

TOP 12 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN SELECTING A MAINTENANCE OUTSOURCER

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1. Pre-qualify bidders prior to sending the Request for Quote (RFQ).

Send a letter to all interested bidders requesting information that will prove their ability to bid the RFQ. Pre-qualifying bidders will help you generate a list of bidders that have met your minimum requirements or requirements that are not negotiable. Examples of proof include presenting bonding and liability insurance certificates.

2. Verify contractor information is consistent with the RFQ.

Did the contractor follow your instructions? Check each area of the RFQ to verify that bidders have provided a response to each area of the RFQ. You are checking their ability to follow instructions and handle your request.

3. Make sure the contractors are financially capable of supporting contract startup.

The purpose is to ensure that bidders are financially capable of supporting new contract startup costs. Many contracts have large initial costs and you want to know that the contractor has the ability to purchase equipment, pay salaries until payments start and cover incidental costs.

4. Determine if the contractor meets required insurance and/or bonding.

This is important—to ensure your protection in the event of employee accidents, damages or theft.

5. Review acceptable safety policies.

Request safety policies, safety training and Worker Compensation EMR rate. You want to make sure the contractor's safety policies are compatible with your safety standards.

6. Check references.

Ask for references from companies currently under contract that are similar in size and industry type. In addition, you may want to ask for names of companies they have lost contracts with and why the contract was lost.

7. Research any legal actions against the contractor.

The process of obtaining a new contracted service is expensive and you want to know if the company selected has any liens or judgments that may impede their ability to stay in business during the life of the contract.

8. Confirm that contractor has a quality assurance program.

Many contracts have been entered into without an understanding of how the contractor was going to ensure the quality of work performed. Request an explanation of how the contractor is going to monitor the performance of the contract.

9. Ask contractor to offer a service-level agreement.

How do you hold your contractor accountable for doing what they said they would do? Many contractors are willing to implement a reward/penalty agreement (service-level agreement) for performance outcomes. Provide the type of reward/penalty program you would prefer or ask the contractor for their service-level agreement.

10. Establish that proposed staff is adequate to fulfill RFQ specifications.

Do your homework prior to preparing the RFQ. Create a detailed set of specifications explaining the work that is to be done, location, size and frequency. Narrowing the specifications to this type of detail will give you an idea of the number of resources that are going to be required to fulfill the contract.

11. Compare price.

After all areas have been evaluated, it is now time to compare cost. Bidders should have met all other requirements prior to this step. All things being equal or close to equal it's much easier to select the bid with the best price.

12. Talk to an industry expert.

Outside resources should be obtained if you are having difficulty with any of the previous steps, especially creating specifications. There are consultants with the expertise to help improve your outsourcing efforts. **FMJ**

About the Authors:



Harry and Pat McClure deliver top-quality consulting and project management services. They have many years' experience in all aspects of the janitorial industry. Pat has a wide-range of experience and education in business consulting and technological strategies. They are based in Dublin, Ohio.