



TENDERS | BIDS | PROPOSALS | SUBMISSIONS

TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

CAPABILITY STATEMENT



Strictly commercial in confidence

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Creating an interconnected world through an innovative industry

The Information Technology (IT) sector lives and breathes in almost every aspect of our lives.

With unparalleled reach, IT is used in every industry and every business, no matter its size or scale. From hardware, to software, to virtual realities, the technology sector keeps our economy growing and improves our quality of living. With innovation at its core, the IT industry is constantly developing and with change comes complexity.

Like an intricate web of possibility, IT offers us a sweeping range of business solutions that can be as complicated as they are incredible. Spanning a broad range of projects and professions, from website development and hosting services, telecommunication carriers and hardware supplies to Artificial Intelligence, quantum computing and the Internet of Things. It takes a specific skillset to navigate this sophisticated world, and yet we have come to rely on it.

Modern society is built on a foundation of technology and most excitingly, so is our future. IT allows us to grow businesses through innovation and efficiency, it takes our client bases to a global level, connects communities, and increases productivity and profitability simultaneously. IT takes our most ambitious, futuristic, and seemingly unachievable ideas, and turns them into a reality.

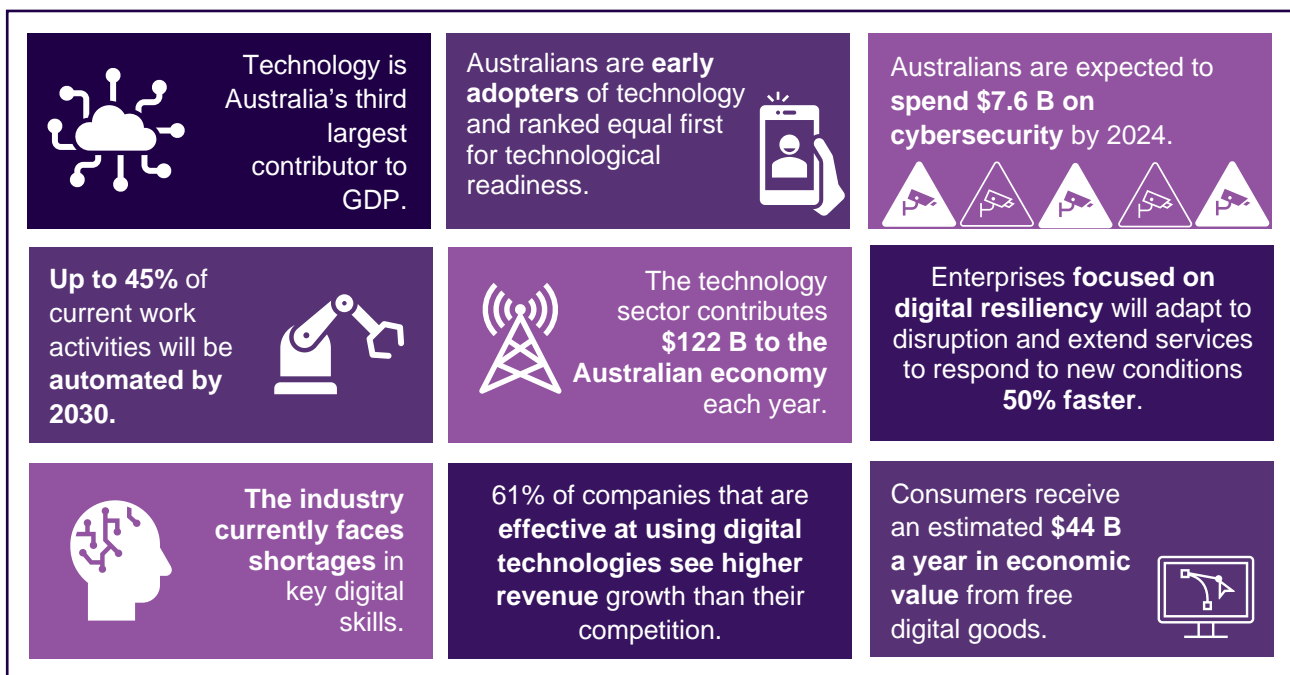


Figure 1: Growth and development within the IT industry is occurring at an impressive rate.



Technology's unique complexities

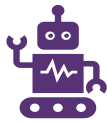
For companies bidding on technology projects, there are some key industry nuances to keep in mind:

Table 1: Challenges in the IT industry.



TECHNICAL JARGON

With so many specialties under one roof, an information technology bid is sometimes at risk of being overloaded by jargon and three letter acronyms (TLAs). The bid team needs Olympic-level linguistic dexterity to synthesise, translate and communicate complex information to ensure it's accessible to all without losing its potency.



EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

The rate of development of new and emerging technologies is unparalleled. This adds a new dimension of difficulty to tech tender writing. Knowledge of emerging technologies may be limited. Therefore, it's paramount to have your best subject matter experts involved in the tendering process.



