

# Top 10 tips for tenders, bids, and proposals

## 1 BID SMARTER.

Too often, businesses say yes to every tender opportunity. This scattergun approach can be a real drain on resources and money. Always ask yourself: 'Is this tender appropriate for my business? Does it fit with our strategic plan?'. If you decide to go ahead, understand that tenders are time-consuming, and generally involve input from a lot of people within the business. Do you have the people, time, and resources to do the best possible job?

## 2 BE PREPARED.

When the tender documents land in your inbox, you want to be ready - but don't confuse 'activity' with 'preparation'. Focus your team's efforts on agreeing upon key messages and strategies that will give your response structure, purpose, and cohesiveness. [Learn how to better prepare for a tender here.](#)

## 3 LISTEN.

If you have an opportunity to meet with the prospective client, don't use this time to push your product or solution. Learn as much as you can about their needs and pain points by listening. The more insights you gain, the more your proposal will align with their needs. [Learn more about the importance of listening here.](#)

## 4 ANSWER EVERY QUESTION AND WATCH YOUR WORD COUNT.

Never submit a tender that includes blank spaces, or unanswered questions. And always stick to the word count specified. There's no point dedicating hours and hours of your precious time to a tender, only to find out it was excluded for being non-compliant. [Learn more about compliance here.](#)

## 5 MAKE LIFE EASY FOR THE EVALUATOR.

If you follow the structure of the Request for Tender or Request for Proposal, you will be providing your prospective client with the information they're after, in the order they'd prefer. Simple. It will also demonstrate you've read the request thoroughly and can follow instructions.

## 6 INCLUDE AN ENGAGING EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

Unless the tender documents specifically instruct you not to (remember – following instructions is important), provide a snapshot of your proposal by beginning your response with a punchy, benefits-focused executive summary. Use sub-headings for ease of reading and do leave it until last to write – it's usually easier that way!

## 7 IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT YOU.

Although it's natural to focus your answers on your company and services, what your prospective client really wants to know is: 'What's in it for me?'. Try putting yourself in their shoes and describe the benefits of working with you in a compelling way.

## 8 PROVE IT.

Don't simply write about what you intend on doing. Show your prospective client that you've done it before, and well, by providing examples of work to support your statements.

## 9 EDIT, EDIT, AND EDIT AGAIN.

The word limit is your friend; see it as an opportunity to improve your response. A tightly crafted narrative is more compelling, easier to read, and helps your key messages stand out. If this is not your strong suit, [leave it to the professionals.](#)

## 10 THE DETAIL BELONGS IN THE APPENDIX.

Don't dilute your core messages in a vast sea of detail about your business. Instead, provide additional information as an appendix – but again, only if the client wants it. Just make sure you accurately reference your appendices throughout your tender or proposal.



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