

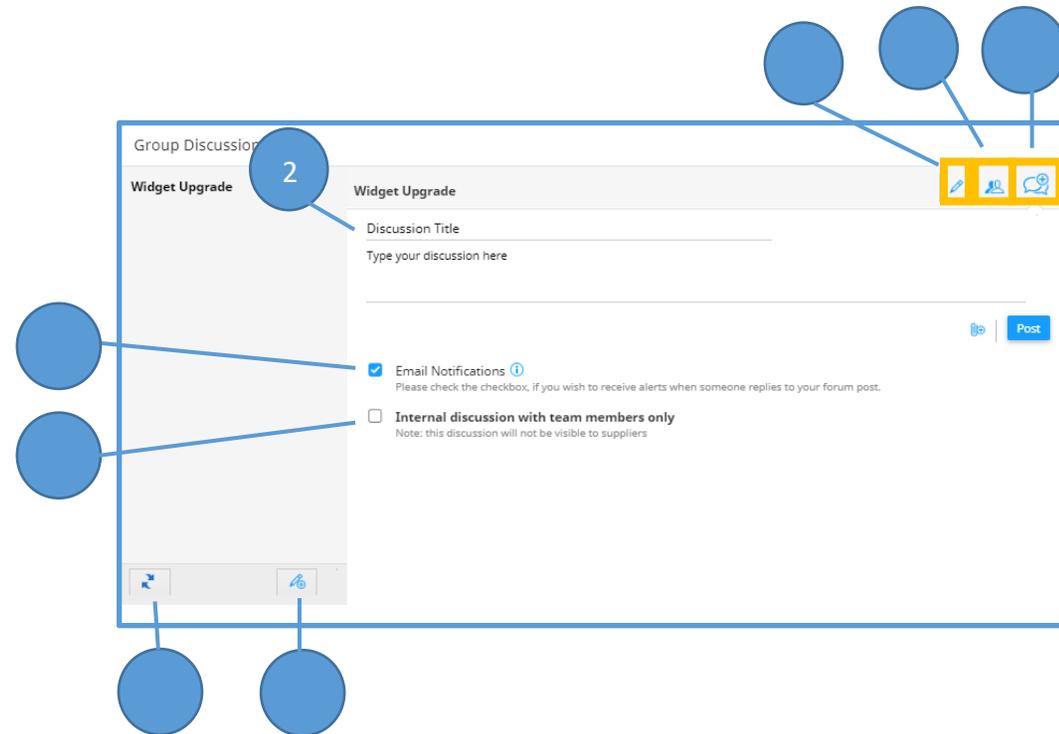
Managing the Discussion Forum

You can use the discussion forum for both external (suppliers) and internal (team members) communications. You can initiate a group discussion with team members when the RFx is in a draft stage. However, you can only communicate with suppliers after the event is published. Also, only those suppliers who accept your invitation to participate in the event can join the discussion. A group discussion consists of topics, which in turn contain the actual discussions where stakeholders interact with each other.

