

MIKE WICKS

WINNING GOVERNMENT BUSINESS



Community 
Futures PA and District
Growing communities one idea at a time.

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Winning Government Business
by Mike Wicks

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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Chapter 1 - 10 Reasons To Sell To Government	6
Chapter 2 - Sell to Government - Are You Mad?	7
Chapter 3 - Searching for Opportunities	8
Chapter 4 - Understanding Government Bidding Language	12
Chapter 5 - Understanding The RFP Game	15
Chapter 6 - Writing A Winning Proposal	23
Chapter 7 - 4 Ways to Make it Tough for Them to Say No	28
Chapter 8 - Top Ten Tips for Winning Contracts	29
Chapter 9 - A Final Checklist	30
Chapter 10 - The Sales Element	31
Case Study - Example Cover Letter	32
Case Study - Example Executive Summary	33

Introduction



Have you ever thought about selling your products and services to government, but don't know where to start? The first thing to realize is that there are federal, provincial and municipal contracts and each is different. In addition, you may well decide to bid on opportunities with crown corporations, health services, educational institutions, or the military - many of which will use government, or government-style bid documents.

This book is intended to be valuable to those of you who rarely (or never) bid on government business, but do answer corporate Request for Proposal (RFPs). The rules are very similar; in many cases, major corporations use RFPs very similarly to those used by government.

Answering an RFP is not the only way to get business from government sources - we discuss the wide variety of methods in Chapter four.

For starters, do not treat writing a proposal in answer to a federal RFP in the same way you handle one from a provincial government, or municipality. Differences may be subtle, but important. Each province's RFPs may also differ in structure, layout, and evaluation method, so again treat each on its own merits.

One of the first things to realize is, governments buy a lot of stuff! Last year (2015) there was approximately \$16 billion in federal government procurement alone. Quite a few provincial governments annually purchase in excess of \$1 billion - so as a business owner, it's a good idea to check out opportunities which might be open to your company.

One of the key things you will begin to realize as you read this book, is the more you understand the systems governments use, the more likely you are to be successful in winning business. Another revelation, if you have not attempted to secure government business in the past, is that it's not as simple as writing a letter of introduction, throwing together a few quotes, and presto, you start picking up work. Winning government business is hard work, and if you are not going to waste a whole bunch of time, you will need to understand how to write a winning proposal, which is the most common way most of us win contracts. Quoting and tendering for government

business may not be as complicated as answering an RFP, but I recommend that you learn the RFP process as it will assist you in all other forms of pitching for business.

I have written hundreds of proposals for all sorts of organizations from a symphony orchestra to a YMCA, and from a business enterprise centre to a security firm. The subject doesn't matter, nor does the type, or scope, of the contract - what matters is following the rules and knowing how the game is played.

With that, I wish you the very best when it comes to winning government business. If you follow the guidelines in this publication, I can assure you that your chances of winning a government contract sometime soon are far better than all those companies using guesswork.

Mike Wicks
www.mpwicks.com



Chapter 1

10 Reasons To Sell To Government

You will have to decide for yourself whether selling to government is a good fit for your organization given the amount of effort you will have to put in to get contracts.

Here is a quick list of some of the reasons you might seriously consider the effort worthwhile.

1

Government in all its guises forms the largest purchaser in the country. Why wouldn't you want to access that purchasing power?

2

It can be your entry into far larger contracts than you can obtain by sticking to the corporate world.

3

Financially it can be very rewarding as government contracts are usually fairly priced.

4

Government always pays - they may be slow at times, but you'll always get your money in the end, assuming you delivered on the contract.

5

Handling government contracts can take you into another league in terms of scope, manufacturing capacity, and skills. This knowledge can then be taken and used in other parts of your business.

6

Carrying out government contracts exposes your company, your products and services, to other government departments that may well require your services at a later date.

7

Being awarded a government contract brings with it a certain kudos and credibility. This can be especially true if you are a smaller company trying to break into bigger markets.

8

A government contract demonstrates your competency to other markets, in particular to potential foreign customers, as these types of contracts have very strict requirements, conditions and deadlines.

9

With government you get a yes, or a no. Ever negotiated for several months as a potential customer strings you along? Well, at least with government, you put in your proposal, or quote and you get a straight answer. They'll even sit down with you afterward, if you weren't awarded the contract, and explain how you might do better next time.

10

Probably the best reason is if you do a good job providing government with what it wants, then it only gets easier to win contracts. They're loyal like that.



Chapter 2

Sell to Government - Are You Mad?

There are a lot more reasons for selling to government than to avoid it, but what there are, may make you think twice.

1

It's a lot of work, especially if you are putting proposals together to answer RFPs. There is a great deal of skill required in pulling together a decent proposal.

2

RFPs are downright frustrating to work with.

3

It's easy to do a ton of work and miss one simple mandatory criteria, which results in your proposal being rejected before it's even read.

4

You will likely lose far more bids than you win. Hopefully this book will help move the odds in your favour, but only if you read it all the way through! There's a learning curve, the more you do the more you will win.

5

Some opportunities are worded in a specific way to ensure a certain bidder, or bidders, have a greater chance of being awarded the contract. At the beginning this is a real downer, but as you become one of the companies that knows what a ministry wants, this can be an awesome advantage. Is it fair? Probably not, but turn it to your advantage.

6

Government can be at times, a slow payer.



Chapter 3

Searching for Opportunities

Although true, later we will look at how sometimes the rules can be manipulated - making certain opportunities lean in favour of those corporations the agency putting out an RFP would like to see win.

The range of opportunities, and the diversity of products and services purchased, is mind-boggling, so it's very likely that whatever you sell could be sold to some level of government.

A great number of websites list government business opportunities; if you want to start getting a slice of the action, you will have to visit them all on a regular basis (daily if you are really serious). The Government of Canada purchases around \$16 billion of goods and services every year for its various departments and agencies. In addition to this, each province and territory also procures goods and services, as do municipal governments, crown corporations, the military, health services, and educational institutions.

As one of the reasons for bidding on government contracts, Canada Business Network lists the following: "Even if your business is new or small, you still have a chance of winning a contract with a government body, because government purchases are subject to laws, regulations, policies, and must meet trade obligations. The bid or proposal that you submit will be evaluated and scored based on predetermined criteria and compared to the scores of your competitors."

Federal government departments and agencies usually leave purchasing of anything over \$25,000 to Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) - www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca. Under that amount they can purchase directly with suppliers. This is important to know when seeking federal government business.

