



9 steps to... a successful tender

Drawing up proper guidance and efficiently managing the selection can pay dividends, says *Louise Cole*

1 KNOW WHAT YOU WANT

Do you need to go through a tender process? If the service you require is very specific or you only have a few vehicles, you could contact suppliers directly. However, the thought process before you start must be the same either way; knowing what you want is crucial.



2 QUESTION COLLEAGUES

Start by examining your current provision. Speak to key stakeholders – such as other directors and staff – to identify what is important. Taking a collaborative approach means you can utilise the skills and expertise from across your business.



3 DRAW UP A PRIORITY LIST

Prioritise. Everything on your wish list will come with a cost, and not just financially. If time is critical, broaden the definition of vehicle you will accept. If product is critical, then longer lead times may be needed. Think what you are willing to pay for each element.



4 PUT VALUE BEFORE PRICE

If price is the most important element for you, say so upfront; but usually it's best value rather than price alone that matters. Companies should also be looking at service levels, value for money, innovative ideas and expertise when deciding if a supplier is suitable.



5 DON'T FALL FOR FREEBIES

Look at the whole package and not just the free extras. Free extra services will save some money, but your company will save a lot more if you focus on ensuring the structure is right in the first place.



6 RESEARCH THE MARKET

Make sure you are aware of all the key companies in the marketplace. Ask for testimonials from those you decide to select for the tender process – and ensure you follow them up. Check their financial security – you need suppliers that have a strong balance sheet.



7 WATCH LATEST TECHNOLOGY

Future proof. If you need a supplier that can offer continual improvement or contract enhancement as technologies change, say so. You need a supplier that understands the latest market developments, including the emergence of new technology.



8 FIND SOMEONE YOU TRUST

Meet face to face – even before the suppliers have put in their tenders. This is the first step in a relationship – make sure you shake hands with someone you like, can trust and can work with. Ask whether their business culture fits with your own ideologies.



9 LOOK BEYOND THE FIGURES

Identify those elements which are not vehicle related such as corporate social responsibility, company ethos, a supplier's financial stability and reporting capabilities. Explain clearly what kind of company you are looking to deal with.

