# Lecture 33

Responding to Contract Notices

# 4524807500.jpg Good Practice

Never withdraw from any stage of the tendering procedure without offering a FULL written explanation. To do so could lead to your firm being barred from future opportunities.

If you were to ask a local trades person to come to your home to provide an estimate and:

* They failed to turn up.
* Promised to forward an estimate but failed to do so.
* Provided an estimate but then failed to begin the work.

How well would that reflect on your opinion of their worth? Undoubtedly, in every instance, you would be unlikely to consider that firm's services in the future.

So it is with the government departments.

Should you, in response to reading a contract notice:

* Request information, or express an interest, but then fail to notify the issuing authority that you do not intend to continue your interest.
* Be invited to tender but fail to do so.
* Then don't be surprised if the issuing authority is inclined to dismiss your firm's interest in future opportunities that may arise.
* It is essential that you follow the "Best Practice" procedure of always explaining in writing why you are no longer interested in a contract opportunity.
* The following letters provide you with ideas for correspondence relative to withdrawing your interest in a contract at various stages in the process and for various reasons.

# Decline to Proceed

Write a formal letter to the issuing authority explaining why you feel unable to respond on this occasion, but state that you look forward to being invited to do so in the future.

# Decide to Respond to Tender

Complete questionnaire and return. (Do not rely on details held on lists, always supply full and updated information). Have a database of all information that may be requested.

KEEP YOUR DATABASE UPDATED.

# Invited to Tender

Evaluate tender documentation. Refer to your initial report and make a new report again highlighting items requiring clarification or potential problems. Seek a pre-tender meeting if necessary.

Always record clearly the date for return of tender documentation. If you are deterred by either the terms or specifications expressed in the tender, don't withdraw unless you consider it fully justified. Write to the issuing authority fully explaining your concerns and request clarification.

# Pre-Tender Meetings

Do not attend a pre-tender meeting alone.

* Always take detailed notes and be aware of the questions of others. See and be seen.
* Ask only relevant questions that show your experience and knowledge.
* Use your firm name and your own name when asking questions: make sure you are known.
* Be supportive of the speakers. Nod in reassurance (this will ensure he/she directs their attention towards you).
* After the meeting always shake hands with all issuing authority personnel, whatever their status.

# Seek Clarification

If you cannot satisfy all the qualifications stated, request to be allowed to supply alternative supporting information which can give the same assurances.

* Clarify whether variants will be accepted. Ask if you may supply more than one proposal if you intend offering a variant as well as a standard tender.
* Discuss responses with your "Boss".
* Confirm all verbal communications in writing.
* If the invitation states that your tender is restricted to a set number of words, ask if any supporting information may be sent in addition to your tender.

# Decide not to Tender

If, after being invited to tender, you decline the offer, ensure you forward a full and detailed explanation with your apology.

# Decide to Tender

Do not return documentation until you have repeatedly checked that the information supplied is correct and all supporting documentation is enclosed. (A high percentage of all tender documents received by government authorities are found to be either incomplete or seriously and obviously flawed). A little extra time spent in reassessing your tender is time well spent. Get others to check before submission. Record return of tender documentation and remember to retain a copy.

# Update your tender report

Just by completing the tender process effectively, you can increase your chances of success by 300%.

# Cause for Complaint

If you feel you may have cause for complaint; in the first instance direct your complaint politely to the issuing authority. Do not be abrasive in the tone of your letter. All your correspondence with government authorities should be professional, polite and precise. Your letter expressing concern should be compiled in the same tone.

Allow time for the issuing authority's response. If satisfaction is not received, advise them that you intend to raise the matter with the Senior Authority.

The sample letters displayed are only a guide. They should be adapted as required for each situation. Your firm's letter must be expressed in a professional, articulate manner which promotes this image to the recipient.

# To Summarize:

* Never withdraw from any stage of the tender process without explanation.
* Always remember your competitors are being faced with the same documentation as you.
* Always compile a written record.
* Maintain links with the client for future opportunities.
* Use legislation to improve your performance. .
* Identify the client's principal requirement.
* Never complaint unless you are sure it is not your fault

# Everybody's Job

In the end I would like to stress that if everybody in your office takes his job seriously it is very easy to manage tender business, otherwise it can end up like the story given on the next page:

"This Js a story about four people named: Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody would do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done!"