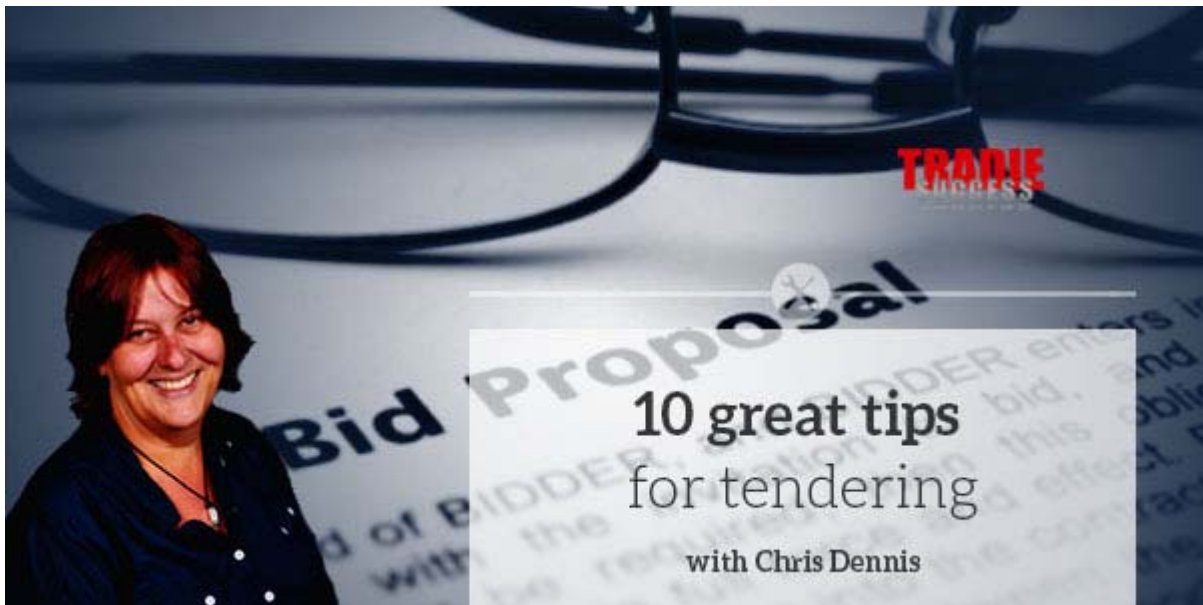


10 Tips for Winning Tenders



Welcome, Annette Welsford here.

How's business? Getting plenty?

In this episode we'll be looking at how you could be getting more. We have a special interview with an expert in tendering.

What Can I Do To Win More Business?

Before then, we have some feedback from a listener – John, who didn't leave his company name, but he has a landscaping business and he asks:

"What can I do to win more business? I spend a lot of time visiting clients, scoping out their land, creating a quote and plans etc., but I only win about 40% of the jobs. It's frustrating and a real waste of my time."

Here's four suggestions that might help you John!

1. Qualify Them Beforehand

Maybe they've already got other quotes and you're just the 3rd or 4th option. Find out if they're getting lots of quotes, when they want the work to begin, what sort of budget they have in mind. You might be out of the running to begin with because you can't meet their schedule. Or you might not want to do it because the budget is too small.

2. Find Out Your Customer's Hot Buttons

While you're scoping out their property, find out what their hot buttons are. Price will come into it, but there may be other factors that just hold as much weight. Plant selection, low maintenance design, ongoing maintenance option. Sometimes people don't know what they want until you suggest it to them, so show them your expertise, suggest options and benefits.

3. Follow Up

Follow up after you've delivered the quote and I mean within a couple of days – strike while they're hot. So many people don't do this. They wait for the client to ring them. If you don't follow up, it sends a message that you're not interested. You're too busy.

4. Ask Why

If you don't get the work – find out why. If it's price, offer to remove one of the options so you can get the price down. Or offer to throw in something of value that will cost you hardly anything to deliver as a bonus – eg: A container of fertiliser, a free maintenance call in 3 months time, etc. People sometimes need help when they make decisions, so be helpful.

Thanks for your enquiry John, and keep them coming listeners.

