

Guide to Writing Compelling Non-Confidential Proposals in Response to NineSigma Requests

INTRODUCTION

NineSigma publishes Requests for Proposals (RFPs) on behalf of our clients to help them find partners with resources that address their needs. Your written response to an RFP is your opportunity to highlight your **unique capability to address the client's needs in a brief but clear, concise, and compelling proposal**. We require that you submit only non-confidential proposals to protect both your interests and those of our clients. This guide will help you prepare a strong, non-confidential proposal that more effectively attracts our client's interest.

Our client will compare proposals on a competitive basis and choose to contact and negotiate with respondents who **most effectively address the client's needs** as described in the RFP.

Unlike a grant proposal, where you are judged on your technology alone and the financial terms are fixed, NineSigma's clients will be evaluating your response based on feasibility in three areas:

1. **Technical feasibility** – Is the proposal scientifically viable and does it meet the technical specifications requested?
2. **Commercial feasibility** – Will the proposed technology meet the client's business/product needs?
3. **Relationship feasibility** – Can the client and solution provider work together?

1. TECHNICAL APPROACH

When describing your solution in a non-confidential way, focus on describing **what your technology does, not necessarily how it works**. A general description or classification of your approach, without revealing the technical details, provides enough information in your initial proposal. In addition, consider the following suggestions:

- Can you currently meet all the criteria in the Request? If yes, be specific.
- If no, outline the additional resources needed to develop a solution that meets all criteria
- Emphasize the advantages of your technology compared to other existing technologies in the field
- Describe the maturity of your technology (e.g. concept only, lab scale testing, pilot scale prototyping, commercially available)
- Include supporting data, diagrams, and/or pictures to illustrate and validate a concept or technology
- Upload supplemental files, such as product brochures or media clips

Q: Is there a form or template that I can use?

A: Yes. Each of NineSigma's Requests has a custom Proposal Template available via a link in the Request and from the [NineSights](#) website. In addition to the general guidelines for preparing a proposal, the template may contain specific criteria that clients will use to evaluate proposals and specific instructions for responding to the RFP.

Ideally, our clients are looking for your interest and demonstrated expertise in the form of a two-to-three page written summary. NineSigma's clients tend not to select proposals that direct the client to "look at my website" or "look at my CV", or that claim that the respondent can "invent anything" without providing examples or evidence.

2. COMMERCIAL FEASIBILITY

Whereas the goal of a grant proposal is to obtain funding for long-term basic research projects, NineSigma's clients seek to fund targeted needs. Therefore, we encourage you to highlight how your approach applies to the stated business need of the RFP. If your technology is still under development, **include your proposed approach to achieve a proof of concept, including an estimated budget and timeline for a specific deliverable.** If you have a ready product, be as specific as possible in describing how your product is currently in use in the marketplace and how you envision collaboration with our client. Furthermore, describe your current intellectual property status when possible, as well as your preferences for the proposed relationship with NineSigma's client.

Q: Does NineSigma have a sample of a great proposal that I can review?

A: Sorry, we do not. Because every Request and client is different, there is no "ideal" proposal. In addition, we show the proposals we receive only to the client who sponsored the Request.

3. RELATIONSHIP FEASIBILITY

Finally, our client will evaluate the compatibility between the two parties. The following are suggested ways to describe the unique qualities that would make you an ideal partner:

- Include a brief summary of your team and organization(s)
- Highlight a few recent achievements or past projects that are relevant to the RFP
- Emphasize your capabilities and experience, especially if you are not comfortable providing details of your technical approach, or if your approach lacks significant supporting data

Your capabilities and examples of successful product development experience will give the client insight into how you might work together.

HOW NINESIGMA PRESENTS YOUR PROPOSAL

NineSigma does not screen or evaluate the proposals, and we provide all submitted proposals to our clients. In addition, we present organized summaries of your capabilities as they compare to the client's evaluation criteria. The proposals that **most explicitly meet the greatest number of RFP criteria** typically rise to the top. Ultimately, the client selects the respondents of greatest interest for further discussions.

CONCLUSION

Submitting your non-confidential proposal in response to a NineSigma RFP gives you the opportunity to present your technology to decision makers at some of the world's largest and most successful companies. We are here to help you prepare the best possible proposal, so please contact us if you need assistance.

Q: Who can I contact if I have questions?

A: NineSigma has a Solution Provider Help Desk to answer your emails and phone calls. The Help Desk can answer general questions and can let you know if a deadline extension is available.

Our Help Desk will connect you to the Request Manager for additional guidance regarding the Request or your proposal.

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