

Elevating Your RFP Team

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Elevate Your Team

Let's face it, RFP writing can be a grind at times and managing a team of RFP writers can feel like you're juggling, cheerleading, mobilizing, and running a sprint at the same time...all while remaining calm under pressure. Chances are, you're not only managing the team, but you're also writing and responding to RFPs as well – getting into the weeds with your team.



RFP teams are essential to the success of any business, and absolutely vital to generating new business. We sometimes lose this perspective when we're in the daily grind, so as a manager, it's often necessary to reiterate this and boost morale among the team. But building this awareness goes beyond the confines of your team. Does it often feel like herding cats when it comes to collecting information, and getting others to prioritize the RFP process and your team's needs? You're not alone.

The good news is, the essence of an RFP role is to collaborate with various stakeholders across the company, which puts you in a unique position to engage with professionals at all levels. Not only that, you have access to vast company knowledge that few have. So how do you leverage that advantage to elevate the team's visibility, credibility, and value proposition? It's up to you to champion your team and develop relationships that will ensure their success!



Whether a manager or a writer, let's take a minute to reflect on the characteristics of someone in an RFP role. You are:

- ✓ Team managers
- ✓ Project managers
- ✓ Writers
- ✓ Editors
- ✓ Content managers
- ✓ Database managers
- ✓ Researchers
- ✓ Interviewers
- ✓ Translators
- ✓ Problem solvers
- ✓ Strategic thinkers
- ✓ Process- and deadline-driven
- ✓ Efficient and organized
- ✓ Time management pros
- ✓ Over-communicators
- ✓ Revenue generators
- ✓ Information gatekeepers
- ✓ Compliance ambassadors
- ✓ Influencers
- ✓ Agility wizards
- ✓ Detail-oriented
- ✓ Collaborators
- ✓ Relationship builders
- ✓ Designers
- ✓ Mentors
- ✓ All around hard workers

Wow! That's an impressive list of skills...and that may only scratch the surface! So, we've established that you and your team play a vital role at your company, you have access to unmatched people and knowledge, and you exemplify a remarkable skill set. Armed with this information, how do you begin elevating your RFP team? While there are numerous possibilities, here are three simple steps we believe will take your team (and you!) to that next level.



ENGAGE

It's no secret that trust and credibility take time to earn, yet so often, we don't set aside the time needed to do this work. Through authentic relationship building, you can strengthen that bond with your key stakeholders – and there are a lot of them!

The key here is authenticity...it's important to spend time getting to know your stakeholders BEFORE you need something from them. Listen with ears and eyes, be observant and considerate, and lead with empathy. If they share a personal story while engaging in conversation, say, "Tell me more."

Leading with empathy can often be the toughest, especially when a deadline is looming and it feels like a stakeholder isn't cooperating. Your ability to understand and share in the feelings of stakeholders will help you create genuine connections that will ultimately build trust that they'll come through in challenging times. The reverse benefit is that they will be more understanding when you have a rush request.

People will go the extra mile for people they like and trust.



MEET (OR EXCEED) DEADLINES

This goes without saying: never miss a deadline. Understandably, a lot of people play a role in completing an RFP, so this may not always be within your control. But through your leadership, you can ensure your team is invested in their deadline and hold them accountable. Give them tools to keep their deadlines clear and present by developing systems that streamline the process; pave the way for them by being aware of resource constraints; and make sure the deadline is realistic (and we know just how difficult that can be).

That said, this advice goes beyond submitting an RFP on time. Follow-through is imperative to building credibility. Keep your promises and strive to deliver ahead of schedule — this is one of the best ways to build trust and integrity.



STRATEGIC PARTNERING

Cultivating a strategic and agile mind-set is the ability to analyze new information, develop a strategy, and lead change. Not only is this a skill that you as a manager want to embody, it's also a skill to cultivate within your team.

Again, your access to a wealth of knowledge and resources puts you in a position to creatively help others and potentially add value outside the scope of RFPs. Through cross-functional collaboration, you can have substantial long-term impacts on the success of the company.

Here are a few ways to uncover strategic partnering opportunities:

1. Be inquisitive and absorb — take a vested interest in people and the business by engaging in conversations, learning how your company ticks, and studying the competition.
2. Think outside the box — make an effort to get out of the RFP zone and think about what's best for the company overall.
3. Be results oriented — uncover commonalities or shared visions and seek ways to make people's jobs easier by solving a problem.

You've already started laying the groundwork by engaging with your stakeholders. Now leverage those conversations and start putting your tools and resources to work to build strategic partnerships!



At RocketDocs, we understand the true value you provide — many of us have previously been in your shoes. RocketDocs 2.0 will make your job easier, save your team time, and reduce frustration by helping you:

- Build an accurate and compliant content library
- Develop a consistent and repeatable process
- Reduce duplicative work and creating efficiencies
- Automate administrative tasks to free up strategic resources and produce winning RFP responses

Engagement, meeting deadlines, and strategic partnering — together with the new RocketDocs 2.0 with AI-driven responses — will naturally build credibility with your stakeholders and business partners. As your software solution partner, we can help you simplify and automate processes, giving you time to go above and beyond, elevate your team, and ultimately increase win rates.

With the proper tools, technology, knowledge, and partnerships in hand, you'll have the means to drive the business forward.



Before joining RocketDocs, Jason served as an experienced management consultant, specializing in growing and restructuring middle-market organizations. Jason served as acting CEO and president of the Maryland Proton Treatment Center, and a variety of other senior executive positions including CEO of EntreQuest, and COO of Florida-based Progressus Therapy. Jason now serves as the CEO and president of RocketDocs.