



## **Customer Story**

HITACHI GTS

# BiD Masters support helped Hitachi Rail win “game-changing” UK mainline bid

*“Pound for pound, it’s effective. We’re letting our highly skilled engineers focus on what they’re good at and using BiD Masters’ specialist skills to create the proposal.”*

Karen O’Neill is Head of Bid Management at Hitachi Rail. She and Trish Shanahan, Sales and Business Development Director for mainline signalling business in the UK, discussed the organisation’s partnership with BiD Masters, their engagement of a Virtual Bid Team, and a “game-changing” bid win in the UK mainline sector.

## TYPICAL BID CHALLENGES

*“We have contracts with Transport for London to manage their communication infrastructure and replace legacy signalling with latest generation CBTC on the Underground – they’ve been running for 20 years. Our mainline business is growing rapidly and supports several customers. In Manchester, we manage communications and management systems for the tram network in the city,” said Trish.*

With the opportunity to bid for high-profile contracts, Karen’s role at Hitachi Rail means she’s no stranger to the typical challenges when creating bids.

*“We employ many specialist engineers, and while they’re experts at writing complex technical documents, they’re not always specialists in writing proposals and there’s no doubt that answering the customer’s questions and writing in a winning manner is a specialist skill,” said Karen.*

## BID SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE AND AGILITY

Karen has worked with other bid specialists as part of various consortia. She says she’s had “mixed success”. Having been introduced to BiD Masters by another part of the group, she reflected on what makes the partnership so effective.

*“We’ve got a lot of confidence in BiD Masters. That’s partly because they’ve acquired a lot of knowledge about our business, the market, and our customers. But it’s also down to the personal touch and their willingness to have in-depth discussions with subject matter experts,” said Karen.*

Trish said agility was important to her: *“The BiD Masters team can expand and shrink as we need it. We’re never paying for people to sit around, and we can call in further help when necessary.*

*On our recent bid, this proved to be a godsend. Due to workload, a subject matter expert (SME) was struggling to find time to focus on their question. Very quickly, BiD Masters offered a team member with relevant experience. He had a call with us then came back the following day with an outline answer. We then went back to the SME and asked them to tweak it from there.”*

*Summing up the value, Karen said: “Using BiD Masters, we’re playing to our strengths. It’s a marriage because we’re blending our team’s knowledge and expertise and BiD Masters’ specialism to shape it into an often very prescriptive proposal.”*

## YEAR-ROUND VIRTUAL BID TEAM

Hitachi Rail was one of the first organisations to establish a Virtual Bid Team with BiD Masters. A new approach to bid support, Karen explained how it works for them and why they chose it.

*“Reviewing our previous year activity with BiD Masters, we committed a similar level of bid resource for the upcoming year and agreed a monthly fee.*

*This arrangement means I can quickly call on any type of support when I need it. Before, I’d have to check BiD Masters’ availability and raise a purchase order. It was long-winded and not ideal on a compressed timeframe.*

*With my Virtual Bid Team, I can roll resource over - or draw days forward - when I’ve got a large tender in sight. I can also ask for minor support on our smaller bids, such as graphic design or content planning. A Virtual Bid Team is incredibly useful – I can use the right people in the right place more easily,” she said.*

## WINNING A UK MAINLINE BID

Following months of intense work to deliver the best possible bid, a Hitachi Rail and VolkerRail consortium became one of six named on Network Rail’s Train Control Systems Framework, aiming to revolutionise signalling across Britain.

From Carlisle to Brighton, this 10-year £4 billion signalling plan will change the face of Britain’s railway. Hitachi Rail and VolkerRail will deliver one of four contracts within Lot 2: Digital Signalling European Train Control System technology.

As Hitachi Rail grows its operations in mainline rail digital signalling, this is a huge win for the organisation. Trish reflected on how the bid team feels, and how BiD Masters contributed.

*“Everyone who worked on the bid is incredibly proud. It’s a game-changer for us here in the UK and it’s significant globally - the UK is such an attractive mainline market.*

*A huge part of the bid relied on the proposal. If we hadn’t answered those questions to the quality they were answered, we wouldn’t have been successful,” said Trish.*

## BID PARTNER CHOICE ADVICE

Karen and Trish are confident about their bidding process for high-profile tenders, and it involves BiD Masters.

*“You want to know you can rely on the people involved because bids are stressful and could mean being in touch during evenings and weekends. So, you need your bidding partner to feel it too,” said Trish.*

Karen added further advice for organisations wanting to perfect their bidding.

*“Look at your internal core skills first and decide how to best use your people. Prioritise their time-planning too because nobody gives enough attention to that in a bid.*

*Then, choose your bid partner carefully. You must feel confident in the relationship you’re developing from the start, so when you’re at the sharp end of a bid, you’ll work in harmony and be more likely to succeed. With BiD Masters, we’ve got those relationships and invested in them over time.”*

*The proof, as they say, is in the eating. And with a Virtual Bid Team in place, Hitachi Rail has all the specialist bid support it needs to thrive.*