How to Use the Discussion Forum

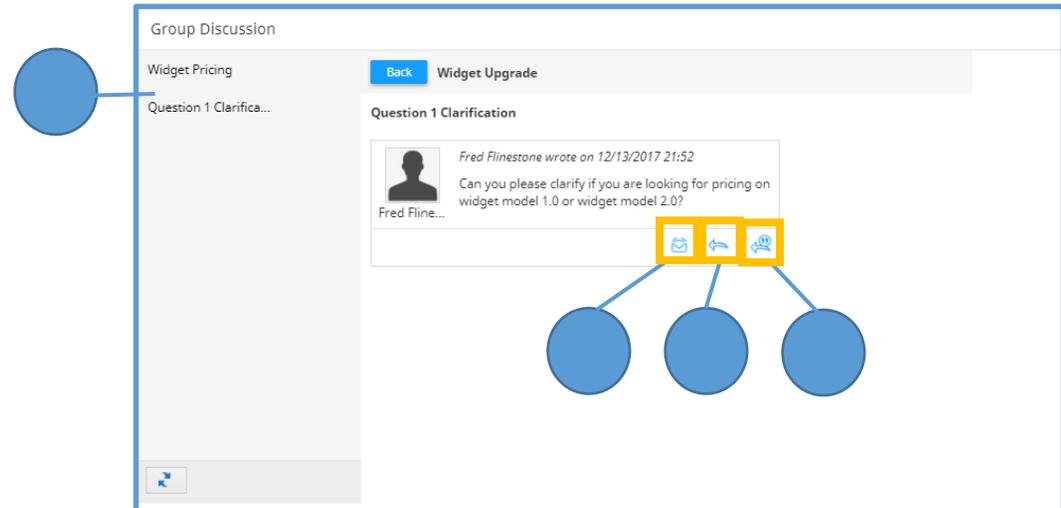
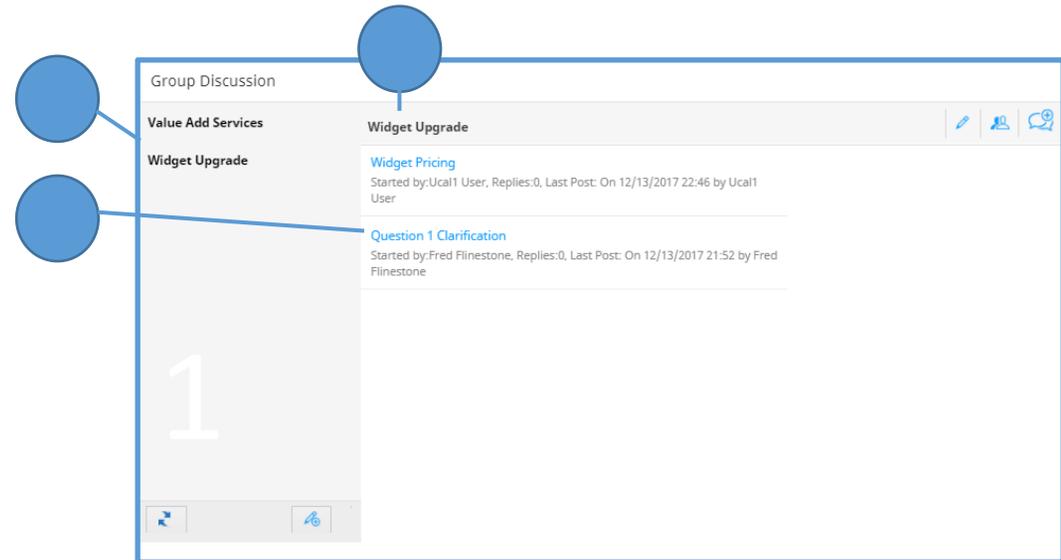
To initiate a group discussion. Click the Discussion Forum  icon in the top right of your screen.

1. Click the **Add New Discussion** icon to initiate a new discussion topic in the forum.
2. Enter the discussion name in the **Discussion Title** field.
3. Click the **Participants** icon to view current event participants (Team members and Suppliers).
4. Click the **Edit Topic** icon and click the boxes next to team members and/or suppliers you want to include in the discussion and then click **Add**.
5. Check the **Email Notifications** box if you would like to be notified when someone replies to your forum post.
6. Check the **Internal Discussion Only** box if you want to keep your discussion between your Team members and exclude Suppliers.
7. Click the **Add Attachments** to allow Team members and Suppliers to add files to any discussion.
8. Click **Post** to post the discussion.
9. Click the **Refresh** icon to refresh the page.
10. Click the **Add New Topic** to organize discussions around a particular subject.



Actions within a Discussion

1. View the list of RFx discussion topics on the left. By default, the first topic is created by the application and will always have the same name as the RFx. In this example, *Widget Upgrade*. The buyer has also created the additional topic, *Value Added Services*.
2. View the list of a topic's discussions in the main body of the screen. In this example, the buyer has created the *Widget Pricing* discussion in the *Widget Upgrade* topic. A supplier has created the discussion *Question 1 Clarification* in the same topic.
3. Click the title of the discussion to display its details.
4. When a discussion is selected, the **Group Discussion** window displays. You can navigate to links within each discussion thread on the left
5. Clicking the **Broadcast** icon allows all suppliers to see your response posted under this discussion.
6. Clicking the **Reply** icon enables you to reply to a specific Supplier. For internal discussions, all Team members can view a posted message.
7. The **Reply with Quote** icon works the same as **Reply** but will also include the original message in your response.



Tips

- When a Supplier replies to a Buyer's message, only the Buyer and his or her Team members can view the reply. Other Suppliers cannot view it. For internal discussions, all Team members can view a posted message.
- Only Team members who are invited to participate in the RFX event can view the  icon.

Warnings

- It is critical to maintain a fair and equitable RFX, so using the **Broadcast** option as the method to reply to a Supplier's question is best unless the Supplier provides self-identifying or proprietary information in their response. In this case, you can use the **Reply** option so no other Suppliers will see the response.