That question leads beautifully into today's interview with Chris Dennis from win-win tendering.

Chris Dennis

Chris Dennis is a tendering expert with over 20 years experience & CEO of Win Win Tendering. Born from her passion for giving smaller companies the chance to compete with the 'big end of town', her 'Tendering for Success' program is a systematic guide to getting tendering right, comprising 'how to' videos, group Q&A sessions, one-on-one mentoring and a comprehensive tender review.

Over her career, Chris has worked for medium and large IT&T companies with over 80% of tenders being won or shortlisted. Since starting Win Win Tendering, she has worked with Electrical, Scaffolding, Cultural Change, Cleaning, Fitout and Water pipe companies around Australia.



Chris: Thank you Annette its great to be here to spread some great tendering tips with your listeners. And Hi to everyone listening, I'm looking forward to sharing some successful tendering tips with you.

Tendering is a real double-edged sword for business: when you get it right it's a fantastic way to access more profitable jobs that increase your bottom line. Get it wrong and it's a black hole of 'busy-ness' that will see you pouring valuable time, resources and money into 'opportunities' that are anything but profitable.

For over 20 years, I've learnt from trial and error of what works and what doesn't. So Today I'm sharing with you my experience to shortcut your learning curve

How Do You Know Which Tenders To Go For?

Chris: The first stage of tendering is to target the right opportunities. These tenders might be found on tendering websites, or sent to you from existing customers or prospects. While it's great for the ego to be sent a tender from a client or a prospect, it doesn't mean that it's right for your company. After all you don't just want to be the 3rd quote guy.

The 3rd quote guy is the other quote that is there just to keep the others honest.

When you get a tender have a good read through all of it and ask yourself these types of questions:

- Do you provide what the client wants?
- Is it your core business?
- Can you demonstrate that you have done it before and show results?
- Do you have a relationship with the company?
- Are the contract terms acceptable?
- Is this tender for your ideal client?
- Can you fund the job?

If you can answer 'yes' to all these questions, chances are this is a good tender to go for.

If you have answered NO to most of them – then chances are you will be wasting your time in responding.

Asking yourself those questions will help you to decide bid or no bid.

Tip 1: Target the right opportunities

Being crystal clear on the answers to these questions will ultimately save you time and money and a hell of a lot of stress.

What Are Your Tips To Make a Tender Response Stand Out From The Crowd?

Chris: Chances are you and your competition offer essentially the same products/services.

There is more to responding to tenders than just answering the questions.

Its about How you position yourself, how well you write your answers that will make you stand out from the rest and how easy it is for your client to do business with you all make an enormous difference to your likelihood of success.

Remember, people like to do business with people like them – all responses should be in the client speak, not your jargon. When you talk like them it makes your client feel comfortable and you're far more likely to end up on the 'yes' pile.

The words you use would be different for different types of clients. Talking to a big corporation is different than talking to a project manager, which is also different when talking to a builder. Different words mean different things to each group.

Tip 2: Mimic client words

Demonstrate Value

Chris: Another way to stand out from the crowd... is Demonstrating Value

A lot of companies think a tender response should be a chest beating exercise on how great you are. Years ago – this was probably true. But today it's all about solving problems and adding benefits to the client.

Lets say you have called an electrician to put lights in your office. The electrician that says we use 60-watt globes for every socket. Is this really solving a problem or adding any benefit?

However, an electrician that says we ensure we maximise the balance between natural light and globe wattage in every part of the office, which will reduce any eyestrain by staff as well as ensuring that darkness hazards are reduced and removed from the office area. This example may be that the same 60-watt globes are used throughout the office space. But this adds emotion to a tender response and solves the problems of the client and adds benefits.

Value is what your client perceives is value for them. Not everyone sees value in the same way.

For example when your buying a 4-wheel drive – the value that you see won't be the same as the value that someone else sees.

As a tradie, you might see value being that your ladders can be put on the roof. For someone who ski's – their value might be putting the ski's on the roof and that the wheels can have snow chains put on easily

For a mother taking the kids to school – its probably the boot space for shopping and kids bikes as well as the airbags

All of these are right, cause they are in the eyes of the buyer.

