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e-Equal delivers benefits to Northumbrian Water Limited

Northumbrian Water Limited supplies 2.6 million customers in the north east of England with water and wastewater services, trading as Northumbrian Water. In the south east of England, the company trades as Essex & Suffolk Water, offering water services to 1.7 million customers.

Northumbrian Water Limited depends on thousands of suppliers for the provision of works, goods and services required to maintain the high level of service that its customers have come to expect. Senior Buyers from all parts of Northumbrian Water Limited spend millions of pounds with these suppliers every year.

“UVDB is a primary tool Northumbrian Water Limited uses to identify suppliers.

The next step is to find out if the shortlisted suppliers have the specific capabilities to meet our tender requirements - this is where e-Equal comes into its own. By providing a description or scope of the work and then asking some specific, targeted questions, we can quickly identify the most appropriate suppliers. These short-listed companies are then invited to tender.”

Steve Crake

Head of Procurement
Northumbrian Water Limited

The challenges

It is difficult to ensure that all prospective suppliers receive timely, consistent communications about tenders.

Northumbrian Water Limited needs to give all interested suppliers the right set of questions to identify key capabilities and experience, and needs a tool that will help it manage all the resulting information.

An additional challenge is the sheer number of suppliers whose details are retained on the UVDB - too many to automatically be sent invitations to tender. “We need a way to reduce the number to a more manageable size in a fair and transparent way,” says Steve Crake, Head of Procurement.

Overall benefits – A summary

- Communication online with registered suppliers
- Secure second stage qualification process
- Qualify or fail suppliers based on their responses
- Re-use stored questions from previous e-Equals
- Access all supplier data in a single secure area



e-Qual delivers benefits to Northumbrian Water Limited



e-Qual is a functional addition to Achilles SMS services, allowing buyers to ask further qualification questions to registered suppliers. The built-in wizard offers a simple and effective method of asking for and collating supplier information not collected in the SMS service questionnaire.

e-Quals are generally used for contract or tender-specific data where a buyer wants standard responses to additional questions. All data is sent and stored electronically, eliminating the need for hard-copy storage of additional tender documents.

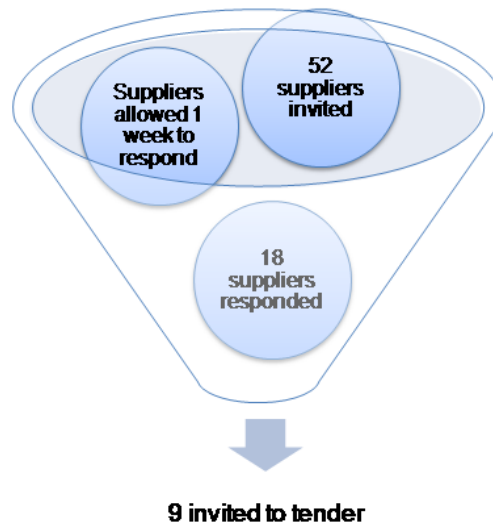
“Using e-Qual has delivered great benefits to Northumbrian Water Limited by providing a quick, simple and effective tool for interacting with suppliers.

We now have the flexibility to invite more suppliers into e-Qual, to outline the key requirements for the contract and to identify the most appropriate suppliers. Not only has it streamlined our pre-qualification process and removed costly administration time, but it has also supported us in the way we identify and evaluate suppliers.”

Steve Crake
Head of Procurement
Northumbrian Water Limited

The solution

Northumbrian Water Limited started using e-Qual in mid-2006 to refine the pre-qualified supplier list provided by UVDB in order to produce a short list for formal tender. They achieved this through creation and submission of additional supplementary questions. These were wide ranging, from simple yes/no questions asking for confirmation of interest, to more evaluative questions, asking suppliers to explain the environmental considerations for a specific project. The answers enable Northumbrian Water Limited to quickly achieve a short list.



e-Qual decision flow for a “Services framework agreement”

Results

To date, e-Qual has been used by Northumbrian Water Limited on 41 different occasions. 2,750 e-Qual invitations have been sent to suppliers.

Some suppliers have received more than one invitation from Northumbrian Water Limited.

The response rate has been excellent with 765 suppliers submitting responses.

Find out how your company could benefit from e-Qual, by contacting us today using the details shown below:

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