



LESSON #9

CONDUCT EARLY AND THOROUGH CONTENT ANALYSIS

One of the most crucial steps in any submission is what we call ‘Content Analysis’.

This is where the bid team conducts a **3-way diagnostic**:



Like many things in bidding (and life), Content Analysis is a “garbage in - garbage out” activity. When done well, the team benefits from a deep understanding of how to win and a clear path forward for making it happen. When done poorly, the team wastes time, misses a crucial opportunity and undermines their likelihood of winning.

The best results are obtained from Content Analysis workshops which are conducted with a **small group of subject matter experts** who can contribute to a constructive discussion on the client, the subject matter and the likely solution. Importantly, these workshops should be **held as early as practical** in the bid phase, ideally within the first few days after the bid documents are released. Remember, a core part of the diagnostic is to understand the client, so it makes sense to do this as early as possible and certainly before the team starts working on their solution.

Content analysis is one of the most crucial activities in the bid.

Don't cut corners on this step!



LET'S TALK LESSONS LEARNT. OUR FORMAL RESEARCH REVEALED:

- A large portion of submissions do not contain the requested information.
- 82% of written explanations aren't clear or are lacking detail.
- When bidders provide a business-as-usual response, at best they score 5/10.

Content analysis solves these problems...



THE SPECIFIC OUTCOMES WE STRIVE TO ACHIEVE ARE:





Our methodology provides a structured framework for the team to think broadly, deeply and creatively about each deliverable. We can adapt our sessions to finetune what we need to focus on, how we facilitate each session and how long each session takes, but in our experience the following discussion structure works really well.

TYPICAL CONTENT ANALYSIS AGENDA

TOPIC	ANALYSIS
1. CLIENT ANALYSIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the client asking, why, what is important to them, etc? What is the specific scope, what are the specific requirements, why, how are the requirements prioritised, etc? What are the evaluation criteria, how are they prioritised, etc?
2. SOLUTION SHAPING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What would be the ideal solution for the client, how would this be unique, how will this provide value, etc?
3. SUBMISSION PLANNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliverable overview – What are the basic details about the deliverable including weighting, page limits, etc? Structure – What is the client’s structure, what attachments are required, etc? Comprehensiveness – How will we articulate our solution, what are the benefits of our approach, what level of detail is required, etc? Project Objectives – How will we explicitly contribute to achieving the project objectives or client vision, etc? Risks and Challenges – Do we understand the major risks and challenges of this aspect of the project, how will we minimise and manage them for the client, etc? Evidence – What evidence do we have to build credibility and demonstrate the certainty of our solution, etc? Unique Approach – What is unique about our solution, what can we offer that is innovative, how have we gone beyond business as usual, etc? Competitive Edge – How do we position ourselves against our competition, what are our strengths, what are their weaknesses, etc? Win Themes – How do we connect to the overall strategic narrative, etc?
4. ACTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is responsible, what needs to happen, when does it need to happen by, etc?

In our experience, Content Analysis is the step in the bidding process that teams dislike the most. After all, it’s hard work and they usually want to get stuck in to developing the solution, not workshopping boring stuff like client expectations. We get it! You’ve got lots of stuff to do, every minute is crucial and being stuck in meetings seems like an epic waste of time. But we know from bitter experience that cutting corners in this area leads to major problems down the track. In the worst case scenario, teams shortcut their Content Analysis and end up misreading client requirements, underestimating their expectations, developing unacceptable solutions, submitting nonconforming submissions, or just generally submitting unconvincing or lacklustre proposals.

WHAT TEAMS SAY WHEN THEY WANT TO JUSTIFY CUTTING CORNERS

“It’s too early! We need to develop the solution first.”

“This returnable is a tick-a-box compliance returnable (eg management plan / finance schedule / departures table / spreadsheet) so it only needs a light touch.”

“There’s not enough time.” / “It’s a waste of time.”

WHAT TEAMS DO WHEN THEY WANT TO WIN

They do Content Analysis as early as possible so that all of their work is informed by a deeper understanding of the client.

They start by assuming that every schedule is important, and use the Content Analysis process to critically analyse each schedule to determine the appropriate level of priority and effort.

They willingly invest time in areas which directly affect the likelihood of winning, such as developing an understanding of the client, shaping a solution to match the client’s expectations and requirements, and ensuring the submission is persuasive and compelling to the client.