

2 Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility, n. A detachable burden easily shifted to the shoulders of God, Fate, Fortune or one's neighbor. (Ambrose Bierce 1881–1911)

What is a Bid Manager, and what does the job entail? Looking at the roles and responsibilities that apply to a Bid Manager, or the person nominated to deliver a bid, provides the answer to this question (see Figure 2.1). The first thing to note is that this will vary from organization to organization and depend to some extent on the background and skill set of the person involved. One of the goals of this chapter is to provide a model for producing a job description for a Bid Manager for organizations that do not already have one.

In order to set about this, the context of the role of the Bid Manager will be defined so that it becomes clear where a Bid Manager fits in, irrespective of the details of the specific bid.

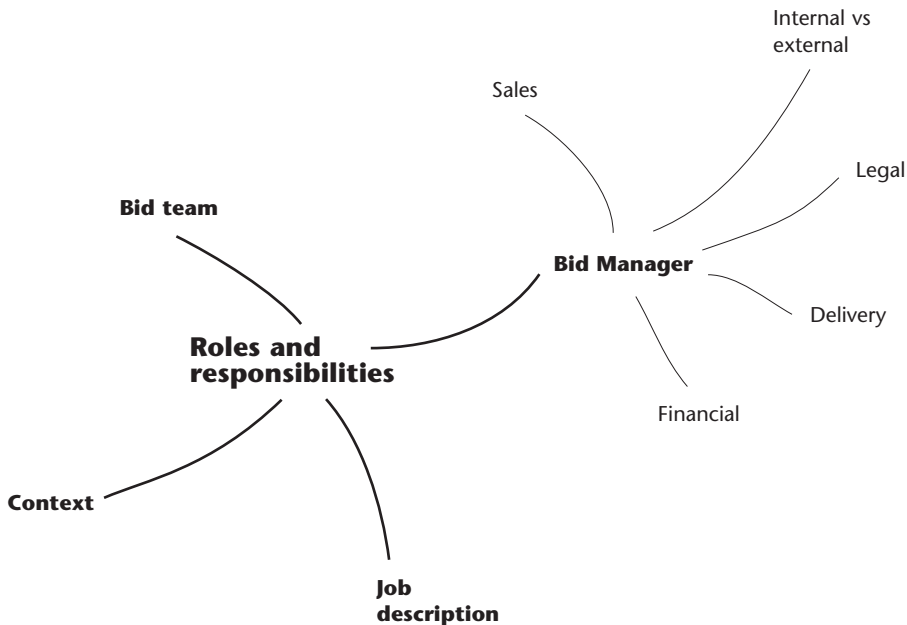


Figure 2.1 Mind Map®: Roles and responsibilities

Why have roles and responsibilities?

There is a very strong case that everyone should have their roles and responsibilities defined, typically in the form of terms of reference. People need to know what they are supposed to be doing, whom they should report to and who reports to them in order to do their job. The importance of this varies from job to job, and the requirement for definition needs to be tempered with the need for flexibility. However, for safety and mission-critical roles it is a high-risk strategy not to have such terms of reference.

Bid Managers, by definition, have a role that is critical to winning new business for an organization, vital to continued existence. However, in many instances such bids are 'special events' that do not happen every day. For example, a utilities company may bid for a multi-million pound per year operation and then run it for 10, or even 25 years, before it needs to bid again. The bidding process is going to be rare when compared with day-to-day operation. So, it is more likely that the day-to-day operation will be better understood than the bidding process. Unsurprisingly, experience shows that it is more likely that the familiar processes will be better documented than the unfamiliar ones. Because of this combination of unfamiliarity and criticality it is vital that the role and responsibilities of the Bid Manager, and indeed the entire bid team, are defined. The Bid Manager will often be someone whose main role is to do something else, or is a specialist from outside the organization. Either way there will be a need to define who is going to do what. Without this sound foundation the Bid Manager will struggle to build an effective bid.

Role of the Bid Manager

This varies from organization to organization. Strong evidence for this can be found in the wide range of salaries – at least a four to one ratio – that are offered to Bid Managers. At one end of the scale the job can be largely an administrative and logistical one, at the other it can be a combination of that of a sales, delivery and project manager. Keeping in mind the definition of a bid, 'an approach to a client in order to gain significant new or repeat business', it is the upper reaches of this range that we are concerned with here. The Bid Manager will be a person who has to deliver the bid and in doing so has to manage multiple resources and deal with complex business relationships in supporting the delivery of a strong, winning, sales case to the client.

