



## Developing a Winning Bid

Large companies, corporations and government agencies frequently put their CPR and first aid training needs out for bid. This allows them to compare various service providers and choose the vendor that best meets their needs. For the Emergency First Response Instructor, landing a large account through this process can be challenging, but well worth the effort. A critical step in this process is writing a winning bid. Here are some tips for writing a successful bid and, although many are common sense, missing one could cause you to lose a great business opportunity.

Begin by thoroughly reading the Request for Proposal (RFP) to get an idea of what the organization is seeking. Make a note of any areas that aren't clear and develop a list of questions. Then, call or make an appointment to get these questions answered. Remember, there are no dumb questions – make sure you're absolutely clear on the bid requirements.

Once your questions are answered, organize your material for submission. Your format and main titles should follow the instructions in the bid request and often include the following sections:

- Cover page – Identify the job you're bidding on and tell them who you are.
- Table of contents – Provide an index of the information in your proposal.
- Executive summary: Summarizes your bid and the services you'll provide.
- Project Management Plan: Describe how the project will be managed.
- Phase-in plan: Describe how you plan to phase those already trained, but in need of a refresher, into Emergency First Response.
- Understanding the scope of work: Clearly state how you will fulfill the Scope of Work (SOW). Make sure you are clear that you understand the SOW and aren't conflicting with Request for Proposal (RFP) specifications.
- Staffing plan: State how you'll staff training sessions and who will be involved.
- Quality Control: Describe how you assure quality instruction and the Emergency First Response quality management process.
- Past performance and references: Include testimonials and other complimentary letters from customers and business associates.
- Organization chart: Include contact information for billing, ordering materials or other facets of your business.

- Resumes: Include a resume for every instructor involved in fulfilling the bid.
- Other Exhibits: Provide any other items requested in the RFP.

There are a few things you'll want to avoid with your proposal and a few things you'll want to make sure your proposal achieves. Here are a few of the things to avoid:

- Using a previous proposal as a template.
- Including statements that conflict with the SOW or the RFP specifications.
- Wordy sentences.
- Bidding on a project you cannot fulfill.

Here are a couple of things you *should* do with your proposal:

- Keep it simple.
- Be specific to each RFP request.
- Ask for help writing.
- Specifically state how you'll meet the SOW.
- Have someone outside the company read your proposal.
- Submit your proposal early.
- Contact your Emergency First Response office for additional help.

At this point you might want to include something to make your bid stand out from the others, such as including AED or oxygen training. When all other factors are equal this might be the deciding factor.

Once you've completed your bid, look it over one last time to make sure that it answers who, what, why, where and how. Then, package the original with the number of required copies. Make sure each of the copies is of the same quality as the original. This isn't time to skimp. Then, it goes without saying that you must submit your bid on time. Late bids are usually rejected outright.

Put a little extra work into your bid and set yourself apart from your competition. This will go a long way to getting the contract.