
Request for Proposal

Request for Study of Current Training Materials and Feasibility of Online Learning

February 11, 2008

Requested by:
Banker's Association of Risk Management
(BARM)

Contact:
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Company Overview

Banker's Association of Risk Management (**BARM**) was founded in 1923; BARM is a not-for-profit, member-driven professional association whose sole purpose is to advance the use of sound risk principles in the financial services industry. BARM promotes an enterprise approach to risk management that focuses on credit risk, market risk, and operational risk.

Headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, BARM has 5,000 institutional members that include banks of all sizes, as well as nonbank financial institutions. They are represented in the association by over 27,000 risk management professionals who are chapter members in financial centers throughout North America, Europe, and Asia/Pacific.

BARM's strong relationship with members and regulators helps to develop new risk management techniques and innovative products. BARM's education and training programs are geared to risk management professionals at every stage of their careers. Over 60% of BARM's revenue is derived from providing products and services to members.

With the support of its members, BARM develops leading-edge risk management products, services, and studies.

Business Need

As a non-profit professional organization we are concerned that over the past three years BARM has seen a decline in product and service purchases from our members. BARM believes that the progressive loss of sales is directly in relation to the stagnancy of the products we provide for training and education. BARM would like to take a cue from our leading competitor, Alpha Performance and update our offerings. Alpha Performance currently provides lending institutions with web-based training for risk management and fundamental courses that provide a solid foundation in the credit, market, and operational risk areas.

Our desire is to have a vendor conduct a full scale needs, content and audience analysis to determine the best format and delivery of our learning programs. We anticipate recommendations ranging from the development of online curriculum to a possible reconfiguration of our stand up courses and seminars.

Current Status

BARM offers the advanced thinking in the discipline of enterprise risk management. Our products, services, and research are designed to help institutions manage risk across the enterprise, and in the specific areas of credit, market, and operational risk.

BARM provides training products for 50 instructor-led training courses, including financial regulations, annual tax rules, credit risk for lenders, key risk indicators, Sarbanes Oxley and enterprise-wide risk management. BARM also offers customizable courses for any financial institution at an additional cost. Currently, chapters, individual members, or even nonmembers can sign up for a training session(s) via the BARM web site.

BARM currently offers limited online products with our focus primarily on stand up instruction delivered in workshops and seminars. While we don't offer online courses, we do have an online presence where our customers can sign up for face-to-face seminars, round table sessions and stand alone (or self-study) materials, as well as, order books, publications, and journals. We offer a Credit Risk Certification program based on the concepts and body of knowledge related to the credit risk field. Our certification exam is derived from the seven dimensions of the credit risk field as defined by BARM's Certification Steering Committee. The certification process has been designed to assess the knowledge of a commercial credit risk professional with a minimum of three years' active credit risk experience.

Profile of Our Typical Customer

Following is a profile of a BARM member interested in our course of study.

Professionals interested in expanding knowledge of credit risk management concepts can benefit from our programs. Our courses, seminars and workshops are appropriate for professionals working in or in close cooperation with the following financial related functions:

- lender
- credit officer
- credit analyst
- credit risk manager
- loan review officer
- supervisor of these professionals

Project Overview

At this point, BARM would like some industry expertise and recommendations on the various directions our learning offerings and courses could take in the future. We prefer to not make major decisions that will impact our revenue base without first evaluating our existing processes and product.

BARM would like to partner with a learning vendor and have the vendor evaluate our current status from several perspectives:

- Current customer satisfaction with our courses
- Our current course development process
- Instructional quality of our courses
- What course are candidates to be placed online
- Training department personnel's skills and preparedness for online learning development
- Where is BARM as related to competitors
- Possible Learning Management System solutions/options for hosting and delivering courses
- Course development software recommendations
- Recommended course delivery format

Since we are considering moving some or all of our courses to an online format, we would also like vendors bidding on this RFP to create a sample course titled "Your Responsibilities Under the Sarbanes-Oxley Act" to show our organization the possibilities of online learning. However, the focus of this proposal is on the evaluation of our training program and its various aspects.

The winning vendor should be fully versed in the ability to provide assessments/evaluations encompassing process, infrastructure, and products as indicated above. We desire the vendor to have a proven methodology and tools for conducting this comprehensive assessment of our organization's training function. BARM is open to providing in-house and external resources in the form of Subject Matter Experts, trainers, and end-users to assist in gathering the data that will be needed for decision making. BARM expects to be able to evaluate both qualitative and quantitative research uncovered by the vendor. Upon completion of this project BARM will own the information gathered in both raw and summative formats.

BARM will select a partner based on the vendor's capabilities and expertise in the area of evaluation and assessment. BARM anticipates seeing samples of tools that the partner intends on using for data gathering. These tools can be paper-based, face-to-face, web-based, or a combination of all of these.

BARM will not only want to review the tools and methodologies but understand the rationale and benefit to using these instruments – BARM would like to comprehend how in-depth one assessment is over another and which ones they can select from, if any.

Prospective partners should be prepared to provide a flexible cost structure to pair with their solution and an estimated timeline that includes the evaluation, as well as a summative report.

