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MarketEdge

4 Steps to Outsmart an RFP



INTRODUCTION

Every year, state and local governments in the United States spend \$1.6 trillion on products and services through the public procurement, or RFP, process. The only problem? Responding to RFPs can be a time-consuming nightmare.

Companies that can outsmart RFPs have nearly limitless opportunities for revenue growth in front of them, and companies that don't face frustrating and disappointing sales cycles. So, we're breaking down — step by step — what you need to do to outsmart RFPs.



Step 1: Get ahead of RFPs by building relationships.

RFPs aren't drafted overnight. Before releasing an RFP, government leaders take time to learn about products and services, and their findings greatly impact the document. Building relationships with those decision-makers and educating them on your field and services can help influence the direction

they take the project as well as help you understand their specific concerns. You also get the opportunity to prepare for the RFP before it officially comes down the pipeline, which greatly extends your timeline and lays the groundwork for the request to align closely to the solutions your business provides.

Step 2: Tackle the right problems for the right customers at the right time.

Because RFPs require so much time and effort, it's important to know which ones are worth pursuing. Before diving in, learn more about the issue, the customer, and the timeline. Your solution is no good if it's not the right fit for the particular problem, policymaker or schedule. A great way to find that information is by

researching factors like what topics the city council is discussing, what challenges the local news is covering, what policy desires local elected officials are announcing, and more. (Hint: resources like [MarketEdge](#) easily package that relevant information for you.)



Step 3: Educate first and sell later.

Because RFPs are so competitive, many contractors have a hard time standing out from the competition. Well, there's a simple solution — educate first and sell later. Government leaders are constantly inundated by product and service pitches. The sheer volume of sales calls coming in can be unmanageable. While many government leaders want to meet and engage with members of the public, they are more hesitant to do so for sales calls.

So, make your first engagement educational. Introduce yourself, get to know them, and circle back when the right opportunity presents itself. Remember that decision-makers can't be experts in every industry. Teaching them about your field and service can be valuable to them — and you.

Step 4: Make your response stand out from the rest.

What are government leaders looking for in an RFP response? Besides making sure you responded to every element of the proposal, there are two other ways you can make sure your RFP is considered.

First, include trending buzzwords. At any given time, certain buzzwords are popular among government leaders. Learning what those words are, what the interests are behind them (again, through resources like [MarketEdge](#)),

and how you can leverage them might be the difference between winning and losing a bid.

Second, reference case studies. Have you worked on other government projects similar to the one you want to win? Mention them. Government leaders want solutions that have worked before, so including relevant experience can be incredibly influential in their decisions.



CONCLUSION

There are so many RFP opportunities out there. Not only are needs constantly changing with specific, localized forces, like downtown flooding and political turnover, but there are also 90,000 local government entities out there that might be in the market for your solution right now.

To be effective in the state and local market, marketing and sales teams need to deeply understand pain points, priorities and people dynamics for every target account at any given time. Dig for as much information as you can about each state and local government stakeholder, and look at trends based on geographic region, size of the city, and nuanced hierarchical structures.

When you build relationships, research markets, educate decision-makers on your offerings and include strategic information in your RFP response, your team is in the best possible position to win.



THE ATLAS **MarketEdge**

Companies using The Atlas MarketEdge have access to 1st party search and engagement data from authenticated local government decision makers which has transformed their sales and marketing efforts.

This active intelligence gives you the edge you need to close more deals. Expand your pipeline and increase conversion today.

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