NEW SKILL DEVELOPMENT

A significant skill gap currently exists within the IT sector. This gap continues to widen at an exponential pace due the rapid rate of digital transformations. Keeping a strong focus on technical training within your team is the secret to success.



STRONG SECURITY FOCUS

Adapting to a remote working world has seen a rise in cybersecurity measures. The challenges of cybersecurity are ever-changing as new technologies emerge and disrupt the environment for secure networks. To be successful, tenderers need to demonstrate their commitment to an organisation's data security and privacy.



DRIVE TO INNOVATE

IT projects are often visionary in nature – pushing the boundaries to deliver better outcomes and striving for new horizons in connectivity, innovation or performance. Bid teams need to be able to inspire and energise teams to imagine and differentiate smarter solutions.



GENDER DIVERSITY

Gender diversity in the technology sector continues to lag behind comparable industries. Firms with higher levels of gender diversity have been shown to be more productive and innovative. Addressing the gender gap within your tender team can lead to bid winning outcomes through the ability to produce stronger and more innovative solutions.



Technology: a fiercely competitive sector

The IT sector in Australia and across the globe is experiencing rapid growth, making technology bids ever-more competitive. With the development of new technologies driving change across multiple industries, both global tech giants and well-known Australian companies are zealous competitors in bidding for IT tenders.

If you're about to embark on a technology tender, you'll need every possible advantage to win.

As a rule of thumb, you can expect a typical technology bid to follow a process similar to this:

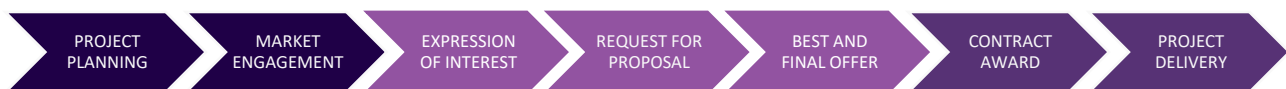


Figure 2: A typical bid process will follow these seven steps.

The bidding phase is shown in bright purple. Depending on the procurement process being followed, the process might include all three bidding steps (or more) or might concentrate on just one bidding step (usually the Request for Proposal).

Bid timing can vary enormously, depending on the size and complexity of the project:

- An Expression of Interest will typically take between 2–4 weeks, but sometimes up to 12-15 weeks
- A Request for Proposal could vary from 4 weeks to as many as 20 or 26 weeks for a mega project
- A Best and Final Offer might take a week or several months (one recent project took 11 months).

Despite the variation in bid process and timing, typical bid budgets are quite consistent, particularly for the top tier and major players. **A comprehensive bid budget, including allocation of internal costs, typically runs to around 2% of project value.**

From our experience, we consistently see that the winning technology bids are those that have been developed and prepared by teams that have a clear partnership between the 'project team' and the 'bid team'. Success comes when the project team can focus on developing a smart solution while the bid team takes responsibility for selling the solution through a persuasive submission. The important point here is that both elements are needed – a smart solution and a persuasive submission.

In terms of bid team resources, the winning bidders are typically scaling up their bid team with:

- Performance coaches and teaming experts (like Alliance Coaches)
- Industry experts and people with client insight (like our Shadow Catalysts)
- Bid strategists and innovation experts (what we call Bid Catalysts)
- Bid managers and team leaders (like our Bid Whips)
- Bid writers and content developers (our Bid Writers)
- Formatters and production experts (our Production Managers)
- Graphic designers (our Design Team).

A strong bid team frees the bid director to focus their effort on leading the team, driving the solution and negotiating the commercial arrangements, knowing that the submission is under control.



Lessons learnt from our major projects research

Since 2019, we have regularly conducted an on-going major research program with industry leading evaluators from major projects. The purpose of *our Behind Closed Doors* research is to collect confidential, non-identified and non-specific feedback from evaluators that would provide open, honest and helpful direction to bidders.

Key findings

Evaluators are looking for five key factors when choosing a winning bid

We asked evaluators to tell us how important various factors were when assessing a bidder’s submission, such as previous experience, technical capability, an innovative solution, clarity of communication and so on. The results show that evaluators have high expectations across a wide range of factors, but a clear top 5 emerged. **Note the even spread across these 5 factors: this is the formula for success.**

