

Trade Promotion Management Software: Running a successful RFP

Deciding to implement a TPM solution is a big step for many organizations. As you grow, it becomes increasingly difficult to manage trade processes and forecasting in spreadsheets. Deciding which vendor is the best fit through a thorough and fair evaluation can seem like an enormous task. A solid RFP process, placing the right weight and emphasis on the right elements, will simplify and expedite the selection process. Unfortunately, too often the RFP process can be overwhelming and create confusion, both for the organization doing the sourcing as well as for the vendors competing for the business.

The following will help guide you from organizational readiness through to vendor selection, complete with a downloadable template specific to TPM solutions that you can use to solicit information from your prospective vendors.

Organizational readiness

There's nothing more frustrating to potential vendors than going through a lengthy RFP process only to find that a potential client is far from ready to embark on a project, so it's beneficial to make sure the organization is ready before soliciting bids:

01 Define the problem you are solving and key objectives of the project

Build consensus among key stakeholders: You will need support from IT, Finance, Sales, Sales Ops, etc. Spend some time gathering their needs and understanding their concerns. Make sure your RFP addresses the needs of all parties.

Determine budget: This can be tricky, since you don't have proposals yet, but you should have a range of acceptable spend as well as an understanding of where (whose budget) this will fall.

Build your business case to justify the budget should you be challenged: What is the expected financial benefit, how do you anticipate the TPM solution will impact:

- ✓ Trade spend efficiency
- ✓ Forecast accuracy
- ✓ Productivity
- ✓ Deduction aging and validity

CPGvision has assisted prospects with quantifying return on investment from TPM; if you would like to understand our ROI model, please [contact us](#) for more information.

02 Select a project team

Once you've solicited input from key stakeholders you will need to put the actual project team together. TPM project teams typically have a lead for the business end, a lead from a systems perspective and subject matter experts (SMEs) from sales, finance, sales ops, systems integration, etc. Make sure the key members of your project team understand the time commitment and can attend regular meetings.

03 Define the project scope

- How many users do you anticipate will be in the system?
- What data sources will be needed and integrated?
- What is the time frame for go-live?
- Will you employ a phased-in approach on functionality?

04 Conduct background research

There are many options when it comes to Trade Promotion Management solutions, so some background research is necessary to decide which providers will be invited to participate. Common sources for TPM software vendor information include:

- Colleagues in similar positions at other companies
- TPM vendor websites
- Gartner Market Guide for Consumer Good Trade Promotion Solutions
- POI Enterprise Planning Vendor Panorama
- Software review sites such as Capterra, Software Advice and G2

While you want to be comprehensive, the more vendors you ask to participate, the higher the workload is on your team, so aim to limit the RFP participation to no more than 5 vendors.

05 Prepare an RFP document

A comprehensive RFP document enables you to compare all vendors from the same starting point. You should have a template that enables you to prioritize the features and vendor attributes that are most important to your business. **Use the template we've put together**, which covers the key areas you will want to probe.

A typical timeframe to allow for vendor response is 2-3 weeks, longer if you need detailed systems and security information.

06 Select short list for demo

Once you've evaluated and scored each vendor's responses, select the top 2-3 to "short list" for demo purposes. Demos are time consuming for the RFP team, so you will want to limit that phase to the vendors who scored best on the RFP. Deep dive on the most important attributes and ask vendors to actually show you the capabilities they say they have.

07 Select the best fit

When demos are complete you should have enough information for the team to make a selection. If you're fortunate, one vendor will rise to the top in everyone's eyes, but be prepared to talk through each viewpoint and opinion. Remember that multiple levels in your organization will use the system, so it's important to include all stakeholders in the selection decision. Consensus building can be difficult, but will pay back in increased cooperation during implementation and strong user adoption.

Ready-to-use trade promotion intelligence at your fingertips

Meet CPGvision: the best-in-class fully connected and integrated TPM and RGM solution suite for Consumer-Packaged Goods, built on the Salesforce platform. With the most advanced functionality in the industry, CPGvision equips you with real-life problem-solving applications for TPM, TPO, and RGM.

Your success is our success- CPGvision proudly provides a dedicated customer success team staffed with CPG industry professionals. Regardless of where you are in your RGM journey, you'll be fully equipped with the solutions you need for profitable revenue growth.

[Contact us today to learn more.](#)