According to its website (www.Buyandsell.gc.ca) Public Works and Government Services Canada makes Government of Canada procurement a little bit easier by simplifying the way procurement information is shared on the Web. By accessing open procurement and contracting data, Buyandsell.gc.ca helps businesses and government buyers focus less on figuring out how to do business and more on doing business.

Buyandsell.gc.ca's content is created by Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) procurement professionals in the

Acquisitions Branch and managed by the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises – Strategic Engagement.

Another agency to check out for business opportunities is MERX (www.merx.com) which lists Canadian Public Tenders. This site lists opportunities from all levels of government including school boards, hospitals, municipalities and more. Some provincial governments use MERX and do not list their opportunities on their own websites (e.g. Manitoba). Check out the list of provincial procurement websites below.

The Office of Small and Medium Enterprises (OSME) has regional offices across Canada which hold seminars called *Doing Business with the Government of Canada* which teach the fundamentals of selling goods and services to the Government of Canada.

Each provincial and territorial government has a procurement website detailing business opportunities and also offering assistance. The list below is a good starting point if you are looking to do business with provincial government ministries, and departments.

ALBERTA PURCHASING CONNECTION

<http://bit.ly/29F0BTL>

From the site: The Alberta Purchasing Connection (APC) enables you to view and download purchasing opportunities that have been posted by the Government of Alberta and the Province of Alberta's MASH sector. APC is the Province of Alberta's official system for posting and distributing purchasing opportunities from the Alberta public sector.

APC does not charge you for browsing opportunities or downloading opportunity documents. However, you are required to be a registered user and logged into APC to be able to download all documents necessary to bid on a purchasing opportunity.

BRITISH COLUMBIA - E-PROCUREMENT IN B.C.

<http://bit.ly/29JHUyC>

From the site: Access, create, browse and compete on public sector opportunities anytime.

This is B.C.'s procurement site called BC Bid. It is a simple but effective site and offers options for registering your interest in opportunities that meet your specific requirements.

MANITOBA GOVERNMENT TENDERS

<http://bit.ly/29yYNsE>

From the site: The Manitoba government is committed to open and fair tendering practices. Government tenders that exceed trade agreement thresholds are advertised and distributed by MERX - electronic tendering service. MERX provides vendors with a low-cost, easily accessible way of reviewing and obtaining government tenders.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR GOVERNMENT PURCHASING AGENCY

<http://bit.ly/29DJowZ>

This link takes you to the government purchasing agency. **From the site:** The Government Purchasing Agency (the Agency) is an independent branch of the public service under the management and control of a Chief Operating Officer. The Agency operates under the authority of the Government Purchasing Agency Act and the Public Tender Act. The Government Purchasing Agency Act outlines the mandate of the Agency and provides for its operation. The Public Tender Act is the primary legislation that governs procurement within the public sector.

NEW BRUNSWICK OPPORTUNITIES NETWORK (NBON)

<http://bit.ly/29w5pMQ>

This site is a little like BC Bid where you can search directly for opportunities. **From the site:** The New Brunswick Opportunities Network (NBON) is owned and operated by the Central

Purchasing Branch, Department of Supply and Services, Province of New Brunswick.

Official tender documents for goods and services, as well as tender notices for transportation and building construction issued on behalf of the province are available free of charge on this site.

This site also contains some tender opportunities issued by other public sector bodies such as municipalities, hospital corporations, Crown corporations, universities, regional landfill corporations and the Atlantic Lottery Corporation.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES CONTRACT OPPORTUNITIES

<http://bit.ly/29w5ssf>

The link above takes you to current opportunities.

From the site: The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) wants to ensure that any interested businesses are provided with a fair opportunity to compete on government contracts.

The GNWT Contract Registry, Reporting System provides a central list of all tenders and proposals. It is open to the public and supports the Business Incentive Policy (BIP) by enhancing transparency in government contracting.

NOVA SCOTIA TENDERS

<http://bit.ly/29CCQIJ>

This friendly site even lists the number of tenders open in all other provinces! **From the site:** Look no further! The public sector spends over \$1B in goods, services and construction each year, which you can be part of with a few simple clicks.

GOVERNMENT OF NUNAVUT

<http://bit.ly/2aa4Jd3>

This basic request for tenders site, is nonetheless easy to use providing the opportunity to download RFPs and other documents with one click.

ONTARIO - SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

<http://bit.ly/29DK7hL>

From the site: The Ontario Government spends billions of dollars each year on goods, services and construction from 45,000 vendors, most of which are located in Ontario. Learn how to become one of these vendors. Vendors who want to sell to the Ontario government have several ways of finding out about bidding opportunities.

We would advise anyone considering bidding on opportunities with the Ontario Government to read the Doing Business document, which can be download at by click the link.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND TENDER OPPORTUNITIES

<http://bit.ly/29SBhJv>

The link above takes you directly to current opportunities. **From the site:** This site provides suppliers with information about tenders and other procurement opportunities issued by the Government of Prince Edward Island and other PEI organizations.

QUEBEC - SOUS-SECRÉTARIAT AUX MARCHÉS PUBLICS (AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY)

<http://bit.ly/29EnAgz>

The link above will take you to the Quebec procurement website, which although it seems to offer the choice of viewing it in English, doesn't seem to deliver on the promise. If your company is located in Quebec, and you want to look also at federal contracts, you will probably deal with the Quebec Region of PWGSC. It buys goods and services for federal departments and agencies throughout most of the province. It is divided into two areas: eastern Quebec and western Quebec.

SASKATCHEWAN - SASKTENDERS

<http://bit.ly/29ErYed>

From the site: As a registered supplier, you have full access to all competitions. You may set up notifications, identify your areas of interest, bookmark competitions and download competition documents.

YUKON - SELLING TO THE GOVERNMENT

<http://bit.ly/29F3NyM>

From the site: The Yukon Government requires bidders to register their services so check out there website and don't forget to register with them. The Government of Yukon wants to ensure that all interested contractors and suppliers are given a fair opportunity to compete for government business. Goods and services are acquired by publicly advertised tenders, invitations to bid, standing offer agreements or by contracting directly with businesses.

Publicly advertised tenders are posted in local newspapers and on the Public Tenders web site. To receive an invitational tender, introduce yourself to potential customers within the government and register your services on the Supplier Directory or Commodities Vendor Index.

SELLING TO MUNICIPALITIES

There are about 3,700 municipalities in Canada and all of them procure goods and services. Whatever you sell, it is a good idea to check out those municipalities closest to you first as they are more likely to be receptive to doing business with you. Once you have sold something to one municipality, it will make it easier to sell to the next.

