

Technical vs. Price-Driven Evaluations

Understanding How Buyers Decide Who Wins

Not all solicitations are evaluated the same way. Understanding whether an opportunity is technical-driven, price-driven, or best-value is critical to deciding how much effort to invest, where to focus, and how to structure your response.

QZC helps clients identify the evaluation approach early so proposals are built strategically, not blindly.

1. What Is a Technical Evaluation?

A technical-driven evaluation prioritizes quality, capability, experience, and approach over lowest price.

Common Characteristics:

- Detailed technical narrative requirements
- Emphasis on:
 - Experience & past performance
 - Project approach & methodology
 - Staffing plans & key personnel
 - Risk mitigation strategies
 - Quality control processes
- Price is important, but not the deciding factor

Where You'll See This Most Often:

- Professional services contracts
- Engineering, IT, environmental, consulting work
- Complex construction or infrastructure projects
- Corporate RFPs for long-term vendors
- Federal RFPs using Best Value Tradeoff

Winning Strategy:

- Invest heavily in:
 - Clear, structured technical narratives
 - Differentiation (why you vs competitors)
 - Demonstrated understanding of the buyer's problem
- Avoid generic language or boilerplate responses
- Ensure pricing supports, not undermines, the technical story

2. What Is a Price-Driven Evaluation?

A price-driven evaluation prioritizes cost, often awarding to the lowest-priced responsive bidder.

Common Characteristics:

- Limited narrative requirements
- Heavy focus on:
 - Line-item pricing
 - Compliance with specs
 - Required forms & certifications
- Technical requirements are usually pass/fail

Where You'll See This Most Often:

- IFBs (Invitations for Bid)
- Commodities and standardized services
- Maintenance, supplies, or repetitive work
- Some municipal and local government contracts
- Certain corporate RFQs

Winning Strategy:

- Ensure:
 - Absolute compliance with requirements
 - Accurate, competitive pricing
 - No missing forms or signatures
- Technical storytelling has minimal impact
- Small errors can disqualify an otherwise low bid

3. Best Value: A Hybrid Approach

Many solicitations use a Best Value evaluation, balancing technical merit and price.

Two Common Best Value Models:

- Tradeoff: Higher technical scores can justify higher prices
- Lowest Price Technically Acceptable (LPTA):
 - All technical proposals meeting minimum standards are considered equal
 - Lowest price wins among acceptable offers

Key Risk:

Misreading LPTA as technical-driven (or vice versa) leads to:

- Over-investing in narratives that won't matter
- Under-investing in pricing strategy
- Poor bid/no-bid decisions

4. How to Identify the Evaluation Type (Before You Bid)

Always review:

- Evaluation Criteria Section
- Scoring Weights or Point Allocation
- Language such as:

- “Price is more important than...”
- “Technical factors are significantly more important than price”
- “Award will be made to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder”

If unclear:

- Government: Review the solicitation matrix or ask questions during Q&A
- Corporate: Clarify expectations with procurement contacts when allowed

How Quin-Z Helps

We support clients by analyzing evaluation criteria before proposal development begins, advising on technical vs pricing emphasis, aligning proposal effort with actual scoring priorities, and helping clients avoid misaligned bids that waste time and money.