

BidBenchSolo Users' Guide

Issue 3





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Welcome to BidBenchSolo

High quality proposals may not always help you to win more business, but poor quality proposals will certainly help you to lose more.

BidBenchSolo was developed to meet the needs of busy Sales and Bid Managers who needed immediate, quick and clear guidance on how to improve the quality of their sales proposals

BidBenchSolo is a web based tool that provides access to a library of proposal quality attributes as viewed from the customer's not the seller's perspective. These attributes are largely intuitive, but they are often neglected by sellers. Based on the answers to 21 multiple choice questions, BidBenchSolo creates a report which contains recommendations to improve the quality of your proposal.

BidBenchSolo will allow you to:-

- Establish a set of improvement recommendations on your proposal in around 60 minutes; the tool guides you through 21 multiple choice questions and emails you with an automatically generated improvement report based on your responses
- Find out how you compare with others based on data that is dynamically updated every time someone uses the tool – no more out of date comparisons

The BidBenchSolo value proposition

By using BidBenchSolo you will focus your limited time and resources on improving those aspects of a proposal which have been consistently proven in thousands of proposal writing workshops across the UK, Europe, the US and Asia to improve the evaluation scores on proposals by an average of 40%. In addition, you will reduce the time and costs involved in holding unfocused proposal reviews and in implementing review actions which do nothing to improve your win probability.

Before starting

Be sure to have your customer's request and your proposal to hand and be familiar with them; please read our Terms & Conditions and continue only if you accept them. Make sure you have an internet connection and set aside about 60 minutes.

It will take about 60 minutes to complete the assessment, less if you are very familiar with the proposal

As a security measure, the assessment will time-out if you spend more than 60 minutes on any one question. If this happens, simply log back in and you will be taken back to the point where you left off.

Access to BidBenchSolo is via the web

BidBenchSolo is accessible worldwide via:-

www.bidbenchsolo.co.uk or www.bidbenchsolo.com

Secure payment via RBS WorldPay is enabled in most, but not all countries. If you are not able to pay via RBS WorldPay, please email bidbenchsolo@shipleyswins.co.uk to find an alternative method.


The Welcome Screen describes how BidBenchSolo may help to prevent the deal being lost on the proposal



The screenshot shows the BidBenchSolo website's welcome screen. At the top, the BidBenchSolo logo is displayed. Below it, the main heading reads "DON'T LOSE THE DEAL ON THE PROPOSAL - ONLINE PROPOSAL BENCHMARKING USING BidBenchSolo". The page is divided into several sections: "Quality is what the customer says it is, not what the seller wants it to be", "Establish a set of improvement actions", "Find out how you compare with others instantly", and "Our value proposition". A "Before starting" section lists three steps: 1. Have your proposal and the customer's request to hand; be familiar with them. 2. Set aside around 60 minutes, find a quiet space. 3. Read/Print the PDF [User Guide](#). A price of "£60 per proposal including VAT (where applicable)" is shown. At the bottom right, there is a prominent green button with a white arrow that says "Click Here To Improve Your Proposal". The footer includes "All Images (C) Shipleys Limited 2007", "Technical Help", "Terms & Conditions", and "Contact Us".

Welcome Screen. *This screen provides an overview of BidBenchSolo, a sample report and this Users' Guide.*

