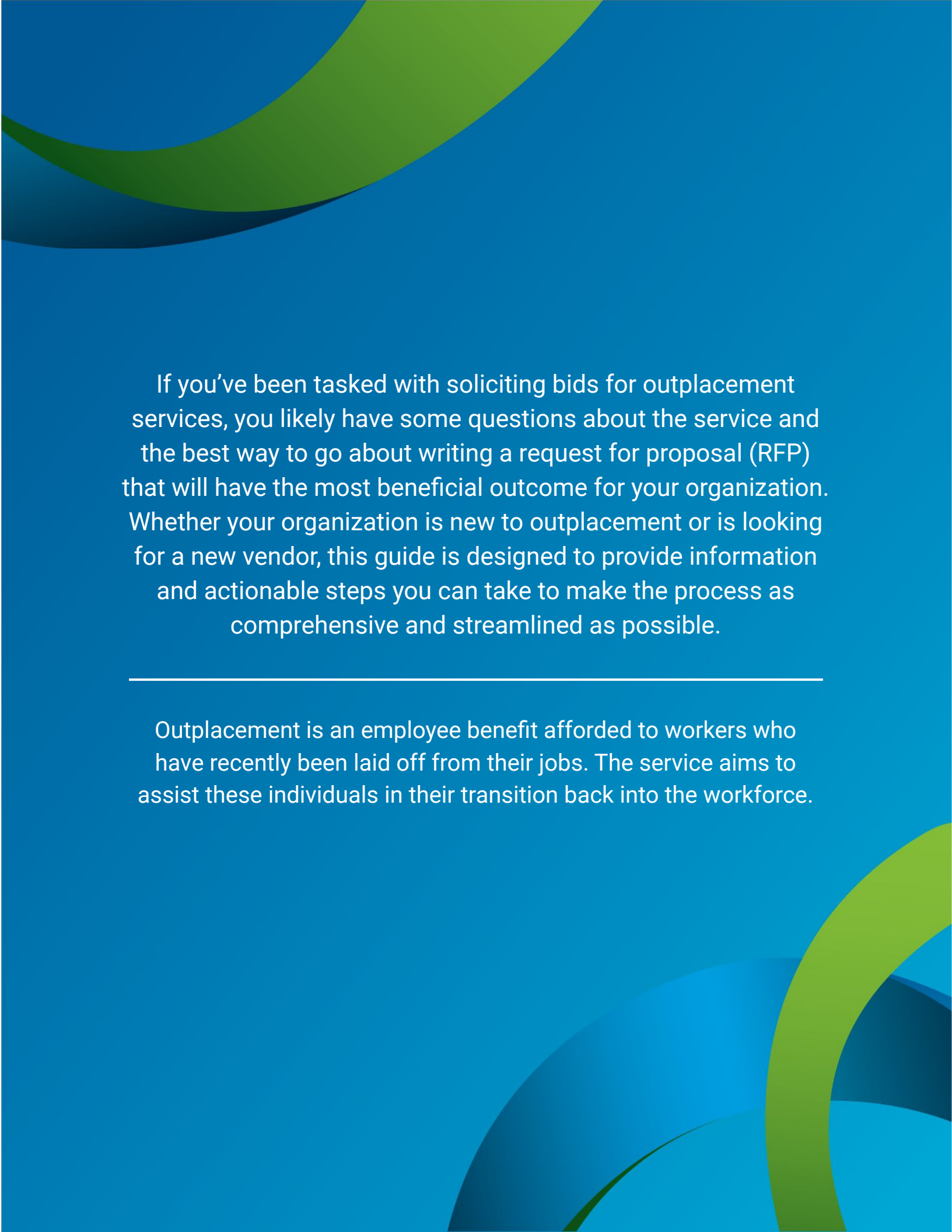




Outplacement RFP Guide

Best practices for an effective outplacement
vendor selection process



If you've been tasked with soliciting bids for outplacement services, you likely have some questions about the service and the best way to go about writing a request for proposal (RFP) that will have the most beneficial outcome for your organization. Whether your organization is new to outplacement or is looking for a new vendor, this guide is designed to provide information and actionable steps you can take to make the process as comprehensive and streamlined as possible.

