

Ten 'tender' tips to help in the SA Government tendering process

Government tendering is big business and done correctly, can stimulate the SA economy and sustain and grow local businesses. With over 660 departments issuing requests throughout the year, the tender process can be busy, complicated and open to abuse. It is also a sector that is most often misunderstood, with many cries of foul play.

Helping to shed light on the process and encourage more entrepreneurs and small to medium enterprises to enter the tender market, OPENTENDERS.com, South Africa's first business social media networking portal, has compiled their top 'Ten Tender Tips'.

1. Supplier databases - if you are not registered here, you may not be able to tender

All government departments have a supplier data-base. Decide which sectors are most pertinent to your business and then register to do business with that particular department. During the registration process you will be required to submit an original, current and valid, tax clearance certificate and a BEE Certificate. You will also be required to submit copies of your company registration - proving its existence.

There are currently 660 government institutions, if you wished to do business with all of them you will need to repeat the registration process 660 times. Government has, however, proposed a one-stop supplier registration portal, <http://www.etenders.gov.za/>, which will do away with laborious process of registering in multiple government institutions.

2. Make sure you know what is out there - first

Government institutions issue over 200 daily tenders and requests for quotation. To keep abreast of opportunities in your sector, subscribe to a service that will provide you with regular and up-to-date email notification of all those tenders in the sector that would interest your business. The online platform www.opentenders.com offers precisely such a service.



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3. Note the closing date and time for the tender and respond early

The business of government tendering is a numbers game. The more times you respond to tenders, the more likely you will obtain a tender. The first thing to do once you have received a notification that there is a tender in a specific department (relevant to your business and secure in the knowledge you have the capacity to perform), is to confirm when and where

you can pick up the tender documents.

Then, identify the process of responding; will it be by hard copy to be delivered at a tender box or electronic submission? Most tenders require a hard copy to be physically delivered to a tender box before a specified closing date and time.

4. Read the terms and conditions of the tender carefully, pay attention to what is required of you to tender

The tender notification will indicate whether there is a tender briefing and whether it is compulsory or not. We suggest attending the tender briefing, as you will get better insight of what is expected of the successful bidder and you can then make an informed decision on whether to apply for the tender in the first place, and what to highlight in the application to increase your chances of success.

5. Read the document from beginning to end, then, complete the tender documents carefully and attach all supporting documents, BEE Certificate and Valid Tax clearance

Government officials receive a multitude of tenders. Consequently, they tend to look for reasons to cut down the numbers of documents they take to the adjudication committee. If the tender documents are not filled in properly, one of the accompanying documents such as a BEE certificate or valid tax certificate is not attached, they will immediately disqualify that application outright.

6. Submit before closing date

Failure to submit a tender on time, before closing date is grounds for disqualification. Government officials will not even bother to open it so they will never know all the considered information you included in the tender hence all the time you took.

7. Price Competitively - Prove you can do it

When evaluating a tender, officials are looking for a tenderer who distinguishes itself from the competition and price. When all is said and done, price is the number one consideration. There are of course other factors other than price that need to be focused on to increase chances of success and these are; demonstrating innovativeness, capacity to deliver by submitting a picture gallery of your previous work, or testimonial of satisfied customers.

Prove your ability to deliver on the work tendered.

8. Confirm that your tender documents have been received

Sadly, there have been numerous instances where tender boxes have been tampered with. Our recommendation is to call and ensure that the person, for whom the tender was intended, has in fact received it. Follow this up with a confirmatory email to be on the safe side.

9. Keep a copy of your submitted tender document with all its attachments

This is necessary for your own records and knowledge base for future tenders. It is also a vital back-up should your documents go missing.

10. Stay informed of when the adjudication committee is going to sit to consider your tender

It often happens that the tender was submitted with valid accompanying documents such as tax certificate and BEE certificate but at the time of the adjudication committee sitting, those documents have since lapsed.

Ensure that the latest valid documents are furnished to the parties concerned, at the time of sitting of the adjudication committee.

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