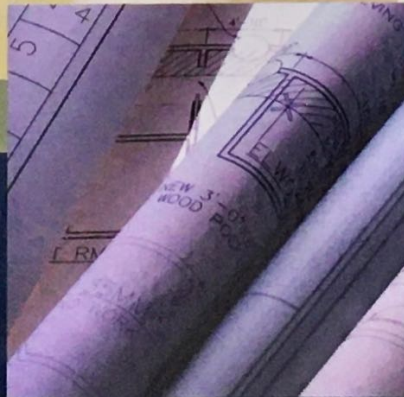


RICK FRIA

SUCCESSFUL RFPs IN CONSTRUCTION

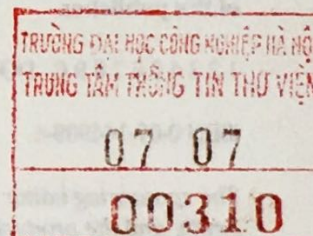
*MANAGING THE
REQUEST FOR
PROPOSAL PROCESS*



Successful RFPs in Construction

MANAGING THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL PROCESS

Richard T. Fria



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PREFACE

The View from Here

The construction industry is continually evolving. Change is the norm, and it permeates all facets of the construction process—from feasibility, to design, to construction, and finally, to occupancy. As the project progresses, it never stops changing, growing, and maturing, and ultimately it becomes reality in the form of the sum of all the process parts.

Yet the development continuum of a project is only one aspect of change. After 35 years in this business, I continue to be grateful for a career in an evolving industry. Development professionals—including architect, engineer, constructor, developer, owner, user, and a cast of hundreds—are fortunate to participate in projects that have a beginning, an end, and a lasting finished product of which to be proud.

With every project comes a new team of participants, new design challenges, new materials, new construction techniques, and new technology, all of which represent a fresh approach, an expanded professional network, and another beginning and end. Threading the same nut on the same bolt on an assembly line day after day would never work for me.

I have been fortunate to have teamed up with so many talented professionals, producing permanent recognizable landmarks on the skyline. I believe a can-do approach, an open-minded philosophy, and working with enthusiasm are integral to ensuring a positive outcome. I am continually astonished at how this personal approach to both work and life attracts like-

minded teammates. And when the project is complete, the champagne corks are popping, and the happy owner is beaming, every team member from laborer to design professional can point out the product to family and friends and say, "That's my building!"

I was born to build. I've known this passion all my life. The forts I built out of scrap from the neighborhood construction project represented challenge and creativity and fulfilled my need to hammer nails, saw wood, smell sawdust, and finally occupy the fruit of my labor. And of course I always had help, friends who shared the experience, the sense of accomplishment, and the pride. Little did I know then just how special is the team approach.

I majored in business in college, but my calling for construction moved me to take a job as a brick carrier for a father-son home-building bricklayer team. Every afternoon break, the son would drive to the store and return with a six-pack of beer. We would sit and indulge in two beers each, connect with one another, and then complete the day's work. Now that was one heck of a college summer job! And I never forgot the connection from that team camaraderie.

My journey has included work as a laborer, carpenter, foreman, superintendent, project manager, construction executive, and, yes, consultant. I worked in the boom years of the early 1970s in the Colorado ski resorts of Aspen, Vail, Steamboat Springs, Breckenridge, and Crested Butte. I built a log lodge on a 7000-acre ranch in the remote Bitterroot Valley of Montana. I managed the construction of the computer lab that developed the software for the Space Shuttle and the construction of production and test facilities for top-secret defense satellites. I've managed the construction of high-rises, electronic manufacturing facilities, biotechnology R&D labs, historic landmark renovations, hotels, and destination retail and entertainment centers. I've been blessed with a diverse, opportunity-filled career and, as a result, have learned just how much I don't know. But the one thing that has stuck with me throughout is the value of teamwork.

The construction industry's very nature is teamwork. So many hands touch a project from inception to completion that they simply cannot be

counted. Friends ask me, “How does a high-rise get built?” I contemplate this, become completely bewildered, look at them, and say, “I really don’t know. Somewhere near the end a miracle occurs.” Yes, at some point, the project is magically transformed from individual pieces of steel, wood, stone, and glass into “a building”—the sum of all its parts.

Of course I know the reality is that the project gets built through the orchestrated efforts of many participants and the application of intense thought, planning, and execution. What amazes me is that all these parts that make up the whole come together in this one place from all over the world, touched by multitudes. The aluminum window mullions may be fabricated locally, but the paint may be produced in France, the aluminum ore mined in Mexico, and the extrusions manufactured in Canada. The wood-paneling veneer may be from exotic Madagascar, from trees felled by Madagascarites, while the plywood backing may be produced in the southeast United States and the adhesives in China. Every component of the building has a story, of families from foreign lands, of boat captains and truck drivers, of millwrights, accountants, and factory owners.

I realized one day that “the miracle” occurs when the myriad products show up at the job site, manufactured and crafted to precise tolerances, finished in the intended colors and shapes, and at precisely the time required to accommodate a complex schedule. It is an orchestra that stretches around the world, encompassing instruments and players making one incredibly beautiful sound! It is the sound of construction.

What I take away from this is the criticality of teamwork—a necessary component for every successful project, from the smallest tenant improvement to the Golden Gate Bridge. “It’s the team” is what I tell myself when I contemplate the miracle. And that is why this book presents a collaborative team approach to selecting a contractor. In the end, when the miracle needs to happen, it’s the team that will make the difference.

The process presented in this book is a proven method, developed over many years and through many projects. As I train others, I am realizing that the process, like the industry itself, will continue to evolve. I look forward to learning much, and to the continued adventure.