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## IT Outsourcing Part 1: Contracting the Partner—A Management Guide

*IT Outsourcing Part 1: Contracting the Partner—A Management Guide* is a how-to guide and practical key reference of best practices for the creation of a request for proposal (RFP) for the outsourcing of IT services as a strategic business alternative. The RFP is the primary focus as its fundamental purpose is universal: the customer documents business requirements, interested suppliers respond, the winning supplier is selected and a final contract is negotiated.

Within the management guide, the RFP is dissected as the cardinal document in which the customer renders detail service requirements, and it serves as the foundation for fulfilling the ultimate goal of outsourcing IT services. Ancillary documents are indirectly highlighted, including the request for information (RFI) and the contract. The RFP reigns supreme, however, as its overall quality is tied directly to the quality of the responses received from interested suppliers. From the subset of supplier responses, some are then requested to tender bids. The RFP again adds value when negotiations ensue, leading to the signing of the final contract.

Elements of three well-known public domain best practices were used to create the guide, including the Application Services Library (ASL), the Information Services Procurement Library (ISPL) and the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL). ASL is the public domain standard for application management. ISPL is the public domain standard for IT service procurement. ITIL is the public domain standard for IT service management. An appendix is included referencing where each of the public domain best practices is used and where differences occur. To profit from the guide, however, no prior knowledge of these standards is required.

The best practices utilized within the 125-page guide are applied to a specific case study in which an RFP is developed for a fictitious company embarking on a journey to complete a complicated strategic IT outsourcing agreement. Ten extremely comprehensive and straightforward chapters weave together the most critical aspects of the practical and the academic worlds. The guide details the overall

outsourcing process, including the advantages and disadvantages of outsourcing, in general; the criticality of having a clear business case for justifying the outsourcing decision; a recommended structure for the contents of an RFP; the need for clear supplier instructions to help during the evaluation process; the need for detailed service requirements; and key insights into transition requirements, governance requirements, personnel, financial and legal requirements, and the final supplier selection.

An appropriate amount of documentation is included within the guide, including sufficient definitions, checklists, tables and useful references within each chapter. Each chapter has a brief abstract, sufficient definitions, checklists and figures to convey the key aspects of preparing a quality RFP for the outsourcing of IT services. The strength of the guide is its overall style—being well organized, comprehensive and straightforward and, at the same time, using easy-to-understand sets of definitions and checklists throughout, as each section of the RFP is examined.

*IT Outsourcing Part 1: Contracting the Partner—A Management Guide* supplements ISACA/ITGI research books as a practical reference guide for all IT and business managers. It is a useful desktop reference for intermediate readers across all industries and geographic areas. As a recommended reference for the business library with a shelf life of three to five years, the target audience transcends IT management and procurement professionals to reach out to all those interested in best practices for business management related to the outsourcing of IT services as a strategic business alternative.

### EDITOR'S NOTE

*IT Outsourcing Part 1: Contracting the Partner—A Management Guide* is available from the ISACA Bookstore. For information, see the ISACA Bookstore Supplement in this *Journal*, visit [www.isaca.org/bookstore](http://www.isaca.org/bookstore), e-mail [bookstore@isaca.org](mailto:bookstore@isaca.org) or telephone +1.847.660.5650.

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