

Commerce Decisions supports the Department for Children, Schools and Families in successful letting of the Schools Recruitment Service

Customer profile

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), created in June 2007, aims to make the UK the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. DCSF is directly responsible for state schools in England, but control of state schools in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales has been devolved to those regions.

About the project

The Schools Recruitment Service is an innovative online service that will be used by educational establishments across England to post vacancies and manage their communications with applicants. The primary function of the Service is to improve current recruitment practices for all permanent leadership, teaching and support staff in schools.

The Service makes the recruitment process more candidate-focused, better able to respond to the marketplace and the needs of the school; therefore reducing the cost per hire and increasing quality and productive time. It is expected that more than 8,000 schools will advertise their jobs on the Schools Recruitment Service.

It uses online applicant tracking technology designed to help modernise recruitment processes, thereby supporting the provision of a world class workforce and subsequent attainment of the Department's 2020 goals for educational achievement.

Project procurement challenges

The key challenges of this project were:

- working with a large number of stakeholders, bidders and evaluators
- managing a complex procurement and ensuring adherence to all regulatory requirements
- managing a large volume of documentation
- delivering a clear and transparent audit trail

- the ability to debrief losing bidders effectively and manage any challenges that might be made
- delivering a robust evaluation process
- maintaining consistency and neutrality

Role and value of Commerce Decisions and AWARD®

Commerce Decisions was engaged before the issuing of the tender.

At the very beginning of the procurement, the AWARD® software was configured to the specific needs of the project team and the users. At the same time, the Professional Services team assisted in the structure of the evaluation itself.

"Commerce Decisions provided excellent advice on how we should structure the questions and criteria. The Professional Services team were very helpful on a number of topics and assisted us in making sure the evaluation and associated processes were structured in the way we wanted," said Adrian Finn, Implementation Manager, Schools Recruitment Service, DCSF.

Eight suppliers responded to the tender with a huge amount of supporting documentation. These responses were uploaded straight into AWARD®, which saved the project team a great deal of time as they were able to search and reference the bid documents electronically.



"AWARD® ensured that the evaluators provided a written rationale to justify their score of each criterion they evaluated. This was very important as it allowed us to understand and show how the results were reached. We had two challenges regarding the final decision. Using AWARD® we were able to demonstrate very clearly the decisionmaking process and defend the final outcome," said Adrian Finn. "In today's working environment you have to be able to demonstrate clearly how decisions have been reached. AWARD® was fundamental in helping us to do this."

"Our evaluation panel was drawn from a number of geographically dispersed Local Authority and school staff who were impressed both with how easy AWARD® was to use and how much time it saved them. AWARD® assisted us in the process of maintaining the highest level of buy-in to the project from our stakeholders."

Paul Howard Head of Sector & ex-DIUS Procurement, Shared Services, Department for Children, Schools and Families



The evaluators were geographically dispersed, and found AWARD® very userfriendly. Being web-based, they were able to log on to AWARD® remotely, and to carry out the evaluations they were responsible for effectively and efficiently. AWARD® enabled the procurement cycle to be shortened and made the whole process more robust and defensible.

“Using AWARD® really helped me to manage the project. I could see where all the evaluators were up to in real time and I had total vision of their responses. In addition, when it came debriefing the bidders, AWARD® allowed me easy access to all the information I needed,” observed Adrian Finn.



“I would definitely use AWARD® again. I couldn’t imagine doing a project of this nature without using AWARD®. What is particularly important is that non procurement professionals find it very easy to use.”

Adrian Finn Implementation Manager, Schools Recruitment Service, Department for Children, Schools and Families

Note:

The Department for Children, Schools and Families is now called the Department for Education.

AWARD® Benefits

AWARD® delivers a transparent audit trail that underpins the bidder debriefing process and manages any challenges to the outcome of the procurement.

AWARD® is highly flexible, enabling full integration of the tender requirements and policies.

AWARD® enables project users to be managed centrally, optimising the time spent on evaluating suppliers.

AWARD® is delivered via a security accredited hosted service. Users can access AWARD® from any workstation with an internet connection and web browser.

Powerful reporting capabilities allow a range of selected reports to be generated quickly and tailored to your project.

Enhanced controls allow better management of tender stages leading to efficiencies and on time project delivery.

AWARD® provides a structured and compliant approach to the execution of a procurement.