

The importance of the PQQ – Imtech Marine

Commerce Decisions—increasing the probability of successful PQQ results.

Imtech Marine contract the services of Commerce Decisions to support their bidding activity in to the UK Ministry of Defence.

Customer Profile

Imtech Marine (headquartered in Rotterdam) is a leading company in the global maritime market. It operates as a full-service provider and system integrator of tailor-made, innovative and sustainable technology solutions covering the whole ship. Imtech Marine specialises in automation (platform and engine room), navigation, communication and connectivity solutions, propulsion systems, power generation and distribution, HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning), ship motion control, information technology, entertainment, water management and port services. The company provides innovative systems and reliable maintenance services around the world during the full lifetime of the ship.

Imtech Marine employs approximately 2,500 staff in almost 100 offices in 30 countries based along major shipping routes and close to shipbuilding centres. It is organised around six regions worldwide. Each individual company within the organisation is assigned to one of the six regions, creating a clear global structure very close to that of their customers. Imtech Marine Group companies work closely together, combining expertise in electrical, electronic, mechanical and ICT disciplines. They share knowledge in order to offer their customers integrated solutions and trusted service from engineering through to new build and during the whole operational life cycle



The Challenge of the PQQ

Following the requirements of the UK Public Contracts Regulations, many public sector buyers use Pre-Qualification Questionnaires (PQQs) to shortlist the businesses most capable of performing the contract in order to determine who will receive an Invitation to Tender (ITT). The evaluation of the PQQ responses is the first step in the tender process, normally resulting with a clear-cut “pass” or “fail” for each bidder.

PQQs normally focus on the financial status, technical and/or professional capability of a potential supplier, considering areas such as their experience, their processes and the qualifications of their employees. The questions in a PQQ are often subjective in nature, requiring bidders to understand the motivation of the buyer before constructing answers that successfully communicate a depth of experience, capability and understanding of the question. Understanding the way that particular buyers construct and evaluate their PQQs - and not having well-proven boilerplate answers to hand - often presents a formidable barrier to newcomers in a particular market.



Imtech Marine had a history of unsuccessfully responding to UK MOD PQQs at the point that they contacted Commerce Decisions for assistance.

Support from Commerce Decisions

Commerce Decisions worked with Imtech Marine to quickly analyse and understand the reasons for their 100% failure rate.

Our analysis showed that the major factor for this was the inexperience of Imtech Marine in competing in the UK defence market, compounded by unfamiliarity with UK MOD's thinking behind the construction of the PQQ questions.

In addition, the need to respond to questions that required a robust and convincing explanation to a complex and subjective question was proving difficult to technical staff for whom English was a second language.

Commerce Decisions Ltd (CDL) was contracted to work with a number of the Imtech Marine business development and technical staff to prepare for, and then complete, a number of UK MOD PQQs. CDL assisted these teams in fully understanding the question and the likely motivation for the question, and then advising on the degree of evidence that the UK MOD were likely to be

seeking in order to have confidence in their capability. CDL also assisted in the drafting of PQQ question responses where particular technical experts found the help of a native English speaker useful.

As a result of this renewed focus on responding to UK MOD PQQs, Imtech Marine were very pleased to be successful on the first three PQQs they completed with CDL's help - the first for Electronic & Electrical Spares for Warships, the second for T23 Power Generation and MCAS and the third for a five-year Maritime Multimedia System Maintenance Support contract.

Feedback received from the UK MOD NDP in response to a recent PQQ request indicated that the quality of Imtech's PQQ response was exceptional, confirming the approach adopted with CDL's assistance met MOD's expectations in full.

Anthony Jones, Head of Sales for Imtech Marine UK Ltd said:

"Commerce Decisions' involvement was crucial in aiding Imtech Marine's fuller understanding of the PQQ questions and the level of evidence and robustness required in their responses. This enabled us to achieve scores that properly reflected the Company's true capability".



The Importance of the PQQ

Completing a PQQ can often be seen as a time consuming and difficult process. It is advisable to have a preliminary scan through the documents early on to ascertain what information is required.

The PQQ is intended to provide a bidder with information on the contract on which they have expressed an interest. This allows the bidder to complete the required information with a clear idea of what the contract will require from a prospective supplier.

Bidders must ensure that the information they provide is clear and relevant to the contract requirement; and that they fully answer the question, providing robust and compelling evidence to back up their statements. The evaluation team can only evaluate the response submitted and the information provided.

When a bidder has completed the PQQ submission, it is important to check through it to ensure there are no significant omissions, mistakes or areas of confusion. Errors at this stage could potentially lead to the bidding organisation failing to meet the shortlist criteria for the tender stage.

For further information on Commerce Decisions bid support services, please contact us on +44 (0) 1235 431100 or sales@commercedecisions.com.

