

# WINNING DATA STORAGE SERVICE CONTRACTS WITH ACCURATE RFQs

Service providers in the break-fix computer repair industry tend to think that the sooner they respond to a customer's RFQ (Request For Quote), the better their chances of winning a service contract. They seem to apply the concept of "the more quotes we produce, the more business potential we create". Unfortunately internal sales people often find themselves reviewing RFQs with very little detailed information about the type of services the customer really needs. They end up having to guess configurations, quantities, even systems options.

This restricted quote process can produce misquoting and misunderstanding, which can lead to these situations:

- Customers are disappointed in the lack of expertise from the service provider, as well as the lack of understanding of the systems that need to be covered under contract. Service providers who issue more detailed price quotes will gain customer confidence and trust, resulting in more contracts.
- Customers will often accept quotes with few details if the price looks like a good deal. Unfortunately, once a Field Engineer completes the on-site systems survey, customers will hear that more equipment needs to be added to the original quote, resulting in higher costs. Customers resent this situation since they need to issue a new PO with a higher amount, which needs to be approved, or denied, by their supervisors.
- Some customers believe service providers are responsible for any missing parts in an original RFQ and hold the original quoted price as definitive, regardless of the site survey findings. In this case service providers quickly lose revenue for any inaccurate contract they sign.

Issuing a detailed RFQ should start with a face-to-face meeting between the service provider's salesperson and the customer. It's the salesperson's job to understand the specific needs and equipment requirements, explain what is and what isn't included in the quote, and recommend the most adequate type of service. Listening well to customers will increase the probability of closing the deal.

On the other hand, an RFQ with too many details can cause confusion in the customer's mind. Not every single piece of hardware needs to be quoted for extended warranty purposes. Here is the minimum information to include on a data storage service quote regardless of the type of equipment to be covered under contract:

- SLA (Service Level Agreement): NBD (Next Business Day), 9x5x4, 7x24x4 or 7x24x2, or custom SLA
- Location of each data storage system and their components
- Type of contract: respond vs. restore
- Start date
- Contract term





*YOUR SINGLE-SOURCE PROVIDER FOR ALL  
TAPE & DISK DRIVE POST-WARRANTY NEEDS*

The following information should also be listed on a service quote for tape drives:

- Brand and model of each tape library
- Quantity of expansion chassis
- Model of tape drives
- Manufacturer of tape drives (if possible)
- Interface for tape drive (fiber optic, SCSI, LVD,HVD, Fiber, ESCON, other)
- Quantity by tape drive model
- Switches, routers and other peripherals

The following information should also be listed on a service quote for disk arrays:

- Brand and model of each disk array
- Quantity of expansion chassis
- Size of hard drives (in GBs) and speed (in RPMs)
- Quantity by hard drive size and speed
- Cache memory cards
- RAM memory
- Fiber cards
- Switches, routers and other peripherals

Of course, time is of the essence when delivering quotes, but customers appreciate service providers who thoroughly discuss their data storage support needs in order to provide an accurate quote. It also gives service providers the opportunity to position themselves as professional, knowledgeable and reliable early on in the sales cycle.

ISC Group provides all of the technical and sales assistance you need during your RFQ process, including service needs analysis, in order to help you create the most accurate quote the first time around.