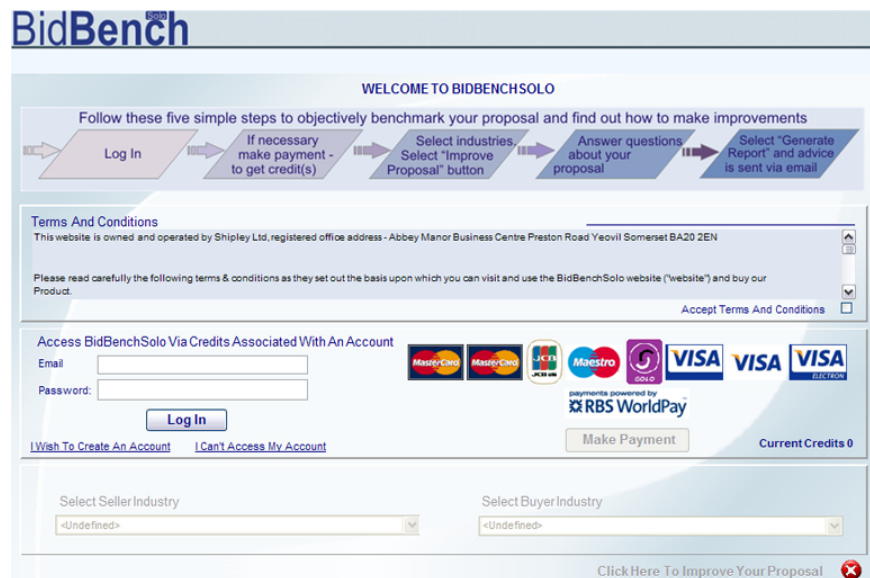
To progress to the login page, select the button in the bottom right-hand corner of the home page:-

Click Here To Improve Your Proposal 

How to log in

Click on the “Click Here To Improve Your Proposal” link and the BidBenchSolo log in screen will open:-

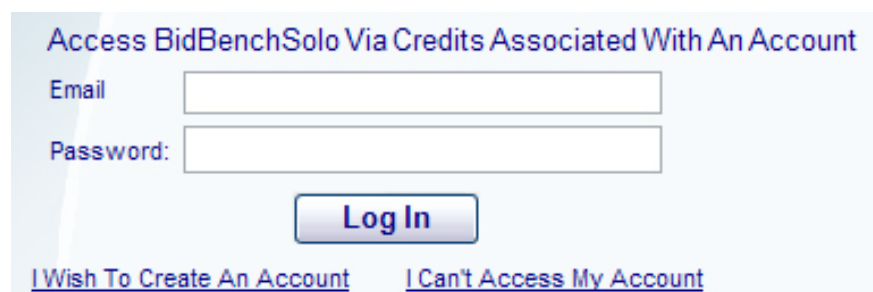
Access to BidBenchSolo is via credits associated with an account



Log in Screen. *This screen provides access to your existing BidBenchSolo account or allows you to open a new account.*

If you know your login email address and password

If this is the case, accept our Terms & Conditions, enter your email address and password into the Email and Password boxes and then press the “Log In” button. You will then be able to start the assessment.



Log in via Email and Password. *You can log in with a known email address and password, create a new account, or obtain help in accessing your account.*

If you wish to create a new account

If you do not already have an account and wish to create one, select the “I Wish To Create An Account” option.

Enter your email address and chosen password in the boxes provided

Please also enter the word verification characters, then click the “Create My Account” button

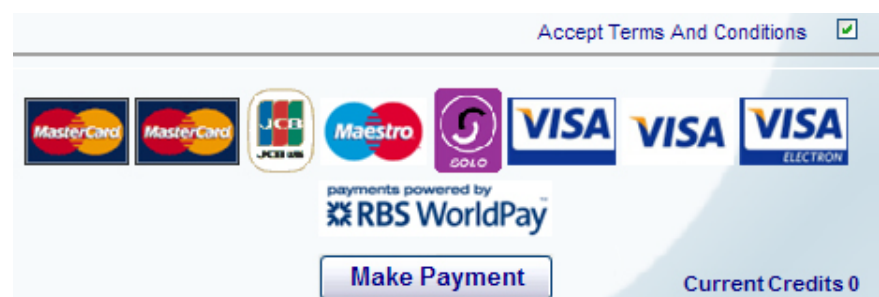


Password Selection. Passwords must match and you must enter the case sensitive code.

You will then receive an account validation email to the email address that you provided. When you receive this, complete the validation process.

