

*'Update your tender
writing
skills and
WIN more business'*



TOP TEN TIPS FOR TENDER WRITING

BIZPHIT ASSOCIATES LTD
WWW.BIZPHIT.CO.UK

Never underestimate the power of review and reflection.

If you’ve been frustrated and suffering from trying to get your tender response on the starting blocks, or perhaps feel that your just not getting the kind of quality you should, then maybe you need to revisit some of the fundamentals of tendering.

The power of stopping and reflecting on your efforts will pay you dividends and help you to focus your submissions on a winning strategy instead of the ‘hamster on the wheel’ strategy.

In reality, there are probably many more than ten issues, mistakes and errors a business might make when bidding for a contract, or indeed any kind of business submission.

But as professional tendering specialists we’ve generally found a number of the same or similar mistakes being made. So, to help we’ve recorded these for you on the following pages.

Putting our top ten tips into perspective and putting them together will help to provide focus. With no focus you don’t have a way forward. So, read and reflect on our top 10 tips for tendering.

If you need further support, then do get in touch – ‘we’re here to help you’

Top Tip #1

Always give yourself time to obtain all of the documentation you require

*This is an absolute requirement. So many times we find that clients forget or don't bother to obtain all of the information for a tender **BEFORE** they enter into the process of putting a bid together. You just can't complete a successful bid submission if you don't have all of the documentation. Without it you might miss really important information that the buyer wishes you to be aware of, or you don't understand the context of what is being bought, either way you're on to a losing bid straight away.*

Time is one of the biggest enemies of the bid process, too little and you're likely to miss the deadline or you start off well and the submission deadline comes around quickly and you rush the last often-crucial elements. Go too slowly and you could get distracted and you'll end in the same position.

Top Tip #2

Construct a project plan

No matter how easy or complex a tender appears always take time to scope a project sheet, larger more complex tenders might require a project plan but it makes good practice to have a template you can use time after time. If you put a 100 hours into a very comprehensive bid and then leave one small item out, all that time and effort is wasted. A project plan gives you a 'tick box' of items you need to complete which you can then delegate or share with a colleague.

We have developed a simple project plan sheet for you to use if you do not have your own, use this to track the items that need completing, do check the timeframes and stick to the plan, it will help you keep on track.

Top Tip #3

Always read the tender documentation

This is another example of where bidders often get caught out. Not reading the supporting documentation is as bad as not allowing yourself time to read the bid documents. Help yourself by putting a project plan together and add in the plan reading time to make sure you do not miss vital information. Work with a colleague if possible to double check and confirm your understanding of the information provided (two heads are better than one). You'll get one chance and one chance only, make that chance your best.

Top Tip #4

Have a bid team if possible, managing with one person is difficult

Try to pull a team together so that you can allocate portions of the bid to members of the team, keep delegation smart and reporting tight, you need to focus on the outcomes and if one member of the team is lagging then the whole project will be put at risk.

Try to find other members of staff to support you, if you are a one-person business then at least have a consultant read your bid before you submit it, when you are too close to it you are likely to miss some important items and make silly mistakes.

Top Tip #5

Check you have standard policies and procedures available and up to date

It is likely that you will be asked to provide some of your standard policies and procedures as part of the tender process. Resist the temptation to trawl the internet looking for suitable policies, often they are not in the same context of your business and we see many silly mistakes, for example copying of a Health and Safety Policy complete with the business name and details it was copied from. Not helpful when the buyer looks through your policies.

*This is part of your pre-tender readiness; you should have these in place **BEFORE** you proceed to put a bid submission together. Don't underestimate how much time and effort can go into bringing this kind of documentation together. If need be engage a tender support consultancy, they can help you provide what you need.*

Top Tip #6

Concentrate on the outcomes and put real commitment in to win!

*One of the surest ways of wasting your time is going into the bidding process in a half-hearted way. Unless you are going to give **100%** commitment then 'don't do it'. Ask yourself what's your motivation for bidding? Do you really want or need the contract; do you have the technical capacity to deliver if you were successful? What kind of issues or problems might occur in the business if you won, you might not have sufficient capacity to deliver and complete a contract potentially for up to three years.*

*There is a myriad of questions, but whatever the outcome **don't bid** if you're not committed to the process.*

Top Tip #7

Check your self-compliance issues, are you 'fit' to tender?

There is a move to provide more self-compliance to bidders; this is a result of the changes brought about to the Public Sector Contract Regulations 2015. Check the issues that are going to be flagged up in the tender process, you certainly don't want to go down the tender route if later you are not able to provide proof of information relating to self-compliance. If you're not sure about the self-compliance issues then please use our guide to self-compliance in bidding, but do check if there are any specific issues to be aware of in your particular sector.

Top Tip #8

Do you have current financial accounts duly signed?

Accounts are important, but if you are a start-up and new to tendering then you might be able to get through the process with a copy of your current cash flow forecast, or perhaps you have just one year of accounts. Either way do make sure that all financial documents are signed off, generally your accountant will have forwarded the last set of accounts to you for checking, you'll often find a place on the first page for the proprietor or director(s) to sign that the accounts are a true and honest record.

It's good practice to sign these off even if the buyer is not specifically asking for signed accounts, signed accounts helps to show self-compliance and due diligence.

Top Tip #9

Ensure you follow the same due diligence for your supply chain as you would for your own business

If you are using a supply chain of contractors then you'll need to ensure the same high level of self-compliance is maintained and evidenced by your contractors. Do you request insurance details from your sub-contractors as well as training and health and safety policies, are they qualified and can they show technical competence?

You would do well to examine your supply chain particularly if you use sub-contractors, a good supply chain will help you to secure a contract but you need to check its legitimacy before committing your bid. The Supplier Questionnaire introduced by the Public Sector in Sept 2016 requires this information.

Top Tip #10

Check and re-check before you finally submit your bid documents

This is a case of check and double check before you submit your bid. If you have followed the top ten checklist then you should have charted a course that has provided you with some structure and meaning, but you are only able to see what you have written and probably not what might be missing.

Give yourself a better chance of producing a winning bid by getting it checked by a third party. We do this for clients with regularity; we also pick up mistakes and errors with regularity too.

*It's well worth having your submission checked, you have invested many hours of work into producing the tender, make your tender the **winning** tender.*