

A construction worker wearing a white hard hat and a blue button-down shirt is focused on writing on a clipboard. The background is a blurred industrial or construction site. The text "COMPLETING YOUR OUTSOURCING JOURNEY" is overlaid in large, bold, white, uppercase letters. A red banner at the bottom contains the text "8 STEPS TO PARTNER SELECTION". The Aramark logo is visible on the worker's shirt.

# COMPLETING YOUR OUTSOURCING JOURNEY

8 STEPS TO PARTNER SELECTION

The decision to outsource campus services, such as dining or facilities, is one of the most strategic an institution can make, requiring much forethought, research, analysis and involvement by members of the campus community. However, the decision on which partner to engage is an equally important decision. How can you assure you select the partner that best aligns with your intentions and goals?

This guide outlines the eight steps necessary for selecting the right partner and solidifying a beneficial partnership. But before undertaking the selection process, it is useful to first understand the time commitment required and the parties to be involved. Below we offer some useful guidelines to help in your planning efforts.

# HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO SELECT A PARTNER?

As a general guideline, the entire process takes 6 to 12 months, including these phases:



**Conduct partner research prior to the procurement process**  
(2 to 3 months)

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**Develop Request for Partner Solicitation**  
(2 to 4 months concurrent with partner research)

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**Issue Request for Partner**

- Walk-through campus visit (1 to 2 months)
- Proposal development (1 to 2 months)

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**Selection and Award**  
(1 to 2 months)

The process of transitioning from self-operation to that of a service partner takes some time. Success is often measured by the least level of disruption. Periods of low activity on campus, such as during the summer or winter breaks, are most ideally suited for transition. Keep this mind as you plan your selection process.



# WHO SHOULD BE ON YOUR PARTNER SELECTION TEAM?

It is likely your institution's president or chancellor, chief financial officer and vice president of student affairs initiated the decision to outsource services. However, the selection of a partner is one that should not be made exclusively by this same group. The likelihood of success of the decision will be greatly enhanced if there is broad support for the ultimate service provider.

**Here is a general overview of whom to include on your partner selection team.**

## **VP of Student Affairs or VP of Finance (CFO)**

This person typically initiates the outsourcing process and would want to continue their efforts when choosing a partner.

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## **Other Cabinet Members**

Depending on your institution's size, services sought and business processes, this team could include any of the following positions: Chief Operating officer (COO), VP/Director of Facilities, VP of Academics, VP for Enrollment and Retention, VP for Advancement, AVP/ Director of Housing, key Department Heads/ Deans of Schools.

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## **Finance Team**

This team will help determine the budget, negotiate the contract terms and compare value between service providers.

## **Legal Team**

This team will be essential during contract creation and signing.

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## **Labor Relations**

If unions are involved in the transition of employees, someone from this group should be involved.

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## **Student Representatives**

Outsourcing campus services directly impacts students. Allow them to have a say in who is awarded the contract.

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## **Board of Trustees Member**

They likely serve in an advisory role only, but may have final approval at the end of the process. Keep them well informed throughout the process.

# WHAT GUIDANCE SHOULD WE GIVE THE SELECTION TEAM?

Once convened, the Selection Team is charged with choosing the best partner, while also representing their campus' constituent groups. Here are three keys to assure success by this team:

**First, ensure that each member clearly understands his or her role early in the process. Role confusion can bring frustration and dissent. For example, employees, senior staff or even faculty may confuse their role as being one of approval, when it is really one of consulting, advising or providing information.**

**Second, ensure the entire team understands the decision process and criteria as early as possible. Establish and publicize key milestones so people know when to expect the final decision.**

**Finally, as soon as possible, develop an integrated decision-making and communications plan. Time invested early in this area will avoid problems later in the process.**

NOW THAT YOUR PROCESS TIMELINE AND PARTNER SELECTION TEAM IS ESTABLISHED, HERE ARE THE STEPS TO ENSURING A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP SELECTION PROCESS.





# 8 STEPS FOR PARTNER SELECTION

These eight essential steps to outsource your services with a quality partner give you a solid foundation for completing your outsourcing journey.

## 1 CLEARLY DEFINE WHAT YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE WITH YOUR OUTSOURCE PARTNER

There may be several reasons why your institution has decided to outsource your [dining services](#) and/or [facilities operations](#). However, what is equally important is understanding what you hope to achieve by outsourcing. Clearly defined campus goals and expectations are essential information for a service provider. Including this information in the procurement process helps a partner craft a solution unique to your campus and will lead to a more successful outsourcing experience.