Check their individual websites and look for “bid opportunities” or “call documents” or “tendering” - other terms are used, but once you begin visiting city and municipal websites you will start to identify where the opportunities are listed and what they are called.

A lot of acronyms are used, and these can be confusing so take a look at the next chapter where I explain what they all mean. Be careful when approaching opportunities; read up on exactly how they want you to apply, and whether they require you to register as a potential supplier first.

Most municipalities will post opportunities in local newspapers, so make sure you also check these. The best way to get your first municipal contract is to become involved - attend council meetings, rub shoulders with councillors and bureaucrats at Chamber of Commerce meetings, and get to know what's going on in your target towns and cities.

SELLING DIRECT

When selling to the federal government, not all contracts require you to submit tenders, or proposals. Where the value of the contract is below \$25,000 (this has to include all taxes etc.) you can be asked to submit quotations directly to the person, or department, handling the contracting. According to Public Works and Government Services Canada, “in this case, contracting officers will determine the most appropriate procurement strategy for each requirement to obtain best value and ensure the timeliness and cost-effectiveness of each contract. They may use various methods of supply to identify and select a supplier on either a competitive or non-competitive basis. Often, suppliers may be selected from the Supplier Registration Information system.



Chapter 4

Understanding Government Bidding Language

Government uses acronyms for everything and there are a host of them when it comes to bidding on government work. Examples in this chapter refer to both federal government and provincial government solicitation. Many terms are interchangeable so you will come across them when bidding on work for municipal governments, crown corporations, or other government affiliated agencies. I have put them in alphabetical order rather than try to rationalize them, so it is easier for you to reference them.

(ITQ) INTENTION TO QUOTE

According to the B.C. government, an “Invitation to Quote (ITQ) is used when the requirement is adequately defined to permit the evaluation of quotes against clearly stated criteria and quotations. The focus of this solicitation document is on price, targeting the lowest qualified bid.”

(ITT) INVITATION TO TENDER

ITTs are used when the contract is valued at \$25,000 or above, and when there is more than one supplier who could deliver on the contract. The ITT clearly states what is required, so when tenders are submitted they can be evaluated against the criteria laid out in the provided documents. With ITTs the government intends to accept the lowest-price bid and will not negotiate.

(REI) REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

A REI is used to shortlist potential suppliers before seeking detailed bids from the resulting shortlist. It is used when the information required from tenderers is specific, but the government department is uncertain of the capability of suppliers to provide what is required. It can also be a fishing expedition, whereby the issuer wants to see what expertise is out there and the depth of interest.

(RFI) REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

This is a procurement procedure where vendors are provided with a general, or preliminary, description of a problem or need. They are requested to provide information or advice about how to better define the problem or need,

or alternative solutions. It may be used to assist in preparing a solicitation document. No contract awards are made directly from a request for information. (Source: B.C. Government).

(RFP) REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Government uses these for more complex opportunities; or where its decision will be based on more than just price, such as when they are not sure what might be the best solution to a problem, project or process. They are also used when a program is new, and they are looking at varying ways to deliver it. With this method of solicitation they are looking at the most cost-effective solution, not necessarily the cheapest. RFP's can be very long and complex; putting a proposal together to answer one can be time-consuming and expensive. Choose carefully as to which ones you make the effort to win.

(RQU) REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION

Sometimes confusingly called a RFQ, which more commonly refers to a Request for Quotation. A RQU refers to the pre-qualification stage of the procurement process. Governments use it to weed out potential bidders who do not have the required expertise. This can be good for potential bidders as it could save them time putting a bid in when the RFP is posted, when in reality they would have had no chance of being selected.

(RFQ) REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

The federal government use this type of solicitation when the opportunity is valued at less than \$25,000 - note, this figure has to include all taxes etc. Basically, the lowest bid wins. On a positive note the required 'proposal' is usually simple and straightforward.

(RFSO) REQUEST FOR STANDING OFFER

This is really a pre-qualification; companies agree to provide products and services on an as required basis at set prices, and pre-agreed terms and conditions. All criteria are pre-set and used when government departments want to 'call-up' products and services from listed suppliers.

(RFSA) REQUEST FOR SUPPLY ARRANGEMENT

If you are a pre-qualified supplier (against specific requirements) then this is a fast-track way for government departments to process bid solicitations. Formal contracts will still be required for all products and services being supplied.

The following types of arrangement are not acronyms, but this list would not be complete without listing them.



STANDING OFFER AGREEMENT

A standing offer is not a contract. A standing offer is an offer from a potential supplier to provide goods and/or services at pre-arranged prices, under set terms and conditions, when and if required. It is not a contract until the government issues a “call-up” against the standing offer. The government is under no actual obligation to purchase until that time.

Standing offers are used to meet recurring needs when departments or agencies are repeatedly ordering the same goods or services. They may also be used when a department or agency anticipates a need for a variety of goods or services for a specific purpose; however, the actual demand is not known. Delivery is to be made when a requirement arises. Common products purchased this way include food, fuel, pharmaceutical and plumbing supplies, tires, stationery, office equipment and electronic data processing equipment. Common services include repair and overhaul, and temporary help services.

Standing offers are most suited to goods or services that can be clearly defined to allow suppliers to offer firm pricing. Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) issue standing offers when it is determined that this is the best method of supply. Departments and agencies may also establish their own standing offers. Source: buyandsell.gc.ca

SOLE SOURCING

As the name implies this is where a supplier has something the government requires that it can't get anywhere else. This saves the government wasting time issuing an RFP, or other form of solicitation, when it knows there will only be one bidder. Strict rules govern the issuing of sole source contracts. Prior to issuing a sole source contract government will issue Advance Contract Award Notices (ACANs) which are posted on the MERX site for a little over two-weeks announcing the intention to award a contract. This allows other suppliers to approach government with information supporting the fact they are also capable of delivering on the contract.

(T-BUY) TELEPHONE BUY

This is similar to the RFQ, but in this case bids are solicited from one or more selected suppliers either in person, or over the telephone. T-buys are for contracts worth \$25,000 or less, and again this has to include all applicable taxes.





Chapter 5

Understanding The RFP Game

A little knowledge goes a long way when writing a proposal, so let's take a look at what you need to consider before firing up your computer and starting to pull together your document.

A GENERAL OVERVIEW

It is vital to realize and accept that a proposal is a sales document, and as such it needs to be client centered. Talk about what you can do for them, not what winning the contract can do for you. You will need to feature a compelling reason why they should choose you, once you have met all the mandatory and desirable criteria of course. Remember – it isn't a price quote, you need to offer them the best solution.

