

UTILITY BUSINESSES GET NEW BENCHMARKING SERVICE

• FOCUSES ON SKILLS AT WINNING NEW BUSINESS

A benchmarking service which allows utility companies to benchmark their skills at winning new business against 18 other industry players has been launched by Policy Publications in association with the Centre for Competitiveness at the University of Luton.

The benchmarking service allows a utility firm to rate its own performance against that of competitors on 62 different issues involved in winning new contracts.

The issues are grouped in areas covering subjects such as getting invited to bid in the first place, understanding a customer's "buying centre", communicating key messages about your company and its expertise, managing a bid team and negotiating the contract to a final close.

Colin Coulson-Thomas, professor of competitiveness at the University of Luton, who played a key role in setting up the benchmarking database, says: "Winning new business is just about the most important management function utility companies undertake. Yet few give it the importance it deserves."

"The benchmarking database lets management teams assess their own performance against that of competitors so they can see where they're doing well or badly."

Companies that benchmark their performance get a specially produced document which shows how they perform not only against all 18 firms in the database, but also against firms in the database which are statistically high-performers at winning business. The document also provides an "action list" of the top ten issues where the benchmarked company falls most behind the rest.

The benchmark results come with a comprehensive *Winning New Business* resource pack designed to help a company lift its sales and business development performance. The resource pack consists of four items:

Winning New Business: the Critical Success Factors, a 172-page report which shows how to develop excellence in pitching for new business.

Bidding for Business: the Skills Agenda, a 70-page report which shows how to raise performance in the 20 top skills needed when pitching for new business.

The Contract Bid Managers' Toolkit, 30 key worksheets and checklists designed to make a pitch for new business more successful.

Win More Business, a CD-Rom which contains the above three reports plus animated presentations on winning new business and other resources.

Professor Coulson-Thomas adds: "We anticipate that, as the benchmarking database grows, leading edge companies will want to benchmark themselves regularly to identify those issues where they may be falling behind their competitors."

* The utility industry benchmark and ***Winning New Business resource pack*** (http://www.policypublications.com/WNB_best_practice_resource_pack.php), is published by **Policy Publications** (<http://www.policypublications.com/>)