Context

In order to define the role of the Bid Manager it is necessary to put it in the context of all the other people and departments that are likely to be involved in a bid. One way is to look at the composition of a generic team that could be found in any organization bidding for business or funding. This team may be specially set up for the bid, or may be brought into being 'virtually' as a result of the individuals being called upon to contribute to the bid documents (Figure 2.2).

A better way of looking at this is to consider with whom in other parts of the organization the Bid Manager will need to interact. Figure 2.3 shows how a bid interfaces with a typical organization.

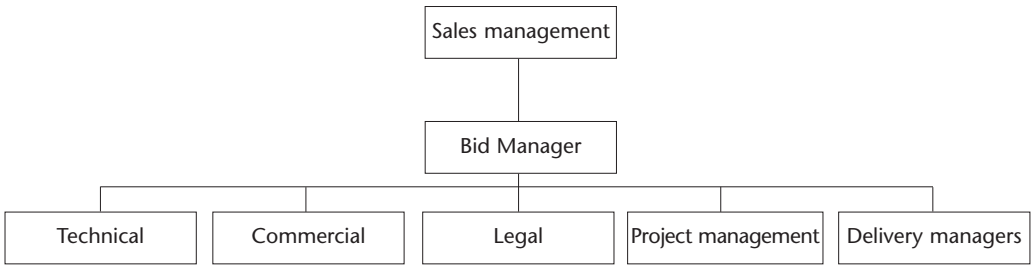


Figure 2.2 *Composition of a generic team*

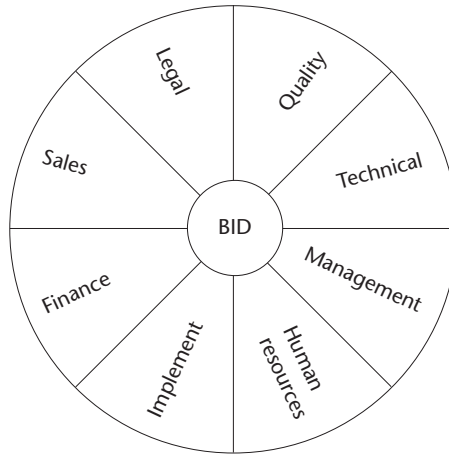


Figure 2.3 *Bid interfaces in a typical organization*

Bids, by their nature, involve staff from across the whole breadth of an organization. The Bid Manager will need to be able to interact with all these specialists and will need to know what their roles and responsibilities are, and what they can and cannot be asked to deliver, if the job is to be done. The next few subsections look at these resources and suggest what to expect. The Bid Manager’s role needs to encompass all these interactions.

BID MANAGERS AND SALES

The overlap between sales and the Bid Manager is one that needs to be very clearly defined from the start if the bid is to run smoothly. It is most important to have the ownership of the sales strategy defined. The author’s view is that this should belong firmly with the sales function, though this is by no means always the case. In some organizations Bid Managers come from the legal and commercial department. These tend to be companies where a significant part of the bid work is related to the legal terms and conditions side of the supply. In this case sales become another specialist supplier to the bid.

The following are deliverables that typically require contributions from sales:

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Description</i>
Sales strategy	The approach to be taken in order to win the business.
Sales themes	The themes that need to be communicated to the client to support the sales strategy.
Pricing	Conversion of cost and financial options into the price needed to support the sales strategy.

BID MANAGERS AND PROJECT MANAGERS

To some extent all Bid Managers are project managers. As stated a bid has many of the characteristics of a project in that it is a fixed chunk of work with a defined beginning and end point, a specific objective and identified deliverables. For this reason some organizations source their Bid Managers from project managers.

Food for thought. The author is aware of at least one company that has a sales strategy of using project managers as Bid Managers, the concept being that if the business is won then the same project manager carries on to project/services that have been sold. This has the benefit of offering the client continuity and allows the project manager to build a working relationship with the client and to 'hit the ground running' once the deal is signed, reducing delays and so forth. This strategy does work, but it is only applicable where there is a strong project element to the sale and where there is a project manager with the relevant skill set available. Only organizations that are in a project-orientated business are likely to have such people to hand. It also means that any lack of sales skills on the part of the project manager will have to be supplied from elsewhere within the organization.

