

# EDI Network Services Provider Request For Proposal

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### Request for Proposal

**Company-X** is considering an initiative to strategically manage their global EDI and other B2B transactions. This project is to be implemented in phases depending on the transition effectiveness, pricing, and other factors.

This Request for Proposal (RFP) provides requirements and evaluation criteria for selecting an EDI Network Services provider (sometimes referenced as VAN or Value-Added Network). It requests a detailed response from prospective providers, including service descriptions, pricing, transition methodology, current customer base and service levels.

### Bidder Executive Summary

Please prepare an executive summary of your proposal to include a summary of your firm's capabilities, transition methodology, proposed pricing structure, and the resources you would dedicate toward fulfillment of a contract with **Company-X**. The proposal should also include an explanation of why **Company-X** would realize a competitive advantage by doing business with your company and what differentiates your firm from your competitors.

### About **Company-X**

**Company-X** was founded in ... <Provide Company Background>

### Project Goals

**Company-X** is looking for a global, strategic partner who will provide us with a leading-edge EDI Network service. We seek a company that can provide best-in-class service in conjunction with competitive pricing and improved functionality. Additionally, **Company-X** expects that the partner has the capability to grow the relationship, scale to meet the dynamic nature of our business, and provide these services on a global basis. This RFP should be viewed as a step toward building a productive, long-term relationship with a top provider that can demonstrate a long-term strategic vision for transaction management and one that is capable of maintaining an efficient cost structure while constantly improving the quality and service levels of its offering.

**Company-X** requires the strategic partner to provide:

- Reliable, consistent, and secure delivery across the entire scope of requirements, while eliminating redundancy across **Company-X**'s B2B infrastructure
- Global presence and infrastructure to accommodate current and future needs of **Company-X** and our trading partners around the world
- Enhanced business visibility allowing multiple groups to access, view and analyze key performance data across **Company-X**'s trading community
- Trading Partner onboarding services to streamline the process of implementing additional suppliers, customers, logistics providers, financial institutions and other business partners as we need to add them.
- Seamless migration from our current VAN services provider to an enhanced EDI Network service that manages EDI and other B2B transactions.

# EDI Network Services Provider Request For Proposal

**SAMPLE**

## II. GENERAL RFP PROCEDURES AND INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

Bidders must conform to the instructions provided in this RFP. The instructions provide sufficient flexibility to bidders to customize their responses, yet provide standard required formats for analysis by **Company-X**. Bidders failing to adhere to these instructions may be removed from consideration of their bid.

1. Within two (2) business days of your receipt of this RFP, please provide a written acknowledgment via email to **Company-X**'s contact, **<name>**, **<title>**, at [emailaddress@Company-X.com](mailto:emailaddress@Company-X.com). If you intend to respond to this RFP, please indicate this in your acknowledgment.
2. If you elect not to respond to the RFP, please inform **Company-X**'s contact (noted above) and return this RFP and any other material from **Company-X**, retaining no copies.
3. All questions or requests for clarification concerning the RFP must be submitted via email to **Company-X**'s contact, **<name>** by **<date>**. Inquiries must make specific reference to the applicable section of the RFP. Written answers will be made available to all bidders by the date listed on the RFP Time Line table detailed in the next section.
4. This RFP does not constitute an offer by **Company-X** to contract, but rather represents an invitation to submit a proposal addressing specific requirements.
5. After **Company-X**'s analysis of proposals, **Company-X** may elect to modify the requirements of this RFP. Following the date of submission of the proposal and prior to contract award, the terms and conditions of the offers will be binding.
6. **Company-X** will not reimburse your firm for any proposal preparation costs or other work performed in connection with this RFP, whether or not your firm is awarded the contract.
7. In submitting a proposal, bidder waives any right to claim damages of any nature based on the selection process or final selection.
8. Proposals submitted could be reviewed by any person(s) at the discretion of **Company-X**, including employees, contract workers, or third party consultants. **Company-X** reserves the right to accept or reject any or all responses to this RFP.
9. **Company-X** is not obligated to accept the proposal offering the lowest cost of services and has no obligation to explain why bidders were not awarded contracts.
10. All information contained in this RFP related to the business of **Company-X** is confidential and is to be used solely for the purpose of submitting the proposal. All information supplied by the bidder will be kept in strict confidence. Proposals submitted will become the property of **Company-X**.
11. Bidder's response to this RFP must specifically identify all exceptions to those requirements with which the bidder cannot comply. Exceptions must be noted in the proposal in the appropriate section.
12. The RFP response should contain concise answers to all questions, eliminating marketing type collateral and other "boiler-plate" type information.
13. Proposals must be submitted in Microsoft Word (Excel or PowerPoint for graphics) electronically to the above named **Company-X** contact.
14. Proposal must arrive no later than **<date and time of required RFP response>**.

