# Lecture 32

What to Do If Your Tender Is Unsuccessful

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# Post Tender Briefing

Whether your firm is successful or not, it should seek a debrief, either received in writing or in person. Please remember, it is just as important for the winning firm to know precisely why it won the contact as it is for the unselected firm. It could be that the winning contractor only did so because of the default of others, or it may be that your tender was thousands below other tenders, in which case your pricing strategy may be costing you profits.

# Purpose of Debriefing

The purpose of debriefing unsuccessful tenderers is intended not only to assist the contractor but also the issuing authority. It increases the potential for improved value tenders on future contracts.

Contractors should see the opportunity of a debriefing as valuable information on the strengths and weaknesses of their tenders. This opportunity to hear why other tenders were considered more favorably than your own is a very valuable information.

Suppliers must appreciate the importance of learning why their tender was rejected. Such knowledge can then be used to improve your next tender and result in your firm being successful at a future date. It is no use tendering for many contracts unsuccessfully and never learning why.

So, even if you are not offered the opportunity of a debriefing, ask for one.

# The Topics of Discussion

The topics discussed at a debriefing meeting can be wide-ranging. It is up to you to ensure that you receive full value; you can discuss, was your tender rejected due to the following or any other, quality management; organizational administration and controls; experience; contract terms; Personnel; after-sales service; etc.

# Request for Debriefing

The government authorities are not required to give tenderers the opportunity of a post-tender debriefing, many will do so if specifically asked.

Even if they refuse your request, you can ask them to inform you in writing of the reasons for the failure of your tender and the criteria implemented in both selecting those companies invited to tender and also the attributes of the winning tender.

Far too often companies fail to request any form of post-tender briefing and, as a consequence, continue to respond to invitations to tender with basic flaws in tenders, which could easily, and in many cases without additional cost, have been corrected.

# Preparing for the Meeting

Prepare carefully for the debriefing by reviewing your tender against the scope of work, the evaluation criteria stated in the tender documentation and the winning price. Get all your facts together before the debriefing.

Take notes during the debriefing and seek immediate clarification on matters you do not fully understand. If the department agrees to "get back to you" on any matter arising during the debriefing then ask for a contact name and contact telephone and date by which the information will be provided, this will enable you a follow up, if the response date has passed.

# Checklist of Questions

Have a list of questions you wish answered. These should cover areas such as:

* Cost
* Equipment
* Schedule
* Sub-Contracting
* Design
* Industrial Relations
* Delivery
* Quality Management
* Organizational Administration and Controls
* Experience
* Contract Terms
* Personnel
* After-Sales Service

# Other Resource

Following the post-tender debriefing, if you are still not happy with the out come (i.e. You believe the process was flawed or the evaluation inaccurate), then the following approach is suggested.

Firstly try and resolve the matter with the department concerned by carefully reviewing the matters discussed at the debriefing, including those issues that you were satisfactorily dealt with. Then consider the matters you are not happy about and document these.

Should the issue persist, you can then lodge a formal complaint with office of the Chief Purchase Officer, who can then form a committee to look into the matter.

Suppliers have a right to:

* Equal opportunity to obtain government business.
* Fair and professional assessments of their tenders.
* Consistent application of supply policies by government departments..
* A tender process that minimizes the cost of tendering for government business.
* Tender and quotation-documentation that is simple and easy to follow.
* Access to trained, knowledgeable and experienced government purchasing staff.
* Prompt and courteous treatment.
* Have complaint investigated with prejudice.
* Briefings on major upcoming acquisitions.
* Be provided upon request with reasons for their offers being unsuccessful.
* Immediate advice of problems with the performance of products or services supplied.
* Prompt payment of accounts (within 30 days or on other terms as may be mutually agreed).

Suppliers have a responsibility to:

* Offer their most competitive prices first time.
* Not offer inducements that could be seen to compromise the impartiality of government officers.
* Attempt to resolve problems/complaints direct with the agency concerned before seeking third party intervention.
* Not waste time with false complaints.
* Supply quality goods and services.
* Not seek to avoid existing government contracts.
* Meet the government's quality assurance requirements.