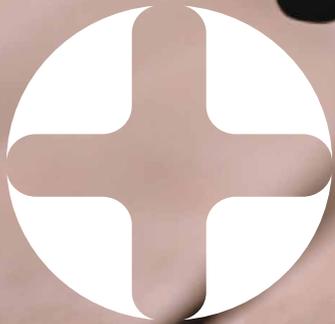


YOU
ARE
HERE

TEN TENDERING TRUTHS



WHICHEVER INDUSTRY YOU'RE
IN, IF YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT
IMPROVING YOUR TENDERING
OUTCOMES, WE CAN HELP

\$50bn+

Billions of dollars worth of
business won for our clients

100+

Hundreds of clients helped
every year

1,500+

More than 1,500 tenders
completed

10+

More than a decade of
specialised service provision

For more than a decade, we've helped clients submit upwards of 1500 proposals, winning more than \$50 billion worth of work along the way. It's no surprise that we're often asked about what works. So here's a guide outlining the Ten Tendering Truths that often make the difference between winning, or not. And to keep things practical, each Truth is accompanied by a simple self-reflection question designed to help you think about the state of the bidding function within your organisation.

WHETHER YOU'RE A ...



» senior manager wanting to know how to make tendering a larger and more reliable contributor to your company's revenue streams



» business development executive seeking to hit your revenue targets through more successful tendering



» bidding professional looking for ways to make the process less stressful, more efficient and easier to reproduce

—or—

—or—

We hope you find these Truths useful on your journey towards better tenders.

Truth

No

1

SUCCESS FOLLOWS COMMITMENT.



As it is for any business process, improvement requires motivation coupled with the means.

While you can drive the former, there is an answer for the latter courtesy of APMP (Association of Proposal Management Professionals).

They've developed a vast body of proven and accepted tendering best practice. As an organisation, we're 100% committed to using it. Why? Because it helps you win.

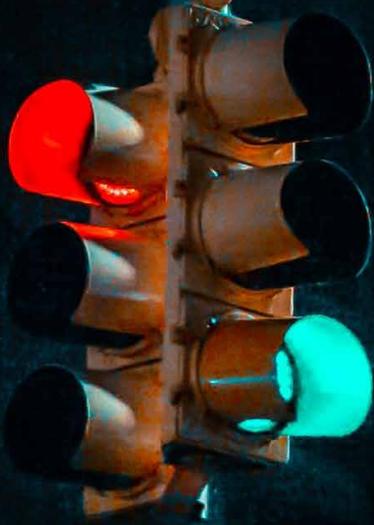


WE'RE SERIOUS ABOUT HELPING ORGANISATIONS IMPROVE THEIR TENDERING CAPABILITY, BUT ARE YOU REALLY COMMITTED TO DOING THE WORK TO WIN MORE TENDERS AND WIN THEM MORE EASILY?

Truth

No

2



IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU. ◀

Many organisations fall into the trap of thinking that winning tenders is about who can impress the buyer the most. Insightful organisations know to focus on the buyer's needs first ... and then express features of their offer as benefits for the buyer. This is a far more persuasive approach.

Showing how your solution solves buyer's challenges is a clear recipe for success.



DOES YOUR BIDDING TEAM KNOW HOW TO COMMUNICATE IN A MANNER THAT PLACES THE CLIENT AT THE CENTRE OF YOUR OFFER?

Truth

No

3

PRICE MATTERS BUT VALUE FOR MONEY MATTERS MORE.

Non-strategic bidders claim that winning tenders simply comes down to price. Here's the rub. Tender evaluators will usually adopt a 'cheapest compliant' decision making approach unless you give them reasons not to. It's not up to them to infer value. It's up to you to explain it.

