

# Proposal Contents

## What Should We Ask For? How Much Is Too Much?

*“Am I asking for the ‘right’ information?”  
“What criteria should we ask for in our solicitation?”*

### Overview

As the frequency of poor performing projects or services increases, the natural reaction is to add more and more proposal requirements on the next solicitation. Owners are now asking themselves:

*What should we ask vendors to submit?  
Are we asking for the right information?  
How do we evaluate all of this material?*

### Case Study

In a recent case study, a Fortune 100 Company was soliciting proposals from General Contractors to construct a high-tech facility. The Owner requested the information shown in the figure below, which would be evaluated during the procurement process.

Proposal Requirements:	8. Innovation
1. Cost	9. Prefab Experience
2. Approach to GMP	10. CX, QA, QC Processes
3. Similar Experience	11. Contract Exceptions
4. Goals of the Contractor	12. KPI's
5. Capacity of the CM	13. Bonding
6. Management Approach	14. Insurance Info
7. BIM Experience	15. Safety Plan

The Owner received six proposals, and assigned three individuals to evaluate the proposals. One of the sections of each proposal response was the ‘Safety Plan’. On average, the Safety Plans were **356 pages long**. The evaluators each spent 2.5 weeks evaluating this document alone (**7.5 weeks** spent evaluating the Safety Plan between all three evaluators).

The majority of these documents contained ‘off-the-shelf’ contents that were very generic. These documents were very similar to one another, and

resulted in a final overall spread of **1.52%** between all six proposals.

So the question becomes, *is investing 7.5 weeks of personnel resources worth determining which vendor is 1.5% higher/better than another vendor?* Is that an efficient use of internal resources?

Nobody will argue that ‘safety’ or having a ‘safety plan’ is not important on a construction project. However, the importance of having a safety plan should not be confused with the value that the document will provide during the evaluation process. Those are two completely different needs

### Final Thought

Owners should consider what criteria will help them differentiate contractors, suppliers, or vendors versus what documents are required prior to contract award.

Not every question, criteria, or requirement should be used to differentiate proposals. Questions that do not result in a ‘significant’ differential, should not be asked during evaluation process, but submitted and evaluated as a pass/fail requirement. This will improve the efficiency of the selection process and allow the evaluators to focus their time on identifying the highest performing vendors.

*To learn more about what questions should be asked during your solicitation process, contact the Simplar Institute.*