



TOP TIPS FOR TENDERING SUCCESS



READ ALL THE DOCUMENTS

There will be several documents relating to each tender and these can be long and wordy. They vary in content but at a high level you should look out for the Selection Questions or 'SQs', the Invitation to Tender or 'ITT', Instructions to Tenderers (also, ITT), the Evaluation Criteria, the Specification, the pricing schedule and any supporting documents relating to the nature of and reasons behind the bid.

BID OR NO BID

At the very beginning, once the documents have been understood, a cold view needs to be taken on whether the opportunity is truly obtainable – or a bit of a stretch. This saves businesses more time and cost than any other piece of advice.

MAKE A BIDDING PLAN

Invariably, bidding is seen as an 'additional job' and left until the last moment. Not great but easy to do, however, establishing a plan from the outset sets objectives and milestones. As you familiarise yourself with all the documents, you can put key information into your plan for easy reach. The plan should contain a tender summary, salient points in highlight and an idea of who will answer each question.

KNOW THE DEADLINES

The tender timeline will contain a number of dates such as deadlines for asking clarifications and for overall tender submission. It sounds obvious but we are always surprised at the number of clients who have failed to commit to these dates. Put them in your diary with a reminder the day before!





ANSWER THE QUESTION – PROPERLY

Try to resist the urge to cut and paste previously used material – the risk in doing so is that you don't answer the question being asked. Use the question to infer the structure of your answer so you don't miss anything.

Often bidders sell what their service is to them and not what the buyer is actually wanting to buy. A subtle but important difference.

Most tenders have a provided format for responses – use this. This allows evaluators to easily understand specific answers to specific questions and therefore, when reviewing 10s of these, make evaluation easier. Should they need to 'hunt' the answer, they will get frustrated and mark the bid down.

Each question may be limited by numbers of words, page count, even characters. Use all of them, don't give in halfway through as every word used is another opportunity to get extra marks for better describing your solution, added value, why you are the best choice.

Answer each question separate and do not refer to other answers. To maintain consistency, evaluators can only evaluate the specific response to the specific question.

ASK CLARIFICATIONS

If you are unsure about anything in the documents, ask a question. That is what clarifications are there for. You can ask as many as you like before the deadline and there will also be a date by which the procuring authority will respond.

If your clarification is commercially sensitive or solution specific (proprietary) state as much asking the Authority not to publish the response widely – generally, responses to every bidders' clarifications are shared with all bidders.



REFLECT LANGUAGE USED IN THE TENDER DOCUMENTS

The tender will be written using particular and relevant vocabulary which it is important to reflect and in certain cases repeat back to them in your response. For example, if they use the word 'customer' do the same, don't use the word 'client'.

UNDERSTAND THE WEIGHTING

There will be a quality to price weighting ratio – 70:30 and 60:40 are commonly seen, but more recently we have seen them as low as 10:90.

Clearly the higher the quality weighting the better, because in the case of 10:90 it is not much more than a race to the bottom which is not good for anyone.

The pricing schedule may also be weighted in favour of certain roles or levels of support and it is important that you understand this. We suggest doing some sensitivity work around changing unit or daily rates to see how it affects the scoring.



RESEARCH

What is the problem that has caused the authority to come to market?

The more you can find out about the procurement the better because it will increase your understanding of the authority's 'pain points' and ultimately the issue they are looking to solve.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Why not book a 20-minute consultation with one of our bid managers – it's absolutely free with no obligation to engage us.