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## 2 FORM A SELECTION COMMITTEE

Lack of buy-in is one of the most common contributors to failed outsourcing. Structure your selection process for success. Appoint members to your selection committee who represent broad factions of campus. Involve them early and often. The greater their involvement in the process, the higher the likelihood for advocacy of the final decision. You also need to ensure those charged with delivering and managing the contract are committed to seeing it through and can stay focused and determined in the face of potential resistance. *(See previous recommendations on forming a partner selection team.)*



### **3 ISSUE A REQUEST FOR SOLUTION, RATHER THAN A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

*The best strategic relationships begin with a Request for Solution.*

Request for proposals (RFPs) are often used when soliciting a defined scope of work. You prescribe the work and then get a price for that work. The challenge with this approach for dining and/or facilities is that it often results in the **Outsourcing Paradox**, a situation where the service solution is defined by the requestor, rather than the provider of service. In such a model, innovation and continuous improvement on the part of the partner are stifled and the relationship invariably deteriorates. Instead, develop a detailed, accurate and effective Request for Solution to elicit responses tailored to your institution's needs.

*Learn how to craft a Request for Solution in our guide, [Outsourcing in Higher Education: Getting the Procurement Process Right.](#)*

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### **4 PROVIDE PROSPECTIVE PARTNERS AMPLE ACCESS TO YOUR CAMPUS AND INFORMATION**

Institutions that outsource often underestimate the importance of this step in the procurement process. The partners you engage are experts in their fields. They have the knowledge, understanding and expertise to craft solutions specific to your campus' needs. Yet, to develop a tailored solution, they require access to both quantitative and qualitative information.

Reviewing financials and demographic information, dialogues with campus users (students, faculty, staff), tours of campus buildings and inspections of mechanical rooms all provide incredibly useful insights. The greater the transparency and the more your campus is willing to share, the better the solution proposed.

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### **5 REVIEW PROPOSALS AND EVALUATE OUTSOURCE COMPANIES**

Review proposals and shortlist those that meet your predetermined requirements. You will also want to conduct due diligence, such as a financial review and checking client references of preferred respondents before moving forward.

## **6 SOLICIT ORAL PRESENTATIONS FROM EACH PROVIDER**

It is useful to have responding providers formally present their proposal to your selection committee. This gives your team an opportunity to better understand each provider's thought process, capability and innovation. Most importantly, it allows your team to assess the cultural fit of each provider with your own campus. Team members will have the opportunity to ask questions of the provider and truly assess each provider's proposal. Finally, the presentation assures a level of transparency that the selection process was open, fair and thorough.

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## **7 COMMUNICATE THE OUTCOME OF THE SELECTION PROCESS TO YOUR CAMPUS**

Once your selection committee has assessed the pros and cons of each provider and made a selection, it is important to communicate the result to campus as quickly as possible. The communication should include the rationale for the selection and convey broad support by the selection team.

Your communication plan will share the level of support you will expect to receive from the campus community during the transition process. This includes the various leaders, department heads, faculty, students and the entire campus community. Note that your selected partner can help in this communication. They have experience with conveying similar messages to other institutions. Be sure to solicit their recommendation and best practices for communication.

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## **8 COMMIT TO THE JOURNEY WITH YOUR NEW PARTNER**

Outsourcing with a service partner is not a transactional decision. A single contract typically runs between five to 10 years, while successful partnerships can run for multiple contract terms spanning 20 years or more. That's why it's important to choose a partner with skills and experience, and is a good cultural fit for your campus. Once you've made your decision, make a commitment to support your new partner at every level. With that support, you'll gain even greater long-term results.



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**AS YOU CONSIDER SERVICE PARTNERS FOR YOUR CAMPUS, WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO CONSIDER **ARAMARK**. WITH OUR YEARS OF EXPERIENCE PARTNERING WITH HUNDREDS OF CAMPUSES, WE HAVE A TRACK RECORD OF SUCCESS AND ARE COMMITTED TO **DELIVERING THE BEST SERVICES AND OUTCOMES TO YOUR CAMPUS.****

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Please contact us for more information, case studies and references.

**CONTACT US!**