



CONNECTION



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AMP Promises

What We Can Deliver

Responding to a Request for Proposal (RFP) can be quite a challenge. While many RFPs are clearly written and straight-forward, others require significant interpretation. Well-meaning prospective clients often do not say exactly what they are seeking from an assessment or management firm and, sometimes, when they do say it, they don't always mean what their words say. Thus, responses from the various competitors can be left to chance. This can result in disappointment on the part of the potential client, especially when the services provided by the selected firm turn out to be different than expected. When an RFP is unclear, it leaves room for doubt on the part of respondents, and also opens the door to those who would say "whatever it takes" to get a contract.

by William D. Hogan, ME,
Vice President,
Marketing and Business Products

At AMP, we respond to RFPs with direct answers, containing the specifics of how we would handle the prospective customer's program. We take great pains to promise only what we can really deliver, avoiding agreeing to unrealistic timelines, offering unreasonably low cost estimates and accepting expectations that may not fit within our business approach. In short, we "tell it like it is," even if this means the contract is awarded to another organization. However, not all assessment and management firms take this approach. There are pitfalls to avoid and organizations that will "say anything" to get a prospect "signed on the dotted line."

What are some indications of possible problems with a RFP response? Let's start with the simplest: **too good to be true pricing**. Most major competitors in the assessment and management industries have been around for several years and are adept at evaluating RFPs and responding with competitive prices. However, for whatever the reason, one may choose to offer exceptionally low prices to gain an advantage on a particular proposal. This may be due to the "loss leader" approach to pricing, that is, offering an extremely low price at the start to get a foot in the door for later, when prices can be quietly raised. It could also be due to desperate times in their business, especially if the group is having an unannounced financial problem. Or, in the case of a RFP with unclear objectives, an exceptionally low price could mean that there is disparity between the work the client expects to be done and what the bidder believes is to be done. Before accepting a "bargain basement" price, it is wise to carefully investigate what is being offered for the cost proposed. Many times, a low price means that it comes with a service level to match.

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Technology That Works

People Who Care



AMP on the ROAD

AMP is committed to staying current with advancing professional standards and annually attends, exhibits and presents at industry conferences. An additional bonus to attending these conferences is the opportunity to meet and share with our clients, other credentialing organizations and associations. Please visit with us at an upcoming event:

CLEAR ANNUAL CONFERENCE

September 15-17

Phoenix, AZ



ARELLO NATIONAL CONFERENCE

September 28 - October 1

Nashville, TN



NOCA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

November 16-19

Long Beach, CA



ATP INNOVATIONS IN TESTING CONFERENCE 2006

February 6-8, 2006

Orlando, FL



New NBRC/AMP **Executive Office Building** *Planned*

AMP and its parent company, the National Board for Respiratory Care, Inc. (NBRC), will have a new home in early 2007. Plans have been completed for a new NBRC/AMP Executive Office Building to be located in the Corporate Ridge Office Park in the Kansas City suburb of Olathe, KS. As the artist's rendering reflects, the new building will be an attractive, three-story, concrete and glass structure, to be solely occupied by AMP and the NBRC. With approximately 75,000 square feet of office space, the new facility will more than double the space currently occupied by our hard working staff.

The Corporate Ridge Office Park is being developed by OPUS Northwest, a Minneapolis-based real estate developer with offices around the country, including one in Overland Park, KS. OPUS is one of the largest developers of commercial and industrial property in the country. The new NBRC/AMP Executive Office Building will be visible from the very accessible K-10 Highway corridor and will be easily identifiable from inside the office park, a plus for the many AMP clients who elect to have board and committee meetings at our facilities. Once there, clients will find significantly improved conference rooms and state-of-the-art technology.

"The primary driving force for the new building was space for people and technology," said Gary A. Smith, AMP's President and Chief Executive Officer. The new NBRC/AMP Executive Office Building will initially house about 120 staff members, but will have room to expand to about double that amount. As the ever-increasing number of our clients attests, AMP has rapidly grown during its history and expects to continue to grow significantly in the future. The new office facility is part of our plan to offer AMP business partners the best, most responsive service in the assessment and management industries, as well as leading technology and an attractive, productive work environment.

