Brenda Crist shares her advice on developing both requirements matrices and compliance matrices for all proposals.

A proposal manager’s biggest concern is working on a huge proposal for months and having it rejected because an instruction was not followed or an esoteric requirement was not addressed.

Adding to this risk are disconnects between the statement of work, proposal instructions, and evaluation criteria.

To avoid compliance issues, consider building a requirements matrix and a compliance matrix. The requirements matrix assigns each requirement a specific number and verifies that it is met in the proposal, as Table 1 illustrates. To facilitate internal proposal development add columns including the page size limit and author name to the matrix.

Table 1. Requirements matrix

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement #** | **Solicitation Section #** | **Solicitation Section Name** | **Solicitation Page #** | **Requirement**  | **Requirement Met (Yes/No)** | **Comments** |
| 1 | 1 | Personnel | 1 | N/A | Yes | None |
| 2 | 1.1 | Organization | 1 | Prepare an organization chart | Yes | None |
| 3 | 1.2 | Roles and Responsibilities | 3 | Define the roles and responsibilities of key personnel | Yes | None |
| 4 | 1.3 | Key Personnel Resumes | 9 | Provide resumes for all key personnel | No | No program manager resume |

Use the requirements matrix to build a compliance matrix. The compliance matrix simply cross walks each requirement to a proposal section number and name. Depending on the complexity and synchronization of the requirements, you can order the compliance matrix by solicitation section number and name, as illustrated in Table 2, or by the proposal section number and name. Submit the compliance matrix with the proposal to facilitate its evaluation by your customer.

Table 2. Compliance matrix

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Solicitation Section #** | **Solicitation Section Name** | **Proposal Section #** | **Proposal Section Name** | **Proposal Page #** |
| 1 | Personnel | 1 | Personnel  | 1 |
| 1.1 | Organization | 1.1 | Organization chart | 1 |
| 1.2 | Roles and Responsibilities | 1.2 | Description of Key Personnel Roles and Responsibilities | 2 |
| 1.3 | Key personnel resumes | 1.3 | Key personnel resumes | 5 |

Allow ample time for preparing the matrices – a solicitation with hundreds of requirements could take 2 or 3 days to prepare and verify. Assign one or more people to review the requirements and compliance matrices before the Kick-off Meeting. Assign compliance checkers during the reviews of the initial and final proposal drafts to validate compliance.

Use the requirements and compliance matrices to build the proposal schedule, create proposal writers’ packages, and estimate the number of reviewers needed. The time taken to prepare accurate and well-documented matrices saves times on re-writes, reduces the risk of non-compliance, facilities evaluation, and maximizes your proposal score.

What best practices do you follow in developing your requirements and compliance matrices? Send your thoughts to me at BWingate@LohfeldConsulting.com, and I’ll share your advice in upcoming posts!

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