# EDI Network Services Provider Request For Proposal

**SAMPLE**

## RFP Timeline

**Company-X** has developed a timeline for the RFP and the ensuing project. The timeline represents good faith estimates. Bidders will be notified of any changes to the time line as they occur. All bidders are expected to meet the deadlines as follows:

| Date         | Event   | Description  |
|--------------|---|--|
| <date>       | RFP distributed to bidders                    | RFP sent to bidders.   |
| <date>       | Written acknowledgement                       | Bidder must acknowledge receipt of RFP and intent to bid.  |
| <date>       | Bidder questions                              | Bidder must submit questions by 5PM (Eastern Time).  |
| <date>       | <b>Company-X</b> response to bidder questions | <b>Company-X</b> will respond in writing providing one document to all bidders containing every question asked. Bidder's identity will be confidential.  |
| <date>       | RFP proposal due to <b>Company-X</b>          | Bidders completed proposal is due to <b>Company-X</b> contact by 5PM (Eastern Time).   |
| <date>       | Bidder short list developed based on pricing  | Bidders RFP submissions will be analyzed. A short list of finalists will be developed using competitiveness of the pricing, responses to minimum project requirements and exceptions listed by the bidder. |
| <date range> | Bidder on-site presentations                  | Bidders who make the short list will be invited to present their proposals to <b>Company-X</b> .   |
| <date>       | Bidder evaluation and selection               | Based upon a combination of price, quality, and strategic fit, a bidder will be selected.  |
| <date>       | Contract negotiation                          | A final contract will be developed with the bidder selected.   |

## III. COMPANY-X CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

<Describe the specifics of your current environment and plans, including the following items.>

| Item   | Response  |
|--|---|
| Platform   |   |
| Translator   |   |
| ERP  |   |
| Document Standards                                       |   |
| Documents <b>Company-X</b> sends                         | <list documents such as Purchase Order, Purchase Order Change, Remittance Advice, etc.> |
| Documents <b>Company-X</b> Receives                      | <list documents such as Invoice, Advance Ship Notice, Purchase Order Change, etc.>      |
| Current # of suppliers in production                     |   |
| Current # of customers in production                     |   |
| <b>Company-X</b> Countries                               |   |
| Countries in which <b>Company-X</b> has trading partners |   |
| Current VAN Providers                                    |   |
| Connectivity method to Current VAN                       |   |

# EDI Network Services Provider Request For Proposal

**SAMPLE**

| Item  | Response  |
|---|---|
| Providers   |   |
| Monthly Transaction Volume (documents)                            |   |
| Monthly Transaction Volume (KCs)                                  |   |
| Peak Processing Time  | <i>&lt;identify any peak periods that apply to your company – e.g. 1:00 AM&gt;</i>  |
| Peak Volumes  | <i>&lt;identify peak volumes associated with any peak periods that apply to your company&gt;</i>  |
| # of Trading Partners to which <b>Company-X</b> connects directly |   |
| Upcoming Projects   | <b>&lt;Describe projects being planned – e.g. ERP upgrade, e-invoicing program, Global consolidation, AP Centralization, Global process standardization&gt;</b> |
| Additional Suppliers to be on-boarded                             |   |
| Additional Customers to be on-boarded                             |   |

## IV. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Irrespective of the specific activities performed, **Company-X** embraces deep commitments to both quality of service and customer care as a major source of competitive advantage. To that end, EDI Network Service Providers should expect to be graded along the following dimensions:

- Transaction Accuracy
- Reliability and Responsiveness
- Stability and Redundancy
- Scalability
- Speed of Execution
- Time to Implement

To monitor compliance of **Company-X** standards for service delivery, **Company-X** will require on-demand electronic monitoring capability and visibility into transaction processing. Activities slated for this monitoring could involve a number of distinct business segments including the following:

- Procurement
- Finance
- Sales/Marketing
- Customer Service
- Corporate

The technologies enabling these activities must be extremely reliable and secure.