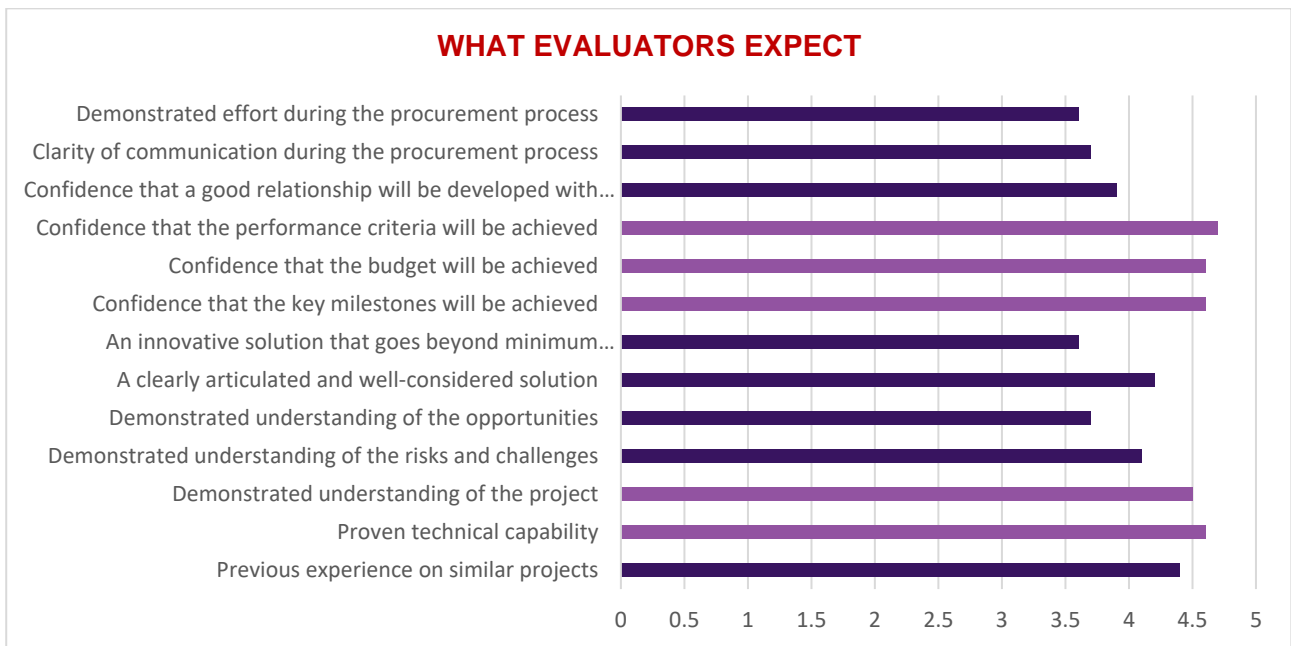


Figure 3: Evaluators were clear about what made a strong submission, with 7 stand-out characteristics.



Evaluators are looking for seven key elements in submissions

Evaluators cited almost 20 characteristics common to the best submissions, with 7 characteristics standing out as the most important. Readers may jump to the conclusion that ‘concise’ justifies keeping their submissions short and sweet, but ‘comprehensive’ and ‘thorough’ also rated strongly. The key is to include information that is both **relevant and pertinent**.

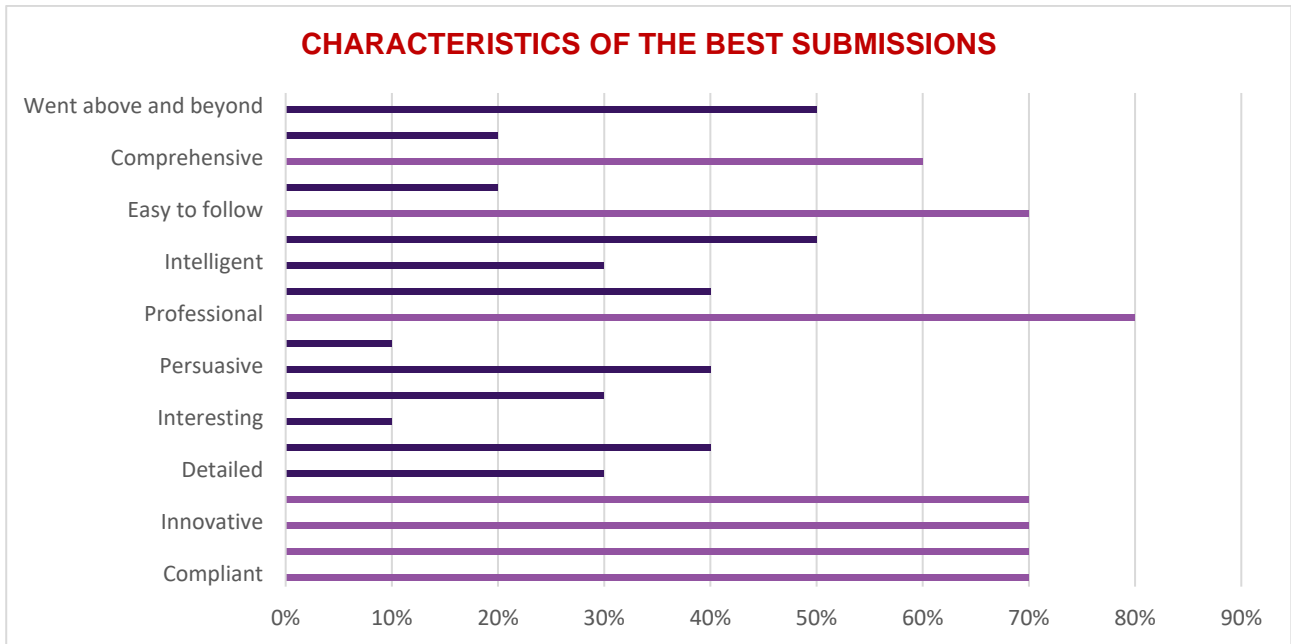


Figure 4: Evaluators were clear about what made a strong submission, with 7 stand-out characteristics.



