain how you will fulfill the Government's requirements and why your solutions are superior to others.

If you need to respond to a must-win requirement and either don't feel confident in your proposal development skills or don't have the bandwidth available to do so, seek professional assistance. There are several reputable resources available that can assist you.

- EXAMPLE - SOLICITATION REQUIREMENT ➔ PROPOSAL OUTLINE

RFP Section L Requirement

I.C. Management: This section shall clearly demonstrate the Offeror's understanding of the management required to successfully perform on this contract and demonstrate its experience and plan for meeting, or exceeding, these requirements. The Offeror shall provide a detailed narrative and program schedule that addresses all SOW requirements including meetings, CDRLs, major component procurement/manufacture, final assembly, testing and delivery of pilot production and production units as specified in the solicitation. The Offeror shall describe in detail the project management processes which will be followed by their management team. The Offeror shall describe in detail the programs and processes which will be used to track program schedules. The Offeror shall identify the critical path schedule and describe in detail how program risk will be managed and mitigated.



Separation of "Will/Shall" Statements

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describe in detail how program risk will be managed and mitigated.



Proposal Outline – Top Level

- 4.0 Management Subfactor
- 4.1 Understanding of the Management Required to Successfully Perform
- 4.2 Experience and Plan for Meeting/Exceeding Requirements
 - 4.2.1 Experience
 - 4.2.2 Plan
- 4.3 Statement of Work (SOW) Requirements
 - (4.3.1 – 4.3.X - responses from SOW document, by paragraph)*
 - 4.3.X Meetings
 - 4.3.X CDRLs
 - 4.3.X Major Component Procurement/Manufacture
 - 4.3.X Final Assembly
 - 4.3.X Testing and Delivery of Pilot Production Units
 - 4.3.X Testing and Delivery of Production Units
- 4.4 Project Management Processes
- 4.5 Programs/Processes Used to Track Program Schedules
- 4.6 Critical Path Schedule
- 4.7 How Program Risk will be Managed/Mitigated