WHITE PAPER 06 · MATCHMAKING AND VENDORS

How to Write an RFQ Vendors Can Actually Answer

The five parts of a training RFQ that produce comparable, honest quotes

Industry Services group and beauty multinational

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AT A GLANCE

INDUSTRY

Services group and global beauty multinational

PROBLEM

RFQs that list topics and leave vendors to guess the problem

FRAMEWORK

The Five-Part RFQ

CHANGE

Vendors quoting against one design and one standard

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Most training RFQs in Malaysia list a topic, a headcount and a date, hence every vendor answers a different question and

the buyer ends up comparing brochures. This paper sets out the five parts TLMM writes into every RFQ, drawn from two recent engagements, so vendors quote on the same design and the buyer compares like for like.

20
questions a vague RFQ left open

3 hrs
immersion written into one RFQ

3
options per need

1
standard for every vendor

A vague RFQ buys the vendor's programme, a clear RFQ buys the business outcome.

INDUSTRY AND PROBLEM OBSERVED

The problem

In the services group case, one RFQ for 3,000 plus staff left about 20 questions unanswered, from the business reason to the delivery method, and it was scrapped in a single meeting.

In the beauty multinational case, TLMM wrote the design first, including a 3-hour system immersion before the Train the Trainer, and only then turned it into an RFQ for vendors to quote.

What we observed

- Topics are listed, business problems are not
- The delivery method is assumed, usually a classroom
- No measure of success, so quotes cannot be compared on outcome

THE FRAMEWORK PROCESS

The Five-Part RFQ

1

The problem

The business reason, in one paragraph, with who is affected

2

The design

Delivery method, sequence and any pre-work such as immersion

3

The standard

How participants and trainers will be assessed

4

The measure

What changes in the work and how it will be timed

5

The options

Ask for options, not one answer, so the buyer can choose

HOW IT WAS SOLVED

The solution

TLMM writes the problem, the design, the standard and the measure before vendors are approached, then asks each vendor to quote against that same document, hence the client compares vendors on fit and price for the same outcome, and the vendor knows exactly what will be checked.

BEFORE

- Topic, headcount, date
- Every vendor answers differently
- Brochures compared

AFTER

- Problem, design, standard, measure
- Every vendor quotes the same design
- Outcomes compared

WHAT L&D LEADERS SHOULD DO

Your checklist

- Can a vendor tell the business problem from the first paragraph?
- Is the delivery method a choice, not an assumption?
- Is the assessment standard written down?
- Does the RFQ ask for options?

The quality of the quotes is decided by the quality of the RFQ.

ABOUT THE LEARNING MATCHMAKER

The Learning MatchMaker has been a trusted advisor to HR and L&D leaders since 2010, matching organisations with the right learning design, the right delivery method and the right trainers for their business problem. Clients in this paper are named by sector and function only.

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REFERENCES AND DATA NOTES

- TLMM RFQ practice, 2026 engagements.