Bidders are most frequently let down by simple – and avoidable – failings

Evaluators cited almost 20 common failings in the submissions they reviewed, but 7 deadly sins stood out as the most common failings, all referenced by **at least 50%** of evaluators.

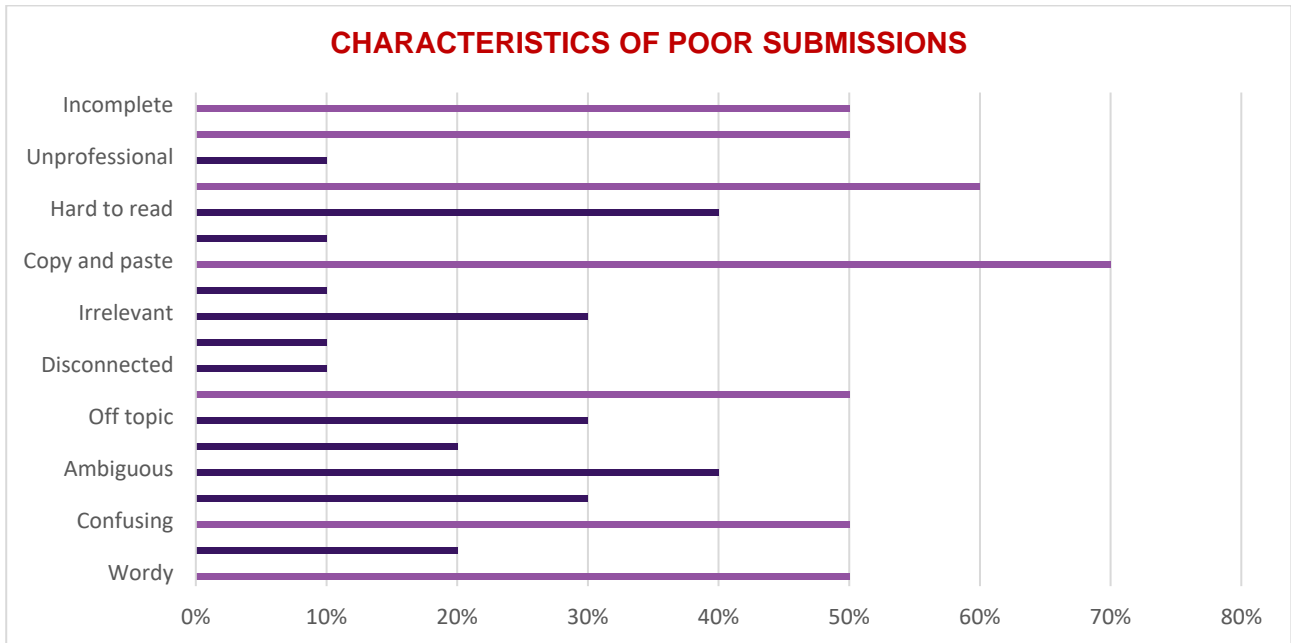


Figure 5: Evaluators saw consistent themes in poor submissions, with 7 deadly sins occurring frequently.

Further to this, when asked where bidders dropped the ball, evaluators referenced a wide range of issues, from not addressing criteria, to demonstrating poor attitudes and behaviours, through to missing the mark on project objectives and risks.



How well are bidders currently performing?

The good news is that 80% of evaluators report that the bids received are ‘fine – adequate and compliant’. The even better news for bidders is that there is a tremendous opportunity to up their game **as only 10% of bids are considered ‘excellent – very thorough and compelling’**.

