



Seeking a PR firm or agent? Draft an RFP that fits you - by Harry Zlokower

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As a long-time, real estate public relations firm head and consultant, I never expected to one day be recommending use of the “dreaded” Request for Proposal (RFP) to anyone considering a PR firm or agent. But now having had the experience of consulting with real estate firms , I have come to realize why RFPs are useful and important.

Whether it be a multi-page document or concise list of bullet points, every real estate firm should

consider some form of RFP when recruiting public relations assistance. The exercise provides the comfort and assurance of having communicated your needs and possibly budget range. It will also save you much time and anguish by eliminating firms or representatives that are not a good fit and that may not have the experience and tools to meet your needs. A good RFP will help you focus and provide a certain objectivity to a decision that typically includes emotion or chemistry.

Large or small in volume, a well-executed RFP should accomplish at least these goals for you as the hiring party:

- Clear definition of your company and/or principals

- Discussion of the duties and problems you wish addressed by the prospective public relations firm or agent

- Request for qualifications, experience, and proposed activity from the public relations firm bidding for the project or program and finally if possible

- Discussion of budget by both parties

The last goal—budget—is particularly important because it requires the contending public relations service providers in some way to equate their charges with your expectations and with what they propose to accomplish. You have the option of either suggesting a range or dollar amount of what you are willing to pay or of leaving that proposed number to the candidates to be used as part of the criteria in making your final decision.

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