Upon review of the qualitative and quantitative data obtained during the evaluation, BARM wants either this same partner or a recommended vendor to provide options for how they can manage expanding their educational and training product line to become more competitive within their own market. They would like to see their revenue increase from 60% to 75% over the next five years. BARM believes they can do this by providing more educational and training materials to their members through the Web.

BARM is open to increasing the size of their training department and/or using the services of trusted vendors to assist in providing quality, effective training in the format (instructor-led, web-based, or a blended approach) that their members desire. BARM is dedicated to finding the optimal solution (LMS capabilities) that will increase retention and competency-based learning for its members.

In closing, BARM has no internal resources to guide them on the decisions they need to make and lay out for 2008. We would like this initiative to begin with evaluation in the second quarter with results and project plans in place by the end of third quarter of 2008. BARM anticipates 2009 being a time of change for our organization as we implement the most viable solution for their needs.

Materials Available for Review

For each of our face-to-face learning modules, we have a Student Guide, an Instructor Guide, and PowerPoint Slides available for the vendor to review. We also have detailed course descriptions available for review as well.

We have a customer advisory group that could be made available if needed as well as a board of directors and access to all of our members via email, phone and US mail services. Other materials can be made available upon request.

Experience in Financial Industry

The proposal will include a discussion of the bidder's experience in producing products or conducting studies targeted at the financial industry with a focus on credit risk management. If little or no previous experience exists, a plan for the lack of experience is required.

Submission Process

All proposals are due in 2221 McCormick Center at 8:00 am on March 24, 2008. No late proposals will be accepted. Three hard copy, bound documents are expected as well as one file in the Adobe Acrobat format emailed to kkapp@bloomu.edu. The hard bound materials are to be turned into Karen Swartz on the second floor of McCormick Center. A bidder's conference to answer any questions will be held on February 18, 2008 at 6:00 in McCormick (classroom). Questions must be submitted in writing the morning of February 15, 2006 to kkapp@bloomu.edu

If a vendor is chosen as a finalist, they will be required to present a 20 minute presentation of the proposal and to present a working prototype of any developed instruction. The vendor will then be requested to participate in a 15 minute question and answer session. We expect the proposal to be limited to 40 pages, including front and back cover as well as appendices. We require a single-spaced, twelve point font and one inch margins on the document.

Date	Activity
February 11, 2008	RFP Issued
February 15, 2008	Bidders Questions Due
February 18, 2008	Bidders Conference
March 24, 2008	Proposal Due 8:00 am in Karen Swartz's Office
April 17, 2008	Vendor Presentations

Proposal Organization

The following is the desired format for the proposal.

- **Corporate Confirmation Letter:** A letter from an official with signatory power will be written that states the vendor's interest and commitment to the project and agrees to adhere to BARM's Terms
- **Executive Summary:** Include an outline of your evaluation design, and time and price for completing the work. Maximum of two pages.
- **Understanding of the Scope:** Provide a concise description of the challenge you believe the BARM is facing.
- **Overview of the Solution:** Provide an overview of the process you will undertake to evaluate our current learning and development efforts, how you plan to obtain data from our members and staff and how you plan to provide recommendations. Include background and information that qualifies your organization to make such recommendations.
- **Description of Evaluation and Recommendation Process:** First provide information on how you will conduct the evaluation, what will you do? What data will you seek? Why? How will the gathered data be used to inform your decisions and recommendations? Clearly outline your proposed evaluation strategies and methodologies.

- **Project Management and Schedule:** Describe your approach to managing this evaluation and analysis project. Include a high-level working plan outlining resources (yours and ours), phases, timelines, and deliverables. You should include a graphical - e.g. work plan as an appendix.
- **Budget:** We desire a comprehensive budget outlining initial cost for the evaluation. Additionally, if you determine or foresee, based on your expertise, any cost savings or revenue opportunities due to implementation of one strategy over another, we would like information concerning those options.
- **Corporate Capabilities:** We are looking for experts on learning and learning strategy, please list all appropriate credentials and background of your company in this area. List similar projects you have completed in the past and the specific clients for whom you have completed the projects.
- **Appendices:** In addition to any other appendices you choose to add, include client references and resumes of the core team members. In this section, you may want to include prototype screens.

Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the proposal.

- **Method and Approach to Evaluation:** Comprehensive scope of the suggested evaluation and assessment solution; impact recommendations will have on the BARM, methodology used to conduct study. We are looking for a comprehensive review of our program and an approach that views all areas of concern and includes all stakeholder input.
- **Project:** Quality of the people you would assign (as judged by resumes and face-to-face); your experience with similar projects; how you propose to handle shifts in project scope or timelines; integrity; availability of resources needed to complete project in a timely manner; your instructional design and development strategy, your project management strategy; your ability to evaluate solutions to training problems and your quality assurance process.
- **Time & Cost:** They must be appropriate and reasonable. Focus is more on feasible timeline and activities than cost.
- **Written Document:** Organization, clarity, and brevity (no longer than 40 pages).

Copyright and Ownership

The content of this RFP is confidential to BARM and those vendors asked to bid. Your proposal will be treated as BARM property. This RFP is to remain with the designated corporate representative and should be treated as proprietary and confidential.