The more common situation is that there is a project manager whose job is to put together the plans for implementing what is to be sold to the client. In this case there will be an overlap between what the Bid Manager has to do and what the project manager has to do. It is critical that the interface between these two people is well defined. In particular this must be very clear where client deliverables are concerned. For example, the project risk register (as opposed to the bid risk register, see Chapter 4) would normally belong to the project manager. However, it would need to be clearly defined who covered risks coming from non-project elements of the supply to the client. Typically the project manager would be responsible for delivering the project plan for implementing the client's requirements, any documentation on methods and standards that relate to project management, risk plans and any assumptions and constraints that would apply. The project manager would also be a source of cost information.

The following are deliverables that typically require contributions from project managers:

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Description</i>
Project plan	Project plan to the level of detail required by the client. In addition a sufficiently detailed internal plan to allow project costs to be estimated as reliably as possible. Estimate of accuracy of any such estimates. Any plans must be in line with any quality standards for project management such as PRINCE 2 (either for the client, supplier or both).
Risk plan	Risk management documentation for the products and services to be supplied to the client, highlight any which also imply risk for the bid.

Note. Who owns the solution? Where there is a bespoke set of products and services to be supplied there needs to be one person who understands how it all fits together. This may be the project manager, it may be the Bid Manager if appropriately skilled. In some companies there is a role called solutions architect or it may be a technical design authority. Whatever the job title, the key point is that someone has to do it, and the Bid Manager needs to know who it is.

BID MANAGERS AND TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS

These specialists will be industry specific. For example in the information technology sector they might include system and database designers, networking specialists, capacity planners and so forth. In the water industry it might include civil engineers, water-processing specialists, hydraulic engineers, architects and the like. These people all have something in common – they are usually specialists in what they do, not in selling it to the client. They will contribute to the design of whatever is to be delivered to the client. The Bid Manager will need to support them in this and make sure they have all the information they need to contribute positively to the bid. Another factor they may have in common is having ‘fee-paying’ customers to service. In this case their priority will tend to be the fee payers, not the sales prospect. It is important to be sensitive to this and to make sure a reasonable compromise can be made.

The following are deliverables that typically require contributions from technical specialists:

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Description</i>
Design	Overall technical design of what will be proposed to the client to a level of detail that allows it to be costed and to be evaluated by delivery staff as a viable solution.
Performance	Specifications relating to the performance, capacity, expandability and so forth for the solution proposed for the client.
Equipment requirements	Specifications (in part to support costing) for equipment and plant to be supplied as part of the solution. Any environmental requirements to allow building/premises to be identified.
Development requirements:	
Technical constraints	Any constraints that apply to the solution, particularly any that impact the client directly.
Risk	Identification of any areas of risk that arise from the proposed design; for example, use of leading-edge, untried technology.

BID MANAGERS AND IMPLEMENTERS

The Bid Manager will need to interact with those who are going to end up delivering the products and/or services to the client. This may be to obtain sign-off/approval to the effect that what is being bid can be delivered, or it may be to have them contribute to the bid itself. These people differ from the technical specialists in that they are in the operational, rather than the design side of the business. They may, or may not, have the skills needed to define the solution but they will know what has to be put in place in order to make it work. Again they will have other calls on their time; in fact they are quite likely to have a full-time

job with an existing customer so their time will be the hardest to gain. However, experience shows that their input will be highly valued by the client. Demonstrating a clear understanding of what is needed to make the client's business run smoothly will make a very positive impression.

The following are deliverables that typically require contributions from implementers:

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Description</i>
Operational solution	Contribution to any operational design, including logistical, staffing, reporting, service levels and other issues.
Cost drivers	Staff and premises required to run the solution after delivery.
Risk	Areas where there is perceived operational risk.

BID MANAGERS AND FINANCE

Here the relationship is usually straightforward. The commercial specialists will normally have both a contributory role and a reviewing role in the production and pricing of the bid.

Finance will be a source of information for any cost modelling and will normally be involved in any financing deals, currency deals, leasing, discounts, margins and so on.

The following are deliverables that typically require contributions from finance:

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Description</i>
Payment schedules	Comments and suggestions relating to client proposed schedules for payment, costs associated with them, alternative suggestions for funding and related issues.
Leasing options	Finance deals available to underwrite business or make it easier for the client to afford, more favourable cash flow and so forth.
Cash flow forecasts	Financial modelling of how the business will run once the client has given the go ahead.
Cost information	Raw cost information such as daily rates for staff, cost of office space and services, purchasing equipment and so on.
Credit information	Is client creditworthy, is any subcontractor creditworthy?
Financial reports	Annual report information such as trading profit/loss.

