

APMP UK Event: EXPLOITING THE PUBLIC SECTOR RULES FOR COMPETITIVE GAIN - Wednesday 21st November 2012 at ING, 60 London Wall, London EC2

November's well-attended event was held at ING Bank, 60 London Wall which, it emerged, has an interesting history – but more of that later.

For their presentation, public sector bidding specialists Andy Haigh and Peter Lobl of Sixfold International directed our focus to specific aspects of government procurement: Process, Scoring and Decision and how these relate to response preparation and management.

Be aware of the Principles

Taking us through some of the many options we can pursue to achieve that competitive edge prompted much interest and discussion. These options include tactical asking of questions, using the Freedom of Information Act, and various methods to ensure you maximise your scores for each question.

We were urged to study and remember the Principles of Public Sector Buying (you can see them in the slides on the Past Events section of the website www.ukapmp.co.uk) so that we will be able to recognise opportunities, if they arise, to challenge the process. Interesting anecdotes and cautionary tales illustrated the potential twists and turns.

Andy and Peter were keen to highlight more differences between the public and commercial sectors and they spelt these out with care. It is essential that we understand how the question of scoring forms the basis of any approach we take to our bid.

Answering the question

These differences were analysed in further detail as we were all asked to decide how many question elements we could find within one example question put in front of us. Most of us arrived at a number between 8 and 15, but Peter and Andy showed us how there were actually 25(!) elements to address in order to maximise the score and leave no room for doubt.

Learning more about challenging the process (not the decision) was extremely interesting for the audience and related to the recent Virgin Trains / First Group situation recently, which has resulted in the government being forced to re-run the procurement, following the correct process this time.

Everyone was reminded about the high standards that must be maintained to deliver those wins, and went away better informed than when they arrived. Here is one of their comments:

"Having attended the session on 'Public Sector Bidding', I can only say how impressed I was with its content and the engaging manner in which the speakers delivered their presentations. It's not often I can say that giving up a perfectly good evening to attend a presentation around bid management issues was worthwhile, but this definitely was.

I came away with reminders of some of the key considerations one has to always bear in mind when bidding in the public sector and also information I wasn't fully aware of, which I was able to go back to my office to apply to an ongoing bid I have been working on with the senior partners at my firm. My UKAPMP membership has definitely risen even further in value and I look forward to attending future events."

Dexter Williams-Ollivierre, Field Fisher Waterhouse

As an added bonus, Trevor Salthouse of ING Bank treated us to a potted history of Barings Bank since its formation in 1762 to its dramatic downfall, courtesy of Nick Leeson, in 1995. ING subsequently bought Barings, debts and all, for £1 - because they believed that its people were actually very good. Our delegates were given the freedom to wander round the permanent exhibition of Barings artefacts and the art collection displayed informally in rooms designed by the Queen's interior designer.

Thank you to Cofely GDF Suez for enabling our visit to their client's beautiful premises. Sixfold International offers briefings to live bid teams at no charge.

UKAPMP Events Team