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CONSULTING

*Good thinking*

# Winning tenders

*Tips for responding to selection criteria*

# Winning Tenders

99 Consulting has helped clients win tenders, grants and awards in a wide range of fields. We're working on training and mentoring materials to help clients build their skills in these areas. Here's a sample of some of our thoughts about unpacking and responding to tender selection criteria in a tender.

## *Preliminary analysis*

Obviously your first step is to decide whether to apply for a particular tender – whether it fits with your strategic directions, whether you have the capacity, whether the likelihood of winning it is greater than the cost of the time and effort involved in the application.

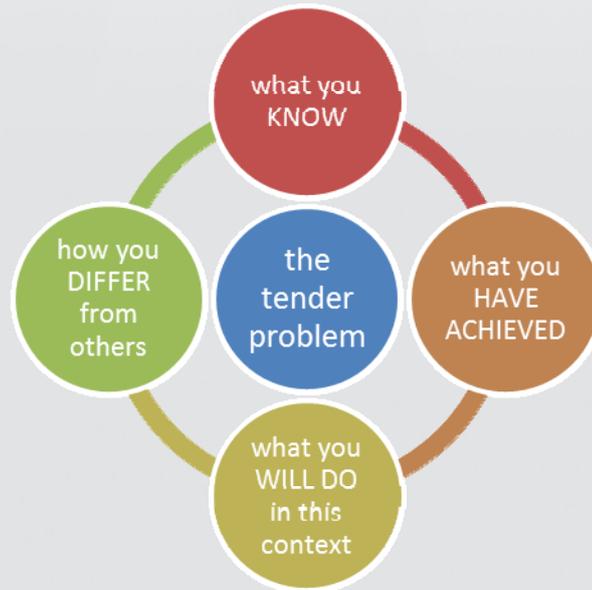
Once you're sure that applying for a particular tender is a good idea, it's helpful to have a good look at the criteria and questions, and plan your approach before you start gathering data and writing. Here are some suggestions:

- 1. Understand the problem:** what is the tender for? What is the need driving it? What is the context?
- 2. Differentiate the criteria:** sometimes criteria appear to overlap. Try to work out the specific intent of each one, bearing in mind the problem the tender is addressing.
- 3. Understand the weightings:** some tenders include the weightings to be applied to each criterion or tender component, so you know what to put most emphasis on in your response.
- 4. Consider the assessment process:** panels may assess by breaking down criteria so that they can "split" tenderers who often have fairly similar offerings. You need to give them all the info they are looking for to give you all the points possible.
- 5. Identify criterion components:** where criteria or questions are multi-faceted, identify the chunks that make them up.

## *Developing responses*

Once you've broken down each criterion or question into chunks, you can start pulling together your response.

For each chunk, think about how you can include the following four elements in your response, always bearing in mind the "problem" the tender is trying to solve:



So for example, if you were responding to a criterion about your staff retention in a tender to establish a new service, you would first consider why this question is important (presumably because there is a need for staff and service continuity in an industry where retention is an issue).

For this question your response might include:

- What you KNOW: what research says about why people stay in jobs in your sector
- What you HAVE ACHIEVED : specific evidence about your track record such as your retention rates, how they compare with industry benchmarks and how you achieve them
- What you WILL DO: specific strategies you will implement to retain staff in the service you are tendering for
- How you DIFFER from others: What's unique and special about your staff retention strategies that your competitors can't match, and how your retention rates compare with the industry in which you work.

We can't emphasise enough the importance of including **specific, relevant** data, evidence and examples. We see far too many tenders full of soft motherhood statements that don't give the assessment panel anything to go on. It's not enough to **claim** you do something, you need to **prove** it.

If you'd like to talk about how we can help with training or mentoring of your staff (or helping you win tenders) contact us at [info@99consulting.com.au](mailto:info@99consulting.com.au)