

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

## Elements of successful bidding - 1: Bid Management

A key element of success in bidding is effective bid management. But what is bid management? In this article we look at the ingredients of bid management and how it helps lead to success.

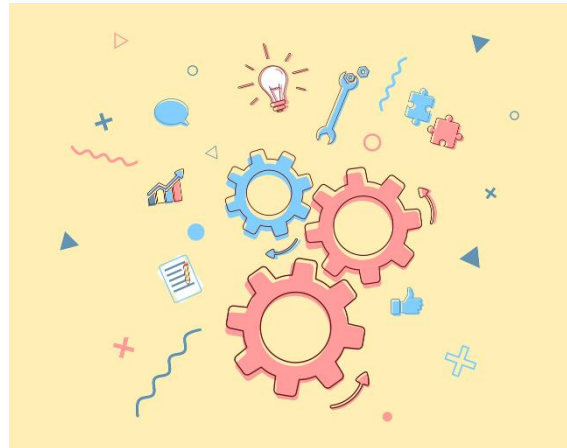
Whilst many larger businesses will most likely have a dedicated bid team with a Bid Manager and Bid Writer(s), smaller businesses can sometimes struggle, such that the bid is left on the shoulders of one individual. This leads to a low win rate and disillusionment in responding to tenders.

A sensible solution in that situation is to reassess how you respond to bids: who's best to tackle each element of the bids you respond to, and how can you ensure that they understand their responsibilities? This is where effective management of those who need to be involved in your bid matters; this is **bid management**.

### Bid Management - the low down...

Foremost, bid management is about teamwork. Having a committed team behind your bid ensures all tasks required to complete your bid are shared out effectively and addressed by those best placed to respond to each element. These tasks will include:

- Reviewing and assessing the tender on release - and deciding whether or not to bid.
- Writing responses to the tender questions.
- Creating the technical / operational solution.
- Pricing your response.
- Ensuring compliance (i.e., ensuring your bid responds to the specified requirements and is completed and submitted as required).
- Administration (e.g., uploading clarification questions and submitting the final bid).

