



Probity Protocols for Industry Functions, Conferences, & Seminars

“*Probity*” is the evidence of ethical behaviour.

“*Ethical behaviour*” encompasses the concepts of honesty, integrity, probity, diligence, fairness, trust and respect.

Before a Corporate representative or Public Officer attends an industry function, conference, or seminar where they may be exposed to influence of suppliers or contractors, they should consider probity and confidentiality issues to which they may be exposed.

This is more likely where the corporate representative or Public Officer is either a decision-maker or has some influence in the selection of a product, service or technology from the related industry.

Industry individuals in marketing and sales have well-developed skills in both soliciting intelligence from corporate representatives or Public Officers, and in influencing those individuals towards a vendor, product, service, or technology.

Corporate representatives or Public Officers attending industry functions, seminars, or conferences usually do so for professional development, for commercial intelligence collection, and for commercial relationship building related to professional or corporate interests.

Confidentiality Principles:

To observe requirements for safeguarding the confidentiality of commercially sensitive information, staff should:-

- Never reveal or discuss any aspects of any nature of a procurement or contracting activity with any supplier; or
- Never speak in comparative terms of any one supplier against another or others;
- Never informally indicate to a supplier that an offer is likely to be accepted or rejected, either on the basis of what is demonstrated or presented, or on any technology principles, or
- Never provide any opportunity for a supplier to see privileged information of any kind.

Remember that all commercial information other than what is in the public domain is likely to be Confidential.



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Probity Protocols:

- The Individual should **act objectively and impartially**.
- The Individual should always **act in the best fiduciary interests of the organisation**.
- Ensure you are fully aware of your organisation's **Code of Conduct**.
- **Protect commercial information** including any proposals, investigations, intentions, and processes that are not 'public' information and which may be relevant to their organisation's operations or interests.
- Where hospitality is provided, **avoid the potential for being influenced by alcohol**.
- Use the environment to **obtain information rather than provide it**.
- **Do not disclose information** on the stage of any requirement development, procurement or evaluation or contract; or on any organisational strategy.
- **Avoid being isolated individually** by a vendor.
- **Avoid the potential for lack of corroboration** of actions, information, or findings. (i.e. try to have a reliable 'witness')
- **Avoid being exposed to vendor pressure** or questioning.
- **Revisit your conflicts of interest**. Understand your organisation's Conflict of Interest Policy, and what constitutes a real, potential or perceived conflict of interest. Ensure you preserve your ability to act impartially and objectively.
- **Refrain from any interest in the shares or shareholding**, trust or other form benefit from the commercial activities of a supplier that is or could be a supplier to your organisation.
- **Avoid accepting gifts or benefits**. If unavoidable, the receipt must be consistent with the organisation's Code of Conduct.
- Ensure there is **reasonable disclosure of the event**, who attended, and what was provided.
- Any hospitality should be within the formal arrangements for the event, and **no exceptional hospitality treatment** provided.
- Always **deal objectively and impartially towards competing suppliers** with industry hospitality and events.
- **Advise suppliers that solicitations or offers of influence may prejudice their relationships** with your organisation. Refer to the Code of Conduct.
- **Do not respond to any overtures or solicitations**, but document and disclose them.
- **Report any 'offer of employment'**.