Please note, that some email settings may place this email into your “junk” folder – you can stop this happening again by marking the sender as “safe”.

When you have validated your email address, you will be taken back to the Login screen

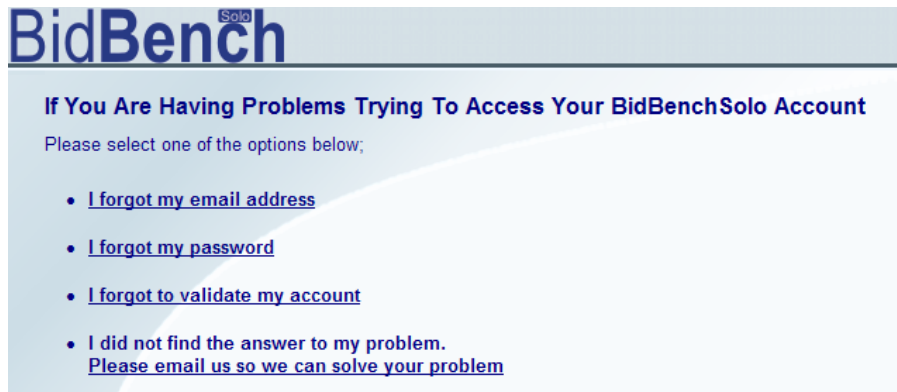


Terms & Conditions Acceptance. You must accept our Terms and Conditions in order to proceed to making your payment.

If you are having problems accessing your account

If you already have an account but have forgotten how to access it, select the “I Can’t Access My Account Option”.

Help is available if you have forgotten your email address or password, or have not validated your account



BidBench^{Solo}

If You Are Having Problems Trying To Access Your BidBenchSolo Account

Please select one of the options below;

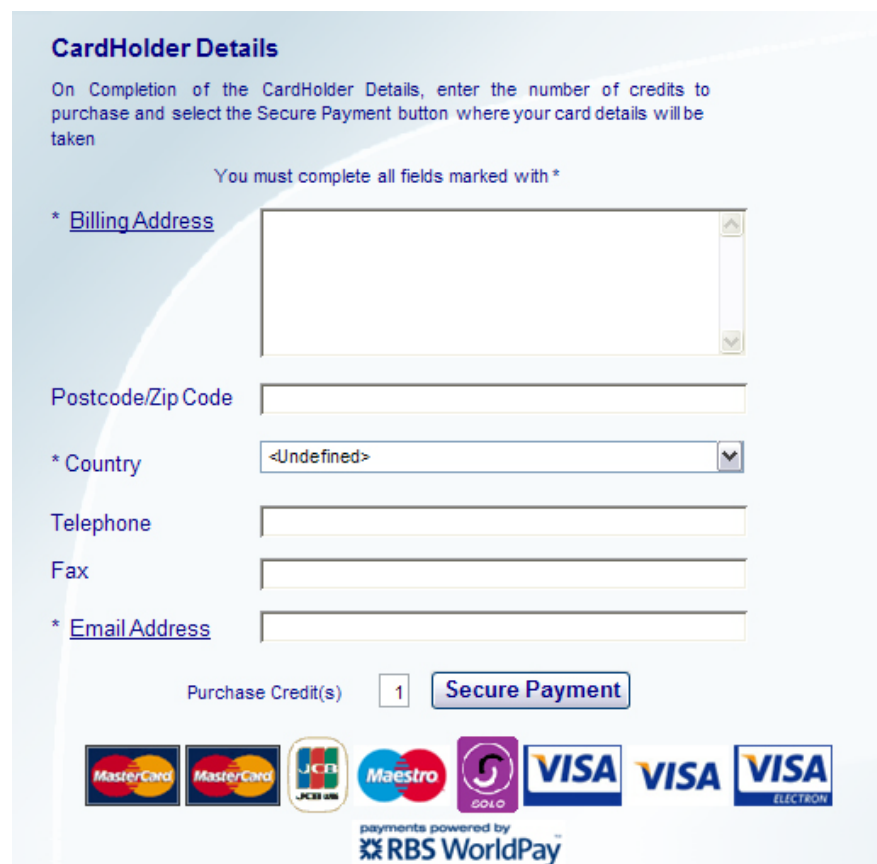
- [I forgot my email address](#)
- [I forgot my password](#)
- [I forgot to validate my account](#)
- [I did not find the answer to my problem. Please email us so we can solve your problem](#)

