



**The Supply Chain Network – Making Opportunities, Visible, Accessible and Winnable!**

**Getting bid-fit: making your business a supplier of choice**

Time spent in the planning phase before bids come to market yields dividends; the time will allow you to review and amend your own business processes (which will be scrutinised by any public sector buyer when you submit bids) so that your business is in the best shape to win a contract.

All buyers want to know that their suppliers are robust and resilient and that they won't be let down during the term of the contract. This may be in terms of what the supplier does (or doesn't do) to deliver the contract; how they do it; or who the supplier uses in their own supply chain to deliver what's needed in the contract.

A suite of company policies and operational procedures provide the backbone of governance and compliance for a business. The policies will reflect any statutory/legal requirements that the business needs to comply with, and implementation of the policy (including staff training in the policies) will ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities.

So why is this important when preparing for a tender? Well, at the least you may be required to state that have a policy for x. Alternatively (or additionally), you may be required to describe your policy's approach to x – all this information should be in your policy/procedure. You may also be required to submit the policy.

Therefore, when preparing for the future tender, key steps would include:

- Reviewing your policies / procedures.
- Updating them as necessary (indicating the date of the review on any reviewed policy, and stating any changes made from the previous policy).
- Identifying any policy / procedure gaps, i.e., where you should - but don't - have policies, and taking action to add the necessary policy to your suite of policies / procedures.
- Reissuing the reviewed policy to employees and ensuring that you have a method for recording that each employee has read and acknowledges any changes in the policy.

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Policies to consider (which may incorporate specific procedures) are:

- Health & Safety Policy (legal requirement for businesses with over 5 employees)
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Information Security Policy
- Disciplinary & Grievance Policy
- Training Policy
- Environmental Policy
- Sustainability Policy

Having got this far in the blog, you'll be noticing how bid preparation is also a useful tool for improving your business management. Bid preparation is a process that necessarily causes you to scrutinise and reflect on your business' internal business process – so even if you end up deciding not to bid for a particular future opportunity that you had your eye on, you'll at least have done some fine tuning and improvement of your business management approach.

*Blog written by Gimlet Associates Ltd, bid and tender support specialists. All rights reserved*

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