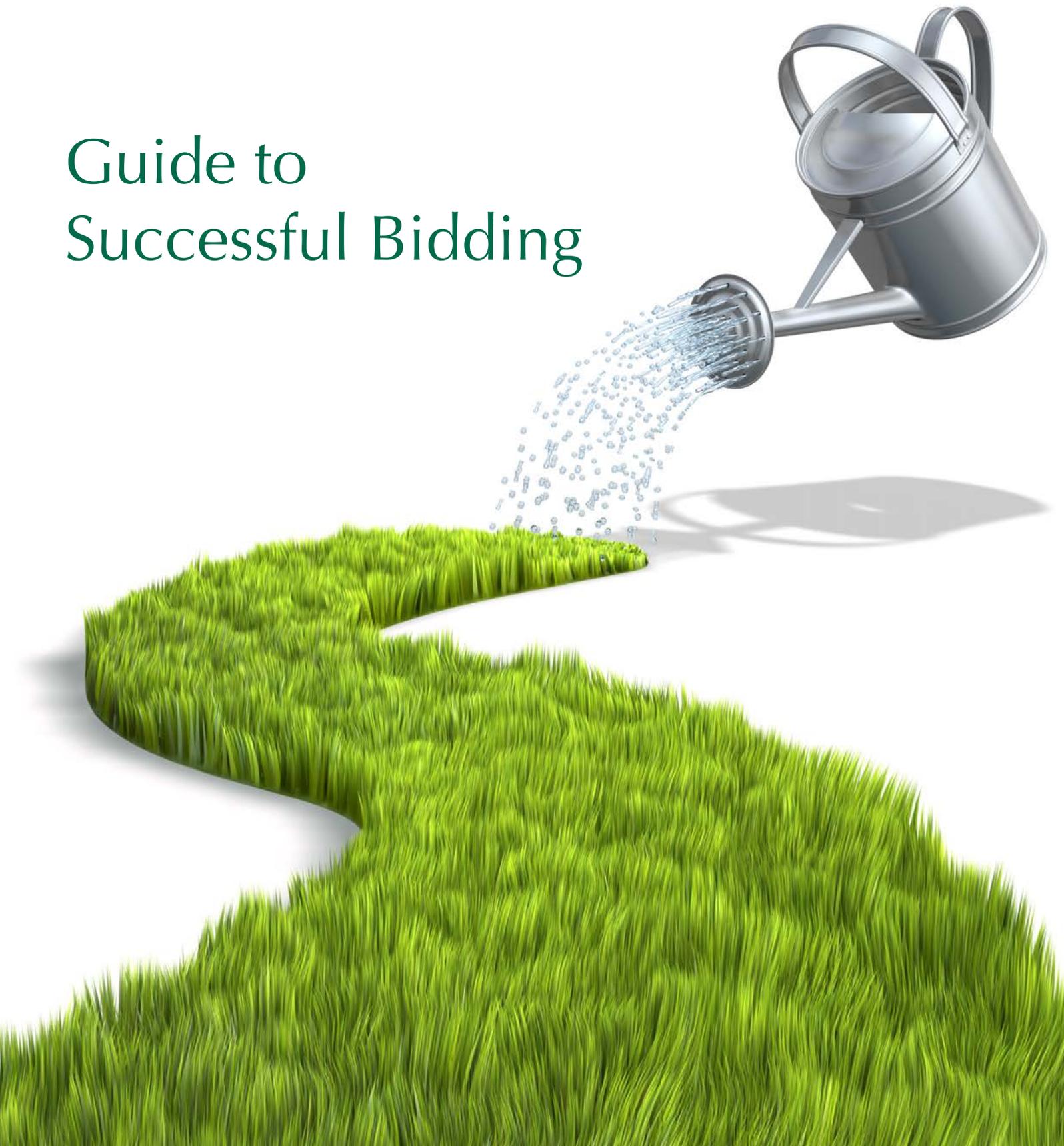




Guide to Successful Bidding



*Kittle Associates:
Passionate about sharing our
experience and expertise to
help organisations to grow*

Welcome to Kittle Associates

Welcome to this short guide to successful bidding. For many companies, bidding is a necessary burden as it provides the pipeline of work for the future. In short, the future of your company and your livelihood are likely to rest on successful bidding.

In today's competitive world, companies that win contracts, particularly public sector contracts, are those that prepare the 'most economically advantageous tender' (MEAT). MEAT means the bid that offers your end client the best offer when balancing price and quality. Put simply, evaluators give bids two scores: one for price and one for quality. The two scores are then added together and the one with the highest overall score is generally declared the winner.

While it is for your prospective client to determine the split between quality and price scores, evidence continues to show that Government and Local Authorities in the UK still put quality ahead of price.

This tells us how important it is to make sure your bid is of the highest possible quality. Relying on beating the competition on price alone will not be good enough. This is all the more true as companies are turning to bid writers to improve their chance of success.

Creating a high quality bid is time consuming and requires skill. This short guide gives you an insight into how you can improve your bidding and increase your win rate!

