

Case study: The Tender Touch

Attention to detail is everything when it comes to successful tender bid production

When the prize at the end of a tender process is a contract worth tens of millions of pounds, bidders who expect to win leave absolutely nothing to chance.

The creation of a bid document for any large project requires a dedicated bid team and the involvement of dozens of people along the way. A winning tender will be the result of many hours (and sleepless nights) of detailed writing, design and revision which usually goes right up to the wire.

When it comes to presentation of the bid document itself, 'look and feel' is a key factor that will help the bidder stand out from the crowd and contribute towards the bid's success.

When a new UK rail franchise was recently put out to tender, the bidders included an international consortium based in Denmark. Recognising the need for the best possible presentation, the consortium engaged a firm of production consultants and an internationally renowned design agency to advise them.

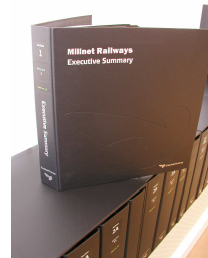
Millnet was one of three specialist print firms approached by the production consultant. Despite being more expensive than the two other potential suppliers, Millnet was selected because, in his words, "We were highly impressed with the examples of previous successful bid documentation that Millnet had produced. Millnet were streets ahead in awareness of the potential pitfalls and their contingency planning was second to none."

Millnet's brief was to produce 10 sets of the forty volume bid proposal in both paper and electronic format. All documentation had to be produced and distributed within a narrow production window of four days, which included a weekend.

Millnet was ready to receive the production-ready files on Thursday evening and Millnet

operational staff were on 24/7 standby to ensure that a 10 a.m. Tuesday deadline would be met. A small team representing the bidder, the production consultants and the design agency were resident in Millnet's offices over the weekend to oversee the assembly process.

As things turned out, the final documents - a mixture of Excel spreadsheets, graphs & images - were not signed off until 10 o'clock on the Saturday night, cutting available production time by nearly 50%. What's more, the finished page count was 40% higher than originally anticipated.



Despite these last minute challenges, Millnet was able to meet all deadlines, with room to spare. More than 120,000 pages were digitally printed, quality reviewed and, because of the complex nature of the document, assembled by hand. The client was "blown away" by the attention to detail, as well as the stamina of all of the staff involved in the process.

Reflecting on the process, the Director of Bid Management commented, "It has been an extraordinary experience working with Millnet. This was a very professional print and assembly of our bid and my special thanks to Tracey Clark, who headed up the Millnet team, for her professionalism and complete dedication to the assignment."