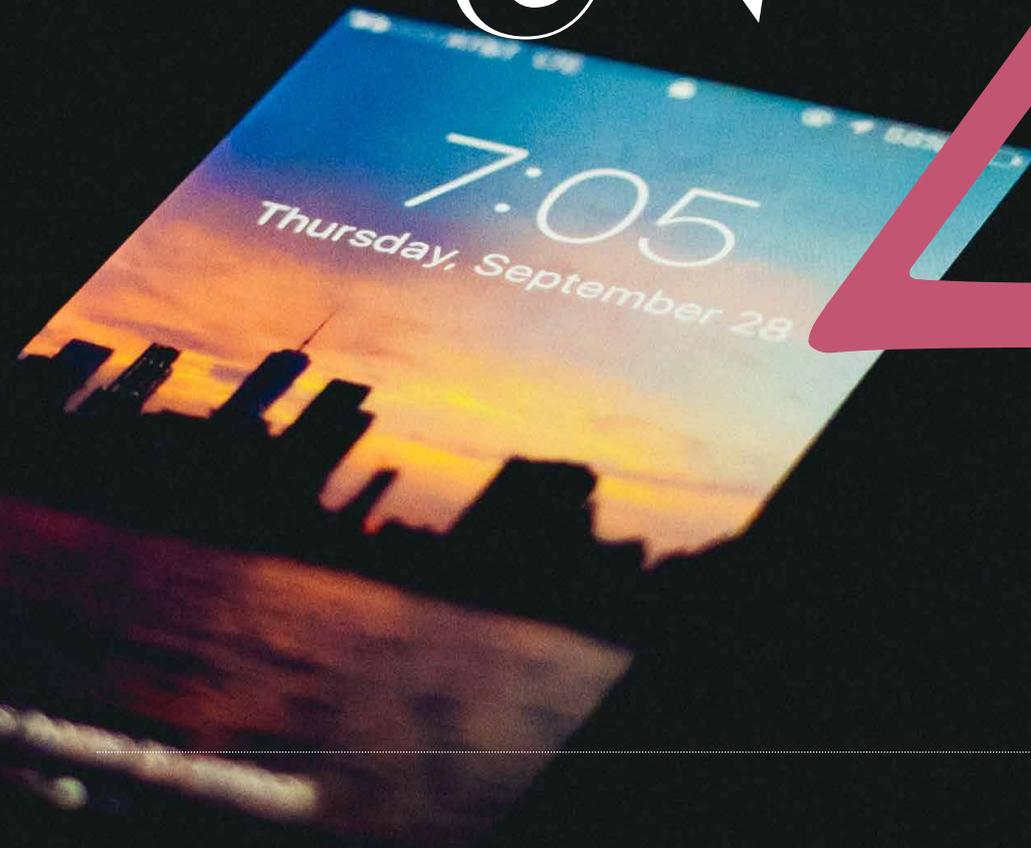
Buyers can be moved to think beyond price; but only if you can match your offer to their needs and demonstrate why your price will deliver a best value for money result.



DO YOU KNOW **HOW TO SELL VALUE** AS
PART OF YOUR OVERALL PROPOSITION?

Truth

No



4

IT ALL STARTS **BEFORE** THE RFT 'DROPS'.



If you're waiting until the request for tender is released before working on your response, then you're already behind the eight ball.

In our experience, competitively tendered opportunities are most commonly won by organisations who have invested the time to understand their clients, their issues and the competitive landscape - well before the invitation to tender is released. They have also spent time acquainting the buyer to their organisation and leveraged this relationship to shape their eventual offer.

Ideally, your tender should be a direct reflection of your capture efforts.



**DOES YOUR WORK-WINNING TEAM HAVE A
SYSTEMATIC AND DOCUMENTED CAPTURE
PROCESS** THAT POSITIONS YOUR ORGANISATION TO
MAXIMISE YOUR LIKELIHOOD OF A WIN?

Truth

No

5

KNOW WHEN TO HOLD 'EM, KNOW WHEN TO FOLD 'EM.

In an attempt to win new business, inexperienced organisations wildly bid for every opportunity they stumble across.

This approach is expensive and lowers win rates, causing team fatigue and declining morale. Importantly, it also defocuses efforts to identify contracts that best match capabilities.

Smart operators have tight systems in place, allowing them to consistently assess their win position — before bidding. This involves assessing the buyer's requirements against their own organisation's capacity and ability to deliver, and evaluating how their offer will compare to other likely bidders. Such assessments improve win-rates, optimise bidding costs and help create a sustainable work-winning team.



**ARE YOU REACTIVELY BIDDING FOR EVERYTHING,
OR DO YOU HAVE A **DEFINED AND REPRODUCIBLE
BID/NO-BID PROCESS THAT FOCUSES** YOUR EFFORTS
ON HIGHER PROBABILITY PURSUITS?**

Truth

No



SUCCESSFUL PERSUASION IS MORE THAN WORDS ALONE.



Many evaluators comment on the dreaded 'wall of text' tender responses that are just plain hard work to read. Unfortunately this 'wall of text' often comes about because it's easier to recycle content as is, than tailor it to suit the latest opportunity.

Evaluators are people too. They'll respect and be moved by submissions that are carefully constructed to convey the information they seek in an efficient and easily digestible manner. There are many practical persuasive techniques available to achieve this, that 1) efficiently build upon 'boilerplate' content, 2) wisely introduce new drafting and 3) maximise the use of graphics, diagrams and images to quickly convey value.