Problem Resolution. *Common queries can be answered via help options.*

Secure payment is via RBS WorldPay

Please then pay £60 (incl. VAT in the UK) using any major credit or debit card using the security of RBS WorldPay.

Enter your billing address and country; your email address will have already appeared and will not need to be re-entered



CardHolder Details

On Completion of the CardHolder Details, enter the number of credits to purchase and select the Secure Payment button where your card details will be taken

You must complete all fields marked with *

* [Billing Address](#)

Postcode/Zip Code









* Country


Telephone

Fax

* [Email Address](#)

Purchase Credit(s)

payments powered by 

Credit Purchase. *You may purchase multiple credits.*

Secure payment via RBS WorldPay

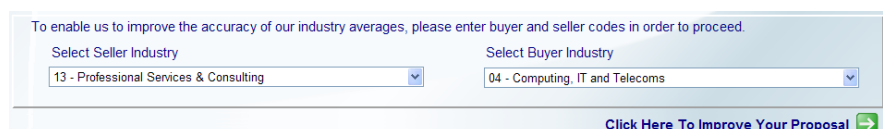


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Secure Payment. *When you select the “Secure Payment” button you will be transferred to the RBS WorldPay site to enter your credit card details.*

How to select your Standard Industry Codes (SICs)

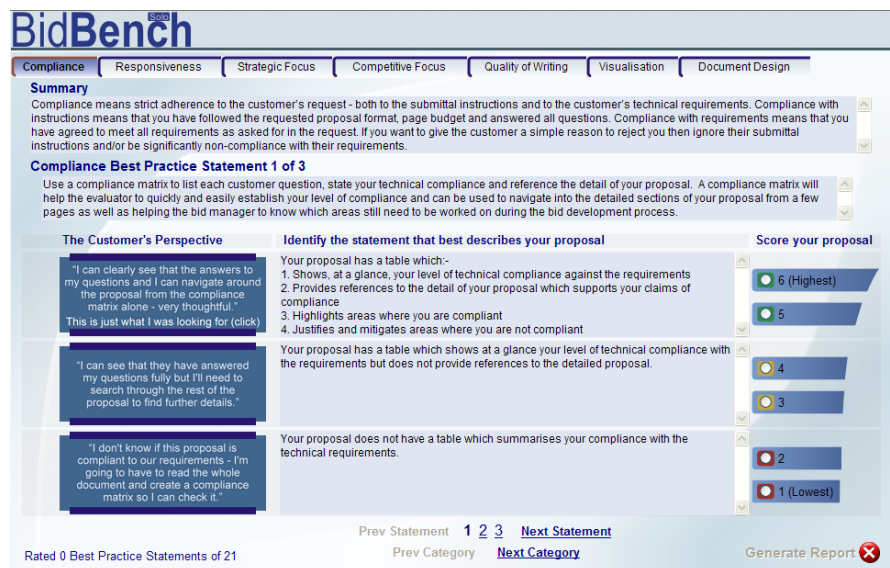
So that we can maintain sector to sector benchmark information, you must select your (“Seller”) industry code and your customer’s (“Buyer”) industry code before proceeding - then click on the “Click Here To Improve Your Proposal” link, and the main BidBenchSolo data entry screen will open.



