



SUPPORT FOR  
BIDS, TENDERS & PROPOSALS

FOSTER BRANDT



Tel: 00 44 (0) 2380 762002

Fax: 00 44 (0) 2380 762003

Web: [www.fosterbrandt.co.uk](http://www.fosterbrandt.co.uk)

Email: [info@fosterbrandt.co.uk](mailto:info@fosterbrandt.co.uk)

Address: Foster Brandt Ltd, Arboretum House,  
4 Bassett Green Drive, Southampton, SO16 3QH, UK.

Concepts & design approaches in this document are copyright of Foster Brandt Ltd and should not be used without prior agreement. We welcome licensing inquiries, potentially on a partnership basis.

© Foster Brandt, 2010.



ART OF THE BID is a re-think of bid support by Foster Brandt, a key UK team in bid method & analysis.

The 8 products blend experience helping 1250+ bidding organisations over 12 years with the changing needs of a mature, faster-changing, bid community.

All products emphasise work alongside clients, enhancing capacity. They can be provided individually, as a menu, or as a flexible package.



REVIEW analyses your bid and is now available in 5 options. A mentored model tunes up skills on a live bid.



CHECK UP inspects your wider bid approach. It brings practical advice based on bid trend analysis.



TOOLKIT brings tailored tools & time-savers to streamline bid work, winning time later for better individual bids.



ADVISER supplies a seasoned bid leader / second opinion to guide on all aspects of a key bid, bid set, or bid process re-think.



AUTHOR offers writing specialists to improve bids in 10 specific ways, including enhancing messages to outscore competitors.



ON CALL accesses flexible, can-do, expertise, 24-7, when you need it most. Key bid insurance.



TEMPLATE maps key content ideas, intelligently, across bids. We devised the approach in 2002. We revised our thinking on exemplar text in 2010.



CREW reinforces a bid team, upskills it, or helps make the most of internal or external resources.



OUR BID ANALYSIS  
IS NOW AVAILABLE  
IN 5 OPTIONS.

A MENTORED  
MODEL TUNES UP  
SKILLS ON A  
LIVE BID.

REVIEW offers a bid scorer perspective - with method analysis.

It applies our work building critique into a key bid discipline.

REVIEW shows weakness (& remedy) and flags best practice.

It also flags subtler points which reduce scores. These include poor evidencing, weak argument, padding and spin.

We study detail and strategy. We identify potential unique selling points (USPs) and where and when to use them.

#### **Formats**

We provide 5 REVIEW styles - and also a mentored model.

R1 scans by exception, identifying key weak areas.

R2 reviews content and text style.

R3 reviews against a specification and support kit.

R4 adds scoring (and our wider experience in selection panels for buyers & funders) and strategic analysis.

R5 brings a practice forum - identifying, classifying and sharing solutions for a multiple bid set.

#### **Mentored review**

This is built around 3 review sessions, typically at text outline, detail and refine stages.

The package helps good bidders to move up a level and can avoid newcomers considerable trial & error. Our learning from many bid contexts over the years can accelerate your own.



As competition for contracts & grants intensifies, consistent wins are becoming harder to achieve.

CHECK-UP helps you keep up with evolution in bid quality & technique.

It reduces emphasis on learning by trial & error and the often limited feedback from buyers & funders.

### **Trend analysis**

CHECK-UP benchmarks a bid approach against a wider range of bid types than most bidders will ever see.

We provide an expert, with 10-15 years bid lead experience, to review your approach. S/he draws on our work monitoring bid trends in many sectors over the past decade.

### **Agenda**

We agree analysis points together, then conduct a structured and tailored review.

We typically meet 2-3 staff, scan 3-5 bids, review process, reflect, then report (issue - analysis - recommendation).

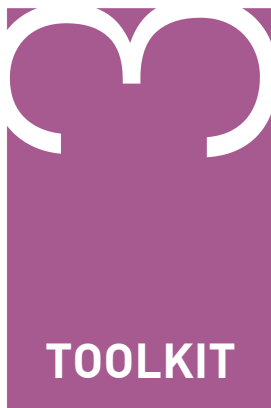
Focal points are typically:

- bid target strategy (incl. review of strengths);
- pre-bid positioning &/or opportunity research approach;
- decision-to-bid criteria;
- in-bid process;
- partnering approach;
- writing style; and
- crewing strategy.