Note. In some organizations the finance and legal departments have a combined function and there may be 'commercial' specialists who will work with a bid team providing both types of advice.

BID MANAGERS AND LEGAL

This situation is similar to Bid Managers' interaction with finance. The legal experts will be involved in reviewing and drawing up terms and conditions. In some cases there will be a very significant input from and interaction with, the legal department. This is particularly true of government business where the contract can be as big as the proposal itself, with literally dozens of schedules to the main contract.

The following are deliverables that typically require contributions from legal:

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Description</i>
Contract and schedules	Analysis of client terms and conditions comments on what is acceptable, not acceptable. Offering advice on drafting supplier terms and conditions, contracts for subcontractors and all other legally binding relationships within the sphere of the bid and ultimate supply to client.
Risk	Any risks to the bid (for example, time it will take to review the contract may be too long) or the client offering from a contractual point of view.

Key point. Changes to terms and conditions can have significant impact on the risk involved in the business. It is important to have reliable legal opinion, do not be tempted to rely on an amateur view. For example, there is a significant difference between best endeavours and reasonable endeavours. If you do not know, consult an expert, this is not a legal textbook.

BID MANAGERS AND OTHER INTERNAL DEPARTMENTS

In addition to legal and finance there will inevitably be a number of other internal departments to be satisfied with, and contribute to a bid. Most commonly they will include human resources and quality assurance,

The following are deliverables that typically require contributions from other internal resources:

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Description</i>
Employment policies	Training.
Health and safety	Evidence of compliance with regulations.
Personnel information	Numbers of staff employed, representation of ethnic minorities and disabled in line with, or better than, any government regulations. Contribution to local charities, investment in local community and so on.
Quality policy	Documentation and certificates relating to any formal accreditation (for example ISO9001). Copies of quality policies and procedures as required.
Quality standards	As above, documentation relating to standards. Also information on compliance with third party standards, what they mean, cost of compliance and so on.

BID MANAGERS AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT

If a bid is large enough to merit a Bid Manager, there is a very good chance that it will need support and approval from senior management. For example, where presentations have to be made at a senior level within the client organization, it shows commitment if equally senior staff are available from the would-be supplier. The other side of the coin is that there is a very good chance that the level of risk and the absolute value of the bid will be such that senior management need to be involved in approving it for submission.

The following are deliverables that typically require contributions from senior management:

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Description</i>
Bid approval	Provide necessary sign-off so that bid can be delivered to client.
Support	Contributing to bid in terms of being available for presentations to show commitment, writing covering letters supporting bid, promoting visibility of company at high levels.

Responsibilities of a Bid Manager

The key responsibility of the Bid Manager is to make sure that the bid gets in, complete and on time. As has been seen from the context of the role it is clear that they will need to perform a wide range of functions involving a wide range of skills. These fall naturally into a number of areas: logistical and administration; management; communication; sales and quality.

These areas may be used as a checklist (see below) – simply tick the items that apply. This will aid human resources/personnel in any required recruitment, training definitions and so forth.

<i>Function</i>	<i>Roles</i>	<i>Required?</i>
Logistical	Office facilities Physical production	
Administration	Maintains bid file (definition of elsewhere but includes, e.g., letters, documents from client, etc.) Maintain bid brief Maintain other documentation as required Support meetings as needed Arrange distribution of documentation/information Delivery of client documents Risk register Email and database access	
Management	Planning Production of resource plan for bid Risk management Resource identification Reporting on issues/progress	
Communication	Principal point of contact for customer (see also sales) Reporting Bid themes/sales themes Meetings Editorial	
Sales	Principal point of contact for customer Input to qualification process Supporting sales Collates costs/budgets	
Quality	Application of organization standards Manages sign-off/approvals to bid	

As mentioned earlier, there may be additional responsibilities such as owning the overall solution (if the Bid Manager has the appropriate skill set), fulfilling the project management role or having a sales function. These need to be added to the above if they apply, but they have not been included as they are additional to 'pure' bid management; not only that – the list would never end!

Note. Associated with these responsibilities will be a list of deliverables that the Bid Manager is responsible for. In greater detail these will form part of the bid plan, but should be considered when defining the role. If there are no deliverables that can be defined for a role it is worth asking if the role is needed.