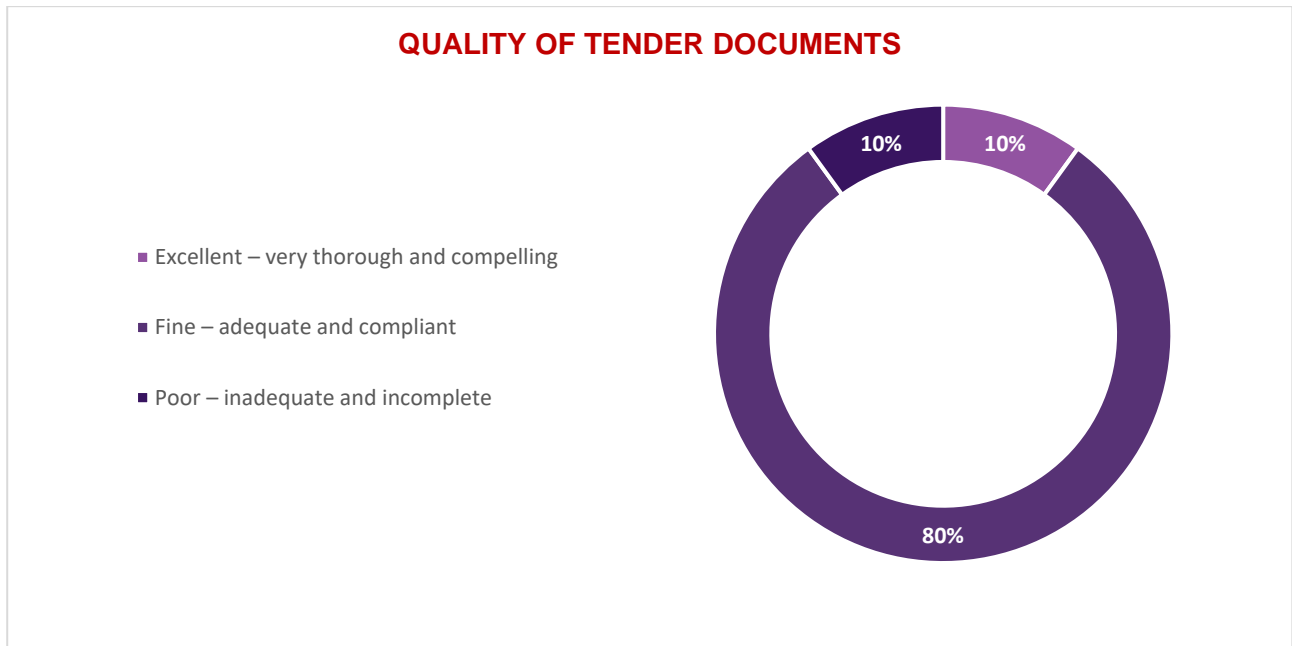


Figure 6: The typical quality of tender documents is ‘fine’ – meaning there is a great opportunity for bidders to step up and impress the evaluators.



Importance of price

As usual, questions about price produced an interesting mixed response.

Price was the most important consideration for 20% of evaluators. In contrast, a collective 30% of evaluators said that price was either the least important consideration or less important than all other elements. In addition, the majority of evaluators (50%) said that price was very important but other elements were also considered.

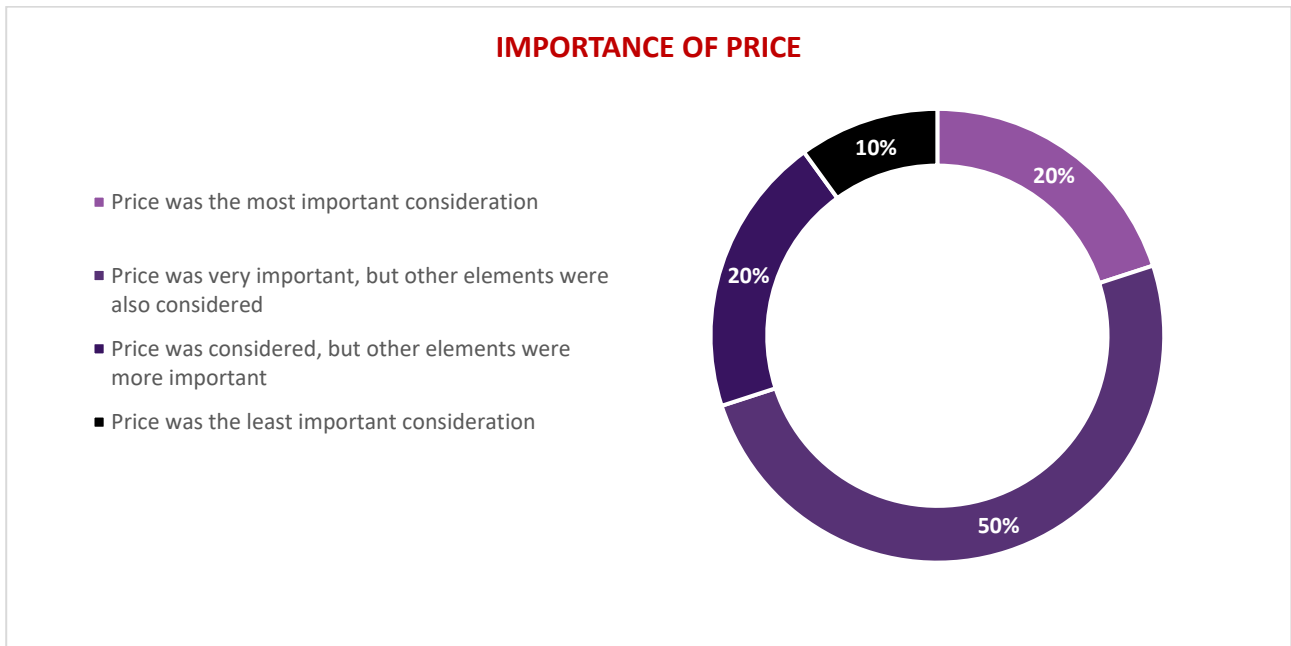


Figure 7: As we have come to expect, the importance of price prompted mixed responses.