WE INSPECT YOUR  
BID APPROACH...

BRINGING  
PRACTICAL ADVICE  
BASED ON BID  
TREND ANALYSIS.



TOOLKIT BRINGS  
TAILORED TOOLS &  
TIME-SAVERS TO  
STREAMLINE BID  
WORK...

WINNING TIME  
LATER FOR BETTER  
INDIVIDUAL BIDS.

Bid opportunities differ in detail. But most follow a predictable pattern with many recurring needs.

Most larger-scale bidders are therefore moving to well-planned bid intranets with many prepared elements.

### **Making the time**

TOOLKIT helps any bidder access time savings resulting from intelligent bid process standardisation. Good use of bid 'down time' is often the key to repeated wins. This investment facilitates better individual bids, later on.

### **Building the kit**

TOOLKIT has 2 stages: *assess* and *implement*.

- We consider key bid targets and any current tools in use.
- We then work with you to improve your resources.

Smaller bidders should find a small, well-conceived, kit quite sufficient to bring efficiencies.

A larger kit would include:

- buyer/funder requests (policies, insurances, accounts);
- bid planners (Gantt) & proformas (eg for partner inputs);
- organisation/structure charts & method diagrams;
- generic texts (eg quality, team roles, TUPE approach);
- budget & pricing models;
- project tools (risk grid/logs, delivery plans, etc);
- evidence for method/focus (policies, data, etc);
- practice analysis (new approaches in your field);
- text planning, writing and critique tools; and
- key competitor details/SWOTs and counter ideas.



ADVISER seconds an exceptional bid all-rounder to guide your response to a key bid challenge.

ADVISER is aimed at bids of key strategic value, such as:

- private sector: market entry/protection of position;
- public sector: area transformation/multi-agenda scheme; or
- third sector: retaining a key income stream/activity.

However, we also offer such support to smaller / charitable organisations under our 'FB partner' scheme (do enquire).

### Options & structure

ADVISER is a mentored approach via e-mail, telephone & face-to-face sessions. We offer 2 options:

- *standard* mentoring (advice); and
- *active* mentoring (management and/or task sharing).

Both can be delivered against a structure, such as our well-received **BID4** framework (PCOT = process, content, organisation, text) or an in-house/preferred model (APMP, etc).

ADVISER can also provide an interim management solution for a key bid and/or act as a next step after our CHECK UP product.

### Typical tasks

Roles include:

- process & planning (staff & other resources);
- establishing draft standards & critique/review modes;
- opportunities (USPs/partners) & threats (competitor USPs);
- bid concepts & delivery models;
- buyer/funder presentations & communications; and
- appeals.



WE SUPPLY A  
SEASONED BID  
LEADER / SECOND  
OPINION...

TO ADVISE ON ALL  
ASPECTS OF A BID,  
BID SET, OR BID  
PROCESS  
RE-THINK.



AUTHOR OFFERS  
WRITING  
SPECIALISTS TO  
IMPROVE BIDS IN  
10 SPECIFIC WAYS.

THIS INCLUDES  
ENHANCING KEY  
MESSAGES TO  
OUTSCORE  
COMPETITORS.

AUTHOR supplies bid writing technicians with an extensive knowledge base. Foster Brandt has been a key UK team developing, analysing & sharing bid-writing techniques for 12 years.

### Technique reviews

We established these to inform the more progressive style of bid writing training we launched in 2000 (we have now trained 3000+ bidders, at all levels, internationally).

We continue to monitor methods closely across the many bid types we *critique* for bidders and *assess* for buyers & funders.

In 2009-10, we re-defined the bid process into 4 areas for our **BID4** framework. We also identified 10 writing tasks for most bid contexts. AUTHOR supports these, as follows:

### 10 writing tasks

- *Summarise* (condense key points from documents)
- *Evidence* (make best use of data/strategy/practice/argument)
- *Message* (define & place unique selling points, or 'USPs')
- *Conceptualise* (define methods/approaches)
- *Simplify* (make technical/research sections readable)
- *Enhance* (add interest to dry text sections)
- *Localise* (apply a generic solution locally)
- *Visualise* (use non-text presentation tools)
- *Sub-edit* (reduce, reality check, proof-read, meet word counts)
- *Polish* (re-write carefully to maximise scoring, USPs, etc)

AUTHOR can work to our typical 3-stage **Outline-Detail-Refine** text development model - or your own.

