

Service Sound and Vision Corporation use Commerce Decisions and AWARD® to support successful MOD bid for forces broadcasting services

The MOD goes out to competitive tender for the British Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS) – a lifeline for members of the armed forces and their families for many years – opening up the service to external suppliers for the first time since it began in 1943.



Customer Profile

The Services Sound and Vision Corporation (SSVC) is a British registered charity set up in the 1980s to entertain and inform Britain's Armed Forces around the world. Its mission: 'To be the preferred provider of entertainment and information to Service personnel and their families worldwide.'

The activities carried out by SSVC are:

- BFBS Radio – this service has three networks broadcasting pop and speech radio 24 hours a day. It combines the best of local radio from eight overseas locations. The service is relayed from the UK to bases around the world where there are significant numbers of Service personnel. BFBS Radio currently broadcasts to 23 countries.
- BFBS Television—this service broadcasts the best of UK television round the clock to Germany, Cyprus, Turkey, the Middle East, Canada, Afghanistan, Belize, Ascension and the Falkland Islands. Two 24-hour channels broadcast via satellite to personnel in 17 countries, with Navy TV being broadcast to HM Ships.
- Combined Services Entertainment

(CSE) - this service provides over 140 live shows every year, entertaining Service personnel based around the world at locations such as the Middle East, Afghanistan, Falkland Islands and Cyprus, as well as HM Ships.

- SSVC Retail—operates shops on major military bases in Germany, selling home entertainment equipment and other household white goods at competitive prices.
- SSVC Forces Cinemas—provides the latest box office movies to 20 static cinemas in Cyprus, Germany, Falkland Islands, UK and Northern Ireland as well as a mobile cinema, 'The Movie Machine', operating in support of Afghanistan decompression in Cyprus. Movies are shown within weeks of UK release.

- British Defence Film Library—this facility is managed on behalf of the MOD and supplies training and recruiting programmes to all branches of the Armed Services.

The Project

In October 2011, the MOD advertised a requirement to introduce a new media and communications service to replace the British Forces Broadcasting Service contract that was then being provided by SSVC. The eventual prime contractor would be expected to produce, implement and maintain a service that delivered unclassified information, entertainment and education to the British Armed Forces community worldwide (including RN Ships in port



and at sea) by means of audio and audio/visual content. As part of the service, the contractor would also be expected to consider technological developments and changing viewer/listener habits. A significant aim of the service would be to sustain operational effectiveness by contributing to the morale and welfare of the serving population and their dependents. It would also be responsible for maintaining a link between deployed personnel and home, and promoting an understanding of Defence business. In addition, it was expected that the final delivery system would need to be installed, implemented and maintained in UK EYES ONLY areas, requiring appropriately security cleared personnel.



Five companies were invited to tender: SSSVC, The Bridge Network North, Triple Play Services Ltd, Garrison Radio Ltd and BT Global Services.

The contract was to be awarded for a ten-year period, with an estimated value between £100-£250 million.

Bid Support

The Ministry of Defence elected to use the AWARD® tender evaluation tool to support the assessment of bids from the five tenderers. Being the incumbent supplier, it was very important to SSSVC to maximise their chances of winning the new contract. On receiving the tender documentation, SSSVC engaged Commerce Decisions to assist them in preparing their bid. This engagement supported the following activities:

- Explanation of the format required for the bid submission, in accordance with the Authority’s instructions and requirements.
- Formatting of the bid material such that it would present well to the Authority evaluators, who would only have access to electronic (soft) copies of the bid .
- Assisting with referencing the bid documentation. This ensured that the Authority’s evaluators could navigate easily to the relevant areas of the SSSVC bid in order to carry out the evaluation.
- Analysis of the Authority’s chosen evaluation approach, as detailed in the tender documentation, and explanation of its implications for the bidder.
- An independent review of the bid against the Authority’s stated criteria to ensure that they had been properly answered, and that it would score well in the evaluation.

Awarding the Contract

Despite a high court challenge to the MOD’s contract award process by one of the companies that were invited to tender in July 2012, on 31st October 2012 the MOD announced that SSSVC had won the contract. It is worth up to £25million per year and is due to start in April 2013.

“Support from Commerce Decisions was so helpful—not only with their detailed knowledge of AWARD®, but also with lessons learned in relation to the vagaries of MS Office. I have no hesitation in suggesting to other AWARD® bidders that they engage early with Commerce Decisions if they want a highly competent independent bid review that will maximise their chances of winning.”

Robert Eggar, FFBS Programme Manager, SSSVC

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Within the UK MOD, AWARD® is the primary tool and it’s use is sponsored by a corporate agreement. AWARD® has been successfully deployed across MOD for over 12 years. to support the delivery of consistent repeatable processes across the organisation. It has been proven to reduce time to contract, improve value for money and reduce risk. AWARD® delivers intuitive and robust assessments with strong audit trail.