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Improving the quality of your bids and increasing your win rate

Here are pointers to improving your bids:

- Make sure you know your customer. Spend time getting to know the key decision makers before the bid competition starts. Yes, you should only be evaluated on what is contained in your bid, but for evaluators, knowing the author will help to bring it to life. You want to give your prospective client confidence you are a competent organisation with the capacity and capability to deliver the service for them. At the same time, understanding what matters to your prospective client, what concerns them and where their risks lie, will give you an opportunity to address so-called 'hot buttons' throughout your bid.
- Understand who your competitors are and work out what their own bidding strategy might be. Use public sources of information to build a picture about what their strengths are and what their weaknesses might be. Think about how they might be positioning themselves with the prospective client and how you can counter that in your bid - not by rubbishing them, but by demonstrating how strong you are.
- Give yourself plenty of time to prepare the bid. Bidding is time-consuming. There is no doubt about that. It is surprising how easy it is for evaluators to spot bids that have been rushed - errors, inconsistencies, lack of detail and poorly constructed answers that fail to get to the core of the issue.
- Prepare a simple project plan that shows how you will draft, review, update and then finalise your bid. Put in milestone dates and track progress regularly. Make sure all members of your team know their roles, responsibilities, and deadlines. Hold check-point meetings regularly.
- Comply with your prospective client's instructions to the letter. If responses are to be no longer than 200 words, ensure they are no longer than 200 words, not 201! At the same time, ensure you use the limit provided. As a rule of thumb, you should come within 10% of the limit.
- Other things to check include: page limits, the use of diagrams, font sizes, line spacing and file size limits.
- If there are no limits on things like pages and font size, be sensible. Don't antagonise your evaluator by writing so small he or she needs to use the zoom button. You might squeeze in more information but will frustrate the reader.
- Think carefully about the questions you are being asked to answer. Make sure you understand exactly what you are being asked for. Ask yourself why your prospective client has asked for particular information and in a particular format. It will give you useful insight into how to structure your answer.

Bidding is time-consuming and requires skill.



- Story-board your answer before you start writing in detail. That is, create an outline of your response with sub-headings and bullet points that set out the information you will provide.
- Follow the logic of the question. If you are asked to describe A, B and C, give the answer to each of those things and in the same order - make it easy for the evaluator to see you have understood and followed the question.
- If provided, consider the evaluation criteria carefully. It will give you some big clues about how the evaluator will be marking the bid and how to frame your answer.
- Make the page appealing to the eye. Create templates that make your bid look interesting. Use headers to break up answers. Bullet points vary the style and allow evaluators to grasp information quickly by skim-reading.
- Do not be afraid of white space on the page - it is psychologically easier to read the bid, as is text that is left aligned, rather than justified.
- It really is true that pictures speak a thousand words. Where permitted, use diagrams to illustrate important points, complex matters and to bring to life business process.
- Evidence your responses from start to finish. This can take the form of short case studies, customer quotes, diagrams, historical data and explanations of how you will do things.
- Use plain English at all times. No one, least of all evaluators, are impressed by long convoluted sentences that are full of acronyms, technical jargon and management speak. Keep sentences short - ideally no more than 20 words each. If evaluators cannot understand what you have said on the first time reading, you will have lost them.
- Check your grammar and spelling carefully. If possible, give your responses to someone unrelated to the bid for review.
- Build in sufficient time for so-called 'Red Reviews' - find people who are unrelated to the bid who know the client, with a good eye for detail and will provide a constructively critical analysis of the bid. Red reviewers should always undertake reviews with a copy of the question and the evaluation criteria in front of them.
- If you have to use acronyms, spell out the word in full at the first time of use, with the acronym in brackets. A glossary attached to the bid is always useful for evaluators.



Preparing high quality bids requires skill and experience to create a compelling case

- The use of appendices can be difficult. Used sparingly, they can be a useful way to evidence experience and quality. Overuse, however, can quickly turn a medium sized bid into a tome the evaluator was not expecting or wanting. Where not requested, challenge yourself whether the appendix adds value. Try and keep appendices as close to the written response as you can - evaluators do not have time to go hunting for documents.
- Be consistent at all costs. For example, check job titles are exactly the same throughout; if you put a full stop at the end of each bullet point in one section, put it at the end of them all throughout the bid.
- Price - you need a comprehensive pricing strategy. Only you know how much it will cost to deliver your service. No bid consultant can advise you on where you can cut costs to become more competitive or what a reasonable margin looks like. Spend time with your colleagues who understand your business well, its drivers and where costs lie. Challenge yourselves to think about how you can deliver services more efficiently without compromising on quality, and where you can share costs. Consider the fact start up costs may mean a smaller return in the early years and a larger return in the later ones.
- Companies are increasingly turning to organisations like ours to help prepare their tenders as they recognise the level of return on their investment that comes from using professionals with an excellent track record of winning for our clients.
- For some, we offer insight that only comes from working across multiple industries and experience of bidding into different end clients. For others, we take the burden of bidding away completely or increase their capacity to bid for more.
- At Kittle Associates, we offer a range of different services - from reviewing your bids to advise on how to improve, through to preparing entire tenders for you. All at a competitive price.
- Whatever your need, our team of professional bid writers, managers and graphic designers will ensure your tender is the best and stands out to win. So why not give us a call today for a no-obligation chat about how we can win you that next contract and grow your business?

Want to know more?

- We hope you have found this guide useful and it will help you to improve the quality of your bids. However, it cannot contain all the answers or techniques we use to position our clients' bids to win.

Call us today for a no-obligation chat about how you can win that next all important bid





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