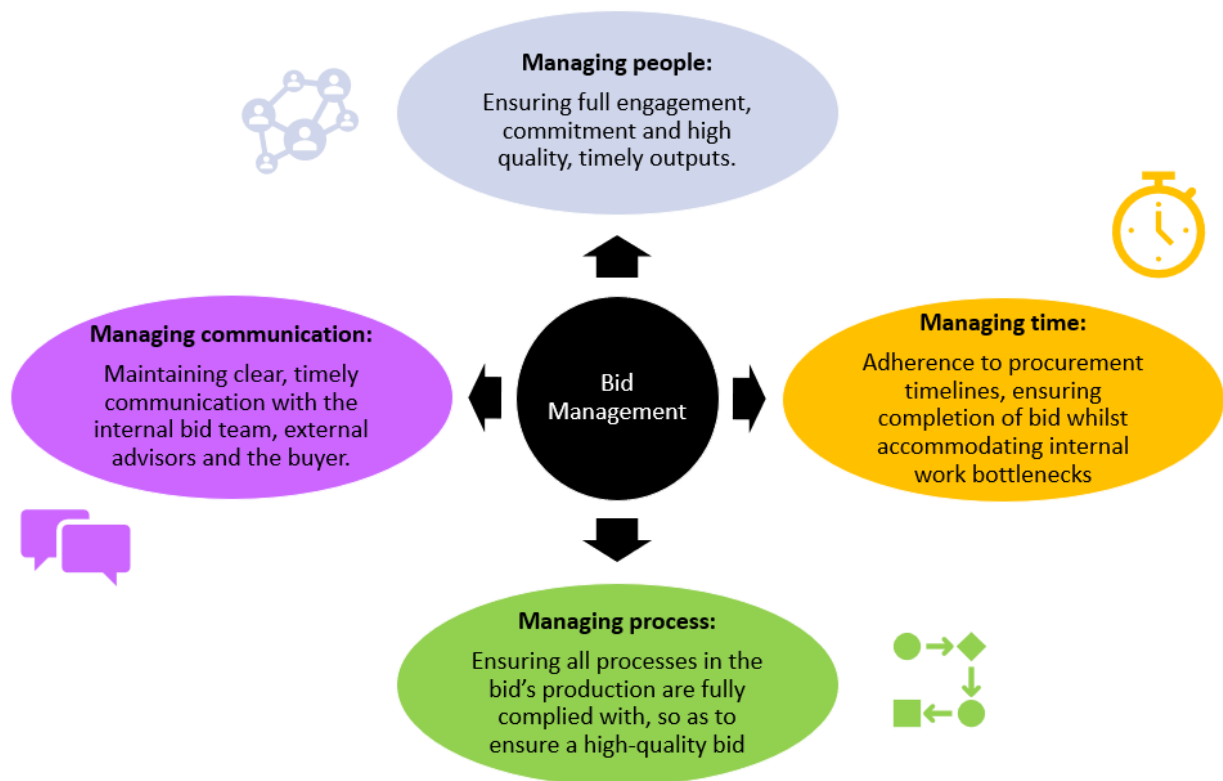


### Implementing bid management

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By implementing a bid management process, you'll be implementing the process where you respond to a tender from start to finish. Ideally this starts before release of the tender so that those involved - your Bid Team - have the best understanding not only of their forthcoming responsibilities but what the buyer's requirements will be in the future tender. This will help you share thoughts among the team to plan a potential response to the tender; it'll get you in the right competitive mindset so you can collectively hit the ground running as soon as the tender is released with a bid Kick Off Meeting (see separate Resource). The bid management process finishes after contract award when the Bid Manager will liaise with the service deliver team to ensure all commitments made in the bid are included in the implementation of the contract.

In summary, bid management involves the four key factors outlined below:



The designated Bid Manager has responsibility for all processes within the tender's timeline and will lead all team members throughout the bid. This project management process requires the Bid Manager to set internal deadlines and ensure these are being met by all contributors throughout the bid's timeline to prevent slippage, bottlenecks and stress on individual team members. It's highly likely that team members will have their 'day job' tasks to undertake alongside the bid, so sufficient allowance should be made for this within the bid timetable through the setting of realistic deadlines.

The Bid Manager will also most likely be closely involved in the production of the bid, for example through bid writing, reviewing contributors' responses or the pricing. In many

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smaller businesses, the Bid Manager (although not officially called Bid Manager!) is frequently a company director or manager, sometimes with the help of an administrator coordinating communications with, for example, an estimator / finance personnel for the bid's pricing submission.

Whoever the Bid Manager is, they should not be completing all elements of the bid as this is likely to lead to tunnel vision in the development of responses to questions and is unlikely to lead to success. It will also lead to slippage in their other day-to-day activities.

**Who else might we need to involve in our bid?**

Some tenders, mainly higher value tenders, may involve input requiring specific areas of expertise from your organisation or external specialists you may use. This includes:

- Accounts department or your accountant for additional support on your pricing submission.
- Your bank. A bank reference may be required for the winning bidder, which should be sought in advance (i.e., as soon as you know one might be required).
- HR specialists for advice on recruitment, training, equality / diversity / inclusion or transfer of the existing provider's employees under TUPE regulations.
- Your suppliers and sub-contractors for pricing, potential innovations, availability and resilience measures.
- Health and safety, environmental and quality advisor.
- Legal advisor to ensure the buyer's T&Cs are acceptable to your business.

You may also find either when planning ahead for a tender or when it arrives, that you need additional support to help with your bid - you may even need a specialist Bid Manager to manage your bid for you whilst you carry on with your normal duties and the experienced bid manager works with your team to produce your bid.

External bid support is readily available in the form of bid managers as well as bid writers and experienced reviewers who can help ensure your bid is the best your company can produce. If you need such resource, it's always best to ensure you book it early so that the specialists can understand your company's strengths and get to grips with the tender early in the tender's timeline.

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