

Bids that Win

Part three - Getting it Right (getting selected not de-selected)

This article in our Bids that Win series takes a look at making bid responses such that you are selected and not deselected. Through careless errors, bidders often throw away points, deselecting themselves from winning.

Here are a number of tips and observations gained from reviewing PQQ submissions over the last decade or so, to help you improve your bid:

Always put yourself in the shoes of the assessor and aim to make your document interesting and easy to read and to navigate. Include the question at the head of your responses wherever you can and use good document practice, for example - page numbers, headers, footers, your company, client and project name.

It's good practice to make each response as complete and stand alone as is possible. Try to avoid cross referencing too much to other question responses. Bear in mind that your bid could well be assessed by a team of assessors who may not see your entire bid responses.

Read re-read and read again the instructions for completing the bid, making sure you comply with submission instructions, format, word counts, fonts and font size requirements. Revisit the PQQ instructions from time to time to ensure you have not drifted from compliance. Note the date, time and requirements for submission, ie by hand, hard or electronic copies.

An obvious area where points are lost, and contractors can de-select themselves, is not answering the question, or equally as bad not answering all parts of a question. This may be obvious but I would say that on every PQQ I see and review prior to submission there is at least one question (or significant part) that hasn't even been addressed. Be sure to note pass / fail questions.

Know the score: Well written and well crafted PQQ documents contain the scoring and weighting that enables you to focus on what is important to the client, project or framework. If the PQQ does not contain the scoring and weighting don't make assumptions or second guess, but ASK the client for it. Only by knowing what is important to the client through the weighting used will you be able to produce a focused and hence winning bid. If, after asking, there is still no scoring system available, use your intel and knowledge from previous bids, from feedback, from knowledge gained by yourselves or your subcontractors in working with that client.

Appendices: Try to include a salient overview of the appendix within your response, rather than just 'refer to Appendix A' This makes the document easier to read and may satisfy the assessor, if not, you have the backup evidence within the Appendix. Again make sure it's easy



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three
Getting it right

to navigate from the main body of the bid to appendices and back again.

Address the question, providing the information the client is looking for, not just what you want to talk about. I use coloured highlighters to mark up the different aspects that a question may be seeking a response to and to help ensure the answer addresses all aspects appropriately.

Craft your response to provide a complete answer, adopting a structure you can follow for all responses and bids. One suggestion is the well used quality approach of Plan Do Check Act (ie how did you *plan* the activity, *execute/manage* the activity, *measure* performance with KPI's and vitally what you *learnt* and *improved* as a result).

NEVER recycle previous questions.

Finally prior to submission get that independent review, within or outside of the organisation, to provide a critical assessment to ensure all questions, and all question parts have been answered and addressed correctly. This review should also check you have completed the bid in line with requirements.

In tough competitive times as these, maximising points and scores from each and every question is paramount. Leaving unanswered, incomplete, or poorly addressed questions is just throwing opportunity away and a sure route to de-selecting yourself.

Give us your feedback - getting ready challenge ...

How do you get your bids checked to ensure the accuracy and completeness of your response prior to submission?

Email: bidsthatwin@ais-interiors.org.uk

Bids that win:

Part one: Getting Ready (*you do not win the bid at bid stage*)

Part two: Improving Content (*evidence, evidence, evidence*)

Part three: Getting it Right (*selected not de-selected*)

Part four: Presenting your Bid (*can you walk the talk*)

Part five: Learning (*for the next bid*)

Acknowledgement: **Bids that Win** articles have been written by Martin Brown who can be contacted on martin.brown@fairsnape.net and on twitter [@fairsnape](https://twitter.com/fairsnape) Martin supports many organisations on bidding, sustainability and social media. His [fairsnape](http://fairsnape.com) blog provides a commentary on the built environment that often includes news, comments and tips for bidding.



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