The reader will find more detail about what these tasks and responsibilities typically involve in the remainder of Part 1.

Example job description

What follows is a possible job description for a Bid Manager in a service or product supply industry organization. It is by no means definitive and will vary according to company needs and policy. For example, the Bid Manager may well report to finance or legal instead of to the sales organization, in which case the skill set might be quite different, perhaps with a strong emphasis on cost modelling and the prime point of contact might be sales instead of the Bid Manager. The important thing is that the job description states what the Bid Manager will do and what skills are needed to do the job. (The skills listed here are explained in greater detail in Part 3, and are included for completeness only. Similarly the functions and contents of documents/files are expanded further in Part 1; for example what should go in a bid brief and a bid file are discussed in some detail in Chapter 3.)

Job Title – Bid Manager for XY&Z Bid

Reporting to Sales Account Manager for XY&Z

Responsibilities:

- Bid planning
- Produce and maintain a bid brief
- Identify resource requirements
- Act as single point of contact for client (XY&Z)
- Maintain bid file
- Drive approvals process
- Edit contributions to bid
- Manage bid production
- Collate and maintain risk registers
- Manage risk process in accordance with company standards
- Monitor and report bid and production costs
- Produce post bid review and hand over documentation

Mandatory skills:

Project management, scheduling, planning and reporting

Risk management
Negotiation
Proposal writing

Desirable skills:
Presentations
Industry knowledge

The job description can usefully be further expanded to exclude what the Bid Manager is not to do. For example, ownership of the sales strategy might be specified as being entirely the responsibility of the sales manager and nothing to do with the Bid Manager. This is helpful in organizations where different departments have different expectations of a particular role. Of course, it is necessary to be selective when recording negative information as the list can get rather long and unhelpful. Bid Managers are not responsible for piloting the corporate jet, however much they would like to!

Summary

Having a definition of what the Bid Manager is to do is the first step towards being able to do the job effectively. A necessary second step is to have this agreed with all those with whom the Bid Manager will have to interact. These people will come from a wide range of specializations and disciplines, and will have different constraints and motivations. The Bid Manager's overall role is to get them to work together effectively.

Key point. Job descriptions and terms of reference only work where all team members, and those they interact with, have matching requirements. In isolation they give responsibility without power.

Internal vs external Bid Managers

The use of freelance Bid Managers is very much an organization-dependent issue. In some companies the commercially sensitive information that a Bid Manager has access to makes the use of a freelance unacceptable. In other companies there is no problem. The author must confess to a bias at this point, for the last fifteen years all the bids I have managed have been on a freelance basis. The case for the defence is that you have no more security with a permanent person; sales staff flit from company to company all the time and have much closer contacts with the customer. Furthermore, freelance Bid Managers can bring perspectives of how other companies work, allowing a better chance of achieving best practice.

The principal downside from using freelance staff is the time it takes them to get used to the way the organization operates. A significant part of the job of a Bid Manager requires knowledge of who to talk to and who does what. For example, the Bid Manager needs to know what the approval process is for getting the bid released to the customer. For this reason many organizations that do use freelance staff tend to have a pool of Bid Managers that they call on, as they need them. This builds a long-term relationship based upon repeat

business, mutual trust and familiarity with the supplier company. Another approach is to employ a freelance Bid Manager to cover a series of bids, the learning curve being overcome during the first bid. The author has positive experience of both these approaches. However, if, for example, the sales department is set against freelance staff, then it is irrelevant how good they are, they will not be able to do the job.

War Story. The author has been in the situation where he was not supposed to know anything about pricing, which made managing the bid more difficult. This was largely self-defeating as in the end he did get to see 95 per cent of the pricing anyway. Given that pricing is always transitory and that a freelance would soon cease trading if found passing on significant confidences, it is hard to see why this is a problem.

Another point often made by sales staff with relation to freelance Bid Managers concerns customer perception. The Bid Manager will often act as the main point of contact for the client and sales may worry that the client may be unhappy that this person is privy to confidential information. In addition, they may perceive a lack of continuity when the freelance resource goes at the end of the bid. The counter-argument for the first point is that freelance staff are no more likely to take away confidential information than permanent staff. The second point comes under the heading of peaks and troughs; even organizations that have a steady flow of bids will have peaks and troughs that they cannot cope with internally.