DO YOUR SUBMISSIONS REFLECT THE MOST EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE WAYS TO COMMUNICATE AND PERSUADE?

Truth

No



BEWARE, TENDERING HAS HIDDEN COSTS.



Many organisations know what they spend on cleaning, but don't know how much it costs to participate in a tender process. For many, it's just considered a cost that needs to be minimised. Measure it and you might gulp. International research shows that over the positioning, proposal and pitch phases of a tender, organisations that consistently win tenders typically spend between 0.5% and 3% of the eventual contract value. In terms of effort, this usually splits evenly between business development and proposal preparation activities.

As the proposal stage is the most tangible and visible of all the stages, the outlays associated with it are commonly perceived as 'the cost of tendering'. But that's a serious underestimation. Knowing this may cause you reconsider what you bid for, how you allocate your staff time and who you allocate your tendering spend to. Because these costs are irrecoverable, it makes sense to ensure your true tendering spend is dedicated to achieving the best possible return on your investment.



DO YOU TRACK THE TRUE COST OF YOUR TENDERING TO ACCURATELY MONITOR YOUR RETURN ON INVESTMENT?

Truth

No

8



TENDERING IS NOT 'QUOTING WITH MORE WORDS'.



If you believe tendering is an administrative exercise involving 'answering a few questions', we'd advise you to think again. Further, if you think 'slick presentation + grammatical excellence = tendering success', you risk insulting the intellect of evaluators who are reviewing your tender, primarily through a trust and risk lens. You need to focus your efforts on things like:

- » Is my offer clear?
- » Does my tender show I can really do the work?
- » Will they have any concerns about my business?
- » Will I be seen as easy to work with?
- » Are the benefits and value of my offer clear?
- » What is it about my offer that separates it and positions me ahead of my competition?

Yes your tender needs to be professionally presented and appropriate for the opportunity you are pursuing. But looking good should not be your primary goal. Every part of your submission must have a persuasive purpose. If not, it shouldn't be put in front of your prospect.



DO YOU TYPICALLY VIEW TENDERING AS A FORM COMPLETION EXERCISE, WITHOUT EVER **STEPPING BACK TO LOOK AT THE BIGGER PICTURE — FROM YOUR BUYER'S PERSPECTIVE?**

Truth

No



TENDERING IS MORE THAN A BACKROOM ADMIN FUNCTION.



As Australia's only APMP accredited training organisation, we regularly train overwhelmed administrative staff who have been handed tender writing duties.

While there is no doubt that administrative people have excellent organisation, communication and time management skills, successful tendering calls for a very specialised range of skills. Bid professionals must be adept at things like:

- » Win strategy development
- » Response planning and structure
- » Compliance
- » Page design
- » Competitive messaging
- » Visual storytelling
- » Response monitoring and management
- » Interviewing subject matter experts
- » Influencing management

But it's impossible to find one person with all these skills. That's why successful tendering requires a team approach. When co-ordinated well, these skills combine to create compelling and competitive offers.



DO YOU OPERATE UNDER THE 'AVAILABILITY IS A SKILL' PARADIGM OR DO YOU HAVE PEOPLE WITH THE SPECIFIC SKILLS NEEDED TO DELIVER RESULTS?

Truth

No

10



SUCCESSFUL TENDERING IS A CONTINUAL JOURNEY.



The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over but expecting a different result. If you want a high-performance tendering team, you need to learn from each bidding activity and invest in the ongoing development of your people and systems. From our experience with longer-term client partnerships, we've learned that the improvement areas that bring the greatest returns are:

- » Preparatory training that equips the team to hit the ground running
- » Live bid mentoring to improve performance and maximise efficiency, submission quality and outcomes
- » Monitoring and assessing ongoing bid performance
- » Post response, 'lessons learned' workshops with actionable people and systems improvement outcomes
- » Investing in developing the specialist skills of your work-winning professionals



DO YOU HAVE A FRAMEWORK THAT PROVIDES FOR THE ONGOING DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR WORK-WINNING PEOPLE AND SYSTEMS SO YOU STAY COMPETITIVE NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE?

MOTIVATION WITHOUT EXECUTION DOESN'T DELIVER.

If you're determined to improve your tendering performance, hopefully these Truths provide direction and focus.

And here's a bonus Truth. Honesty pays. So think carefully as you answer the self-reflection questions. It doesn't matter what stage you're at on the bid maturity curve, just that you make an honest assessment.

In the end it's a blend. But if you get it right the results will start to flow.

If we've lit a fire and you've uncovered a burning desire to win more often and win more easily, we'd love to help. You can reach us here...

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