Too often people writing proposals read and see what they want to see, and end up not actually answering the client's (in this case the government) need. Read the RFP thoroughly and ask yourself the question, "Do you really understand what the prospective client is looking for?"

It is tempting to use a template from the Internet, or from a past proposal, or one that was used by a sister company. **Don't!** Using a cookie cutter approach, or cutting and pasting boiler plate sections are shortcuts that will more than likely lead to you missing, or not answering mandatory, or desirable criteria. Worse still, you never know when your proposal will be read by an evaluator that recognizes your words from a previous submission.

In this section we look specifically at the RFP process. If you understand how to approach an RFP, then you will also understand most of what you will need to do to bid for government business in other ways.

It should be noted that there is no standard timeline from the issuing of an RFP, to the moment the winning proponent signs a contract. It can be anything from weeks, to several months.

The number of proponents can vary widely depending on whether the RFP was advertised, or just sent to those on a pre-qualified list. If, however, you discover an RFP that you believe you could deliver on, yet you were not invited, then usually you will be allowed to do so, unless the RFP is part of a series and is not the first in that series. Sometimes you have to be pre-qualified to receive an RFP, so make sure you look at getting your company pre-qualified for potential opportunities for which you have the pre-requisite experience.

There are three things an evaluator asks when reading any proposal:

1. Am I getting what I need?
2. Can they do it?
3. Is it good value?

I'd like to claim I created the following, but it is a well used acronym N.O.S.E.

NEEDS - You have to understand exactly what the person issuing the RFP wants - no guessing! You have to see the issues and challenges they are facing, along with the politics involved.

OUTCOMES - Show the reader what the world will look like after you have met their needs.

SOLUTION - Demonstrate a clear and specific solution.

EVIDENCE - Convince them that you can deliver on your promises. Provide substantiating evidence and build credibility. You need to remove any doubt they might have.

“If you wish to persuade me,
you must think my thoughts,
feel my feelings, and
speak my words.”

Marcus Tullius Cicero (circa 106-43 BC)

One last vital rule is to ensure you give them everything they require (mandatory criteria) and everything they would like to have (desirable criteria) but don't dump a massive amount of data on them. Remember, they have several proposals to read and they don't want to wade through superfluous fluff!

GETTING THE INSIDE EDGE

Before you even start to answer RFPs, learn as much as you can about the ministries, departments and organizations most likely to buy what you have to sell, and make contacts in those ministries. These contacts may be able to provide you an edge when it comes to answering an RFP. For instance, quite often the RFP won't mention what the budget is for the job, product purchase, or program you are bidding on. This is because the department wants to see the spread of prices/budgets put forth by proponents. The thing is - this is often not confidential information, it can in fact be common knowledge, if you just know who to ask.

UNDERSTAND WHERE THE PROPOSAL IS COMING FROM

Check out the website of the ministry, the city department, or whomever has issued the RFP (Request for Proposal) and learn as much about them as you can. Especially check to see if they have a business plan, or strategic plan, online as this can give you a good insight into their goals and objectives. Also check out their mandate and mission statement.



DO YOU REALLY WANT TO BID?

You may well answer, “why wouldn’t I” but given that writing proposals takes a lot of time and effort which equals money, consider which battles you want to fight. Check out the history of the ministry, department, or organization putting out the RFP; do they work with specific types of company, or have they always used the same company in the past for this type of work? Consider what your chances are of winning - if they are less than 50/50, is it worth your time?

Another factor to consider is whether there is enough profit in the contract. Do the math before you go through the laborious job of writing the proposal. The worse case scenario is not losing the bid, but winning it and discovering you don’t make any profit!

All costs attributed to putting together a proposal, or a bid, are your responsibility. This is something to take into consideration when deciding whether to put forward a proposal.

FOREGONE CONCLUSIONS & FRONTRUNNERS

Unfortunately, in some cases even though there is an RFP, the result is a foregone conclusion. Be careful to read the RFP to see whether it has been written (tailored) in a way that requires the skills, experience, or knowledge of a specific company. Learning to spot this can mean the difference between winning only one out of every ten proposals you submit and winning far more than you lose.

Check out the history; see if this contract has been awarded in the past and to whom. For instance, I know of a company that has been delivering the same services to a city of 20-years. Every 3-5 years a new RFP is issued and several firms put in proposals, but the resident firm always wins. Obviously they are doing a great job and the city has no intention of replacing them, but it still has to go through the “fair” process of issuing an RFP.

COMPETITION

The people standing between you and winning the contract are your competitors. Do you know who they are? Which of them is likely to bid on the contract? Make a list of them, carry out a strengths and weaknesses analysis - and analyze the gaps; where do you have strengths that they don’t? Once you have done this, make their weaknesses your strengths, and highlight any strengths you have they lack - and do this throughout your proposal, but particularly in your executive summary.

REGISTER YOUR INTENTION TO BID

Often you are required to register with the organization. Sometimes you may have to attend a proponent’s site visit, or meeting. If you miss either of these steps you will usually be disqualified. Check the addendum to the RFP to see if there is a registration sheet, and send it in immediately if you intend to attend.

GET RFP UPDATES

RFPs often change after they have been posted, so make sure you sign up to receive updates and new appendices. This will also entitle you to receive notification of any questions other proponents have asked, and the answers they were given.



THE PROPONENT'S MEETING

Read all the details about any opportunity carefully, whether it is an RFP, or other form of procurement, to see whether a proponent's meeting has been called. These are often mandatory, but not always. If you discover one that isn't - my advice is to treat it as if it was!

If there is a proponent meeting then there will be a registration sheet in the RFP (check the RFPs appendices); make sure you complete and submit it immediately.

What can you expect at a proponent's meeting? Well, clarification for one thing, and any updates to the RFP. You may also find out a little about the history of the program. Proponent meetings are also used to allow proponents to carry out site visits, or look at any physical items that will be relevant to the bid.

It is best to submit any questions you might have in advance of the meeting, as these are usually (but not always) read out anonymously. If you ask questions, avoid things such as, "Would the following approach be acceptable?" as this may well give away to your competition your thinking.

Obviously if you ask questions at the meeting, your competitors will know that you had concerns about that particular issue. This may not be a big deal, but you don't want to give any other proponent even the slightest advantage.

Of course one of the best things about proponent meetings is that you get to see who else is bidding. One word of warning though - to hide their intention to submit a proposal some people send lesser known, or junior, employees to represent them. See if there is a guest list and try to get a look at it.

SUBMIT QUESTIONS IN ADVANCE

Don't be afraid to ask questions if the RFP is in anyway unclear. Be advised though that the answers will be sent to all proponents (the questioner will remain anonymous). Be sure to address all questions to the person identified in the RFP.

