How to Write a Good RFQ

A request for quotation (RFQ) works when every supplier quotes exactly the same thing. This guide shows what to include, how to phrase it and how to compare the answers.

1. Why the RFQ decides the quality of the quotes

Suppliers can only price what they understand. When a request leaves room for interpretation, each supplier fills the gaps with its own assumptions, and the quotes stop being comparable. A clear request saves time on both sides: fewer questions, fewer revised quotes and a decision you can defend.

2. What every RFQ should contain

Part	What to write	Example
What you need	The product or service in one sentence, then the details.	Printed folding boxes for a retail launch.
Specification	Material, size, finish, tolerances, standards. Attach drawings or files.	FSC board 350 g, 120 × 80 × 40 mm, two colours, matt varnish.
Quantity	Number and unit. Give price breaks if you are unsure.	2,000 pcs, quote also 5,000 pcs.
Delivery	Country, city, delivery terms and the date you need it.	Delivered to Stockholm, Sweden, by 15 March.
Deadline for quotes	When quotes must arrive.	Quotes by 20 February.
Requirements	Certificates, documentation, samples, packing.	FSC certificate, printed proof before production.
Commercial terms	Currency, payment terms, validity of the quote.	EUR, 30 days net, valid 30 days.

3. Write the specification so it cannot be misread

- Use numbers and units instead of words such as "standard" or "high quality".
- Say what is fixed and what the supplier may propose. "Board grade may be equivalent" invites alternatives you can compare.
- Attach the files the supplier needs to price the job, and name them clearly.

- If you do not know a detail, say so and ask the supplier to state its assumption in the quote.

4. Quantity, price breaks and samples

If the volume is uncertain, ask for two or three quantities. The price per unit at each step shows where set-up costs end and the variable cost begins. If you need samples or a pre-production proof, say whether it should be priced separately.

5. Delivery and deadlines

State the delivery address, the date the goods must arrive and the delivery terms (for example DAP or EXW). Give suppliers enough time to quote: a few working days for simple jobs, longer when drawings must be studied or materials checked.

6. Compare the quotes

- Compare the total cost, including set-up, freight and packaging, not only the unit price.
- Check lead time against your deadline, and what the supplier assumes.
- Look at payment terms, validity and what happens if quantities change.
- Check certificates and documents you asked for.
- Ask the same clarifying question to every supplier, so the comparison stays fair.

7. Common mistakes

- Missing quantities or delivery date, which makes every quote a guess.
- Files sent separately or late, so suppliers quote different versions.
- Changing the request after quotes have arrived without telling all suppliers.
- Choosing on unit price alone and finding freight or set-up costs later.

Checklist before you send

- [ ] The product is described in one clear sentence.
- [ ] Material, size, finish and tolerances are given with numbers and units.
- [ ] Drawings or files are attached and named clearly.
- [ ] Quantity is stated, with price breaks if needed.
- [ ] Delivery country, city, terms and date are stated.
- [ ] The deadline for quotes is set.
- [ ] Certificates, documents and samples are listed.
- [ ] Currency, payment terms and validity are stated.
- [ ] The request says what suppliers may propose as alternatives.

> On Flobid the request form asks for these details step by step, and every supplier answers in the same quote format, so the comparison table is ready when the quotes arrive.

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