



Request for Proposal (RFP) Web-Based Strategy White Paper

Summary

The Society for Neuroscience (SfN) is seeking to engage a professional development consultant with demonstrated expertise with Web-based tools and technologies for career development and e-learning, as well as experience with and understanding of the professional association environment, to conduct research and prepare a white paper with options, recommendations and estimated order-of-magnitude implementation costs.

Organizational Information

SfN is the world's largest organization of scientists and physicians devoted to advancing the understanding of the brain and nervous system. A membership society founded in 1969, SfN has grown to serve more than 41,000 members in 87 countries. SfN promotes scientific exchange through its annual meeting, which attracts more than 30,000 attendees from around the globe, and *The Journal of Neuroscience*, the field's most-cited peer-reviewed journal. SfN also supports the neuroscience community through professional development programming and is dedicated to sharing the excitement and progress of scientific discovery through public information and outreach. SfN advocates strongly for policies that advance science and improve health, such as robust federal research investments and the responsible use of animals in research.

Background

As part of its professional development strategic plan, the Society for Neuroscience envisions becoming a leading provider of a comprehensive range of online neuroscience education, training, and career-related resources and information for its members. Developing such capacity is critical to meeting the needs of SfN members who are increasingly tech-savvy, have wide-ranging career development needs, and who reside in 87 countries around the world. Delivering content through online vehicles will allow members to more easily and cost-effectively take advantage of and benefit from offerings on their own time and at their own pace.

SfN has already invested in new technology platforms (*NeurOnLine*, a members-only professional networking community, and *NeuroJobs*, an online career center, among others) and will be developing a new Web site over the next 18 months. Together these provide a solid foundation for building robust online professional development resources and programming that include video clips, podcasts, and webinars.

To help guide planning and development of a comprehensive set of Web-based professional and career development resources, SfN seeks a consultant with demonstrated expertise with Web-based tools and technologies for career development and e-learning, as well as experience with and understanding of the professional association environment. The consultant will conduct research and prepare a white paper (see "scope of Work" for details), with the potential for a longer-term consulting relationship to help guide SfN as it seeks to strengthen capacity in this arena.

Key Dates

This RFP is governed by the following schedule and milestones:

RFP Responses due at 5:00pm – September 30, 2011

Deliverables –

- Initial meeting with key SfN staff to discuss detailed scope and white paper outline: week of October 3, 2011
 - Draft white paper to SfN: October 25, 2011
 - Final report with executive summary: November 2, 2011
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Scope of Work

The consultant will produce a white paper advising SfN on best practices, options, recommended approaches, and costs associated with developing an effective strategy for online professional development programming. Research and analysis should include:

- description of relevant state-of-the-art technologies, range of possible content delivery vehicles/mechanisms (e.g., podcasts vs. webinars), and assessment of pros/cons of each
- environmental scan of comparable organizations within the professional association and non-profit communities using webinars, etc.; include case studies of effective and ineffective uses of the technologies
- compilation of best practices and guiding principles for effective programming
- potential challenges and pitfalls to be avoided in developing and implementing Web-based programming
- recommendations for SfN's Web-based professional development strategy, taking into account SfN's membership scope, size, and needs
- estimated order-of-magnitude implementation costs
- potential staffing needs and models
- possible business models for varying revenue scenarios (revenue-neutral, revenue-positive), including potential barriers to revenue generation

Possible Tasks for Future Phase

- Assist with RFP development and selection process for technology implementation vendor
 - Advise on structuring and designing content and executing online products
 - Assist with go-live for initial set of pilot webinars in 2012
 - Advise on possible fee structures and marketing activities
 - Recommend possible metrics to measure success of efforts, based on best practices
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Cost Proposal

Compensation for services rendered under this RFP will be on a flat fee basis.

General Information

- Neither SfN nor its representatives shall be liable for any expenses a bidder incurs in connection with preparation of a response to this RFP. Applicants should prepare their proposals simply and economically, providing a straightforward and concise description of the bidder's ability to meet the requirements of this RFP.

- The issuance of this RFP does not commit SfN to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal in response to this request or to actually procure the requested services.
- SfN reserves the right to reject any or all the RFP applications submitted in response to this solicitation, due to the lack of responsiveness, changes in SfN's operating objectives, lack of funding, or for any reason determined by SfN and at the sole discretion of SfN.
- Time Extension: SfN may for good and sufficient reason extend the response deadline, in which case all potential vendors will receive an addendum setting forth the new time and date.
- Request for Additional Information: Prior to the final selection, vendors may be required to submit additional information that SfN deems necessary to further evaluate the vendor's qualifications. As part of the evaluation process, vendors shall furnish such additional information as SfN may reasonably require.
- Denial of Reimbursement: SfN will not reimburse vendors for any costs associated with the preparation and submission of a proposal or for any travel or other costs that are incurred.
- SfN will not be liable for any costs incurred by the vendor in connection with interviews (i.e., travel, accommodations, etc.) conducted as part of the evaluation or negotiation process.
- Gratuity Prohibition: Vendors shall not offer any gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value to any associate at SfN for the purpose of influencing consideration of this proposal. If an SfN associate solicits a gratuity, the vendor is obligated to inform SfN's Deputy Executive Director.
- Right of Withdrawal: A proposal may not be withdrawn before the expiration of one hundred and eighty (180) days from the proposal due date.
- Right of Negotiation: SfN reserves the right to negotiate with the selected vendor the exact terms and conditions for a contract.
- Liability and Insurance: The selected bidder shall purchase and maintain insurance in the amounts and types as needed for the protection from claims caused by the contractor's personnel or work, or by any subcontractor performing work for the contractor.
- Legal Compliance: In connection with the furnishing of supplies of performance of work under the contract, the contractor agrees to comply with the Fair Labor Standard Act, Equal Opportunity Employment Act, and all other applicable Federal and State laws, regulations and executive orders to the extent that the same may be applicable.
- Disqualification: No award will be made to any bidder, person or party, parent or subsidiary that is de-barred from providing services to the federal or state government, or with which SfN has an outstanding claim against or a financial dispute.
- Performance and Approval of Sub-Consultants: The vendor will perform the project as an independent contractor and not as an agent or employee of SfN. The vendor shall secure written permission from SfN before subcontracting any part of the project. Such permission should be obtained during the proposal evaluation stage.
- Licenses, Permits & Taxes: The price or prices for the work shall include full compensation for all taxes, permits, etc. that the vendor is or may be required to pay. SfN is a tax exempt entity.
- Minority/Women Business Enterprise (MWBE) Policy: It is the policy of SfN to provide minority and women owned business enterprises with equal opportunity for participating in the selling of goods and services to SfN. In cases where a vendor plans to sub-contract a portion of the work, it is required to make "A Good Faith Effort" to engage qualified MWBEs for such work. Vendors shall keep records of such efforts, when applicable, that are adequate to permit a determination of compliance with this

requirement. If subcontracting is involved in the proposal, a Proposed Schedule of Minority/Women Business Enterprise Participation shall also be submitted.

- Revisions to this RFP: In the event it becomes necessary to clarify or revise this RFP, such clarification or revision will be by addendum. Any RFP addendum will be distributed to all registered bidders via the e-mail provided.

Bidder Responsibility: The bidder assumes sole responsibility for the complete effort required in the RFP. No special consideration shall be given after bids are opened because bidder's failure to be knowledgeable of all the requirements of the RFP. By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the bidder represents that it has satisfied itself, from its own investigation, of all the requirements of this RFP