A ground-breaking ceremony for the new NBRC/AMP Executive Office Building is scheduled in September, with actual construction set to begin early in 2006. Estimated completion time is Spring 2007. "We are very happy with the design of the building," said Mr. Smith. "It's going to be great for our clients and their constituents, as well as for AMP and the NBRC."



AMP Promises *What We Can Deliver*

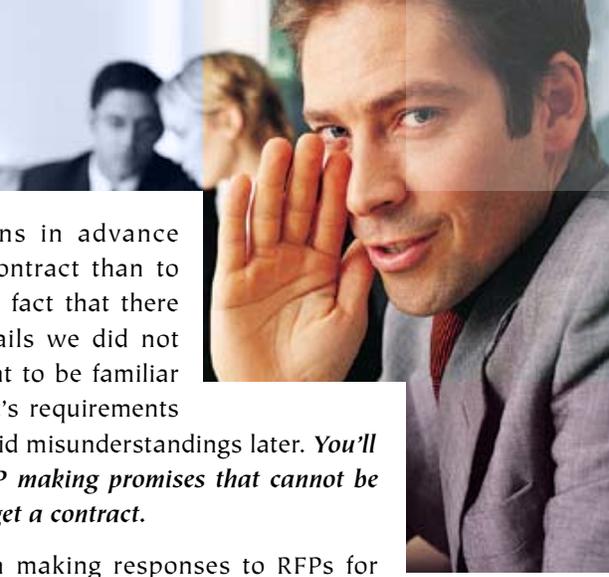
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The best way to avoid the disappointment of receiving poor service for a low price is to contact the references of all bidders before a contract is awarded and *listen to what they say!* With AMP, you'll find that our clients, who we consider business partners, will tell you that "a price IS a price." AMP has delivered each service called for by every contract for the price we stated in each of our RFP responses for the entire time of the company's existence, over 23 years. We have never attempted to adjust a price after a customer signed a contract, even if it meant we lost money in performing the work. Speaking of the work, AMP clients will tell you that whatever we do is "AMP Quality," that is, the best that we can make it, regardless of price.

In addition to following unrealistic pricing strategies, some assessment or management firms today may also fail to understand a prospective client's requirements and seriously underestimate the complexities of a program before saying "*we can do that*" in their RFP response. Many times, we have seen promises made that later could not be fulfilled, simply because the competitor did not investigate or comprehend what was expected by the customer. Taking the "we can do that" approach is fine as long as the organization has an idea of how to do what the customer expects. However, there is no substitute for knowing the client organization and getting into the details of their expectations before submitting a bid.

Over the years, we have found the greatest client disappointments come from circumstances where an organization made grand promises simply to get the contract. We suppose the thinking here must be that "we can worry about it" after getting the contract signed. A few years back, AMP lost a client in just such a situation. A prospective vendor made promises that sounded "really good" and, while our representatives attempted to convince our client otherwise, the choice was made to select this other company and its product offering. Soon after the award of the contract, it became apparent to our former client that their new vendor and its product were not performing at the level they desired. Another RFP was subsequently issued and the client returned to AMP, with significantly more insight about the perils of competitive bids.

How does an organization avoid being taken advantage of by those who would say anything to get a contract? *Ask questions and don't take a quick "we can do that"* as a good answer. Make sure a prospective vendor can give you the details of how they plan to "do that" and can support their statements with examples of other work they have done AND by getting references who can verify their completion of similar projects. Delve into the vendor's understanding of the nuances of your program and make sure you have disclosed all of the facts about it as well. At AMP, we would rather ask

A man in a grey suit and red tie is shown in profile, whispering to someone off-camera. His hand is held up to his mouth, and his expression is serious. The background is blurred, showing other people in a professional setting.

more questions in advance of getting a contract than to learn after the fact that there are many details we did not know. We want to be familiar with our client's requirements up front to avoid misunderstandings later. ***You'll never find AMP making promises that cannot be kept simply to get a contract.***