THE LEGALITIES

Once your proposal has been accepted you are bound to deliver on it, and at the price you offered. Some re-negotiation may be possible if criteria change. But be careful! You can, however, withdraw your proposal up to the closing date.

If you consider there may be more than one way to deliver the goods/services you can usually put in more than one proposal. If you choose this route each proposal has to be clearly marked.

With government RFPs, the contract will usually require your company to indemnify the government against any losses it incurs as a result of your activities in performing the contract. Be sure to thoroughly read what is required. Government does not usually pay for such insurance, but in certain specific circumstance may consider it, such as when the insurance is to protect the general public.

Sub-contracting is often allowed, but you will be asked to provide details of all individuals and firms you will be using and detail their involvement. You will also be fully responsible for their performance.

THE COVERING LETTER

Make sure it meets the mandatory criteria as outlined in the RFP. Introduce your company, where you are located, what you do, how long you have been in business, the number of employees, and highlight the key selling point(s) of your proposal, along with a results statement. This is not an executive summary, so be brief and keep it to one page unless otherwise instructed. Ensure it is signed by the person authorized to sign on behalf of the company (i.e. not a personal assistant).

RESULTS STATEMENT - EXAMPLE

At no additional cost to either the ministry or the applicant, licence turnaround time will be reduced to an average of thirty-six hours from the current sixty, and within six months of operation the applicant backlog will be completely eliminated. Because clients will fill in forms at home rather than at the service counter, line-ups will be significantly reduced.

You might also want to state you agree to, and will be bound by, all terms and conditions of the proposal (unless you are already required to do this in the main body of the proposal).

See a sample cover letter at the back of this book.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Sometimes the RFP will clearly show the weighting placed on each criterion (i.e. experience 25%; cost 40%; program content 20%; etc.) other times it will be less clear and say something like, "Proposals that meet all mandatory criteria will then be assessed and scored against desirable criteria. The winner will be the the Proponent that has the highest overall ranking."

Your proposal needs to comply with all mandatory criteria to be considered. Therefore, it is the desirable criteria where you gain an advantage, as everyone being considered should already have met the mandatory requirements.

References will be checked, so ensure you have asked permission from those that you list, and are confident they will support your proposal.

One of the key ways to lose points is not to provide enough information. Here are a few examples from a provincial government guide updated in April 2016 (Responding to Government RFPs: Proponent Guide to the Request for Proposals Process in the Government of British Columbia - <http://bit.ly/29Esvgt>) that demonstrate how proposals can fall flat when it comes to answering questions fully.

EXAMPLE ONE: SOLUTION STATEMENT IN RFP

Building should be readily accessible by people with physical disabilities.

Insufficient Response

Our building is readily accessible by people with disabilities.

Recommended Response

Our building was selected with our clientele in mind. We are on a main bus route, the front door of the building is right on the sidewalk in front of the bus stop, and there is a parking lot directly beside the building with a drop-off zone and parking stalls for people with disabilities. The floors inside the building are covered with non-slip coating and are painted with clearly visible markings to assist persons who are visually impaired. Although there is a large elevator to the second level, most events take place on the main floor, which has no steps. The information/security desk at the building entrance is staffed at all times.

EXAMPLE TWO: QUALIFICATIONS STATEMENT IN RFP

Proponents should have extensive experience in this or a related field.

Insufficient Response

Proponent has extensive experience in this field.

Recommended Response

The proposed project manager has been a technical writer for twenty-three years. For nine years she was with the Canadian General Standards Board, responsible for providing technical writing training and advice to staff and clients. She now lectures on Technical Writing at the University of British Columbia. A list of her recent publications is attached as Appendix D.

In addition to her lecturing, in the last three years the proposed project manager has completed the following contracts:

- Co-ordinating the writing and production of both on-line and hard copy user guides in Microsoft Excel Version 6.0.
- Preparation of technical documentation for maintenance of Vancouver's SkyTrain.
- Editing quality control manuals for three Lower Mainland manufacturers, all of whom subsequently became ISO 9000 certified.

The other three proposed project team members are experienced and fully qualified technical writers holding diplomas in technical writing from either Simon Fraser University or the University of British Columbia.

WHAT TO AVOID

Avoid underestimating the evaluators. These people have a great deal of experience. Proposals that contain lots of glitz, but little substance, will not score well.

Don't take this opportunity to point out flaws in the organization's existing program unless it is necessary to do so in order to describe the benefits of your proposal. Proposals should be upbeat and positive and should be suggesting solutions.

Don't impose conditions on the organization. If you make it too difficult for them to accept your proposal, you can be reasonably sure the proposal won't be accepted.

Define any acronyms used and refrain from using technical jargon. Your proposal should stand on its substance, and not be overly complicated to describe your solution.

This may seem obvious, but many people have their excellent proposal disqualified purely because it was delivered after the closing time, or wasn't signed.

THE POST PROPOSAL PRESENTATION

Government departments do not often ask for a presentation, unless it is mentioned in the RFP – but they can if they have a number of strong candidates and wish to meet them face to face.

Before making a presentation, you need to dig around and find out more information. If you are on good terms with the organization's contact person they may be able to tell you something, such as how many people are on the shortlist, even perhaps who they are.

Once you know who you are up against, you can look to their weaknesses and make them your strengths, and incorporate them into your presentation.

Invest in making your presentation highly professional - your aim should be to make the other proponents look like amateurs. Bring in a new element – kick it up a notch, offer a new perspective, or some new insight.

Think about what else you can add to what the proposal has already told the people to whom you are presenting. Is there some new information, new technology, added experience, or a new expert you could bring on to your team?

It's you and one or more other proponents fighting it out, so now's the time to perform some magic - although not literally! Do some research, offer something extra - the key is to stand out.

If you are going to be first to present you might say something like, "When considering this project we decided to research how other similar projects have been handled in Europe, and discovered some interesting and very pertinent information that will be invaluable to its success."

Now think about it; after you have told the panel what your wonderful new insights are, when the next group come to present you can bet your lunch money on them asking how much the next presenters know about these groundbreaking advancements. You have just lobbed a grenade into their presentation and their chance of winning the contract. Who ever said business was fair?

If you are using slides, make the last one thought provoking, or insightful, as you ask if there are any questions. The aim is to leave them thinking on a positive note, about how tuned in you are to the project in question. If you can create a video that adds an element to your presentation, this would be a great time to use those skills.

Leave the panel with something, such as a folder, technical specifications, a copy of your presentation, a sample of your product - anything that they can remember you by.