## V. EVALUATION CRITERIA

**<Describe the evaluation criteria for selection of Services Provider.>**

A cross-functional selection team will evaluate the proposals based on, but not limited to, the following criteria (not necessarily listed in the order of importance):

# EDI Network Services Provider Request For Proposal

**SAMPLE**

- Commercial terms;
- Capabilities;
- Experience;
- Any other factors deemed by **Company-X** to be relevant to the selection of a particular Respondent in its sole and absolute discretion.

If required, **Company-X** may request interview sessions with some or all of the Respondents for clarification and explanation of their proposals. **Company-X** would request the attendance of key personnel at these interviews. Respondents should ensure that the attendance includes an authorized officer of the Respondent and the primary contact.

Respondents will not be reimbursed for any cost associated with the interviews.

If interviews are required, the Respondents will be contacted to arrange acceptable times.

## VI. FINANCIAL BID

Please provide your pricing proposal for a 5-year term, including:

1. Monthly transaction fees
2. Optional Service Fees

## VII. RFP QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer all of the questions that appear in this section. If a question is “not applicable” please state this as the answer; do not omit the question. The question and number should precede answers. More than one question/answer may appear on a page.

### Corporate Overview

1. Where is your company headquartered?
2. Briefly recap your organization’s history and growth.
3. How many customers do you have?
4. How many transactions do you process annually?
5. What are the gross annual revenues attributed to EDI Network Services?
6. Type of ownership, major investors and if a subsidiary, provide ownership information on the parent company.
7. Please list key alliances, partnerships, shareholder agreements or joint ventures. Specifically, highlight any key relationships with technology providers, as well as training and recruiting firms.
8. Please list services, experience, and qualifications as they relate to the services required, including any awards, recognition, and/or certifications.
9. Organization Structure: Please provide short resumes on the top management team and the next level down including length of service with the company.
10. How many domestic and international locations does your company manage? Where are they located? What type of work is being performed at each location? What is the total number of employees you currently employ?
11. Please provide a brief description of your organization’s top clients and the kind of relationship your organization has built with these clients. Please provide an illustration of how your organization has ramped up different services provided to any one of your clients. You can choose not to disclose the client name.

# EDI Network Services Provider Request For Proposal

**SAMPLE**

12. Describe the extent of your international client base. Please provide a brief description of clients located in an international location that are being serviced.
13. Describe what differentiates your company and solutions your company provides from those offered by your competitors. Please describe your top strengths in comparison to your competitors.
14. Describe the core competencies that support your business growth strategy. How do your operations support your business growth strategy? Please describe your industry focus for the next 3 to 5 years.

## Financial Information

1. Provide evidence of financial stability including annual cash flow, profitability, and sufficient working capital.
2. Do you engage with an independent audit firm to conduct annual audits certifying the appropriateness and accuracy of your books and records? Please provide the name of your auditor.
3. Do you have a formal internal control policy and/or program that is up to date and fully implemented? Do you have an internal audit committee?
4. Are there independent checks of the internal controls program on a regular basis? When was the last internal control audit completed?
5. How many mergers and/or acquisitions has your company engaged in since inception? Please list the details of those activities including timing and scope.
6. Have you ever filed for bankruptcy or equivalent since the inception of the business?
7. Do you currently utilize any lines of credit with any parent company and/or banking institution? If so, what is the scale of the activity?

## References

Please provide company names of two clients for whom you have provided similar services and whom **Company-X** can contact for references. For each company please provide contact names, addresses, phone numbers, and duration of the relationship and a brief description of the services provided. **Company-X** reserves the right to contact these customers during the evaluation phase of the proposal.

## Account Management for **Company-X**

1. Provide details regarding the qualifications of the account management team that would be assigned to **Company-X**.
2. How would the account management team be selected for the **Company-X** account?
3. What is the reporting structure for an account manager?

## EDI Network Services Offering

### Product Overview:

1. What product(s) do you offer to support EDI Transaction Management? Please provide a list of product names and a brief overview of each product.
2. How often is your product upgraded?
3. Are there any upcoming releases? If so, provide details.
4. Does your company offer the option to bill us electronically for services rendered?

