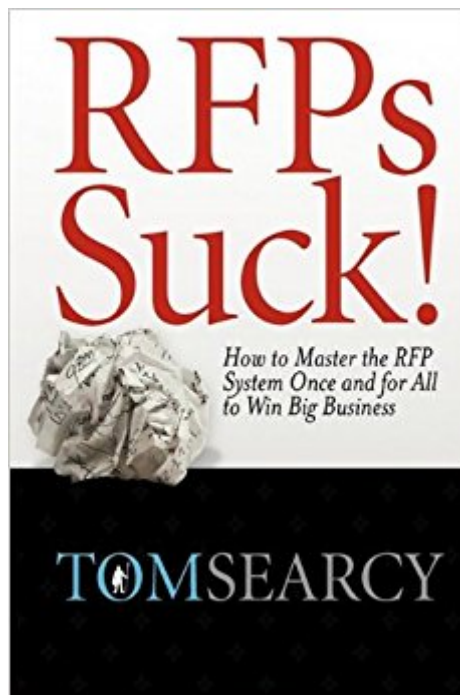




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# RFPs Suck! How To Master The RFP System Once And For All To Win Big Business



## Synopsis

It used to be that you could ignore RFPs. Only a small portion of the market used them in their buying process and you could work around those companies. Today, governance rules dictated by boards and administered by finance have made RFPs and RFQs a dominating component of the large-deal world. Not only can you no longer ignore them, but you need to know that companies use RFPs-and increasingly purchasing and procurement-for many reasons that have little to do with the opportunity offered in the official document. The result? We all have no choice but to go through the expensive and time-consuming process. And though you might like to believe the system is fair, if your company is pitching a disproportionately larger client, you're at a disadvantage from the moment you begin the process. WHY? Because the RFP system is not built for you. It's built for big companies and government institutions that benefit from RFPs. But no matter how hard you try to avoid them, there will inevitably come a day when that irresistible RFP lands on your desk. It's almost like it was written for you. This book is your best guide on what to know, to question and to do when faced with that RFP. It will also help you develop the confidence and understanding to know when to quit the process before it even starts or when to stay in it and win big.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This is the first book I've seen on this grossly overlooked topic and it's definitely a winner. Smaller firms hoping to land large corporate customers will find the most value, but even sellers from big companies will learn some new tricks. "In short, you'll discover how to qualify, divide and conquer RFPs that make the most sense for your company." --Jill Konrath, Author, "Selling to Big

Companies" and Founder, SellingtoBigCompanies.com" This book is a serious keeper. No fluff. No B.S. It's stuffed (as in every pixel on every page) with pointers, recommendations, checklists and whatever else you may need to logically and objectively decide whether to respond to an RFP and, more importantly, how to respond to it. "If you receive only a single, unsolicited RFP in your career, you need this book to guide you in deciding how to respond to it." --Dave Stein, CEO & Founder, ES Research Group, Inc. "An RFP can be a wonderful opportunity or a destructive waste of company resources. If you get involved with an RFP, make sure you are in it to win and you know what you are doing. RFPs Suck! will help you navigate the RFP world and give you the ammunition to make the best choices (from the start) to grow your business." --Joe Pulizzi, Co-Author, "Get Content. Get Customers." Founder, Junta42 "As a writer of RFPs, I found your well-thought out and documented approach for vendors' consideration to be a great road map. If I was a cheering section, you would hear the roars. "One of the challenges many consultants (and clients) often encounter is getting longer lead times, for both sides. Time to write and document all the background and requirements, as well as sufficient time for the vendor to prepare their proposal. This, however, is not an excuse for either side to be sloppy or ill-prepared. "Having said that, it is still amazing to see how many companies' proposals "cut and paste generalizations en mass," use hyperbole throughout, don't justify why they should be selected and don't follow directions. "I hope that companies take your book seriously enough to better manage if and how they respond to RFPs. "Thanks for the high-value proposition." --Gloria Kurant, President, KURANT DIRECT INC. "Tom Searcy's 'RFPs Suck!' embodies the same enlightened wisdom and insight responsible for helping our company land a project in excess of \$50 million. Working with Tom over the years has been one of the more stimulating and rewarding experiences of my professional life. I have come to regard Tom as a close personal friend and can't wait to engage him again." --Richard H. Drennen, President, Superior Mechanical, Inc.

