

Nextgen Group Nets Notices Aplenty Through TenderLink's e-Notification Service



In many ways, a company's bottom line is dependent on its ability to unearth opportunities - and its ability to ensure nothing slips through the net. Opportunities can be advertised in a newspaper servicing a city located away from head office, and can be easily missed by a state or branch with a different set of priorities. Once that opportunity is gone, it's gone, and today's opportunities quickly become tomorrow's fish and chip wrappers.

Australia is a large, remote country, with large geographical separation between cities and regional centres. While Internet advertising helps span distance, manual daily monitoring of relevant newspapers and trade journals, plus a large and ever-growing range of websites can, at best, be described as an unco-ordinated and inefficient process. Streamlining the monitoring process is critical to ensuring better use of staff time, while also making sure nothing slips through the cracks.

Nextgen Group has been able to streamline the pursuit process through its use of TenderLink's notification service, ensuring they don't miss any opportunities, regardless of where they pop up across the country.

Nextgen deploys the largest fleet of data centres in Australia and has the second-largest data network in the country. It participates in the competitive bid process to secure work from large-scale end users, such as government organisations and corporate enterprises. With offices in each mainland capital city, the job of identifying opportunities used to be delegated to each office, each with disparate priorities.

"Various parts of our business go to market in different ways. In the past, they might only have looked for certain opportunities in a certain area, while other opportunities that are relevant for other parts of the business may have been missed," said Paul Humphrey, Director of Sales Operations at Nextgen Group. "But with TenderLink's notification system, we have certainly streamlined the process of identifying potential pursuits."

TenderLink's notification service monitors more than 1700 print publications and over 1500 external websites, then aggregates this information with opportunities published by more than 400 organisations which rely on its e-Procurement solution. Every opportunity is classified by the type of work required and where the work is located. With monitoring coverage across Australia and New Zealand, the company publishes in excess of 40,000 opportunities each year to subscriber organisations, with each user able to customise what they receive using a geographical, industry and keyword filtering system. When setting up the service, the TenderLink team liaises with each company, using their deep expertise of the market to fine-tune the filters to ensure that those looking for opportunities get the most out of the system.

Nextgen uses the service for two notable purposes, the most obvious being the timely receipt of relevant opportunities. On that note, there have already been instances in which the service has kept them apprised of tenders they'd otherwise have missed.

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Director of Sales Operations
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"There was a bid that we've been involved in recently that we wouldn't have picked up if we didn't have the notification service, even though this particular opportunity would be a typical target customer of ours," said Humphrey. "We deal with a lot with government organisations and some of the larger agencies can be quite broad, meaning that the people we typically deal with might not know what other parts of the organisation are doing. "But TenderLink's service provides us with the catch-all we need to be aware of the market and open opportunities across the country."

Tom Dean, TenderLink's operations manager, sees first-hand the sheer amount of opportunities that are published across Australasia.

"It's impractical and frankly nigh-on impossible to believe that any company, of any size, will be able to catch every opportunity out there using a manual system," he said. "Over 20 years of experience has taught us just how hard it is to capture all that data. In the end, it comes down to how companies want to use their time. We offer a service that casts a wide net on their behalf, so they can spend their time focusing on the unique things they can do - like winning contracts."

Adapting to change with maximum visibility

The other main purpose of Nextgen using TenderLink's notification service is the ability to pulse-check the market and research where everything is headed. It enables them to adapt on the fly to changes in an industry that has evolved significantly over the past 20 years, and continues to do so.

"From a technology perspective, our business can change quite rapidly. Sometimes you become interested in things that might not have interested you before," he said. "So we don't just use the service to receive opportunities we're interested in today. We look at past opportunities and withdrawn opportunities, to get a feel for where the marketplace is heading. It allows us to cast an eye over the market as a whole, rather than just our core solutions and targets."

Technology is only as good as the people behind it

He said TenderLink's engagement with the company has enabled Nextgen to get more out of their service than simply providing an email that appears each morning. Their knowledge of the markets - and willingness to learn more about the companies they're working with - enables those such as Nextgen to maximise their investment.

"They make the effort to learn more about our business and what markets we operate in; their approach and their solution feels more intrinsic," he said. "Through their engagement and discussions with us, we were able to fine-tune our search profiles and use their keyword filter system to ensure we picked up all the information we need. They made sure they were looking for the right things on our behalf."

Saving time and speeding up ROI

Humphrey said another benefit the notification system provides to his team was in time saved. In addition, he sees that time saved not having to manually monitor opportunities has benefitted the professionalism of the response process itself.

"Having a notification service means we don't have to be across everything and it's simply a much better use of our time, which we can now use to focus on our core competencies," he said. "It allows us to concentrate more on the pursuit and strength of our submissions.

"For example, I've heard of different organisations adding video into their responses to demonstrate a point of difference. This is due in large part to the capability of digital responses, but also because pursuit teams now have more time to concentrate on these tasks because they don't have to spend all their time monitoring for opportunities."

But the biggest benefit, Humphrey said, is the return on investment. "With the tenders we're involved in, we really only have to win one tender and we've covered the cost of our subscription for a long time," he said. "If we capture a job we'd have otherwise missed, the TenderLink subscription pays for itself and then some. From that perspective the investment is a no-brainer."

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