

Tenders | Questions & Answers

Webinar April 10th, 2019

Q: What is the difference between a supplier and a partner.

A: A supplier is a company or organisation that supplies goods and/or services. These are based on your specifications. A partner is a company or organisations that supports you in realizing your objectives. They are in contact with on a regular basis, discuss your needs and the changes in your needs, develop solutions (together with you) that are the best fit for you.

Q: It is not always possible to stick to the timelines in the tender. Things come in between. Why is it important to stick to the planning?

A: It is hard indeed. A tender is an intensive process, but also very predictable and manageable. If you cannot manage this process in a professional way, potential suppliers will know that you will not be able to manage your contact in a professional way as well. And this will make you less attractive as a customer, suppliers prefer to work with professional organisations. So, If you expect your suppliers to stick to the deadlines, you have to do it as well.

Q: How can we ensure that we stick to our own timelines?

A: Prepare the timing of your tender very carefully. That is the only way you can stick to your own timelines. What can you do at least:

- Allocate time in the agenda of every member of the tender team. Everyone involved should block slots in their agenda to do what is required from them
- Plan team meetings at moments that are crucial in monitoring the process.
- Create a back up plan in case team members are not available (ill, left the organisation, or whatever reason)

Q: I know what we need. So, it is easiest to define the product specifications. The suppliers then know what they have to provide.

A: Your tender aims to support your organisation with the products and services that are best fit for your organisation. Now and in the future. Your needs will change over time. New strategies lead to different requirements. For you it might not be completely clear what products and services might best fit then. Suppliers are focused on providing the best solutions. That is the only way they can run their business. They work with different organisations in non profit and profit sectors. They employ people with the right expertise and innovative ideas. As an organisation you can never beat the knowledge and experience that suppliers have. You have to deal with many different topics. Your suppliers can focus. So use that expertise of suppliers. Make them part of your ambition to improve. Make them part of your thought process about the future. Make them a partner and treat them as such. It can only benefit you.

- Use the expertise of the supplier
- Use the experience of the supplier
- Use the creativity of the supplier

Q: Every supplier wants to have new customers. So why do we need to impress potential suppliers

A: Forget the idea that you are so special that every supplier wants to do everything to get you as a customer. You are not. Suppliers have to put a lot of energy in preparing a proposal. If you want them to come up with the solution and proposal for you, you have to show them that you are worth fighting for. What you can do:

- Make the supplier enthusiastic about your organisation and your future. If the supplier gets enthusiastic about your organisation and your future developments, they will be more eager to become your preferred supplier.
 - Because people like to be part of an organisation they would like to support
 - because they want be part of your future as it good for their image
 - because they can work in an innovative way
 - because it fits their values
- Treat your supplier like a potential partner. Make sure they are comfortable with your process, know exactly what you ask for. Encourage them to come up with new ideas, have contact time with them (all equal of course). They will feel more valued. A happy supplier will tend to do more effort to come with a good proposal
- Show suppliers how professional you are. Stick to your timelines, communicate very clearly, show how working you in practice will work. If a supplier get a positive perception about your professionalism, it will do more. If they supply to a professional organisation, their costs of doing business will be reduced. And then there is room to do more for you.

Q: What is the best way to learn from our tenders?

A: Engage every individual supplier after your decision

- Inform non-winning suppliers to explain why they did not win. This is a learning process for the supplier. And you should stay engaged with the supplier. They might have solutions that fit you in the future and besides you want them to participate in the next tender as well
- Congratulate the winner and explain why they did win. This is the transition from tender to contract management. This is the moment to manage expectations. For the supplier it needs to very clear what for you was the most important reasons to choose for them
- Organise formal evaluations with suppliers after the tender.

Q: Who should be involved in a tender?

A: Identify who needs to be part of the team that will work on the tender.

- Procurement. They are the experts in the procurement process. They know how to handle the process to ensure that it meets all policies and procedures, to define the most effective forms, to challenge requirements and translate requirements in the right questions, to support with identifying the potential suppliers and to be the guard of an honest process
- Fleet Management. The experts in Fleet Management. Together with programmes they can define the requirements. Based on the objectives of the organisation. In collaboration with programmes. They know potential suppliers. They have translated the organizational objectives in fleet management requirements
- Programmes. They are the end users of the fleet management solutions. They define their needs. That can have been done as part of the strategic or operational planning or it can be specifically done for a tender.
- Finance. Many fleet management tenders will have a substantial financial impact. Therefore finance is needed in the tender process. They can do the evaluation of price proposals and make the business case. As price is only a part of the actual operating costs, finance is instrumental to support with the financial evaluation. For example, price of vehicles is less than 50% of the total cost of ownership. A evaluation of price can only be done by looking at Total Cost of Ownership. A cheaper vehicle can have a higher fuel consumption, higher maintenance or lower residual value. That makes the vehicle more expensive. Tracking systems require very intensive implementation processes and

therefore costs. AV's have high disposal costs. Etc. And finance are the colleagues to support you with attracting the funding

- And there can be much more departments. For example, if donor requirements are very important, then the colleagues who are dealing with donors should be involved.

Work as a team. From the beginning to the end. This is not a process owned by one department. Only by working together you can have the best outcome. Procurement will be the leader of the team.

Q: How do I start engaging potential suppliers?

A: From the start of the tender, you should engage your potential suppliers. Make them feel comfortable and with your tender. Make it very clear what your needs are. Bring all interested suppliers together so they all have the same information.

- A meeting to explain your organisation and your tender at the start of the tender. Show your professionalism, engage them in your ambition, encourage them to be creative in their solutions. Make them want to work with you.
- A meeting to answer all questions raised

Q. Are we going to have a recording of this webinar? Some of had poor network

A. Yes, this webinar was recorded for you to watch at a more convenient time. It can be viewed on YouTube through our [Knowledge Platform](#).