Tip 3: Demonstrating value is about solving a problem and adding benefits for your client

How Do You Find Out What Your Client Values?

Chris:

- By far the best way of finding out what a client values is by asking them. Sit down for a coffee and have a chat. However under tendering rules – this isn't always possible.
- So If the tender has already come out – then the next best thing is to read through the tender documents and see what they have said about what they are trying to achieve.
- Have a Look at the selection criteria – in most tenders, the client will say how they intent to mark each part of the tender response.

- The next way is to look at their website and see what they have said for their clients – what are their values or mission of the company
- Another area is to look at their social media and see what they talk about .
- For corporates have a look at their annual report and see what their CEO or Managing Director has to say about the direction of the company.

Tip 4: Don't just rely on the tender documents – do your own research. This could be the difference between a win and a loss.

What Is The Best Way Of Answering The Tender Questions?

Chris: No 1. Answering all the questions.

A lot of tenders have page after page after page of questions to answer. Some questions have multiple parts to it. The easy way to answer the questions is to put in generic answers. However the easy way is not always the best way.

The person who has released the tender has asked the questions for a reason. Sometimes that reason is hard to work out. But there is always a reason.

Answering every question and every part of the question can be the difference between a winning or losing bid.

It's much the same, as you don't build a whole building at the same time. Each part of the building is broken down into smaller areas. Such as design, floors, by each trade, by time frame,

This is the same for tenders – break down each question and answer each paragraph, each sentence and each dot point. Some parts of a tender document you would do before others – such as price is likely to come last after you know the entire scope of the project.

Tip 5: Break each question into manageable parts, and answer every part.

Using Colour In Your Tender Response

Chris: The other best practice is to make it easy for the reviewer to find your answers.

There is nothing worst for a reviewer to have to hunt for the answers to their questions. All that does is put them offside and then they start to ask themselves – is this company worth working with. Or is it going to be too hard getting information from them.

There is a great way to make it easy for the reviewer and that is using colours.

Can you imagine if everything in the world were black and white – it would be boring. Even the newspaper has moved from only black text and black and white photos. The same with tenders - the use of different colours for questions and answers can help the reviewer find your answers. I would

suggest grey for questions and either black or blue for answers. That way your answers stand out - they pop off the page

And Use your branding colours for headings. Although I would not use hard to read colours like yellow as a heading.

Tip 6: Using colour in a tender response will make your answers stand out.

Make It Easy For The Client To Find Your Answers

Chris: Another way to make it easy for the client to find your answers

Lets say you have a document that is everything about your company or it could be your website - Its easy for you to attach that document or put a link to a website in your tender response and for every question say refer to “our document attached”.

This way of responding to tenders is dangerous. Put your client hat on – Imagine if you had 5 tender responses that you had to review and 3 of them said refer to “our document”. So you go to that document and whilst all the answers are there, they are not in the order that you wanted them. So you have to flick through page after page after page to find the answer. I’m not sure about you but I would be wondering is there an easier way of seeing if this company is who I would like to work with.

Then you look at the two tender responses that have the answers to each and every question within the tender response. And each question and answer is in the exact same order as what you were expecting. Then as a reviewer, I can make a judgment call on yes this is a company that is easier to work with. They have provided all the information where I can find it – fast. I’m not wasting my time.

The two companies that have provided the answers easier for the reviewers are more likely to get picked for the negotiations.

Tip 7: Make it easy for the reviewer to find your answers.

What Would You Do If What The Client Has Asked For Won't Work? What If There's A Better Solution?

Chris: It's easy to get caught in the trap of telling the client how you can give them everything you think they need and forgetting to give them what they want. Review each part of the tender document carefully and make note of what the client wants – these are the key points you need to target in your response.

It is important to the client – that you submit a compliant bid – that way they can compare every submission on a level playing ground - apples with apples.

You can also put in options – these options can show what you think they need. If you put in options – then always explain how the option will solve a bigger problem for them or add more benefits.

Once you've given them everything they want and established trust - they will come back to you for what they really need. Which will establish you as a trusted adviser rather than just a supplier.

