



Writing bids and tenders: why good bid writing won't win you more business – bonus material

Steps to being 'tender ready'

A tool to help you identify small steps to upgrade your business development processes, and make bidding for new business easier

Thank you for purchasing my book, 'Why good bid writing won't win you more business'.

It may seem like there is a lot to do to be 'tender ready', but don't feel overwhelmed, you don't have to do it all at once, and very few organisations will have everything in place.

Start from where you are now, and implement small steps that will help you achieve your goals. Regular small tweaks and additions to your processes will soon add up, and before long you will have systems in place which will help you plan for, and implement business development success.

Use the following self-assessment checklist to highlight the areas that you need to prioritise. These will generally be:

- **Areas which lead to stress during a bidding process, for example, not being able to find necessary organisational information, or which delay decision-making**
- **Systems that you have in place which don't quite work. With a couple of tweaks, they could probably make your life a lot easier**
- **Anything which will stop you from submitting a good bid, such as not being able to provide proof that your existing services are good**
- **Parts of the business development cycle where you have nothing in place at all**

Overall your focus should be on

- **Making the bidding process easier and less stressful**
- **Speeding up decision-making, so you don't waste valuable time deciding whether to bid or not**
- **Gathering evidence that you can use to back up what you're saying**

Remember, doing something, however imperfectly, is better than doing nothing at all, so identify and prioritise the small steps you can take, and do them today.

Self-assessment questions	Yes	No
Do you have a written statement of your proposed strategic growth plans?		
Are you clear about what types of services (or products) you want to develop?		
Have you identified the geographical areas that you want to target?		
Do you have a list of when your existing contracts end so that you can start planning for any retendering?		
Do you have a target figure for how much you want to grow over the next 1 – 5 years?		
Do you understand how much it costs you to submit a bid?		
Do you know who your local commissioners are?		
Do you know who commissions services in areas that you want to move into?		
Do you have a system of reviewing your existing services, and your reputation from a commissioner point of view?		
Do you have a plan to build relationships with all your identified commissioners (existing and new)?		
Do you have a system internally to gather and share information about commissioners' priorities, needs, problems and potential developments?		
Have you developed a decision-making tool or system based on your strategic growth plans?		
Do you have systems in place to assess the competence and capability of existing providers?		
Do you have a system to identify potential competitors?		
Do you have a decision-making system in place?		
Do you regularly review local intelligence and commissioner feedback, so you can identify opportunities on the horizon?		
Do you have a system for identifying action you can take to position yourself positively for up and coming opportunities?		
Do you have a system for weighing opportunities against each other and deciding which offers the best return on investment?		
Once you've decided which opportunities you want to pursue, do you produce an Executive Summary outlining your service model?		
Do you have a system of 'signing off' your service model in advance of the tender being released?		
Do you have tools in place to ensure you comply with the requirements of the tender documents?		
Do you have a system to check that your bid answers are responsive to the needs of the commissioner?		
Do you have a system of content planning, and agreeing content before the bid is written?		
Do you have an effective system of reviewing built into your bid schedule?		
Has the person attending post-submission discussions been involved with the business development process throughout, and so understands your proposals fully?		

Do you update your service model after negotiation meetings to reflect any changes you've agreed?		
Do you have a system to review your bid after submission – win or lose?		
Do you capture lessons learned from your bid review process, and put them back into the cycle so you can learn from them for future bids?		
Do you have a system of 'account management' for existing commissioners?		
Do you have a system for capturing information about your existing services and feeding this into future bids?		
Do you have an organisational knowledge bank containing evidence of your organisation's capabilities, achievements and previous experience?		

Add up the number of 'yes' and 'no' answer in each coloured section above, and then use the grid below to identify which areas you need to work on.

Sections with the highest number of 'no' answers indicate priority areas.

Use the book as a guide to what you need to have in place.

If you answered 'no' to one or more questions in this section, you need to work on Step One – Strategy
If you answered 'no' to one or more questions in this section, you need to work on Step Two – Relationships
If you answered 'no' to one or more questions in this section, you need to work on Step Three – Bid/No Bid
If you answered 'no' to one or more questions in this section, you need to work on Step Four – Reputation
If you answered 'no' to one or more questions in this section, you need to work on Step Five – Service Model
If you answered 'no' to one or more questions in this section, you need to work on Step Six – Bid Writing
If you answered 'no' to one or more questions in this section, you need to work on Step Seven – Negotiation
If you answered 'no' to one or more questions in this section, you need to work on Step Eight – Delivery
If you answered 'no', you need to prioritise the ' resources ' section