### Communications:

5. Indicate which of the following communications protocols your service supports.

## EDI Network Services Provider Request For Proposal

**SAMPLE**

| PROTOCOL     | YES/NO |
|--------------|--------|
| AS2          |        |
| AS3          |        |
| FTPS         |        |
| SFTP         |        |
| VPN/FTP      |        |
| HTTPS        |        |
| OFTP over IP |        |
| X400         |        |
| MQSeries     |        |
| ZENGIN       |        |

6. If our customer requires us to communicate with them directly via AS2, can your service provide that connection on our behalf?
7. Do you support multiple concurrent secure connections from **Company-X**?

### Mailboxes:

8. Does your product support multiple mailboxes?
9. Please describe the process for setting up a mailbox.

### Data:

10. Indicate which of the following data standards you support:
  - a. ANSI X12
  - b. EDIFACT
  - c. KEDIFACT
  - d. TDCC
  - e. TRADACOMS
11. What is the maximum file size supported?
12. Is there a limit to the number of files that can be transmitted at one time? If so, what are the limitations?
13. Is there a limit to the number of files in a single mailbox? If so, what are the limitations?
14. Summarize data retention policy, including duration data is online, process to retrieve, additional costs.

### Reporting:

15. Please describe the product's visibility capabilities – i.e. the ability to monitor and track information.
16. Please describe the types of standard and ad-hoc reporting you provide.
17. Please describe the document level visibility capabilities you offer.
18. Do you provide Billing Reports providing volumes by Document, Trading Partner, or Mailslot?
19. Are there additional fees for Reports?

### Value-Added Features:

20. What types of alert notifications are provided for error or other conditions? Please describe.
21. Do you support carbon copy and/or auto-forward capabilities? Please describe.
22. Please describe your ability to store, retransmit, reprocess, and report on transaction data – including historical data.

# EDI Network Services Provider Request For Proposal

**SAMPLE**

23. Do you offer any services that track functional acknowledgments?

**Portal:**

24. Does your service provide a self-service administration portal? If yes, describe how it enables customers to do the following. If not available, mark "n/a":

- a. View the status of transactions
- b. Search for specific transactions or trading partners by ID or document type
- c. View the actual raw data online
  - i. Is this data presented in wrapped format or one segment per line?
- d. Re-send and re-receive data
- e. Generate both standard and ad-hoc reports
- f. Set up new partnerships with additional trading partners
  - i. Please describe the process for setting up a trading partner.
- g. Interface with the portal in the user's language of choice
  - i. Please list the languages supported.
- h. Set up multiple users, each with his/her access authorities
- i. Obtain technical support via phone, live chat, and email.
- j. Allow multiple users to be logged in concurrently

**Interconnects:**

- 25. Do you support interconnects for all public 3<sup>rd</sup>-party networks?
- 26. Please provide a list of interconnects in place for your service and the method and frequency of data exchange.
- 27. Can additional interconnects be added if required?
- 28. Are there additional fees for exchanging data with a trading partner on an Interconnect?

**Support for International Requirements**

- 29. Is your service "Safe Harbor" certified?
- 30. Do you support the OFTP protocol?
- 31. Do you support the ZENGIN protocol?
- 32. Do you support KEDIFACT standard format?
- 33. Do you offer local help desks offering support in the following languages?

| LANGUAGE   | YES/NO |
|------------|--------|
| Cantonese  |        |
| Dutch      |        |
| English    |        |
| Flemish    |        |
| French     |        |
| German     |        |
| Italian    |        |
| Japanese   |        |
| Korean     |        |
| Mandarin   |        |
| Portuguese |        |
| Spanish    |        |

# EDI Network Services Provider Request For Proposal

**SAMPLE**

## Support

1. Please describe your process for day-to-day customer support, including:
  - a. Escalation procedures
  - b. Tracking of customer issues and their resolution
  - c. Customer support resources available
  - d. Hours of support provided
  - e. Methods of support delivery (e.g., live chat, e-mail, etc.)
2. Please describe your customer support service level metrics.
3. Does your company offer live global customer support?
  - a. In what countries do you provide customer help desks?
  - b. In what languages do you provide customer support?
  - c. Is support provided 24x7x365? Is there an extra charge for this support level?
4. What is the % make-up of the customer support staff? Employee, Contractor, off-shore, etc?
5. What is the average length of employment of the support staff within your company?
6. Please describe your support capabilities for **Company-X**'s trading community. Do you offer dedicated support resources? If so, are there additional charges for this dedicated support?
7. Please describe your processes for continual improvement in the area of customer support.
8. Do you provide electronic documentation?
9. How do you track customer satisfaction?
10. What types of quality improvement programs do you use?
11. Do you provide training on the procedures and tools for using your services? Is there an extra fee for this training?