In all the above we focus on the essential difference between bids and most other writing: **single read assessment**.





Good bids do go off track at times.

Controlled departure from a plan may, however, be a key factor helping a later win.

The best bidders now anticipate and manage change situations well. They push their systems, even at later stages, to offer something more. But this often has resource implications.

ON CALL meets the fast-changing demands of a priority bid.

It brings flexible interim expertise to fill staff gaps, help get a bid back on track, or go the extra mile - at short notice, 24-7.

### **Resource challenges**

Most agencies find good bid all-rounders hard to re-deploy or source - especially to short timescales.

We specialise in people who integrate rapidly into teams and contribute fully from the start. Most are night owls too.

### **Resource solutions**

ON CALL has 2 parts.

- We discuss all your resource options, internal and external.
- We agree the optimum ON CALL response, against your current skill set. We add via our core team, or carefully screened associate / partner pool.

As the bid starts, we agree a guide allocation of ON CALL days and timescale (eg final week text refining support).

If you finally use less of the allocation, you either pay a cancellation fee - or transfer a credit to forward for future Foster Brandt support, or training.



OUR  
TROUBLESHOOTERS  
BRING FLEXIBLE,  
CAN-DO, EXPERTISE  
TO YOUR TEAM,  
24-7, WHEN YOU  
NEED IT MOST...

KEY BID INSURANCE.



WE DEvised  
 TEMPLATING IN  
 2002 TO MAP KEY  
 CONTENT ACROSS  
 BIDS.

WE REVISED  
 OUR THINKING ON  
 EXEMPLAR BIDS  
 IN 2010.

TEMPLATE reworks our well-received 'bid templating' and 'bid skeleton' methods.

Both have had excellent feedback for many years.

Both apply a bid scorer mindset (assess on key points, more than lower level detail).

TEMPLATE maps recurring content to allow focus on the unique, often higher-scoring, parts of a single response.

### **Dangers of 'cut & paste'**

TEMPLATE counters cut & paste of text from one bid to another. This once common practice is now firmly in decline.

Cut & paste rarely answers questions well, so it usually brings a low score.

It suggests complacency (and is also a bid scorer's pet hate!).

### **Re-thinking exemplars**

TEMPLATE can involve some re-think of the way many create bid text and apply exemplar bids or texts.

However the approach offers significant long-term efficiencies - and is a pillar of our *pre-bid* work (ahead of specific bids).

We also help clients to 'template' within *live bid* settings. This is valuable when an opportunity responds to most aspects of a business strategy. (But this does require additional time investment by clients, beyond the bid targeted).



CREW enhances your bid team in 2 ways:

*i) expanding* - we supply an experienced team player to lead, or support, a bid;

and/or

*ii) improving* - we provide a mentor/critical friend to help assess, and/or raise individual/team skill levels, on a live bid.

CREW can also dovetail with our bid training offers, acting as a skill need analysis for a tailored in-house course.

CREW can also supply intensive effort to replicate and tailor a central bid approach to a new area, or further 'lot'.

This often improves success chances, evidencing capacity & flexibility.

### **Outsourcing?**

In 2009-10, we changed our thinking on bid staffing.

We now rarely advocate 100% bid outsourcing. We believe that today's more competitive environment - and need for greater in-house connection - require joint ownership at all stages.

### **'Crewing'**

We now talk of bid 'crewing'. This implies roles, hierarchy, a course and a destination. It also suggests care with best use of human resources after the decision to bid ('crewing up').

We can advise on internal crew skill sets, best use of consultants and contractors and an appropriate internal / external mix for a key bid setting.



WE CAN LEAD, ADD  
TO, OR RAPIDLY  
UPSKILL YOUR  
CREW FOR SINGLE,  
OR MULTIPLE, BIDS.

WE CAN ALSO HELP  
YOU USE HUMAN  
BID RESOURCES  
MORE EFFECTIVELY.

