

Handout 8 – What could be in the Proposal (and your tender bank)?

Many people ask the question – what should be the structure of the tender reply? In more and more cases the answer is becoming very simple – structure the document in the manner instructed in the Invitation to Tender. In other words, give them what they ask for! Often the tender documents will have a clear “Format of Response” or indeed simple boxes for you to complete.

It is understandable you may think you have a better structure but think twice before asserting your own beliefs – they are reading many tender replies and need to find information quickly so they can mark you. Help them do this the best you can.

It is also understandable that you wish to insert information into the document you feel is important, but there is not a natural place for it in their structure. This may be further product specification, explanation of innovations, other relevant experience, evidence supporting your method or approach etc. One way to approach this would be to refer to it in the main document and insert it in the appendix.

In addition to this approach re-consider the content you are placing in the main document. Information may be of the nature where you can refer to it in the main document, but place it in the appendix. The main document has to be succinct and hold their attention span. Removing such (necessary) content towards the appendix creates room and fulfils the submission criteria. Examples of this could include accounts, references, cv's, quality procedures, certificates, full case studies, assumptions, details of sub contractors, full product specification, forms of tender etc.

However, ensure that you are not using the appendices as a dumping ground for pre-existing information you would like to add to make your reply appear weightier. The content of the appendices should be just as considered as that of the main document.

The following could be used in a tender response, as well as being developed for your Tender Bank:

- Executive Summary
- Explanation of your Value Proposition
- Introduction and Background to Proposal
- Team structure (with roles and responsibilities)
- Method/Solution
- Previous company experience
- Previous individual experience
- Quality Management procedures
- Our Understanding of your needs and wants
- Pen Pictures of team members (with relevant information only!)
- Certificates (quality, standards etc)
- Project Plan with timings and billing schedule
- Costings
- Key Success Factors
- Any exclusion you have made in your approach
- C.v.'s
- Insurances (professional indemnity etc)
- Assumptions made during the design of your approach
- Terms of Reference and your thoughts / response
- Product specification with notable differences in performance
- Internal Policies (Health and Safety, Environmental etc)
- Manner in which you are to monitor and evaluate your performance
- Sub contractor details and management approach

