

# Winning Tenders – Part 2

## Stage 1: Before the decision is announced

1. Ensure you understand what the tender process involves from here.

Look through the documentation for information on the timeframe including when a short-list is expected to be made, if presentations are required and if there are likely to be further negotiations. If the document doesn't include this information, request it.

2. Be patient, but don't be complacent.

Evaluating tenders takes time, especially if there were a lot of submissions or if the tender was particularly complicated. Unfortunately, the tender is usually NOT the most important priority for the client. This means that timeframes for evaluations are often longer than the time allowed to submit the tender, and they often lag.

Be patient but make sure you keep in contact with the client. Use your judgement as to what is the appropriate frequency and timing of calls. The objective is to demonstrate your enthusiasm and commitment to the client and to keep 'top of mind' for the client during the evaluation process.

### If short-listed...

3. Thank the client and reiterate your enthusiasm to work with them.

Try to identify how many other organisations and who have been short-listed, and clarify the remaining steps of the evaluation process.

4. Put your best foot forward at the formal presentation.

If the client is intending to host formal presentations, you need to start planning immediately. The objectives of the presentation are to build rapport, demonstrate your understanding of the client's business and their industry, demonstrate your professional expertise, instil confidence in your abilities and service level, and address any issues.

Identify who will be on the evaluation panel and match the client's group in number, seniority and area of practice.

Check if the client has an agenda and if they have a preference for the format of the presentation, eg a formal presentation or a discussion around a table.

Allocate the team's primary spokesperson, determine who will speak to what topic in what order, write the script, prepare your notes and prepare any slides or handouts.



Train the team in public speaking and business development skills. (Consider engaging a specialist trainer.) It is not enough that the team is competent in these skills, but they also need to be cohesive and fluid in their delivery.

Rehearse. Draft a mock audience into service and practice your presentation and responses to questions (especially the tough ones you anticipate). Start rehearsals at least a week in advance, and keep practicing until the end.

5. Prepare for the negotiation.

Agree the worst-case scenario on what concessions or discounts can be made, what value-added services can be offered, and any suggestions for improving service.

6. Prepare any additional materials.

Provide additional information in writing. Ensure the information is provided in a compelling format, that the client can easily communicate it to all members of the evaluation panel, and that it is added to your formal submission. This is particularly important if you are altering any information provided in the original submission.

## **Stage 2: Once the decision is announced**

### **If you are a winner...**

- Thank the client for the opportunity to work with them.
- Clarify the areas of service or practice where you have been selected.
- Clarify the service standards expected, particularly for reporting and invoicing.
- Arrange team introductions and begin the process of building relationships.
- Take every opportunity to build a better understanding of the client's business.
- Ask for the work.
- Regularly review your service and seek feedback.

### **If you are not a winner...**

- Thank the client for the opportunity of submitting your proposal.
- Ask for a post-tender feedback session. Ask the client to critically appraise how your organisation stacked up to the other submissions in relation to personnel, expertise, service, pricing etc. Try to determine if the perceived weaknesses are due to inadequacies of your submission or if they are fair comments on the competitiveness of your organisation.