Outplacement is an employee benefit afforded to workers who have recently been laid off from their jobs. The service aims to assist these individuals in their transition back into the workforce.

Understand

About Outplacement

When outplacement emerged in the 1960s, companies primarily offered career assistance to executives and upper-level employees, providing them with a satellite office, phone, and assistant to aid in looking for employment—a model that is outdated by today’s standards. Today, companies seek to offer outplacement programs with more modern benefits to not just to a select few but to all affected employees across every level of the organization—with the aim to better protect brand reputation and better support the employees who historically have been underserved in these times of transition. In addition, internet-savvy employees have come to expect convenient outplacement services, with accessible coaching on demand through the click of a button.

Outplacement services refer to a wide range of services that help people find new jobs, and they can vary according to the outplacement provider. Some of these include:

- career coaching
- cover letter and resume building tools
- resume review and editing
- job interview practice and coaching
- career interests and skills assessment tests
- guides on career-related topics, such as networking tips and personal branding
- access to information and research about target companies
- social media profile optimization

Because different outplacement programs offer different services, the quality of the programs can vary widely. For example, an outplacement program that offers unlimited one-on-one coaching with an experienced career development specialist and hands-on resume reviews by a professional editor is likely to be much more effective for the job seeker than a program that offers only a defined number of coaching sessions and general workshops that, by their nature, cannot be tailored to the job seeker.

In addition, some outplacement programs require job seekers to make an appointment to meet with career coaches in a physical office in order to access services, while others allow users to get the help they need at their convenience, whether through scheduled appointments or through an online platform that gives them instant, on-demand access to career coaching and other tools.



Understand

Essential Features Of Outplacement



Career Coaching

Every job seeker is different and comes to their outplacement experience with different backgrounds and desires for their next career move. Experienced coaches will be able to guide anyone—no matter their job level, industry, or field—to effectively make a career transition that's both satisfying and rewarding.



Resume Writing

While some job seekers may have recently been in the job market, others may not have refreshed their resumes in decades. Either way, an expert resume writer will be able to help them ensure that their resume follows current best practices to illustrate their experience and accomplishments effectively while also using the relevant keywords for the job they want in order to not be filtered out by applicant tracking systems.



Job Postings and Alerts

Job seekers should have access to a job board with millions of opportunities and the ability to set job alerts so that they can be among the first to apply when a job is posted.



Networking and Personal Branding Workshops

Tools and workshops for networking and building a personal brand are necessary to a successful search in today's job market. A quality outplacement program will provide guides, workshops, and other resources to create a pitch and branded materials and to learn how to build relationships and how best to reach out to connections for job inquiries and more.



Interview Practice Tools

Preparing for an interview in a vacuum is challenging. An outplacement program should include a practice interview tool that allows the job seeker to record their responses to hundreds of potential interview questions, view their recordings, and refine their presence and answers.



Upskilling and Reskilling Courses

Now that reskilling and upskilling is seen as a vital part of career growth, you should also expect online education classes to be included in your outplacement programs at no additional cost. These classes should come from a well-respected educational content provider, and be available in a wide variety of fields and subjects.

Understand

Benefits of Outplacement

Outplacement provides a softer landing to your impacted employees once they leave your organization. Not only is offering the benefit the right thing to do, but it can also help with employee retention and talent acquisition. By caring for those employees who are leaving, you demonstrate to your remaining employees, candidates, your clients, and your customers that you are an employer of choice.

Assess

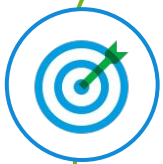


When Does Your Organization Need Services

How quickly will you need services? Whether you need them for an impending layoff event or for general business turnover over an undefined period, try to allow as much time as possible for bidders to respond so that you get as much information as possible that will help you make the right choice. By securing a provider with an upfront retainer or by simply signing an agreement, the process for providing services will be easy should an unexpected need arise.

