

Attachments: Best Practices for RFP Responses

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About Attachments

DecisionDirector gives clients great control over many aspects of their RFP, including the collection of attachments. When configuring the RFP, clients specify for each question or requirement whether:

1. Attachments are **REQUIRED**;
2. Attachments are **OPTIONAL**; or
3. Attachments are **NOT ALLOWED**.

Some attachments, such as pricing spreadsheets and signed documents, are essential and cannot be avoided. Some attachments are extremely helpful, such as technical diagrams or sample agreements. For questions and requirements that seek or require these types of attachments, clients will specify that an attachment is **REQUIRED**. This means that the vendor's response to that question or requirement will not be marked as complete until an attachment is provided.

In general, though, our clients work to avoid dealing with attachments as they require time and effort to read, add a layer of complexity to their evaluation process, and can be downright confusing to some of the reviewers. Our clients have consistently stated their strong preference for straightforward, concise, and plain language responses to their questions and requirements. For these reasons, clients tend to default to **NOT ALLOW** attachments.

Use Attachments Wisely

For those requirements and questions where the client has made the inclusion of an attachment **OPTIONAL**, clients do so with the expectation that the vendors will exercise discretion and provide attachments sparingly and *only to augment, and not stand in the place of, direct answers to their specific question or requirement*. In many cases, clients will even include warning language in their RFP, such as:

"Bidders have the ability to attach supporting documentation to their question response. However, it is not acceptable to simply attach a document and provide a question response that states "See attachment." If a Bidder provides such responses, its proposal may be deemed non-responsive and disqualified from further consideration."

Our strong advice to vendors is to put yourselves in the shoes of the buyer. Keep your answers clear, concise, and complete, and don't burden the prospect with unwanted attachments.

Your prospects will appreciate your considerate efforts.
