

# How to Respond to Commercial RFPs™ (and RFPs issued by State and Local Governments)

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One or Two day Proposal Training Class  
and Workshop

**How to Respond to Commercial RFPs™ teaches salespeople and sales support staff how to structure and write persuasive sales proposals.**

- Students learn to produce persuasive, customer-focused sales proposals in less time.
  - Students learn how to differentiate their solution from competing solutions.
  - One day and two day programs fit your needs and your schedule.
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# Table of Contents

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How to Respond to Commercial RFPs™ (and RFPs Issued by State and Local Governments).....	2
Class Overview .....	2
Improving Effectiveness.....	2
Who Needs This Class .....	3
Course Customization.....	3
Class Description .....	4
Interactive Lecture Session.....	4
Two Day Program .....	5
Pricing & Logistics.....	6
How to Respond to Commercial RFPs™, Single Day Program .....	6
How to Respond to Commercial RFPs™, Two-Day Program .....	6
The Next Steps.....	7
1. Contact Us with Questions .....	7
2. Schedule a Proposal Training Class.....	7
About The Seibert Group.....	8
About The Seibert Group.....	8
About the Instructor .....	8

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# 1

## How to Respond to Commercial RFPs™ (and RFPs Issued by State and Local Governments)

### Class Overview

*How to Respond to Commercial RFPs™* is a seminar that teaches salespeople, business owners, managers, and sales support personnel how to respond to commercial RFPs and RFPs issued by state and local governments. The primary objective of this seminar is to teach students how to structure and write proposals so they are persuasive, compelling, and differentiate your solution from competing solutions.

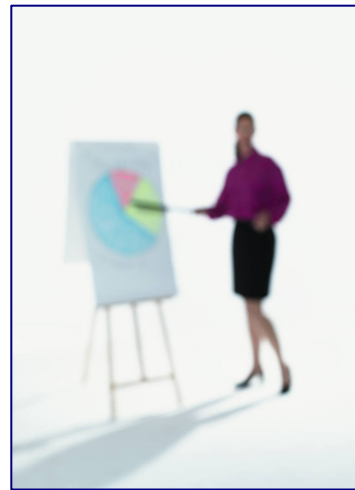
#### Proposal Training Overview

When a buyer issues an RFP, they are typically very close to making a purchase decision. Therefore, your proposal must accomplish two very important things.

First, your proposal should *convince* the buyer that the solution you are proposing will overcome the challenges they face and deliver the outcomes they want. Unlike most proposals that simply present pages and pages of product information, your proposal must be customer focused and inherently persuasive. It must explain, in clear terms, how you are going to use your product to solve their problem.

Second, your proposal has to differentiate your solution from competing solutions. When a buyer is reviewing proposals that are submitted in response to an RFP, all those competing proposals start looking and sounding alike. By structuring your proposal so it clearly demonstrates how your solution is both different and better than the others, your proposal will stand out rather than blend in.

*Writing Proposals in Response to Commercial RFPs™* teaches students how to write proposals that accomplish both of these important objectives.



### Improving Effectiveness

*How to Respond to Commercial RFPs™* teaches students how to produce better, more effective, and more persuasive proposals. Following is a list of the benefits that students will receive by attending this class.

- **Focusing on Customer Needs.** Students learn how to structure proposals so they're more customer-oriented and less product- or seller-oriented. This makes your proposal more relevant to the buyer.
- **Improving Persuasiveness.** Students learn fundamental concepts and practical techniques designed to maximize the persuasiveness of your message.
- **Differentiating Your Solution.** Students learn multiple techniques to organize and present your sales message in a way that differentiates your solution from competitive solutions. This not only helps your proposal to stand out from other proposals, it demonstrates to the buyer why your solution is superior.
- **Formatting.** Students learn how to format their proposals in a way that makes it easy for the buyer to comprehend your message even if they only browse rather than read your document. This is so important because the vast majority of buyers do not read a proposal cover to cover.
- **Research.** Students learn multiple techniques for researching the companies that issue RFPs and the opportunities they represent. This gives you better, more comprehensive information on which to make go/no go decisions. For those organizations that choose to respond to an RFP, it also gives you a better understanding of the client so you can make your proposal more relevant to them and their needs.