Tip 8: Give the client what they want and options for what they need.

If You're Showing Options As Well, How Do You Show That In Your Pricing?

Chris: Your prospect may have a limited budget to use for your product/service. Even though you know what they really need.

The advice I've given to many companies has been to lead with the least cost compliant proposal. Then within the answers and the pricing you can recommend added value or options – at an additional charge.

Think the classic McDonalds upsell: 'Would you like fries with that?'

Tip 9: Lead with the least cost compliant

So if you have 2 options for them – in the pricing have extra line items that clearly say Option 1
Option 2.

Summary and One Final Tip

Chris: Done properly, tendering can be a fantastic opportunity for growth and positioning your company as industry experts in your field. These tips are a great place to get started, but tendering effectively is without doubt a learnt skill – and definitely something you should invest in expert guidance - if you want to increase your chances of success.

If you would like to find out more about how Win Win Tendering can help you to save time and money when tendering go to:

www.winwintendering.com

One final point – Never ever be late in submitting your response.

Always submit up to a few hours earlier, especially if it's an electronic submission – those ones that you upload to a website or email to the contact. By being late during the tendering stage – you are telling the client – you will be late in the delivery stage.

Tip 10: Never ever be late responding to a tender.

Go to <http://www.tenderinguniversity.com/tenderingforsuccess> and sign up for a 45-minute free consultation with me, where we discuss your tendering goals and come up with a plan to reach those goals.

A Quick Recap

Annette: Hope you got some useful tips out of that interview. Here they are again, in summary.

1. Target the right opportunities - Being crystal clear on the answers to these questions – will ultimately save you time and money and a hell of a lot of stress.
2. Mimic the client's words.
3. Demonstrating value is about solving a problem and add benefits for your clients
4. Don't just rely on the tender documents to tell you everything about a client. Do your research.
5. Break down each question into manageable chunks and answer each part.
6. Using colour in a tender response will help to guide the reviewer to what is important. – Your answers.
7. Make it easy for the reviewer to find your answers.
8. Give the client what they want and options for what they need.
9. Lead with least cost compliant with options
10. Never ever be late responding to a tender

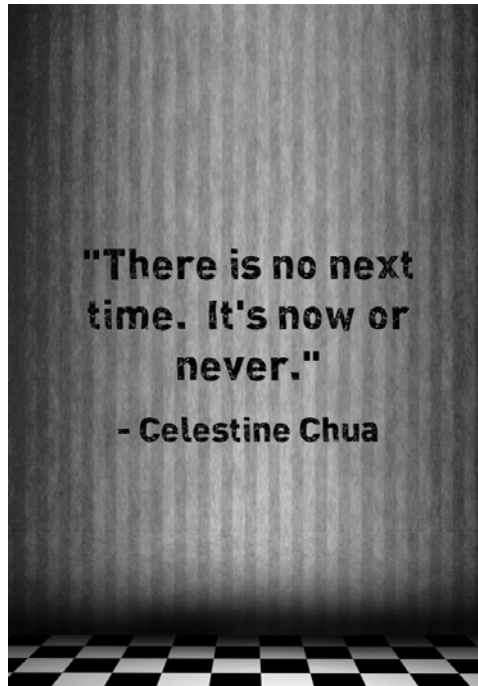
Here's my top takeaways.

- Speak in the language of the client. Do your homework first, find out what makes them tick, how they speak, what their values and goals are.
- Give them what they want and have asked for. Not everything under the sun you can do.
- But also be helpful – if it's valid - suggest options and give good reasons and benefits. They may not know there are better options available now.
- Use colours to make it easy for them to find what they're looking for in the document.
- Always, always, always get it in ahead of time.

That's it for this podcast.

Please visit the link below and get yourself a FREE 45 min session with Chris, if you're thinking of submitting a tender.

We'll finish up with a great quote by celebrity life coach and founder of Personal Excellence – Celestine Chua.



Love it – that's your cue take action!

Get Your Free Session

Don't forget to visit <http://www.tenderinguniversity.com/tenderingforsuccess> to claim you free 45-minute consultation with our special guest, Chris Dennis.

Feedback?

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