Takeaways for writing technology tender responses

Six simple ways to improve your success in technology tenders:

1. Know and respect your audience

You should know everything you can about the buyer and their project. While a pre-existing relationship is not critical, it will improve your chances to have had effective preliminary discussions with the buyer prior to the bid period and will improve your understanding of the project's risks and challenges. On this point, evaluators commented that bidders often showed a lack of understanding of the project and the big picture, which resulted in generally poor submissions. It's also important to understand who the evaluators are so you can pitch your responses accordingly. Even in the rail sector, evaluation panels include a diverse cross-section of disciplines – they're not all engineers!

2. Bring your A-game to every question and presentation

Yes, price remains one of the most important sections of a tender but it's rarely the only factor evaluators consider. To win a tender, bidders need to bring their A-game to every question and every presentation they deliver. Evaluators will frequently read the entire submission so it's important that you tell a complete and consistent story that shows you understand the project and that you can give evaluators confidence in your ability to meet the performance criteria, achieve the key milestones and make budget. With only 10% of submissions and presentations deemed excellent and the remaining 90% deemed 'adequate' or 'poor' there is plenty of room for bidders to step up.

3. Pay attention to the 'soft stuff'

The so-called 'soft stuff' matters, with the majority of evaluators stating what we know to be instinctively true: well-presented submissions are easier to follow and make a good first impression. Neat formatting and presentation make it easier for evaluators to do their job and will engage them more easily, improving your chances of their understanding your solution and following your proposal. A clear structure and grammatical polish aren't just nice-to-haves – they demonstrate effort, professionalism and attention to detail.

4. Attach only pertinent information

Think carefully about what to include in your attachments. If you think you can just attach your capability statement or marketing brochure – think again. The key word here is 'pertinent': your attachments need to be pertinent and relevant to the bid. Generic information not only doesn't cut it, but it will also do your submission more harm than good with the vast majority of evaluators saying generic information is never welcome.

5. Stand out from the crowd

Evaluators noted that bidders are often clustered and that choosing the winning bidder is not always straightforward. This presents a fantastic opportunity to stand out from your competitors and create memorable differentiators for the evaluation panel to consider. Offer more than a compliant, business-as-usual response. Explore innovative solutions and be open to alternatives. Demonstrate your energy and enthusiasm for the buyer's project. Show your smarts and your professionalism, and your commitment to delivering a first-class submission.

6. Ask questions: don't be coy

A common request from evaluators is for bidders to ask more questions of the buyers. Engage with the Q&A process and ask searching questions that will help you understand the project and its inherent risks and challenges. If you're worried that your questions will reveal your solution, use the confidential question function for those types of questions; but it's in your best interests to join in the Q&A process and demonstrate your commitment and enthusiasm.



Factors for success in technology bids

From our experience in information technology bids, there are a few key factors that enhance your likelihood of success:

Table 2: This is the winning formula for success.



BID MINDSET

Embrace the bid mindset to win the competition and go beyond business as usual. Submitting a compliant tender is the starting point; submitting a winning tender requires a completely different attitude.



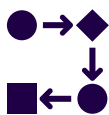
EARLY AND BROAD ENGAGEMENT

Engage early to position and prepare for the tender. Don't wait for the bid documents – get your project and bid team up and running, aligned and focussed. It's also crucial to engage early with your project partners, and potentially also with stakeholders, community groups and local industry.



OUTSTANDING SOLUTION

Develop an outstanding approach or solution that differentiates you and provides real and genuine value to your client. Pack your proposal full of smart initiatives that minimise risks, maximise opportunities and create value.



DISCIPLINED PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Follow a disciplined bid management process including detailed content analysis, iterative content development and collaborative document review. Did you know: a first draft usually scores only 40%? If your process is to gather it all together three days before the deadline, you may be in trouble...



CONTENT THAT SCORES

Develop compelling and persuasive content that goes beyond a compliant answer to maximise your score through the formal evaluation process. Remember: a compliant answer usually scores only 4 out of 10. To elevate your submission, you need to create more potent and comprehensive content.



Get the edge with Aurora Marketing

Over the last 20 years, Aurora Marketing has pioneered the submission management space in Australia.

At the pointy end of our expertise is the work we do in tenders, bids, proposals and submissions. In many sectors, a submission like this is where all the effort our clients invest in marketing, promotion, sales and business development culminates in an all-or-nothing competitive offer. It is an opportunity to really showcase their unique offering and close the deal.

This is the space where we thrive.

We're experts at developing **pragmatic business growth programs**. These programs help position companies as market leaders across selected industry sectors and give guidance on how to actively pursue a targeted list of clients and prospects. Our expertise covers all aspects of marketing, promotion, sales and business development, but always with the crystal-clear focus of driving revenue through more or bigger clients, and more or bigger contracts.

We can help you to **assemble the team** for your tender using your own internal resources and preferred suppliers, or we can assemble a full team of our own resources. We work with teams of all sizes, shapes and skills. Some of our clients are very well resourced with high calibre, experienced tender experts, a strong internal bid culture, and well-honed bid systems. Others are at the opposite end of the spectrum, with limited resources and processes. Depending on what your team needs and the scale of your tender, we can provide **extra resources** to fill gaps or an **entire holistic solution**.