Sector Benchmarking. *If there are at least 10 assessments in the database with the same buyer/seller SIC pairs as you, then your report will show specifically how you compare to these pairs. If there are less than 10 assessments, then your proposal will be compared to the whole (all SIC) database.*

Assessment is via multiple choice selections

There are 21 multiple choice questions, divided equally between 7 proposal quality categories



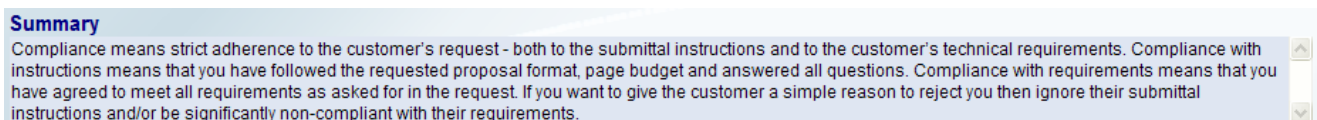
The screenshot shows the BidBench assessment interface. At the top, there are seven tabs: Compliance, Responsiveness, Strategic Focus, Competitive Focus, Quality of Writing, Visualisation, and Document Design. The 'Compliance' tab is selected. Below the tabs, there is a 'Summary' section with a paragraph of text. This is followed by a 'Compliance Best Practice Statement 1 of 3' section with another paragraph. The main assessment area is titled 'The Customer's Perspective' and contains three statements. The first statement is highlighted in blue and reads: "I can clearly see that the answers to my questions and I can navigate around the proposal from the compliance matrix alone - very thoughtful." Below this statement is a radio button and the text "This is just what I was looking for (click)". The second statement reads: "I can see that they have answered my questions fully but I'll need to search through the rest of the proposal to find further details." The third statement reads: "I don't know if this proposal is compliant to our requirements - I'm going to have to read the whole document and create a compliance matrix so I can check it." To the right of these statements is a 'Score your proposal' section with a vertical scale from 1 (Lowest) to 6 (highest). The scale has radio buttons next to each number, and the number 6 is currently selected. At the bottom of the interface, there are navigation links: 'Prev Statement 1 2 3 Next Statement', 'Prev Category Next Category', and a 'Generate Report' button with a red 'X' icon.

The Assessment Screen Contains Seven Tabs. *Compliance, Responsiveness, Strategic Focus, Competitive Focus, Quality of Writing, Visualisation and Document Design represent the seven quality categories against which you will now assess your proposal.*

You can navigate between tabs at any time by clicking on each tab and answer questions in any order. If you change your mind, you can go back using the Previous Statement or Previous Category links, or just select the tab and modify your selection at any time.

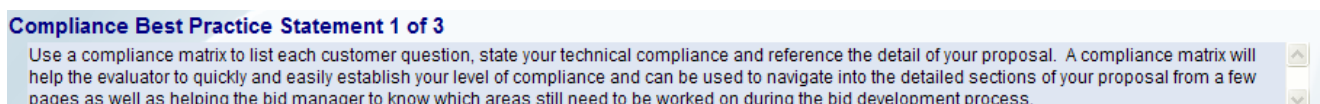
Each tab contains:-

- A summary statement – this explains the meaning of the quality attribute, like this:-



The screenshot shows the 'Summary' section of the BidBench assessment interface. It contains a paragraph of text: "Compliance means strict adherence to the customer's request - both to the submittal instructions and to the customer's technical requirements. Compliance with instructions means that you have followed the requested proposal format, page budget and answered all questions. Compliance with requirements means that you have agreed to meet all requirements as asked for in the request. If you want to give the customer a simple reason to reject you then ignore their submittal instructions and/or be significantly non-compliant with their requirements." The text is enclosed in a light blue box with scrollbars on the right side.

