

HYDRALINC weighs up chasing opportunities at the expense of billable hours



Like many professional service providers, despite having significant skills and experience, Paul Ollett has found the process of finding clients and accessing profitable projects a never-ending challenge.

HYDRALINC is a Gold Coast-based water engineering company providing specialist water consultancy services ranging from resource evaluations to storm and flood risk assessments.

HYDRALINC is led by Paul Ollett, a water engineer with 18 years' experience in hydraulic investigations, hydrology, stormwater planning, floodplain management, water yield, and dam surveillance. Paul, a regional Committee Member of Engineers Australia, founded his consultancy in August 2012.

Describing past efforts as “somewhat hit and miss”, most of HYDRALINC’s assignments to date have come through door-knocking. “I’ve been targeting people who might have suitable work and relying on word of mouth, mostly,” Paul explains. “I’ve also advertised and done the conference thing, but not had much success with either of those,” HYDRALINC has also been included in a few supply panels, but that avenue has not yet generated any meaningful business.

Time for a new approach

Paul first heard about illion TenderLink’s notification system from a colleague who asked him to collaborate on a joint tender submission for an opportunity which had been delivered by TenderLink. The colleague said the system seemed to be delivering more real prospects

than other services he had encountered. Paul decided to explore further and was struck by the professionalism of the sales person who took the time to understand HYDRALINC’s services, then showed him a range of current relevant tenders in the system, along with a number of subscription options. “It was clear that TenderLink weren’t just tapping into local government tenders, but digging deep and uncovering opportunities in places I’d never find,” he notes, adding that he is now seeing a range of prospective assignments from a broad spectrum of buyer organisations.

Paul had no hesitation in signing up for a one-year, three-state subscription which would notify him of any relevant tenders in his home state of Queensland, as well as New South Wales and Victoria. “It was quickly clear to me that if the subscription generated a single job, it would pay for itself and, over time, generate a healthy ROI.” After all, time spent chasing opportunities comes at the expense of billable hours.

“It was quickly clear to me that if the subscription generated a single job, it would pay for itself and, over time, generate a healthy ROI.”

Paul Ollett
Director, Principal Water Engineer
Hydralinc

Notification in action

HYDRALINC has only been signed up for a few weeks, and Paul explains that although his work is specialist, he's off to a good start with six tenders in his specific field advertised in his first three weeks. "They are also just the type of tenders I have been trying to find in terms of size, but I have been spread too thinly to turn every stone. Had it not been for TenderLink, I would never have known about them," he adds.

This stands in stark contrast to Paul's past experience. "I'm on a number of panels, including one of the largest for local governments, and I haven't seen anywhere near the number of opportunities," he explains.

Having a sense that he was just "padding the field on previous tenders, Paul is now determined to check out the buyers before committing to a bid. To that end, Paul is impressed that most TenderLink notices include buyer contact details, which avoids the need to waste time hunting for the appropriate person to talk to. By accessing the right person, first time, Paul can discuss the specific tender requirements, quickly enabling him to determine whether it's worth spending the time and effort required on a bid. "I've been able to call them up and sound them out about the project, their openness to interstate suppliers and their pricing expectations, for example," he says. This allows him to focus on opportunities that matter while also avoiding the sometimes lengthy wait for tender outcomes on projects that were never going to pan out anyway.

Like many consultants, Paul has become a consummate multi-tasker. Time matters and he's impressed with the ease of use of TenderLink's notification service. "I don't have to do anything: the alerts just come through every day. And even those projects that aren't relevant to me right now are a good source of market intelligence, helping keep me up to date with what's happening out there and what might lie ahead in future stages."

Looking to the future

Even though he has only been signed up for a short period, Paul notes that he has not had to change his day-to-day workflow at all: "I haven't really had to do anything special to use TenderLink. All of the procurement processes are in line with what I've been doing all along, so it's really just delivered another avenue of opportunity."

Just a few weeks into his TenderLink subscription, Paul is seeing more opportunities and spending less time chasing dead-end leads and looking for those who may - or may not - need his services. Importantly, he's discovering projects he would never have known about because they wouldn't be posted in the places he and his competitors would normally look.

"Straight after signing up, I was able to submit a tender for an opportunity that was right up my street." And while he acknowledges that throwing his hat in the ring is no guarantee of winning business, he is certain that "you have to be in it to win it". TenderLink is definitely helping with that challenge.

"I don't have to do anything: the alerts just come through every day. And even those projects that aren't relevant to me right now are a good source of market intelligence."

Paul Ollett
Director, Principal Water Engineer
Hydralinc