



Making the Most of Key Sales Opportunities

With Expert Key Stage Interventions

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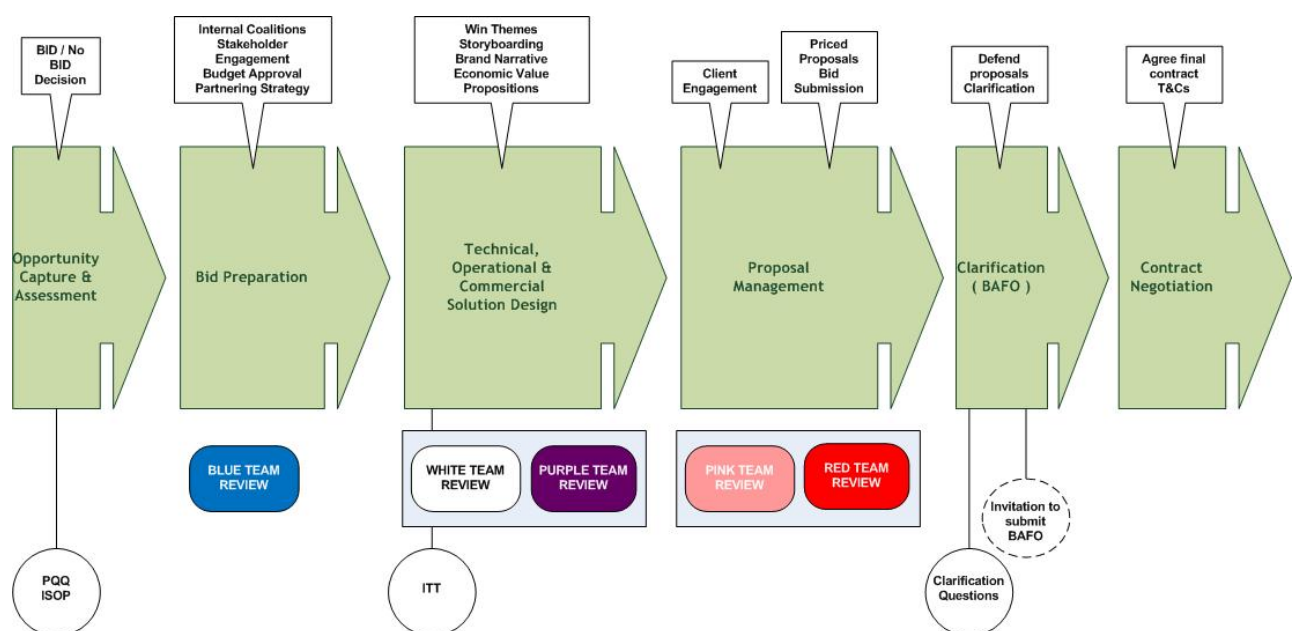
Improve your chances of winning the business with expert key stage interventions

Summary

Sales are the lifeblood of all businesses. For many organisations -- especially larger organisations -- business success or failure is defined by just a handful of key sales opportunities each year. These key deals often make up a significant percentage of annual forecasted revenues and contribution, or are otherwise strategically important to the future direction of the business. The rewards justify the risks of bidding, but nether less these key sales opportunities are costly to bid, costly to lose, and potentially even costly to win if the technical, operational or commercial solution is poorly constructed.



OnPoint helps clients to make the most of these scarce opportunities. In the first instance, we help them interpret the client's requirements and understand their competitors' strategies in order to capture the opportunities that are right for their business. We help them create robust technical, operational and commercial solutions that minimise their exposure to risk and maximise profits. We help them formulate and articulate compelling customer value propositions as part of winning bid proposals. We help them convert qualified prospects into winning deals and profitable business.



We do all this by working alongside your internal bid and management teams at the most critical points in the sales campaign. We bolster their efforts and inject invaluable independent and creative out-of-the-box thinking. These **key stage interventions** typically last just a few days each, but add enormous value to the sales effort and greatly enhance the prospects of winning the business.

Based on our vast experience of running major sales campaigns, we have identified five blocks of activity during key stages of the bidding cycle categorised as *Blue*, *White*, *Purple*, *Pink* and *Red* team reviews. These activity blocks are discrete, standalone engagements that are time-boxed to fit your requirements.

We adopt different approaches to fulfilling the requirements of each key stage. So, for example, we employ our proven templates and checklists to guide the bid manager during the blue team review; facilitate solution design workshops and innovation forums and run creative storyboarding sessions during the white and purple reviews; introduce authoring guidelines, devise client-side objective scoring matrices, and provide face-to-face feedback and coaching during the pink and red reviews.

We're the voice of experience during the initial blue team review that prepare the bid plans, mobilise the right resources and allocate to the key activities, and solicit executive sponsorship during *Bid Preparation* **3 - 8 days**

We're the experts during white and purple reviews that guide your holistic *Solution Design* and interject with ideas that make the difference and avoid the pitfalls along the way **8 – 20 days**

We're the creative force during proposal development and pink review that elicits and galvanises the ideas of your team to build cohesive, exciting and innovative campaign narrative and winning differentiated value propositions **8 – 15 days**

We're the critical friend and intelligent client during the red review that challenges your thinking and constructively reviews proposals prior to submission **4 – 10 days**

Why are quality proposals important?

Increased regulation, much of it emanating from the Public Contracts Regulations especially EU procurement directives, has led to more formal proposal evaluation evolving within public sector contracting bodies. There has also been a steady rise in challenges to procurement decisions, as the business environment has become generally more assertive and more disposed to be litigious. This has resulted in decision-making becoming strongly oriented around the proposal material as opposed to any other factor, because it is the clearest way to create an audit trail and justification for the contract award decision. Assessment methodologies and software tools have been developed to create a more consistent and perhaps

mechanistic approach to proposal assessment. This has also resulted in the proposal itself becoming all the more important. So, whilst sales relationships still play a vital role in early shaping and positioning, the most critical success factor is proposal production in the bidding for and winning of public sector contracts. The written proposals must convey precisely your story, address the client's explicit and implied needs, demonstrate practicable solutions, and represent the most economic value to the client.

"One competitor built an excellent relationship with us, and demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the requirement. It came as a shock when we were unable to progress them beyond the proposal stage. Unfortunately there is no scope to progress a bidder on anything but the written proposal" – Police Authority

"We liked the messages being delivered by the Sales Team, we had a good relationship and felt we could do business together. But the proposals failed to back this up. It was as if the proposals belonged to a different company. We evaluated each bid consistently and fairly using an objective evaluation process, and on the basis of this evaluation we were unable to take the supplier through to the final two" - Local Authority

This is a surprisingly common refrain among public sector clients, but the message is clear: sales engagement and capture planning is important, but winning public sector business places emphasis on the quality of the written proposal.

When considering the public sector market, it is certainly possible to win a contract with an excellent proposal alone. However, it is virtually impossible to win with a poor proposal – even with excellent early Capture Strategy and related activities. The proposal is one element of the cycle absolutely on the critical path to winning business in the public sector.

About the Author

Phil Pemberton is an independent consultant trading under the name of OnPoint Consulting Limited. He has played a leading role in winning big ticket sales with combined values of over £2.5Billion, and has run major sales campaigns for large scale public sector contracts for over a decade. OnPoint works with bidders to improve the quality of proposals to best meet the needs of the potential buyer and thereby give them the best chance of securing the contract.

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