- Three best practice statements, like this:-



The screenshot shows a 'Compliance Best Practice Statement 1 of 3' in the BidBench assessment interface. It contains a paragraph of text: "Use a compliance matrix to list each customer question, state your technical compliance and reference the detail of your proposal. A compliance matrix will help the evaluator to quickly and easily establish your level of compliance and can be used to navigate into the detailed sections of your proposal from a few pages as well as helping the bid manager to know which areas still need to be worked on during the bid development process." The text is enclosed in a light blue box with scrollbars on the right side.

To assess your proposal, read each best practice statement in turn and then identify the statement that best describes your proposal.

Consider also the Customer's Perspective to see the likely impact of your proposal on the customer.

The Customer's Perspective	Identify the statement that best describes your proposal	Score your proposal
<p>"They have remembered to keep to the 50 page maximum and sending separate volumes as we requested keeps it easy for us."</p> <p>→ Click Here For An Example ←</p>	You have taken the time to identify and follow the customer's submittal requirements.	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 6 (Highest) <input type="radio"/> 5
<p>"This isn't exactly what we asked for but I can work my way through it."</p>	You have followed some but not all of the customer's submittal requirements.	<input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 3
<p>"I don't think they have read or understood our submittal instructions at all."</p>	You have not noticed, not asked about or not followed the customer's submittal requirements.	<input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 1 (Lowest)

To view an illustration of best practice, click the customer's perspective for an additional pop-up



Customer's Request Document	Your Proposal
Page count <50	49 pages
Three separate volumes	Vol. 1 - Technical Vol. 2 - Commercial Vol. 3 - Test Plans
Pricing in Euros	All pricing in Euros

Complete the assessment by scoring your proposal using the 1-6 scale; 6 is the highest score.

Repeat this scoring for all 21 best practice statements using the navigation instructions provided in the next section.

To obtain the maximum value from BidBenchSolo, please be totally honest in your scoring

Score your proposal

6 (Highest)

5

4

3

2

1 (Lowest)

Proposals scoring 5 or 6 are largely or fully following best practice

Proposals scoring 3 or 4 are partially following best practice and have some scope for improvement

Proposals scoring 1 or 2 are not following best practice at all and have significant scope for improvement

Scoring Scheme. The scoring scheme goes from 1 (lowest) to 6 (highest).

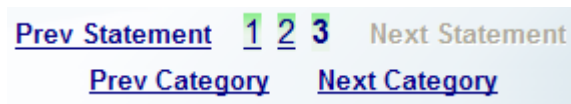
You can navigate to any question at any time

Questions may be answered in any order – and you may go back and change your selection at any time up until you are ready to generate your report

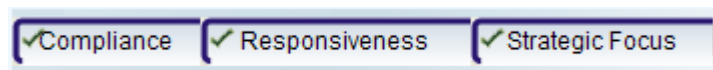
After you score each statement you will automatically move on to the next. You may navigate to any next best practice statement using the links at the bottom of the screen.



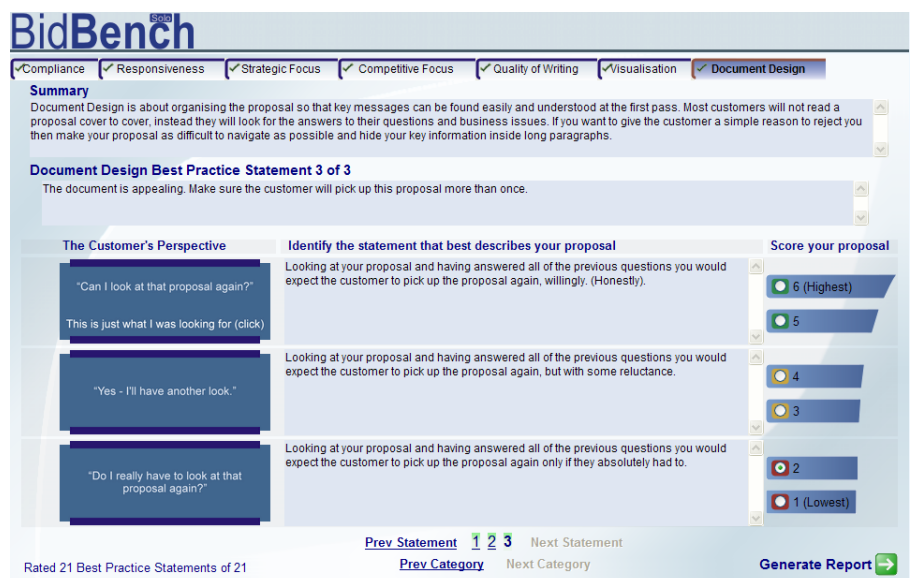
Repeat the process for all three best practice statements before moving onto the next category. When a best practice selection has been made it is automatically highlighted.