WHAT IF YOU LOSE?

In almost all cases, you are entitled to a debriefing in person, or at least by telephone. The key thing you want to learn is who won the contract and why. You also need to know what you could have

done better - where did your proposal fall short? Also ask for your score if proposals were graded, and the score of the winner. Request information on the contract amount, this will allow you to know whether your proposal was in the financial ballpark.

Once the contract has been awarded you are entitled to know who the other proponents were; this will help you with your next proposal as you will have a clearer idea of your competition.

You may also be able to view their proposal; however you might need to use the Freedom of Information Act to encourage them to provide it!





Chapter 6

Writing A Winning Proposal

Make sure your team completely understands what is required and what you are letting yourself in for in terms of time commitment, and resources.

Write down all the questions you have and request answers from the named contact person. Beware, there is usually a time limit on how long you can continue asking questions - it will not be right up to a the day the proposal is due. Also, carefully consider what you are asking; naive questions might make the client feel you are not familiar with the type of business they are in, or the type of product, service, or program they are talking about.

Remember, any question you ask will be seen by all other proponents, as will the answers. They do not usually name the proponent asking the questions, but be careful not to say something that could identify your company.

The bottom line is to ensure you fully understand every aspect of the RFP and the ramifications of putting forward your bid.

RFPs are confusing, period. They often don't make sense; they are often poorly laid out; they are more often than not cobbled together from other department's RFPs and contain incorrect information. Some of my most frustrating times in business have been trying to wade through a mass of mostly incomprehensible, and often contradictory questions and statements in government RFPs. Perfect, they are certainly not, but if you accept that and learn to work around their faults, they do get easier, if not less time consuming.

In this chapter I'll try to give you the benefit of almost 20 years experience dealing with these frightful documents.

ENSURE YOU FULLY UNDERSTAND THE RFP

Read it ten times to make sure you understand it and make notes as you go. Get another member of staff to read it and make sure you both come to the same conclusions as to what it requires.

THEIR NEEDS - YOUR REALITY

Okay, so you've read the RFP and understand it; now ask yourself, "what is their overriding objective, or objectives?" You need to understand what it is they want to achieve - this may not be obvious, or even stated. You may need to look under a few rocks to uncover it.

Does the RFP make sense? Do they know what they are talking about? I once emailed the contact for an RFP with a list of questions that was so comprehensive, she emailed me back to say that my company obviously knew far more about the subject than they did and promptly cancelled the RFP. In one way this was disappointing, but then again our credibility with this particular government department went sky high and was the start of a long-term healthy relationship.

ASSUMPTIONS

As discussed earlier, RFPs are not always clear and this can be especially so with regard to deliverables. You may find yourself basing hours, or costs, on your assumptions; if this is the case clearly outline what might change the hours, prices, or other costs you have quoted.

COMPETITION

As mentioned earlier, write your proposal with an eye to your competition and answer questions in a way that highlights as your strengths, things that you consider your competitions' weaknesses. In addition, add things not necessarily required, but which you can offer that your competition cannot.

One way to weight things in your favour is to bring onboard specialists to fill any gaps in your skills, knowledge, or experience. Then, promote the fact that you have access to a broader skill base than your competitors.

WRITING/LAYOUT

Follow the template as laid out in the RFP religiously. Don't try to be clever or improve on the order that they have suggested. Make sure you use their wording for questions and where they provide a strict format for the proposal part of your document then cut and paste it into your

MANDATORY AND DESIRABLE CRITERIA

Where many people fail when it comes to writing proposals is not meeting all the criteria that has been outlined in the RFP. To ensure you don't fall into this trap transfer all the mandatory criteria (these are usually listed as such in most RFPs) onto a separate sheet with check boxes alongside. When you complete each draft stage of your proposal, check off those criteria you have answered.

Now, this is what most of your competitors won't do; search the document for desirable criteria (those things that the issuer would like to see) and hidden criteria (those things that are simply implied) and add them to your list. In this way your proposal will not only be comprehensive, it is unlikely to be disqualified, and just as importantly will be more relevant than those of your competitors.



document so it reflects their numbering, wording, and so you don't accidentally miss answering a question or point.

NEVER, EVER, avoid a question - answer it to the best of your ability. Miss a question and you could be disqualified.

Write in clear, simple language and keep one point to a paragraph (short paragraphs are important). Remember someone will be scoring you and you do not want them to miss a key point. However, don't talk down to the reader, or bamboozle them with unexplained acronyms and industry jargon.

It is very important to use a simple serif font such as Times Roman for the main text (size 12 is preferred), and a simple sans-serif font such as Arial for the headings (size 10, or 12 will work well). The reason for this is that all computers have these fonts so they are unlikely to be substituted when the document is opened on a different computer (most RFPs request an electronic file). If a font is substituted it can throw out your formatting big-time!

Double space lines unless otherwise requested, or unless the organization is particularly green, or there is a page limit stipulated. This makes the document easier to read.

Keep on track and don't ramble. The people reading your proposal will have to read several others and you don't want them getting bored with yours and start to skip key information.

Unless it has been requested that you provide additional information in the appendices, avoid cross-references.

Always provide a table of contents and use page numbers and section headings, so that readers can find their way around the document easily.

AND make sure you update it just before printing the document - there's nothing worse than going to all that trouble only to find out that you made some alterations or additions and the TOC you sent was completely out of sync.

Print single-sided unless requested to do otherwise, unless the organization promotes its green credentials when it may look to see you take the initiative and print double-sided on recycled paper stock.

Check the RFP thoroughly to see how they expect the finished proposal to be presented. Some want it left loose, others wanted it bound, others want it in a three-ring binder - or not. They might request one loose copy and several bound. Whatever they need, make sure they get it exactly how they want it. Cerlox binding used to be popular, but it is notorious for being unfriendly to people who want to fold the proposal back on itself, either to read or photocopy. The best binding these days is coil, or spiral. Most office suppliers will be able to accommodate this style of binding. If you are going to be creating several proposals a year, it might be worth looking at purchasing your own machine.

STATS AND FACTS

It's tempting to try to impress people with statistics, but only use them where they add credibility to what you are saying, and use them carefully. When you do use them, always quote the source. Avoid using old statistics; in this day and age they become meaningless quickly.

STRUT YOUR STUFF

Without being boastful, provide information that is pertinent and useful that you suspect your competition would not know. I have used the following line in proposals in the past to great effect, "It is vital anyone involved with this project



Here is a quick checklist to remind you.