Who in Your Organization Will Need Services

Whether you are addressing needs for a single impending layoff event or RIF, or are looking to partner with an outplacement vendor for future needs, you may wish to find a vendor who will be able to service every job level in your organization with equal effectiveness. Some providers specialize in executive outplacement, while others focus on mid-level management. To eliminate the need for future RFPs and to cover all potential needs, search for a vendor who has a range of outplacement programs that can benefit employees at every job level in your organization, at a price that makes offering the services to anyone feasible. In your RFP, specify what job levels you are looking to cover, and, if possible, provide approximate headcounts per level.



Where Will Services Be Required?

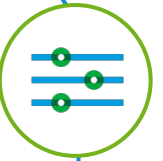
Is your organization global, national, regional, or local? Do you need services for employees in a single or multiple locations? Are you addressing a need for a specific event, such as a plant closure, or are you seeking to partner with an outplacement provider for ongoing turnover? Specify your circumstances to the degree you're allowed so that the vendor can respond to the particular concerns that apply in your situation. For example, if your organization is global, you'll want to be sure you have a provider who can guide you through local outplacement regulations and customs specific to each location.

Assess

What Specific Services Are Needed

Because outplacement programs vary widely, knowing what services are most important to you will help you narrow down your options. Will your HR team members need assistance with notifications or with providing orientations or workshops for your impacted employees? Some features, like a wide variety of online upskilling courses, on-demand coaching, and the availability of coaches seven days a week will make a difference in the effectiveness of the programs you offer. Look for a vendor that provides a range of online tools and resources combined with expert coaching.

If you have an existing vendor but are looking to switch, consider if and how your needs have changed since implementation. Being clear about the negatives and positives or new and different needs will more easily help you find what you're looking for.



What Can you Spend?

Do you have a specific budget for outpatient services? If you're able to indicate a range for your budget, that will help bidders understand your expectations and how they may be able to best serve your needs.



Whom Will You Invite to Bid

You may wish to initially put out a request for information, or RFI, to gather information from vendors about their services in order to narrow down who would be able to best respond to an RFP. If you open an RFP to all vendors, you may end up with a large number of proposals to review, many of which likely will not satisfy your requirements. Whether you choose eligible vendors from the results of an RFI or from your own research, selecting just those vendors you believe will be able to fulfill the requirements of the RFP will streamline your process and provide the best possible results.



Define

The “Why”: *Your Reason for Requesting Outplacement*

Specify whether you are looking for a partner for ongoing turnover or for a particular impending event. Mergers and acquisitions, plant closures, company relocations, or general cost-cutting can create a need for layoffs and outplacement.

The “What”: *Scope of Work*

In as much detail as pertains to your needs, itemize and describe the requirements for the proposal. You may wish to separate them into sections such as “coaching,” “platform,” “client services,” “data and security,” and so on.

How Will Each Part be Weighted?

Some companies will not only create a system of measurement for scoring the bids, but will also publish this information in the RFP. If you think it will help the bidders to understand that you’re more heavily weighing innovation or coaching, for example, indicate that in your RFP.

The “When”: *Timeline and Schedule*

You may have months to analyze, assess, and select an outplacement provider before you sign a contract, or you might be under a tight deadline for an impending event. Either way, you want to provide the vendors with as much time as possible for them to build comprehensive responses so that you have all the information you need to make the right decision.

The “How”: *Instructions for Responses and Submission*

Creating a format for responses will make comparing them and assessing their strengths and weaknesses much easier for you. Ask the bidders to respond to the requirements in order. Some RFPs include a response matrix, in which the vendors indicate the page number where the response to each requirement can be found. If you are using a procurement platform, make sure that you enable bidders to expand on their answers, as often a Yes/No response will need clarification. Also let the bidders know if they can include links, videos, or other attachments that will help to illustrate their solutions.