And while this is what we are best known for, our expertise goes beyond tenders, bids, proposals and submissions. We excel in preparing **any kind of highly technical document** that needs to be clear and compelling for its target audience. Think capability statements, white papers, research reports, grant applications, award submissions, information memoranda and annual reports.

Importantly, the size and scale of our team enables us to ramp up **resources when you need them**. Whether you need a team dedicated to a key project for three months, a tender coach in-house for three weeks, a team of writers working around the clock for three days, or a document formatter for a few hours, we have the solution you need.



Deep understanding of the technology sector

At Aurora Marketing, we love the pace and excitement of working on IT bids. Like a window into the future, we love helping to shape and communicate solutions that will transform the way we all live.

To ensure we retain our position as leaders in this field, we are committed to on-going professional development and extensive networking. We are active participants in industry conferences, seminars and events around Australia and New Zealand, and are proud members of the Association of Proposal Management Professionals, Influence, Collaboration & Opportunity Network (ICON), and Committee for Brisbane. Furthermore, we are recognised Industry Experts with Queensland Leaders and provide valuable education and mentoring for members across numerous sectors.

Furthermore, since 2019 we have been driving a behind-the-scenes investigation of the tender evaluation process to broaden our understanding of how evaluation panels score tenders, what they are really looking for, and what the common shortfalls are. **Our latest Behind Closed Doors program was completed in 2022 and focussed specifically on the rail sector in Australia and New Zealand.** The full report can be viewed and downloaded from our website www.auroramarketing.com.au.

Our bidding experience reflects the full diversity and complexity of the technology sector including:

Table 3: Aurora Marketing has experience that spans the full breadth of the IT industry.

 INFRASTRUCTURE	 IT SOLUTIONS	 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE	 TELECOMMUNICATIONS	 CYBERSECURITY
 SOFTWARE	 AUDITS	 DATA MANAGEMENT	 BIDS AND TENDERS	 GRANTS AND AWARDS
 TRAINING AND COACHING	 BRAND AND DESIGN	 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS	 CHANGE MANAGEMENT	 RESEARCH



A track record of winning landmark deals

We've worked on literally thousands of live tender opportunities for organisations of all sizes and we're proud to have contributed to some of Australia's biggest contracts. Our growing portfolio of IT submissions include:

- NBN Fixed Wireless Network
- Queensland Traffic Monitoring
- Transurban Citylink
- Midland M6 Toll Expressway Ltd UK
- Managed Service Providers
- Online Client Portals
- Communications Contracts.



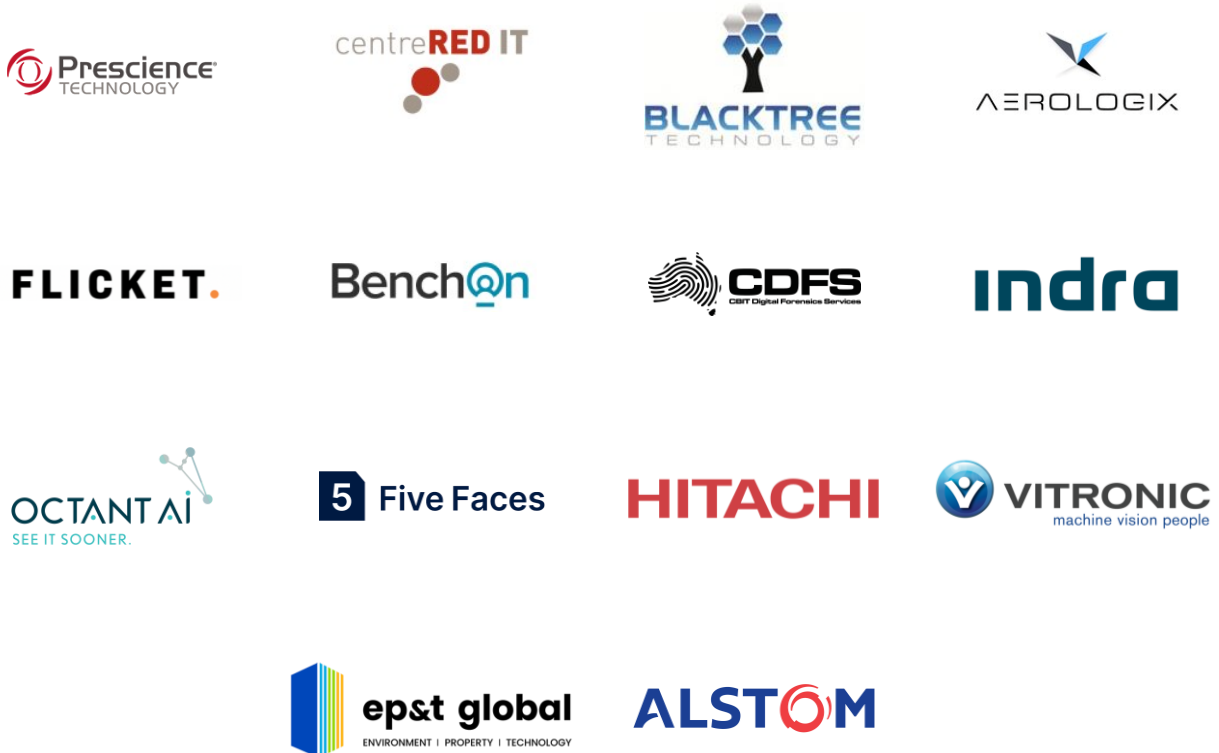
Figure 8: The Aurora Marketing presence continues to grow in stride with our success.