When a category has been completed, its tab is automatically “ticked”.



When all best practice selections in all categories have been completed, you are ready to generate your report. Do this by clicking the “Generate Report” link.



BidBench Solo

Compliance
 Responsiveness
 Strategic Focus
 Competitive Focus
 Quality of Writing
 Visualisation
 Document Design

Summary

Document Design is about organising the proposal so that key messages can be found easily and understood at the first pass. Most customers will not read a proposal cover to cover, instead they will look for the answers to their questions and business issues. If you want to give the customer a simple reason to reject you then make your proposal as difficult to navigate as possible and hide your key information inside long paragraphs.


Document Design Best Practice Statement 3 of 3

The document is appealing. Make sure the customer will pick up this proposal more than once.

The Customer's Perspective	Identify the statement that best describes your proposal	Score your proposal
"Can I look at that proposal again?" This is just what I was looking for (click)	Looking at your proposal and having answered all of the previous questions you would expect the customer to pick up the proposal again, willingly. (Honestly).	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 6 (Highest) <input type="radio"/> 5
"Yes - I'll have another look."	Looking at your proposal and having answered all of the previous questions you would expect the customer to pick up the proposal again, but with some reluctance.	<input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 3
"Do I really have to look at that proposal again?"	Looking at your proposal and having answered all of the previous questions you would expect the customer to pick up the proposal again only if they absolutely had to.	<input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 1 (Lowest)

Rated 21 Best Practice Statements of 21

[Prev Statement](#)
1 2 3
[Next Statement](#)
[Prev Category](#)
Next Category

[Generate Report](#) 

Report Generation. When you have answered all questions then click the “Generate Report” button.

How to generate your report

Thank you. When you complete this page your BidBenchSolo report will be generated in PDF format

The report is prepared as a PDF document and it is mailed to you at the completion of the assessment process

When you have assessed your proposal and before your report is prepared, you will be asked to provide a reference name for the proposal so that this can be recorded on the report.

You will also be asked to state whether the proposal was won or lost, not known or if you would prefer not to say. You will also be asked for the approximate contract value of the bid. You do not have to provide this information, but if you do, you will help us to improve BidBenchSolo.

When you have added a report reference and perhaps have also stated the bid result and contract value, click on the “Generate Report” button.

The report is then emailed to you, and presented on screen in a format that will also allow you to “Save As” should you wish to.

Getting further help and support

Your report provides you with a set of structured recommendations which, if implemented, may reduce the risk of losing the deal on the proposal.

If you wish to discuss how we can help you to implement the report's recommendations, please contact your local Shipley office:-

UK/EUROPE/INDIA: Shipley Limited

Email: bidbenchsolo@shipleywins.co.uk

Website: www.shipleywins.co.uk

USA: Shipley Associates

Email: bidbenchsolo@shipleywins.com

Website: www.shipleywins.com

AUSTRALIA/ASIA: Shipley Asia Pacific

Email: bidbenchsolo@shipleywins.com.au

Website: www.shipleywins.com.au

NORDIC/BALTIC: Shipley Nordic ApS

Email: bidbenchsolo@shipley.dk

Website: www.shipley.dk

Thank you for using BidBenchSolo.

The BidBenchSolo Team

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