



Meet the Buyer North 2019

Supplier Feedback Report

4 September 2019

Aviemore

Last updated: 11 December 2019

Prepared by: Supplier Development Programme

“There are SMEs out there that want to do business with us and Meet the Buyer North is a great opportunity, or a gateway if you like, to getting that business. It’s a platform that will repeat year on year that will give businesses the opportunity to come and talk to us.”

- Diane Beattie, Head of Procurement, Moray Council

Summary

Meet the Buyer North 2019 was held on 4 September 2019 at Macdonald Aviemoor Resort. Out of the record 1,100+ suppliers that registered to attend, more than 560 gathered to interact with 35 exhibition stalls, representing 41 public sector buyers and business support services. There were 400 attendees at Meet the Buyer North 2018, which means there was a 40% increase in attendees.

Local Authorities



Moray Council



Dundee City Council



Angus Council



Aberdeen City Council



Aberdeenshire Council



Highland Council



Perth & Kinross Council

An online survey was distributed to registered delegates for Meet the Buyer North 2019. This survey was live between 4 September and 23 September for a period of three weeks. Within this time, responses were received from 111 respondents.

It was highlighted that 73% of respondents were an SME or third sector organisation and therefore eligible for other SDP training and support.

Of those who had responded, three replied that they did not attend the event. Of these, two said that they had an unexpected business appointment, and the other responded that they forgot about it.

SDP narrowed the gap from the 2018 event, where the majority of attendees learned about Meet the Buyer North from the Public Contracts Scotland website, as more than half of respondents (54%) heard about the event from the Supplier Development Programme website or through the SDP newsletter. The majority (58%) still learned about the event through Public Contracts Scotland, by PCS email (33%) and the PCS website (25%). Seven respondents (6%) learned about the event through social media.

Supplier Experience

The booking process was highlighted by respondents as a strong area of success in terms of event organisation, with 96% rating it as Excellent or Good. In addition, 88% felt that pre-event communication was Excellent or Good. Of the respondents, 60% stated that social media communication was Excellent or Good, though 30% said it was not relevant.

In terms of the Exhibition itself, 92% of respondents said that it was Excellent or Good. Additionally, 87% said that the range of buyers at Meet the Buyer was Excellent or Good, and 68% rated the keynote speakers as Excellent or Good. Catering was rated as Excellent or Good by 40% of respondents, while 30% stated that it was not relevant. The venue and facilities were rated Excellent or Good by 91% of respondents, which was a huge improvement from the previous year's venue and facilities.

The overall event experience was rated as Excellent or Good by 94% of respondents. Most importantly, 93% of respondents said that they were more likely to bid for public contracts after attending Meet the Buyer North 2019.

Selected qualitative feedback included:

"Top Tips for Tendering workshop was excellent."

"We were impressed with the number of buyers present and the venue facilities."

"The only comment I can make is that it was hard to hear the speakers, but overall very good event."

"Difficulty hearing presentations due to noise from adjoining exhibition area."

"First class venue - very spacious and relaxing."

"Can the event start earlier?"

Suggestions for Future Meet the Buyer North Events

Respondents to the survey were asked to suggest exhibitors that they would like to see at future Meet the Buyer North events. One respondent said: “It was just right - we struggled to see all the people we wanted to talk with.”

Suggestions included:

- More local councils like Argyll and Bute, etc.
- Housing Associations
- Health and Legal organisations
- More technology and solutions
- Mechanical & Electrical Contractors, rather than just main contractors
- Process companies, i.e. Timber industry/Sawmill like BSW / James Jones, Norbord HiFab
- More private contractors
- More sections of public sector
- More Construction / House Builders in attendance
- Charities and Museums
- Scottish Power, Scottish Power Renewables
- More NGDBs
- Infrastructure companies, especially those on the five Hubs' procurement programmes
- Mott MacDonald
- A range of Multi Utility companies
- Prestwick Aerospace
- Engineering Companies - BAE, MOD, Rolls Royce
- Robertson Construction, Cairngorm National Park, DIO
- More from Aberdeenshire/City
- Industry bodies, such as IPAF in construction industry
- More transport/vehicle related industries

Social Media Analytics

In March 2019, the Supplier Development Programme created the hashtag: #MeetTheBuyerNorth2019. This was utilised by a number of buyers and suppliers in the lead up to the event.

From 1 September until 4 September 2019, SDP posted 19 tweets using this hashtag.

Twitter analytics indicate that these 19 tweets resulted in:

- 14,360 impressions;
- 411 engagements;
- 66 likes;
- 53 URL link clicks; and
- 37 retweets.

Top Tweet earned 982 impressions

Some early snaps from
#MeetTheBuyerNorth2019 - registration is
from 9:30am, doors open at 10am!
pic.twitter.com/91xMbUXXqi



3 9

Outcomes of Meet the Buyer North 2019

Out of the record 1,100+ suppliers that registered to attend, more than 560 gathered to interact with 35 exhibition stalls, representing 41 public sector buyers and business support services.

Headline partners included the Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

The overall event experience was rated as Excellent or Good by 94% of respondents.

Most importantly, 93% of respondents said that they were more likely to bid for public sector contracts after attending Meet the Buyer North 2019.