If you provide a pricing document for the bidders to complete, make sure that you format it in a way that allows vendors to explain what is included in the overall price versus separately. For example, some vendors may itemize the cost for each feature, while others may include everything in one price. Provide options for both types of pricing.

Common deadlines within an RFP schedule include:

- Deadline for bidder to submit intention to bid (often coincides with signing or accepting an NDA)
- Deadline for bidder to submit questions for clarification
- Deadline for company to respond to vendor questions
- Deadline for submission of proposal
- Deadline for selection of finalists
- Period for finalist demonstrations and/or meetings
- Deadline for selection of partner vendor

Evaluate

Compare Bids

Once you receive proposals, allow time to carefully review each one separately, as well as to compare the responses. Include your stakeholders so that each one's concerns can be addressed within the timeframe for consideration. You may need to also ask vendors for clarification about some of their answers.

Hold Demo / Presentation Meetings

Based on your reviews of the responses, you will want to further narrow down the vendors to a select few who will be invited for finalist presentations and demos. Provide vendors with an agenda for the meeting, a list of specific questions you have for them, and your expectations for the outcomes of the meeting. Also let bidders know who will be in attendance from your organization. These meetings are a good opportunity to meet those who will be working with you should you form a partnership to evaluate chemistry, to reinforce any concerns or expectations you have that may not have been clear in the RFP, and to generally get a sense of your potential working relationship. You may want to include someone from the coaching and technology teams in addition to client and sales representatives.



Measure

Score the Bids, Solutions, and Vendors

Once you've completed all vendor meetings, meet with your internal stakeholders to further compare and evaluate individual reactions. Combine those summaries with those from the proposal evaluations. Following are additional categories you may want to consider to make your decision-making easier.

Ability to customize: Does the outplacement vendor do their own research and development or do they outsource? A vendor who does the work themselves may be able to better customize the solution to your needs.

Agility: A vendor using an agile development methodology will make continual improvements and updates to their technology that will ensure your organization has an innovative product that follows current best practices.

Responsiveness: How quickly does the vendor respond to concerns or needs from the job seekers or clients? How long does it take to match employees with coaches? How soon after contract signing can outreach begin? How easily can changes be made if needed?

Additional value propositions and innovations: Does the vendor offer any other products or services that would add value to your partnership? What is on their product roadmap? Are they innovative and following best practices and industry trends?

Best and final price: Ask your finalists for their best and final pricing, based on any potential modifications to your needs that may have arisen during or after your meetings.

Select

Once you've met with each of the finalists, you should be ready to form a conclusion based on the information in the proposals, the best and final pricing, and your impressions of the vendors' teams.

The INTOO Outplacement Difference

INTOO is the only outplacement provider to offer unlimited coaching seven days a week. This means that no matter when a job seeker has an urgent question, needs help with a resume, wants to prepare for an interview, or needs an expert opinion on negotiating a job offer, an experienced career coach is available for thoughtful, personalized guidance.

INTOO's award-winning coaching methodology addresses the whole human with each candidate they counsel, because career, social, financial, and physical well-being all impact the success of a candidate's job search.

INTOO does not put caps on the number of dedicated coaching sessions, nor restrictions on their durations. A job seeker can meet with their coach as often and for as long as they need to.

INTOO has a network of over 2,100 experienced career coaches globally. No matter where your employees are in the world, they will be serviced by coaches with knowledge about the local job market and regional business customs.

INTOO's in-house technology development team's agility means that new outplacement platform features, updates, and improvements are deployed frequently. It also means that we can quickly respond to client needs and job seeker feedback to ensure our services meet our clients' high standards and better expedite their former employees' paths to new, meaningful employment.

INTOO's award-winning client success and candidate success teams ensure that your programs are efficacious through detailed account management and monitoring, personable candidate outreach, and diligent and responsive communication.

INTOO's team consists of longtime industry veterans who continue to educate themselves on best practices and industry trends to provide your organization and your employees the best experience and current guidance that lead to results.

Get in Touch

Learn how INTOO can make a difference for your employees and your employer brand

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