## Trading Partner Migration

1. To migrate our traffic from our current VAN provider to yours:
  - a. Please describe in detail the migration process that would be required.
  - b. The average migration time of past migration programs.
  - c. Is there an additional fee for migration services?
  - d. Does your company designate a project manager?
2. How does your company ensure a migration project is successful?

## Value-Added Services

1. Please describe your processes for onboarding new trading partners.
2. Do you provide trading partner testing services? If so, please describe
3. Do you offer a web forms service? If so, please answer the following:
  - a. In what languages is the service available?
  - b. For languages not supported, how long does it take to translate your browser into the specific new language?
  - c. What is the elapsed time in days/hours for a new supplier to be enabled?
  - d. Can the forms be customized to <Company-X> specifications, including our company logo?
  - e. Can the forms leverage lookup tables to limit data entry requirements for the supplier?
  - f. Can the forms be translated into my proprietary format, enabling straight-through processing?
  - g. Which documents are supported? Is the ASN included?
  - h. Does your service enable generation of Bar Code Labels to support automated warehouse receiving?

# EDI Network Services Provider Request For Proposal

**SAMPLE**

- i. For suppliers who will receive a low volume of documents, is there an email notification option? Can multiple users be so notified?
- j. What are the support options for suppliers using your forms service?
4. Do you offer a solution that integrates with Microsoft Excel? If yes, please describe.
5. Do you offer On Network Translation?
6. What other solutions do you offer which integrate with the popular accounting packages used by small and medium-size businesses?
7. Do you offer an e-invoicing solution that ensures compliance with government regulations globally? If so, please list the countries in which you provide compliance.

## Infrastructure

### Data Centers:

1. Do you operate your own data centers or do you outsource them?
2. How many data centers do you have?
3. Where are the primary data centers located?
4. Does your company have a redundant data center? If so, where is it located?
5. What systems and applications will be used to support EDI Transaction Management and other B2B services? Describe the overall product architecture
6. What is your process for ensuring physical security of employees and visitors to your facilities?
7. Do you have 24/7 security guards for your building?
8. Do you have restricted areas for your mission critical equipment and systems? Please describe the level of employees who have access to these areas.
9. Do you have any security systems (key card, badge) for your building, secure area access, for building monitoring and break-in alarming? Please describe in detail your security system – physical as well as network related. Has security been breached and what actions were taken post security breach?

### Service Audits:

10. How often are your processes and procedures audited?
11. By who are they audited?
12. Please provide a copy of your last audit report.
13. What hardware platform does the service use?
14. Describe your programs to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of customer data.

### Service Availability:

15. What is your service availability goal?
16. What are your maintenance windows?
17. How much notification do you give your customers for planned downtime of the system?
18. How is the notification transmitted to your customers?
19. What was the total time your customers experienced a planned outage or delay for the last 12 months?
20. Describe network redundancy that will provide high service availability and uptime (excluding maintenance windows).
21. What methods do you use to continuously improve service delivery and product effectiveness?

### Service Quality and Security:

22. What tools and processes do you have in place for monitoring and measuring service quality?
  - a. Please describe your audit and control process.
  - b. Does the process provide end-to-end capability? If so, please describe.
23. Describe the redundancy that is engineered into your systems/facilities. Include the following:

## EDI Network Services Provider Request For Proposal

**SAMPLE**

- c. LAN and WAN
  - d. Telecom network
  - e. Power
  - f. Emergency (outage) procedures
24. Describe the provisions you have built into your systems in the area of security. Include the following:
- a. Customer/Company Data
  - b. Data encryption
  - c. Use of passwords
  - d. Facility access
  - e. Firewalls
  - f. Employee level security

### **Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery**

1. Is there a Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery Program in place at your company? What is the recovery time objective?
2. Have guidelines been established for the use, distribution and updating of these Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery plans? Are these plans distributed to all key employees?
3. Have the Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery plans been tested? If yes:
  - a. When?
  - b. Were the results documented?
  - c. Are plans tested regularly and if so, at what intervals?
4. What policies, processes, and systems do you have in place to ensure customer data privacy and security? What is the recovery time for backups, system failures, network switchovers, etc.?
5. What security measures exist as part of your operations for transmission of data and data storage?