

10 top tips to help you tender successfully for public sector contracts for your business

The all-island public procurement market represents a huge opportunity for SMEs to win steady business and is a market worth considering. InterTradelreland has been helping SMEs to win public sector contracts for many years, enabling them to become more sophisticated suppliers. However some SMEs still struggle when it comes to tendering successfully says Margaret Hearty Director of Programmes and Business Services.

So what are the top 10 difficulties experienced by SMEs ?

1. Not being competitive
2. Not being able to explain why they are competitive
3. Misjudging what the buyer is looking for
4. Not prioritising tendering internally – not having someone responsible for tenders
5. Late or “half baked” documents
6. No research supporting their pitch
7. Not partnering to address gaps – forming consortia
8. Not focusing on markets
9. Not completing documents properly
10. Not asking for feedback

Top Ten useful Hints and Tips:

1. Do your research and know exactly what part of the market you are going for and how it works;
2. Do have tendering as a core part of your strategy;
3. Do build a team (even a small one) that can bring a great document together in a short time;
4. Don't think about tendering as a task for the administration department to complete – it needs significant input from management and those who would actually carryout the work if successful;
5. Do work hard at being able to describe “why you”;
6. Do listen and learn – this requires time, effort and skill to be able to get the rewards;
7. Don't go for every tender that you are able to go for – select the tenders that you are best placed to service and will service well and put double the effort into that tender;
8. Don't ignore the possibility of working with other companies – joining forces with other complementary firms will allow you to tender for larger, higher value contracts and could open the door to other opportunities. InterTradelreland has just recently appointed a ‘consortia facilitator’ who can help you do just that.
9. Don't expect tender success to come easy – it can take intense research and resource, but once you are successful, the return will be worth it;

10. Do get external help – even the best tenderers are continually improving by using good value, external assistance to save time.

For information on InterTradeIreland's tender supports please visit

www.intertradeireland.com/tendersuccessfully