- Due date
- Where it should be delivered to
- Exact information required on the cover page
- Whether a cover letter is required
- Hard copy, or electronic (if hard copy hand deliver, or courier)
- How they want it bound (or not)
- Number of pages
- Number of copies
- Additional electronic copy
- With or without appendices
- Multiple copies
- Single or double sided
- Additional information (e.g. Proof of insurance, WCB etc.)

THE TITLE PAGE

have experience in ... or knowledge of ... ” If what you are referring to makes sense then you might have just made the evaluator think to themselves, “I wonder if the other proponents have that skill/ experience/knowledge.” At that point your credibility just went up several notches. Another way to achieve this is to supply information gained from a survey carried out by your company.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION

Adhere to any length restrictions the RFP sets. On occasion an RFP will state that the entire document must not be above a certain page count, or answers must not be more than a certain number of words, or even stipulate a minimum and maximum font size.

Ensure you thoroughly read, and follow, instructions on how the proposal should be presented.

The cover page layout may be defined in the RFP, so check out how they want it laid out and what information it should contain. They may also stipulate what the title of the proposal should be - usually it will be the RFP number and official title of the contract. If however, you have the opportunity to create your own title, use it as a “selling” opportunity and make it pro-active; perhaps something like “Opening New Markets In ... ”

THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Write the executive summary last and it should be the “sell” part of the proposal. You want the reader to understand why you are the best company/person for the contract. Spend time getting

it right. Remember, this is where you can highlight your strengths, so that they indirectly highlight your competitors' weaknesses.

An executive summary should span around two pages, any longer and you are in danger of not summarizing information; this can lead the reader to want to skip to the meat of the proposal, before “hearing” your “sell.” It should however contain enough information to provide the reader with a clear idea of what you are proposing, how you will achieve the objectives and deliverables, and the results. You should also promote your credentials and ability to handle the job. Leave technical specifications and details out of a summary. Finish off with a simple statement about why you are the best choice.

A good executive summary makes it difficult for the client to say no, because you have categorically proved that you, above everyone else, can help them reach their objectives.

See a sample executive summary at the back of this book.

RESUMES

Where you are asked to supply resumes, ensure they have been updated and made relevant to the RFP requirements. They should highlight skills, knowledge and experience relevant to the opportunity.

PRICING

Any pricing you put into your proposal becomes a major factor in evaluating your submission, and cannot be renegotiated at a later day. For this

reason ensure your pricing is accurate and you can not only deliver on the requirements as given in the RFP, but also make a reasonable profit.

There is the possibility that additional deliverables could be negotiated and added to the agreement, but these will be for things not covered by the original RFP.

DELIVERY

Ensure you have the correct number of copies, the cover letter, and all required information clearly marked on the envelope.

I have known proposals be returned unopened because the primary contact name was not written on the envelope containing the proposal. Ridiculous maybe - but you are playing by their rules.

Each RFP will be different; some will allow electronic delivery, others will demand it be couriered, or even hand-delivered. Make sure you know not only the style of delivery but the date - and check regularly for updates, as this can change.

My advice is to hand-deliver wherever possible and get a name and signature (with a time and date stamp); that way there can be no doubt your proposal, after all that hard work, was delivered and delivered on time.



Chapter 7

4 Ways to Make it Tough for Them to Say No

1

Demonstrate that you have understood the RFP, and the needs and objectives of the organization.

2

Identify and deal with every mandatory and desirable criteria and fully answer them.

3

Make your competitors' weaknesses your strengths and highlight them in the proposal. NEVER run your competitors down.

4

Fill any gaps in experience, or credibility, with specialist help.



Chapter 8

Top Ten Tips for Winning Contracts

- 1 Don't bother with forgone conclusions.
- 2 Understand the evaluation criteria.
- 3 Understand the client's needs and objectives (research).
- 4 Think their thoughts, feel their feelings, speak their words.
- 5 Discover the strengths and weaknesses of the competition, make their weaknesses your strengths.
- 6 Ensure all mandatory criteria are met.
- 7 Understand and meet all desirable and hidden criteria, both known and suspected.
- 8 Fill gaps in credibility with specialist help.
- 9 Spend a high percentage of your time on the executive summary – make it sell your proposal.
- 10 KISS – Keep it short and simple.

CHECKLIST



Chapter 9

A Final Checklist

- ☐ My proposal writing team fully understands the requirements and deliverables of the RFP, or other bid document, and has 'signed' off on our proposal.
- ☐ I submitted the receipt/intention to bid document (if required).
- ☐ I attended the proponent's meeting (if required).
- ☐ I made a separate list of all mandatory requirements and have fully checked that list off.
- ☐ I made a separate list of all desirable requirements and have fully checked that list off.
- ☐ The required number of copies have been prepared and bound according to the instructions laid out in the RFP.
- ☐ Electronic copies have been made and are included in the package.
- ☐ All files have been uploaded via the approved site and the e-bidding key has been entered (where applicable).
- ☐ The envelope, title page, and other required sections, or documents, show the RFP # and bear the primary contact name, signature, address, telephone, fax, email address, website and anything else required.
- ☐ The proposal will arrive on, or before, the closing date at the designated location and the method is in agreement with that outlined in the RFP (the courier has been booked, or other arrangements made).
- ☐ The complete, unaltered RFP title page has been completed and signed by an authorized signatory.



Chapter 10

The Sales Element

Selling to government is still about selling to people. Here are a few ways that you can “sell” your company and your proposal, or gain a slight advantage over other proponents.

Network at the proponent’s meeting, you never know when an opportunity might arise to join forces with another proponent, perhaps in an attempt to beat out a major player.

Network generally in the towns and cities in which you hope to do business. The more you know about how the place ticks, and who makes it tick, the better.

Do the same with experts in your field; befriend them long before you need them. Once you learn an RFP has been posted it will be easier to bring them onboard quickly (and before other proponents nab them) if you already have a relationship.

Get to know people in any organization (e.g. ministry departments) where you might do business. Get to know the key figures, take them for lunch, or coffee, and discover as much as you can about the strategic objectives of their organization.

When you are in the process of writing a proposal make contact with the person named as the go-between on the RFP. Email them, talk to them, try to get any snippet of information that might be useful. Some organizations are strict and everything has to be handled by the book, others are less so.

Make sure you keep in the loop concerning all questions posed and answers given. But, remember everything you ask is made public to all other proponents, so keep your ear to the ground and listen for RFPs that are coming down the pipe. Then you can ask the contacts you have made in the organization some questions BEFORE the RFP is posted. In this way you can learn a whole lot more than your competitors who have no such advance information.

