

Building a Business Development Team



The role of business development

A successful client relationship management strategy relies on retaining existing and securing new clients. The level of repeat business varies, but a key factor lies in understanding clients' changing needs and priorities to ensure that the optimum level of repeat work is secured.

As existing clients' workload reduces, business development and marketing executives' primary role is to manage this process, while identifying and developing new clients, sectors and opportunities. This strategy should form a key business objective for any company working in the construction industry.

A successful business development strategy depends on having the right managers in the front line as part of an integrated strategy for the implementation of a company's business plans.

All too often business development is managed to meet short-term objectives and not as a core part of the company's business strategy.

However, the industry works in an environment where most suppliers work on lead-in periods of at least 6 months, based on the design and planning system. This requires companies to plan ahead to meet business objectives. Managers need to understand the business needs and build up a pipeline of future opportunities and projects to achieve the necessary workload. This includes an understanding of the workload mix on new build / refurbishment, public / private and sector focus. This pipeline of work needs to be developed and cannot be turned on (or off) at a moment's notice. The stronger the pipeline of work, the greater the likelihood of the company working to an optimum workload, which in turn leads to improved operational and financial performance.



Business development organisation

A successful business development team needs a range of different skills and experience. This will include sales, marketing support and bid management. The strategy for recruitment and personal development should be a central part of the process of business planning.

Business development and marketing executives are by instinct well motivated and enjoy working under pressure to achieve business targets.

Companies need clear targets that will allow their business development team to promote a positive and clear message to clients and consultants who influence the procurement process.

However, the industry does not have a strong track record in career planning for business development and marketing executives. Too often career development is by accident rather than a clear strategy of progression through the ranks to senior business development positions.

There is a shortage of business development and marketing managers in the UK construction industry.



Planning business development resources

An optimum balance of staff skills and experience should be planned and a strategy be put in place that allows for career progression within the team and for the development of existing staff through training and skills development. This also ensures maximum retention of existing staff.

Generally it takes 8-12 weeks to identify, interview and recruit a suitable candidate for a business development position. In addition notice periods vary from 1-3 months and although this is usually reduced through negotiation, it cannot be guaranteed. This means that from the identification of a need for new business development and marketing staff through to new orders coming through the door can often take up to 12 months to fully achieve.

Planning of the recruitment process is therefore essential. The range of business skills needed should be identified and matched to existing resources.

If a manager is due to leave the company, a structured handover should be planned well in advance, which may include the recruitment of a replacement.

BD Resources focuses on the skills required for business development and marketing in the industry. We maintain a substantial database of business development and marketing managers in the industry. This database comprises managers at all levels from junior marketing managers to business development directors of large companies. This, however, is only part of the requirements. BD Resources is able to identify, interview and secure staff on a highly efficient process to minimise the time taken to employ staff.

Next steps: If you would like to discuss this further, contact Mark Hegan on 0207 692 7541 or email m.hegan@bdResources.co.uk . **Please quote Ref: CMCBD**
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