



The Art of Not Being Eliminated

Imagine that you have a full time job as a professional person in the federal government. And someone dumps 30 proposals in four large boxes in your office and says: "Remember the boss put you on the evaluation committee for the big XYZ project? We need evaluation results by next Monday." You respond with a gulp and try to find a handcart to get them to your car.

Is this a job you would tackle with enthusiasm or would you figure out a way to get it done as easily and as painlessly as possible? Most federal evaluators would proceed as follows:

1. They read the Executive Summaries and start the "You have got to be kidding" pile (trash pile) for proposals that start with "Our firm is a world class, best-of-breed company that is eminently qualified to serve your agency."

Evaluators read the Executive Summaries of the proposals that don't immediately fall into the trash pile. A truly hypnotic Executive Summary means that you completely understand the solution they want and can convince them in two pages that you can provide it with minimal risk.

2. A skim read of the technical chapter usually shows an evaluator that you have what they want. Then an evaluator might flip to the personnel chapter to see who the company is offering as Project Manager. The proposal might go into the trash pile immediately if the evaluator finds five resumes with no staffing commitment as opposed to the single resume that the RFP requested.
3. Most evaluators want to make the trash pile large and the "read completely" pile as small as possible. The evaluator will read just as much as necessary to put your proposal in one of the two piles.
4. Now read and score the good pile carefully. And then score the trash pile less carefully.

Do all federal evaluators work this way? No, but busy, overworked, or bored people tend to find the easiest way to accomplish their objectives. Give them precisely what they asked for in the simplest, clearest, and most compelling way.

The art of proposal writing consists of providing a compelling solution that addresses all of the requirements specified in the Request for Proposal, and avoiding the trash pile. Don't bid if you don't think the evaluators will move you into the good pile quickly with a minimum of effort.

If you have any questions about this article or would like more information on this topic please contact us at (888) 661 – 4094, Ext.2. Or call the author of this article, Richard White, directly at (301) 908 – 0546, or at rwhite@fedmarket.com.