

Winning the RFP Game: Smarter Bidding & AI Pricing Strategies for Event Support

Thank you for the **E-Book Express Showcase** by **Richard John**, Industry Speaker, Author, Coach & Mentor, MESA Member. View in the Community Platform – **Trends, Reports, Videos & E-Books** (Files / E-Books / 4M's / September 2026) or click on the direct links below:

1. 2026 SWSX Insights Report <https://mesa.wall.idloom.com/#/filelastversion/3873>
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5. Five Generations, One Conference <https://mesa.wall.idloom.com/#/filelastversion/3871>

Overview: <https://mesa.wall.idloom.com/#/filelastversion/3875>

Thank you for: **The Five-Minute Window** from **Bob Toovey**, Founder & Owner of **Event Planner News (EPN)**, MESA Member. **Over to our members: How is your mobile phone data connection?** We've heard that **London has some of the worst mobile data connectivity**, while **German cities reportedly have some of the best**. Bob is currently looking for **quotes and comments for an upcoming article** and would love to hear about your experiences. With members based across Europe, it would be particularly interesting to hear:

- **How reliable is your mobile data connection?**
- **Are there particular cities or countries where you consistently experience good or poor connectivity?**
- **Have you noticed any significant differences when travelling around Europe?**

If you'd like to contribute, please contact **Bob Toovey** directly at bobtoovey@gmail.com

Main session: Winning the RFP Game: Smarter Bidding & AI Pricing Strategies for Event Support - This session explored how event-support businesses can respond more strategically to a changing procurement landscape, particularly as AI begins to reshape both RFP processes and the delivery of services. Mike shared insights from his procurement experience on why suppliers need to look beyond simply responding to tenders and instead focus on qualifying opportunities, understanding how buyers make decisions, and positioning themselves as strategic partners rather than commodities. The discussion also highlighted the risks of using AI simply to automate time-and-materials work, alongside opportunities to use AI more effectively while protecting margins, differentiation and long-term value.

10 Key Takeaways

1. **Procurement is about value and risk, not just price** - Buyers increasingly look for expertise, reliability, confidence and overall value - not simply the cheapest supplier
2. **Not every RFP is worth bidding for** - Focus resources on fewer, higher-value opportunities where there is a realistic chance of winning
3. **The competition often starts before the RFP** - 92% of buyers start with at least one preferred vendor, while 41% already have a single preferred vendor in mind. Building relationships early matters
4. **Early involvement can transform win rates** - Cold RFPs may have win rates of around 5%, compared with 65%+ when suppliers have helped shape the opportunity
5. **Position yourself as a strategic partner** - Move beyond commodity positioning by demonstrating expertise that influences decisions, reduces risk or solves complex client problems
6. **AI can create a pricing trap** - If AI simply makes services faster and cheaper to deliver, clients may see that as a reason to reduce price. Efficiency needs to strengthen - not undermine - the value proposition
7. **Sell outputs, outcomes or subscriptions - not just hours** - Fixed deliverables, outcome-based pricing and subscription models can better capture value and demonstrate shared accountability
8. **AI is changing the role of traditional RFPs** - Automation will increasingly handle smaller, repetitive transactions, making strategic expertise more important
9. **Qualify opportunities before investing heavily** - Assess access to the budget holder, the client's underlying needs and the competitive landscape before committing significant bid resources
10. **The future value is in strategic expertise** - As AI automates repeatable tasks, human judgement, industry knowledge and problem-solving will become increasingly important

Mike asked an opening poll question:



In summary

The session's central message was that winning more RFPs is not necessarily about bidding on more RFPs. It is about choosing the right opportunities, influencing them early, understanding how the buyer is making the decision, and demonstrating value that cannot easily be reduced to a day rate or line-item price. At the same time, AI requires event-support businesses to rethink how they package and price their expertise: using AI to improve efficiency is valuable, but the commercial model needs to capture the value created rather than simply passing those efficiency savings back to the client.

Recommended Reading:

[Reshuffle: Who wins when AI restacks the knowledge economy](#)

Slides from Mike - View in the Community Platform – [MESA Events - Summaries & Slides](#) (Files / 2026 4M's /September 2026)
<https://mesa.wall.idloom.com/#/filelastversion/3885>

The Agency Reset 2026 (Analysis and The Case for Change) <https://mesa.wall.idloom.com/#/filelastversion/3860>

Thank you to:

Our Guest Speaker: [Mike Lander](#), CEO of [Piscari Ltd](#)

Our Moderator: [Richard John](#), Industry Speaker, Author, Coach & Mentor, MESA Member.



NEXT MEETING:

MESA MONTHLY MEMBER MEETING (4M) 1430 CEST / 1600 CEST:
Thursday 29th October
Mastering the Science of Tradeshow ROI
Moderated by [Sebastien Braun](#), MESA Patron Member

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