

## Develop the Request for Proposal

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The most important internal step to take in identifying a technologic solution to enabling Knowledge Management in the organization is to establish exactly what management and knowledge workers need to support an ongoing or planned KM initiative. In this regard, the RFP encompasses not only the minimum technical requirements for a technology but instructs the vendor how it can meet and exceed corporate expectations. For the knowledge organization, an RFP is an internal working document that serves as a sounding board for all internal stakeholders involved in the KM effort. The RFP forces those involved in the initiative to consider the benefits that they expect the system to deliver—



### TIPS & TECHNIQUES

## Multifunctional Request for Proposal

For a company not certain of the options available in the Knowledge Management market, investing the time to craft an RFP that describes the corporate environment can pay for itself many times over in consulting time, lost time on the job, and travel expenses. Senior managers or company representatives won't have to waste time at KM trade shows and meeting with vendors, instead vendors will beat a path to the company to point out how their products can be applied to company's current KM processes. Competing vendors are more than happy to point out faults and gaps in the competition's offerings, and provide industry-wide pricing norms, references, and other information that otherwise the company would have to pay to acquire. Although the practice of using vendors as free consultants may not be completely fair to vendors, it's an excellent starting point for a company serious about acquiring technology to enable its KM activities.