

Baja SAE Business Presentation

Request for Proposal Guidance Document

What is a Request for Proposal?

A request for proposal (RFP) is a document issued by a business entity releasing information about an upcoming project or opportunity to contractors. The RFP contains information about the project/opportunity and is soliciting bids from qualified contractors. A wide variety of organizations use RFPs to release projects and are standardly used by governmental agencies.

The RFP will define what the project is for the issuing entity and what they are asking respondents to address. The RFP will describe the project, the goals to be achieved, and the desired outcome. The RFP will describe the process and expect terms.

The entity releasing the RFP is responsible for the evaluation of the responses submitted. This evaluation includes the feasibility of the submitted proposal, financial health of the company responding, and the ability of the company to undertake the project.

Why is there a RFP process?

Due to the expanding technology in the global economy, the RFP process is used as a first step to evaluate the interest and qualifications of companies looking to work with the issuing company. The company may decide that none of the respondents are qualified or meet the requirements issued in the RFP or they will select a group of respondents to further assess the likelihood of a successful partnership.

During your career, you will likely issue or respond to RFPs. The RFP is a way for you to send out a single notice to outline your needs/requirements and how you plan to evaluate the responses. This process eliminates you trying to locate, evaluate, or get proposals from every supplier in the marketplace. You can issue a single RFP across several noticing platforms and let suppliers come to you with their product, specifications, and a plan to fill your need.

For example, if you plan to equip your vehicle with Company “X” shocks, but they are unable to meet your demand due to a fire damaging their manufacturing facility, you may issue an RFP to the various shock suppliers specifying what you need in shock specifications, volumes, delivery times, etc. to continue production. Companies “A”, “B”, and “C” may all respond, but you will need to evaluate their ability to meet your demand, their price point, and how their product offering will fit with your vehicle.

Some examples of questions that you *could* ask yourself and an RFP *might* help you answer:

- Is it an upgrade or have you downgraded the quality?
- How will your customers respond?
- Does it require any design changes to your vehicles to fit the shock? Do you think they can follow through and meet your timelines?

- If Company “A” currently manufactures 1000 units per year that are comparable to what Company “X” was providing, but you need to produce 4,000 vehicles in the next year, what are their chances of success to supply the 4,000 units at the quoted price?
- Can they tool up for four times the production?
- Do they have the financial ability to support increase production by that much?
- Do they understand the costs of setting up new manufacturing lines and training labor?
- If Company “C” already produces 50,000 units annually that would be an upgrade from Company “X”, but at a cost 10% higher than Company “A” - would you rather pay the increased cost versus gamble on Company “A”?

How does the RFP apply to Baja SAE Business Presentations?

For the Business Presentation response, judges will be looking for information on how you plan to address the given RFP prompt, be confident that your company is in a financial position to perform the work described, that your vehicle can meet the demands of the prompt, that your company can produce the required vehicles, and that you possess the qualifications necessary to be successful. To be clear, your team is responding to the RFP issued by the competition, not creating an RFP of your own.

While detailed business analytics are not necessarily required, the judges do want to know that the entity they potentially will be working with is on solid financial footing. They are looking to invest in your company as a partner to address the business prompt, as such, they want to know that you have the financial ability to support the effort required for a successful outcome.

The judges want to know that you have the ability to ramp up production to provide the required vehicles. Judges will be looking for specifications on your vehicle and why your vehicle is best suited to meet the specifications of the business prompt. This could be an existing vehicle you currently produce, a new product line, or a combination thereof.

What is the format for the RFP response?

The response to the RFP should be a written document, similar to a report, rather than a slide deck for a presentation. Page size should be 8.5x11 with a minimum font size of 10. Complete sentences should be used and tables, bullet points, charts, and graphics are acceptable for inclusion. The exact page count allowed will be clarified when the prompt is released to teams.

How is the RFP response judged?

We recognize that not all teams are able or have the interest to respond to the business prompts. Out of respect for volunteer judges' time, the RFP process was implemented to ensure we focus on teams willing and able to participate fully in this portion of the Baja SAE competition. The teams' proposal submissions will be broken down into five groups as follows:

Group #	Points	Qualifier
1	0	Did not respond
2	5	Responded, addressed the prompt, missing 7 or more items
3	10	Responded, addressed the business prompt, missing 5-6 items
4	15	Responded, addressed the prompt, missing 3-4 items
5	20	Responded, addressed the prompt, may be missing 1-2 items

As the national organizer for the Business Presentation event, the submitted proposals are reviewed and grouped by Oregon SAE volunteers. It is expected that approximately half of the respondents will move forward to virtual presentations. This group of respondents will be asked to present their proposals virtually, face-to-face, in real-time. Top contenders from the virtual presentation round will be selected for a final round of in-person judging during their actual competition event.

Your written proposal response is limited to the number of pages identified in the RFP. You should anticipate that any additional pages will not be considered in the evaluation. If you submit 15 pages when the limit was set at 10 pages, the last five pages will be removed and only the content in the first ten pages will be considered for your submission. Conversely, if you can summarize the information in 6 pages, the lack of additional pages will not count against you.