At times when making responses to RFPs for assessment or management services, we find it is necessary to tell a prospective customer "no." Coming from a marketing person, you may find this surprising! However, there are occasions where clients make requests for services that they do not fully understand, may not actually need, or the ***requirements spelled out in a RFP are inconsistent with best practices*** regarding examination security, test development, effective association management or convention planning. In these cases, AMP believes we have a responsibility to explain to the prospective customer "***what we can do***" and "***why***," rather than to simply agree to a process that does not meet contemporary assessment or management standards. It can be difficult to tell a potential new customer that AMP will only work with assessment programs that are based on a job analysis, or that we will only prepare association financial statements that follow generally accepted accounting principles. However, at the risk of the prospect choosing another vendor, we've found that taking a proactive approach in outlining the reasons why we do things the way that we do them works best for both AMP and our business partners. Even when we have to say "no" to a client request, you may be certain that we do it based on sound reasons and with our customer's best interests in mind.

From this article, you may surmise that ***AMP is a different kind of company.*** In fact, AMP is indeed unique, as the only assessment and management firm owned by a not-for-profit organization, the National Board for Respiratory Care, Inc. (NBRC). Ownership by the NBRC makes us exceptionally aware of the needs of certification agencies and professional associations, having the perspective of both a consumer and provider of the services we offer. When responding to RFPs, AMP recognizes the responsibility we have to stick to what we can actually do, promise only what we can actually deliver and, above all, tell clients and prospects the truth, even when they may not want to hear it. As our President, Gary A. Smith, often says, "Our word is our bond." With AMP, you may depend on it! Ask any of our more than 100 satisfied business partners about AMP or contact me to discuss your specific needs for assessment or management services. ■



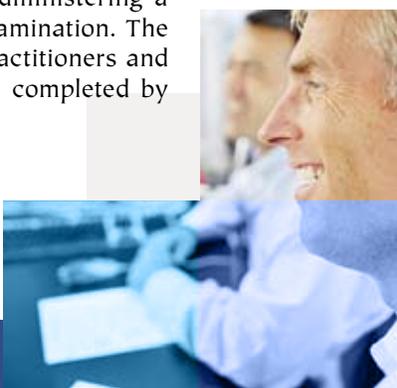
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

■ *Axiom Resource Management, Inc.* is a full service consulting firm serving businesses and state and federal government agencies since 1996. Axiom is currently working with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to develop a National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners. This program will certify medical examiners to perform physical examinations of Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) drivers in order to determine if drivers can safely handle the mental and physical demands of driving a CMV. Axiom has contracted with AMP for role delineation and test development services for this important project. The job analysis is scheduled to include multiple on-site job observations, brainstorming sessions and a survey of 5,000 medical examiners to be completed by 2006. Test development services for the new examination should be complete by early 2007.

■ AMP has recently contracted with the *American Society of Pain Management Educators (ASPE)* for job analysis services. As the sole credentialing agency for pain educators in the United States, ASPE's mission is to improve the standards of clinical pain management education and help establish credentialed pain educators (CPEs) as standing resources within pain practices, hospitals, healthcare systems and long-term care facilities. This job analysis study is an important step toward ASPE's goal of creating and administering a psychometrically valid credentialing examination. The job analysis study will survey 1,000 practitioners and test specifications are scheduled to be completed by May 2006.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT
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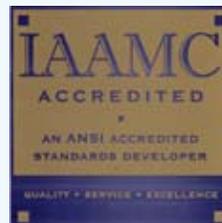
www.goAMP.com



IAAMC Accreditation Awarded to AMP

Management Services

We are delighted to announce that AMP Management Services has achieved accreditation from the International Association of Association Management Companies (IAAMC). IAAMC accreditation is granted when an association management company demonstrates a commitment and ability to deliver consistent, quality service to current and prospective clients. Part of the accreditation process involves an intense review of 13 major performance areas including client contracts, service delivery procedures, project results and financial management.



IAAMC worked with the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) to develop the ANSI/IAAMC Standard of Good Practices for the Association Management Industry, which is the basis for the IAAMC accreditation program. While clients of AMP Management Services already recognize the personal attention, quality service and individual responsiveness provided by our staff, IAAMC accreditation provides further evidence that AMP has adopted and utilizes quality service systems consistent with the excellence demanded by the ANSI/IAAMC Standard. IAAMC accreditation has been awarded to AMP Management Services for a four-year period, effective August 1, 2005.



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