When my marketing team told me that I should write an e-book on RFPs and offer it to readers for free on my website, I thought they were out of their minds. But thousands of downloads and seemingly hundreds of "Thank You" notes later, I realized that the demand for this type of material was strong and growing. And so I've expanded what was once limited material into what I like to think of as the ultimate guide to conquering RFPs--whether government, private or public--by adding several additional winning techniques and a number of sample RFP responses (with critiques). I also did my due diligence by surveying my audience about the mysteries and troubles they've encountered in their RFP traumas experiences and addressed them here. Thanks go to Wynola

Richards for her tireless work on this project. To Carajane Moore for handling the many things that could have easily interfered with the undertaking of a new book. To Richard Drennen for his innovative approach to the world of RFPs. To Dan Kemper's critical eye and nimble mind. To Dave Stein for his continual support and for contributing the foreword to this book. To Jack Burns for always being the voice of reason, balance and practical application. And last but not least, thanks to my publishing team at Channel V Books. You are all a huge thorn in my side, which is precisely why we work so well together.

I am brand new to proposals, but had to bone up fast, so I spent some time reading reviews and looking for some good books. I like to get multiple sources when I'm learning something new and triangulate in. I would put this in the top 2-3 of what I read. Searcy has some very good insights into how the whole RFP universe works, and a solid process for making the bid/no-bid decision and putting together a good proposal. It doesn't go into quite as much detail or depth as I would like. As you can guess from the title, the writing style is a tinge cynical. Still, I gained a lot of good take-aways that I am using to develop my company's response process, and I will use it as a reference. If I were going to pick a "best" book this wouldn't be it, but if you are getting two or more then I would definitely recommend you put this in the mix.

I bought this book hoping to get some guidance as a business owner. Unfortunately, it did not have what I needed - not a total loss as it didn't cost much but I really wanted information that would help me uncover the mysteries behind landing a grant, bid or proposal. After buying this book and still wanting more, I found some online resources that are written for business owners who have no experience responding to proposals, grants, bids, etc. One of the best in my opinion is capture planning however the paid portions are pricey - visit the free areas and absorb as much info as you can. There are other sites out there so do a bit of homework - it takes some digging but it is possible to figure out this detailed process!

The book was awfully thin, but quickly gets to the points. I wish it had a section on how to create a layout for any standard RFP response, some kind of example for people who are learning about these documents. I've tried looking online, to no availability. Nonetheless, it's informative enough to where I'm now familiar with how to approach the bid when responding to a buyer. It does the trick for now.

OK... We all know that winning BIG requires proposing BIG ideas (that cost money). But how do you propose BIG ideas that get buy-in from your customer? How do you win the deal when you have competitors viscusly fighting for the the contract? You start by reading Tom's book...Tom very simply lays out the framework to compete and win the biggest deals of your lifetime. His step-by-step methodology is a "must read" for every company Sales VP and should be required reading for every advanced Marketing Degree. It's easy to read, extremely practical, and ..... actually works. What adds extra value to this book are the last 5-6 chapters that spell out how a winning RFP scenario works. You get samples. You get scenarios. You get analysis. You get 1-on-1 coaching from the author himself. Tom's previous book "Whale Hunters" was a great read. This one is EVEN BETTER!

This book contains tons of valuable information for preparing RFP responses. Bid responses are often painful, but this book gives great guidelines so that it doesn't always have to be. I highlighted so many sections I know it will serve as a great reference book.

If you are anywhere near government tenders this read is a must. Excellent book.

I write responses to RFPs all the time. It was nice to get a different perspective and tips/ideas that I've not thought of before. It's helpful as a refresher.

I have read other titles of this subject, what I thought whern advertised was that it was like a practical guide, it was not for me.

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