## Who Needs This Class?

*How to Respond to Commercial RFPs™* is designed for salespeople, business owners, proposal writers, sales support staff, and anyone else who needs to improve the effectiveness of their RFP responses. While the course is suited to a wide audience, however, it is ideal for organizations who sell in highly competitive markets and need to differentiate their solution from competitive solutions.

## Course Customization

Before a class is scheduled, we spend time learning about your organization and the challenges you face when responding to RFPs. This includes reviewing proposals that you've previously written, determining your current success rate, making a preliminary assessment of staff skill levels, discussing your current proposal processes, and more. We also document what you've determined are your biggest concerns, and we review the major outcomes you want to accomplish.

The purpose of this discovery effort is to identify the areas where we need to focus our instruction. With the information that's collected, we then customize the material that's presented so it effectively addresses your needs. As part of this customization, we use examples from your previously-written proposals to demonstrate how specific sections can be re-written to make them more effective. Ultimately, this process ensures we address the topics that are most relevant to your staff.

# 2

## Class Description

*How to Respond to Commercial RFPs™* can be delivered in a one day or two day format. The one day class is an interactive lecture. The two day class is an interactive lecture the first day, and a workshop the second day.

### Interactive Lecture Session

During the lecture portion of the program, the instructor presents information covering a variety of proposal topics. This lecture format is the most effective way to present all of the relevant information; however, the instructor encourages student interaction and participation throughout the program. Instructor/student interaction facilitates the learning process because it allows the student to relate the topic being presented to his or her own work.

The most important topics that are covered are listed here.

- **Measuring RFP Program Effectiveness.** In order to get anywhere, you must know both where you are and where you are going. This section of the class helps students to understand where they are today, the common mistakes they make, and ultimately, what needs to be fixed to improve your proposal success rate.
- **Understanding persuasion.** Sharing information is important, but when the customer is preparing to make an important purchase decision, communicating persuasively is more important than communicating informatively. This class introduces students to the fundamentals of persuasive theory.
- **Capture planning & pursuit.** Responding to an RFP begins months or years before the RFP is actually issued. This section explores the many steps involved in determining which accounts to pursue and what information to collect during the pursuit process.
- **Analyzing RFPs.** Once you receive an RFP, it is important to review it in detail to identify issues or problems, themes, terms, or requirements that are different than what you expected. A little bit of analysis up front goes a long way towards producing a better response.
- **Developing a response strategy and conceptualizing your message.** The first step in any writing project is capturing and organizing your information. We'll show you what information to capture and how to organize it so you'll have everything you need to draft a compelling response.
- **RFP response rules & reminders.** This section discusses some of the most important rules and restrictions to keep in mind as you write your proposal.
- **Writing your proposal.** Students how to write the various components of a proposal.
  - *How to write a cover letter.*
  - *How to write a compelling title page.*

- *How to write an effective executive introduction that is both persuasive and compelling.*
- *How to answer RFP questions, how to prioritize which questions are more important and deserve a more in-depth response, how to format your answers to make them more persuasive, and more.*
- *How to write resumes and references so they stand out and get noticed.*
- **Reviewing your proposal.** Discusses the two different reviews you need to conduct before your proposal gets submitted.
- **About presentations.** Just because you make it to the short list doesn't mean you are going to get the deal. This section explores how to make your shortlist presentation both persuasive and compelling.
- **Post RFP interview.** One of the best ways to learn how well you are doing with your proposal effort is to analyze what your customer's say about you. This section includes a variety of tips and methods designed to help you capture their best insights and observations.

This class, which takes a full day, is a comprehensive and substantive program. Students walk away with more than just advice and guidelines for responding to RFPs, students walk away with a different perspective on the entire process. They begin to view the RFP response process as a sales process more than a writing process.

## Two Day Program

Organization's that choose the two day program receive the lecture on the first day (described above), plus a workshop on the second day.

The workshop focuses on two things. First, it assists students to draft content that they will be able to use in the executive introduction. Second, the workshop assists students to draft answer content to RFP questions.

Initially, the students and the instructor will all work on editing or drafting the same piece of content. As students gain confidence with the methodical process that's used to draft the executive introduction and answers to RFP questions, the instructor assigns individual questions to each student. Students are then responsible for analyzing the question, determining the best way to structure the response, and drafting a response. Student responses are then evaluated by the group.