Trusted by the leaders in technology

We're particularly proud of the client base we've served. Across the information technology sector, we've worked with some of Australia's most innovative companies including:

Table 4: Our clients are as diverse as the industry itself.





Delivering exceptional results

Don't just take our word for it – our clients sing our praises too:

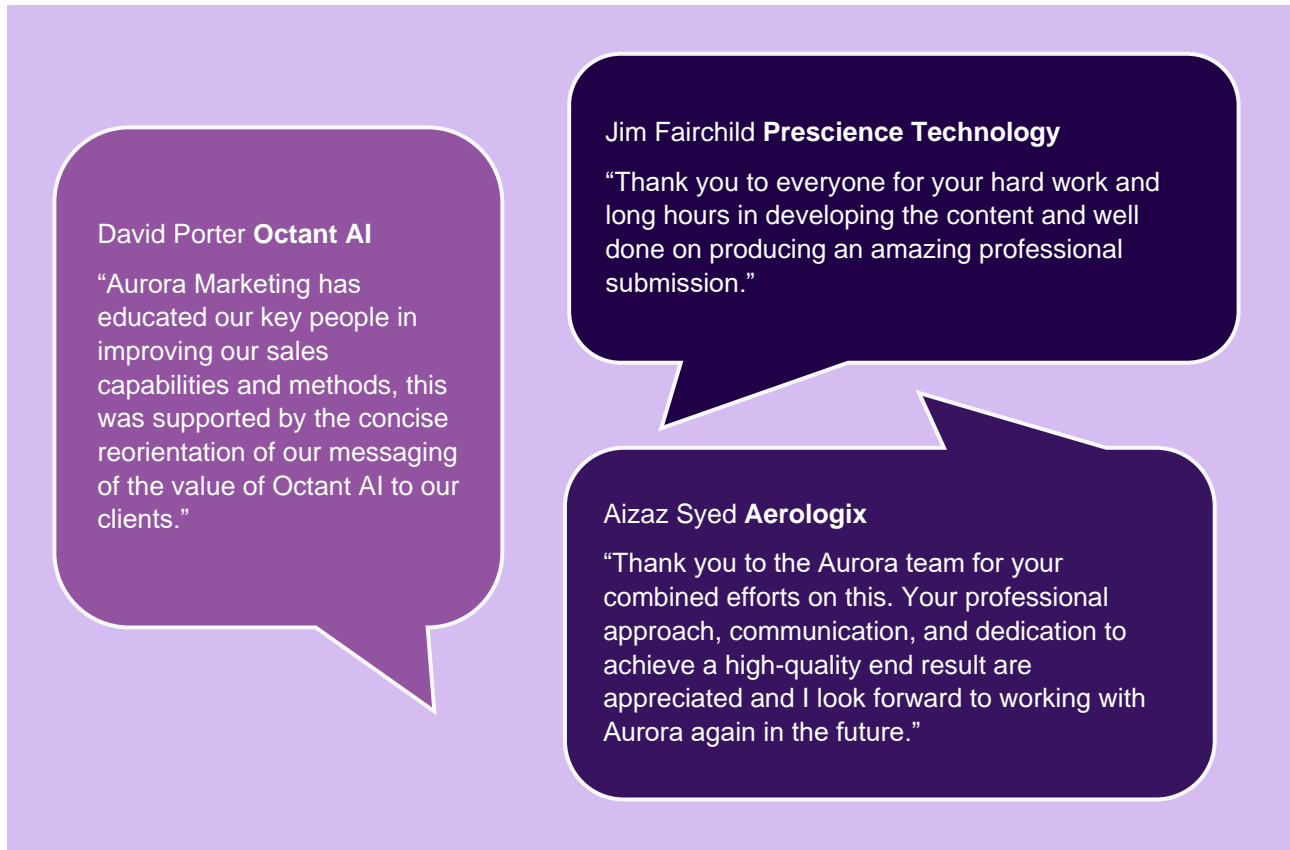


Figure 9: Client testimonials.

Talk to us

We can help you win that ‘must win’
improve your success rate or
improve your bidding methodology

Brisbane | Sydney | Melbourne | Adelaide | Canberra

Phone: 1300 976 312

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www.auroramarketing.com.au