Ultimately the decision on the use of freelance staff in this role is a matter for personal preference, rather than logic. If there is a strong feeling against the use of freelance staff, then the job will be impossible.

CASE STUDY

SITUATION

Karen, a freelance Bid Manager, was brought in by a multinational company to manage a bid to supply passenger display systems to an organization that owned and operated a number of international terminals. This bid involved several different operating companies within the parent organization including subsidiaries in different countries. Specifically these included display manufacture, computer supply, communications equipment, commissioning and installation. In addition input was required from quality, human resources and finance departments, and a partly owned computer software house. A further complication was that no single sales authority 'owned' the business and the responsibility for delivering a winning sales case. Although very experienced, Karen was

new to this particular organization. However, her track record of managing successful bids in the same marketplace made her a sensible choice for an organization which had no permanent resource available to manage the bid.

When she asked if there were any terms of reference defining her role, and that of the people she would need to work with and get information from she was told: 'We don't really need that sort of formality here, we all know pretty much what we do already. I can tell you who to talk to if that helps at all, and I'll give you a copy of the invitation to tender (ITT) and the covering letter that went with it. Harold Bishop is the sales person for the account, he should be able to fill in some gaps.' So, Karen found herself in the situation where, other than knowing she had a bid to produce, and by when as defined in

the ITT, she really did not know the boundaries of her role. Worse, she had no accurate idea what were the responsibilities of the people she would need to get information from – neither did they!

PROBLEM

So, not only did the Bid Manager not have a clearly defined role, other staff essential to the delivery of the bid did not have one either. Consequently when Karen needed to obtain critical data she had to keep going round different managers in different departments to find out who had the relevant information. This was further complicated by the inevitable different goals of each department and subsidiary organization.

For example, she needed a write-up of how the installation division would go about getting the equipment delivered and commissioned so as to provide a smooth switch over from the client's existing systems to the new equipment. All she got in reply was a standard quotation saying that, 'All out of working hours work is subject to special quotation'. The manager of the installations group was measured on installing standard displays as quickly and as cheaply as possible. Consequently, this bespoke work was not in her interest. Unfortunately, there were no terms of reference that said she had to support bids that spanned the whole of the company's operations. This meant that Karen needed to lobby for higher management support from within the part of the company she worked for and get them to negotiate with the installations management to agree to getting the non-standard work done. Not only did this take time, which was not to spare, it also meant that it took up the time of people who were also needed to provide their own input to the bid. This meant that they were late too.

This problem was repeated across the board, with the result that the whole bid got rushed out the door at the last moment without any time to review if the

organization was putting forward its best case or best price. Indeed, they did not even know if it was business that they should be bidding for.

OUTCOME

The bid was lost to a competitor that had well-defined areas of responsibility that enabled their Bid Manager to gather information more easily. Consequently, there was more time to look at the overall sales position, trade off profit in one department against breakeven business in another to come up with both a better price and a more attractive overall solution. The Bid Manager cannot make the sales-winning case or the solution but can bring the information together so that those responsible can. In this case the lack of defined roles made it almost impossible for Karen to do much more than a fire-fighting exercise.

LESSON LEARNT

On arrival Karen asked her manager, the finance director of the display manufacturing subsidiary, to provide her with terms of reference for herself and also details of the roles and responsibilities of the key managers and staff she would need to marshal to pull the bid together. She did not get this, but accepted the statement that they were 'not needed' at face value. As a minimum she could have written some herself and got them agreed, so covering her own position. However, she did not do this, and had both a frustrating and an unsuccessful time.

Karen strengthened her resolve to absolutely insist upon formal terms of reference defining not only what she had to do but also what contributing departments and managers had to deliver to allow her to do it. Fortunately, the company also recognized that it had a real problem and set about developing a process to support such integrated bids. Karen worked for them again on another bid with a much more satisfactory outcome.

Checklist

Item	Description	Completed?
Terms of reference and/or job description	Documentation of what the Bid Manager has the responsibility for, levels of authority, reporting requirements and so on.	
Interfaces	Definition of who the Bid Manager needs to interact with and what deliverables can be expected (in general terms).	
Deliverables	Is there a clear list of deliverable products that the Bid Manager is responsible for?	
Communication	Has this information been circulated to those who need to know?	
Conflicts	Have conflicts of interest between different departments/suppliers been defined for future resolution?	
Overlap	Where there is an overlap of responsibilities has the 'ownership' been agreed?	