In addition to giving students the opportunity to spend more time interacting with the instructor, there are two important advantages associated with dedicating an entire day to this hands-on workshop.

- First, because the workshop is focused on drafting answers to the most important and frequently asked RFP questions that you receive, students will have already made great progress in building a library of revised proposal content by the time the program is completed. This is content that's available the very next time they respond to an RFP.
- Second, Unlike many training courses where students learn new approaches only to fall back on old habits later, the workshop forces students to begin using the methods and processes that were presented in class. This improves the likelihood that students will both internalize and begin using what they've learned.

# 3

## Pricing & Logistics

### How to Respond to Commercial RFPs™, Single Day Program

<b>Price*</b>	<b>\$3,500 for up to ten students. \$300 for each additional student.</b>
<b>Maximum Class Size</b>	<b>20 students. Alternate arrangements can be made with the permission of the instructor.</b>
<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Client provides suitable learning facilities.</b>
<b>Travel Expenses</b>	<b>Client pays for reasonable travel and living expenses for the instructor.</b>
<b>Class Length</b>	<b>Classes are customized to include content that is relevant to the needs of your organization and student skill levels. Depending on this customization, the class takes approximately six hours.</b>
<b>Workbook</b>	<b>Each student receives a workbook. Each workbook includes copies of all relevant slides that are used in class along with numerous examples.</b>

### How to Respond to Commercial RFPs™, Two-Day Program

<b>Price*</b>	<b>\$5000 for up to ten students. \$300 for each additional student.</b>
<b>Maximum Class Size</b>	<b>20 students. Alternate arrangements can be made with the permission of the instructor.</b>
<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Client provides suitable learning facilities.</b>
<b>Travel Expenses</b>	<b>Client pays for reasonable travel and living expenses for the instructor.</b>
<b>Class Length</b>	<b>Classes are customized to include content that is relevant to the needs of your organization and student skill levels. Depending on this customization, the class takes approximately six to seven hours and the workshop takes approximately six hours.</b>
<b>Workbook</b>	<b>Each student receives a workbook. Each workbook includes copies of all relevant slides that are used in class along with numerous examples.</b>

\* All prices listed are for informational purposes only, and are subject to change without notice. Contact The Seibert Group for a firm price quote.

# 4

## The Next Steps

### 1. Contact Us with Questions

If you have questions, or would like to discuss proposal training for your organization, please contact us.

The Seibert Group  
P.O. Box 11053  
Cincinnati, OH 45211

Phone: 513-598-4647  
Email: [training@persuasionselling.com](mailto:training@persuasionselling.com)  
web: [www.persuasionselling.com](http://www.persuasionselling.com)

### 2. Schedule a Proposal Training Class

To schedule a proposal training seminar for your firm, please contact us at 513-598-4647. We will be happy to answer your questions and schedule your training class.



# 5

## About The Seibert Group

### About The Seibert Group

The Seibert Group is a sales consulting agency that specializes in persuasive communications and sales proposals. Our mission is to show sales organizations how to increase sales by maximizing the *persuasiveness* of their sales proposals.

At The Seibert Group, proposals are our business. If you have a question, or simply would like to discuss a project, please call us at 513-598-4647 or send an email to [info@persuasionselling.com](mailto:info@persuasionselling.com).

### About the Instructor

Dave Seibert is the founder of The Seibert Group, and the chief architect of the Persuasion Selling™ method of producing sales proposals. Dave is an accomplished writer and enthusiastic speaker with expertise in persuasive communications and proposal writing. He is a sales veteran with over fifteen years experience in sales, sales management, and sales education—much of it in financial, healthcare, and computer-related industries.

As an adjunct professor at The College of Mount Saint Joseph in Cincinnati, Dave taught classes on selling and marketing. It was during this time that he began compiling research for a book, the subject of which is teaching persuasive communication skills to salespeople.

Dave launched The Seibert Group in 2001 as a proposal writing services firm, and has since assisted many sales organizations to write persuasive sales proposals. In late 2002, he expanded the organization to include a line of training products that are based on his research into persuasive communications. Classes that are currently available include *How to Write Persuasive Sales Proposals* and *How to Respond to Commercial RFPs™*.

