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## 5 Tips to be Successful in an IPD RFP

BY DANIEL DROUIN

You have made it to the Request for Proposal (RFP). Congratulations! How can you and your team stand out from the crowd and demonstrate that your firm is the right choice when it comes to collaborative delivery?

From my monthly work with industry groups and discussion forums of lean practitioners, I know that suppliers often struggle with writing up the IPD proposal. They usually have qualified estimators and a collaborative team but lack the skills of writing. As each lean proposal is unique to the owner's requirements, it needs to be adjusted and written up accordingly. Unfortunately, there is no template or 'one size fits all' approach.

In my four years of experience in Integrated Project Delivery, I have been responsible for facilitating a suite of advisory services for collaborative-focused clients and helped many teams and organizations with a tailored approach to onboarding, training, and cultural transformation.

To be successful in the bidding process comes down to detailed research, excellent storytelling and writing, collaboration, and being a lifelong learner.

Here are my five tips to excel in any IPD RFP:

### 1. Do your research

Investing some time in desk research can go a long way. Look at how the client is positioning themselves in the market? Are they posting on social media? What does their website communicate?

Internally, familiarise your key team members with the standard IPD contract – you can connect with the Integrated Project Delivery Association (IPDA) for literature and other resources that provide guidance. [Download](#) the IPDA's *Integrated Project Delivery: An Action Guide For Leaders*.

### 2. Tell your story

Focus on storytelling - who, what, when, where, and most of all *why*? Ahead of any future RFP response, establish a narrative that shows why your firm is the right choice for this kind of collaborative delivery. Illustrate your firm's values and how they have influenced the firm's direction. How has a collaborative approach changed how your firm delivers services? After all, we all love a good story and people respond to stories more than to facts.

### 3. Be collaborative

IPD proposals typically require more in-depth information from all partners, rather than just the Prime Consultant, who usually is the Architect or Structural Engineer. Informal conversations ahead of the RFP issue should identify values and resource synergies that give your team the edge. It is crucial for the success of your proposal that all involved parties understand what is at stake and required to deliver. This will save valuable time once the RFP has been released. Be collaborative and make sure your proposal team comes together regularly to check on progress, identify weaknesses, and ensure that the vision for the proposal is shared by the whole team.

### 4. Learn from your past experience

Always take advantage of a debrief if you were unsuccessful. Continuous improvement over time will generate success. A willingness to admit mistakes by clearly outlining the struggles and challenges of previous projects not only shows the client that the firm is embracing change and learning, but also your ability to find innovation through continuous improvement. These can also be challenges and struggles that were a result of traditional delivery models.

### 5. Use the help of an external proposal writer

If writing is not your cup of tea at all, I recommend seeking help from a professional writer who can add value to your proposal. Look for a writer who has experience in the construction industry and make sure that you brief him/her accordingly. External content writers can only meet your expectations if you integrate them into your team and provide them with all the necessary information, aka briefing, to make your proposal as best as it can be. Which means that your subject matter expert will work very closely with the writer.

#### What's next?

In my next article, I will discuss developing an understanding of owner readiness and how to create the Owner Readiness Report as a deliverable. With IPD recently emerging as an advantageous approach to project delivery, we believe owner readiness is a primary contributor to the success of any type of project, complex or not. Ergo, our focus will be to assess the level of readiness across different levels within the owner's organisation implementing a systematic approach for the organisation and the project.

#### [About Daniel]

Daniel is a Project Manager and Director of Collaborative Project Delivery with the Ottawa-based architectural firm Group2. He brings over 35 years of experience in the management, coordination and execution of major capital projects, complex work in civil engineering, municipal engineering, and transportation infrastructure. As a Lean practitioner, trainer and coach in the manufacturing industry, Daniel gained extensive experience in 6 sigma, ISO 9000, process auditing and Kaizen.

For lean teams, Dan facilitates a tailored approach to onboarding, training and cultural transformation using an integrated toolbox of Lean tools and processes including Last Planner System, 5Ss, 8 wastes, supply chain and flow vs. batch.