Once it’s posted trawl your list of experts and see if any of them have any background information they can share with you. It’s surprising how much background information is freely available in the industry locally that is not contained in the RFP.

Winning government proposals is a cutthroat game and you will need all the advantages you can manage to obtain.

CASE STUDY - EXAMPLE COVER LETTER

Failing to include all the requested information in a cover letter can be a cause for your whole proposal to be rejected, without being opened.

A cover letter usually needs to include the following, but always read the RFP, or other bidding documents to ensure you are including the correct information:

- Company name
- Address
- Website address
- Telephone number
- Fax number
- E-mail address
- Primary contact person.
- Names and signatures of the person or persons authorized to sign on behalf of the company.
- Acknowledgment of any addendum's issued for this Request for Proposal.

Here is the body of a simple cover letter. For obvious confidentiality reasons the name of the proponent and their geographical location has been hidden (other details have been excluded where it could identify the proponent).

Dear Sir/Madam

Please accept this proposal in answer to Proposal No. 12-007: Late Night Taxi Stand Operation.

XXX Security is a long-established, highly respected local company that has a long tradition of providing security services to the City of XXX; in the case of the City's parkades, for over xx years.

We pride ourselves on training our staff to have a high regard for both our clients and the members of the public with whom they interact. Customer service skills are an integral part of the basic training xxx provides its employees.

We believe our security staff can readily adapt to the role of taxi stand attendants as they are already used to interacting with members of the public in a friendly, helpful and cooperative manner. We will handpick attendants who are especially suited to the role of host and observer, and who are highly organized and efficient.

We look forward to continuing and expanding our relationship with the City of xxx.

Sincerely

>proponent name<

CASE STUDY - EXAMPLE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following executive summary was taken from an actual winning proposal to deliver a federal government program. For obvious confidentiality reasons the name of the proponent and their geographical location has been hidden (other details have been excluded where it could identify the proponent). Note that it highlights the strengths of the proponent in a way that the reader/evaluator would be encouraged to look for the same strengths in competing proposals.

Program Description: >program name< for XXX to serve clients that are unemployed, insured, legally entitled to work in Canada, including clients with multiple barriers to employment, youth at risk, aboriginal clients and other priority client groups.

The >proponent< is pleased to submit this proposal for delivery of the >program name<, in the service area from xxx to xxx (including xxx, xxx, and xxx). This proposal builds on the wealth of knowledge and experience gained from xx years of delivering >government department< funded >program descriptor< programs.

This proposal is for a xx Program to run between: February xxxx to January xxxx with total funding of \$000,000 to assist 000 clients to enter into self-employment.

>proponent< has delivered the >program name< in its various forms for xxx (xx) years and has provided business coaching and training in the region for xxx (xx) years. The organization is known throughout the region as the number one destination for small business owners or start-ups requiring assistance and/or funding. Arguably, the organization has more experience in the delivery of self-employment assistance to EI eligible clients

than any other in Canada. Since xxxx alone xxx clients have participated in Phase I and xxx in Phase II of the >proponent< managed xx program.

>proponent<'s mandate is to stimulate the economic and social development of the communities it represents through self-employment, this provides a natural affinity between the SE program and the work of the organization. >proponent< is a one-stop-shop for entrepreneurs and people wanting to start a business. Whether they want advice, counselling, skill development or a business loan >proponent< can answer all their needs. This is why, where offices exist across Canada, the >proponents< have been the primary delivery agents of choice for the xx program.

The extensive experience of delivering the xx program gained by all >proponent< offices is shared throughout the >organization affiliation< network to ensure that each member has access to best practices across BC and Canada. This resource is invaluable to xx program participants.

>proponent<'s unique suitability for delivering this program comes not only from the practical program delivery experience it has gained over the years, or the dedication and knowledge of its staff, many of whom have been working with the program for many years, but from the experience gained in working with more than 4,000 program participants. Their success validates the success of the program and as each person passes through they leave their mark, making the program better, honing its delivery and improving it. xx years on, and the program is still growing; changing with the times; with client needs and through the passion of those who deliver it.

In the final analysis though, success comes down to the numbers, and this is where >proponent< can demonstrate that it really delivers. StatsCan reports that at least 50% of small businesses fail by their

third year and only 20% survive ten years. Of businesses started on the xx program over the last xx years by >proponent< an impressive 48.21% are still in business - over twice the national average. It should be noted that a large percentage of the people who are no longer running their business did not fail, but rather decided to re-enter the workforce when an attractive opportunity arose.

To celebrate the success of its xx clients, >proponent< is introducing an awards program acknowledging businesses that have been established for 5 and 10 years. Recipients will receive a gold or silver pin along with a certificate. Press coverage for these businesses will be an additional benefit. On the theme of awards, three xx clients were nominated for the xx Chamber of Commerce Black Tie Awards and one of them won the coveted title.

>proponent<'s depth of understanding of the client group is unparalleled. xx program clients require a more practical and down-to-earth, real-world, approach, therefore business planning and counselling only partly answer this client group's needs. More than anything, especially at first, these individuals need support to help them make one of the most emotionally and financially important decisions of their life. Once the decision is made they need to be in an active entrepreneurial learning environment that deals with the real issues of starting a business as quickly and as safely as possible.

>proponent< provides access to bilingual services upon request and is fully accessible by persons with disabilities.

Post-program support has always been important to xx clients and >proponent< has demonstrated that its ability to provide a high level of ongoing business counselling, mentoring and access to business resources and loans, is second to none.

>proponent< is an active member of the community and involved in many partnerships. The organization is proud that it has extensive relationships with both business and community oriented organizations and is a key and founding member of the xx xx Group (xxx). >proponent< is also currently one of 48 organizations participating in a national HR practices pilot program for small and medium sized enterprises.

After xx years >proponent< is still moving forward, still looking for ways to improve the xx program and the client experience, while retaining the core delivery strategies that have made it such a huge success in the region. As someone once said "Success is a journey, not a destination" and >proponent< is proof of that axiom.

Prince Albert & District Community Futures is a full service business centre providing small business loans from \$5,000 up to \$150,000 to help individuals start up a business or expand an existing business. We also provide small business counselling services and workshops for new and existing business owners. Apply on line at www.pacf.ca or drop by our office to discuss your financing needs.

For more information contact:

PA & District Community Futures

5B – 598 15th Street East

Prince Albert, SK S6V 1G2

Phone: 306-763-8125

Email: info@pacf.ca

Website: www.pacf.ca



Growing communities one idea at a time.

Winning Government Business

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Western Economic
Diversification Canada

Diversification de l'économie
de l'Ouest Canada