PROVIDER SELECTION / PROPOSAL REVIEW

Compare Foodservice Proposals: Costs, Scope & Questions

Compare foodservice proposals using the same service volume, schedule, responsibilities, and pricing period. Keep known charges separate from unresolved costs. A number you have not received is an unanswered question, not a zero.

01 Normalize the assignment first.

Start by matching the number of sites, meal periods, service hours, expected volumes, and operating days. Two providers may reasonably have priced different assignments when the original scope was unclear. Ask both to restate their assumptions before comparing totals.

02 Separate four kinds of money.

- Recurring charges: fixed fees or repeated costs for the agreed service.
- Volume-driven charges: amounts that change with meals, transactions, staffing, or other units.
- One-time investment: transition, installation, equipment, and opening work.
- Unpriced exposure: exclusions, conditional charges, or responsibilities whose cost is not yet known.

03 Worked example

Proposal A lists $40,000 per month plus $4,000 of known monthly extras. Proposal B lists $45,000 per month. The entered difference is $1,000 per month. That does not establish the less expensive complete solution if A excludes equipment maintenance and neither proposal has priced that responsibility.

04 Make the responsibility matrix explicit.

For food, labor, management, relief coverage, technology, cleaning, equipment, and reporting, record who performs the work and where it is priced. "Included" should point to a line item. "Shared" should identify the boundary between responsibilities.

05 Ask specific clarification questions.

- Which service days, meal periods, locations, and volumes support the quote?
- Does the staffing figure include relief, supervision, training, and related employment costs?
- Which technology and payment charges are additional?
- Who maintains and replaces equipment, and how is that funded?
- Which charges change when attendance or service requirements change?
- How do sales, employer contributions, credits, and pass-through items reconcile?
- What opening or transition costs are outside the recurring figure?

06 Keep the evidence beside the decision.

Retain the written response, responsible person, date, and remaining condition for each question. A conversation can clarify intent, but your evaluation should refer to the agreed proposal language. Bring contract-specific questions to the people responsible for procurement and contracting in your organization.

The comparison desk creates a first clarification list from manually entered monthly costs and scope selections. It does not read documents, estimate unknown charges, rank providers, or choose a winner for you.

Put your next decision in focus.

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