



Suhas Bhairav

AI RFP Drafting Playbook

Turn business needs into precise RFP requirements with practical AI guidance

A practical, step-by-step playbook to design, automate, and govern AI-augmented RFP processes in procurement.

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Define Business Needs for RFP

Capture genuine procurement outcomes and map them to measurable success. Align stakeholders and governance before drafting.

Key move Pilot the needs with 1–2 internal users before drafting.

PRACTICAL CHECKLIST

- 01** Document the problem, not the proposed solution, to avoid bias during vendor responses.
- 02** List required outcomes (quality, cost, cycle time, risk) with target metrics.
- 03** Identify primary stakeholders, decision rights, and sign-off thresholds.
- 04** Capture existing data sources, constraints, and compliance requirements.
- 05** Outline non-negotiable must-haves vs nice-to-haves.
- 06** Define project scope, timelines, and permissible trade-offs.
- 07** Record assumed conditions to guide vendors in their proposals.

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Data, Tools, and Automation

Identify automatable elements of RFP drafting and evaluation, and specify where human oversight is essential. Define data sources and tool requirements.

Key move Build a living RFP template library; version control matters.

PRACTICAL CHECKLIST

- 01** Automate: extract business needs into structured requirements using AI-assisted drafting.
- 02** Automate: generate standardized RFP sections, evaluation rubrics, and vendor response templates.
- 03** Human review: validate risk flags, legal/compliance alignment, and final decision rules.
- 04** Data needs: internal process maps, policy documents, supplier records, contracts, and historical responses.
- 05** Tools: AI drafting assistants, structured templates, procurement software, and secure data stores.
- 06** Security: ensure data privacy, vendor confidentiality, and access controls.
- 07** Quality checks: validate AI outputs against policy, past successful RFPs, and audit trails.

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Evaluation, Timelines & Guardrails

Set evaluation criteria, timelines, and decision rules. Establish ownership, risk controls, and a plan for ongoing governance.

Key move Document assumptions; specify fallback options to avoid scope creep.

PRACTICAL CHECKLIST

- 01** Define evaluation criteria with weightings and scoring ranges for each criterion.
- 02** Set timelines: draft, Q&A, responses, evaluation, and final decision with clear deadlines.
- 03** Assign owners: procurement lead, legal, finance, and privacy officers.
- 04** Guardrails: approval thresholds, data handling rules, and escalation paths.
- 05** Risks: bias in scoring, data leakage, vendor misrepresentation, and regulatory non-compliance.
- 06** Measurement: track cycle time, response quality, and contract value variance.
- 07** Decision rules: go/no-go thresholds and post-award debrief process.

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ABOUT THE CREATOR

Suhas Bhairav

I build AI systems that combine distributed architecture, retrieval, knowledge graphs, security, and practical workflow design. My focus is AI that can be used repeatedly by real teams: understandable, reliable, and grounded in the work people already do.

EXPERTISE

- Principal systems architecture and applied AI engineering
- Production-grade AI systems, agentic workflows, RAG, and knowledge graphs
- Full-stack workflow applications across AWS, Google Cloud, Azure, on-premise, and hybrid environments
- Practical AI implementation patterns for automotive, manufacturing, finance, logistics, cybersecurity, sales, and customer operations
- Security, governance, observability, approvals, and failure-mode thinking for operational AI systems

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