THE RESULT

"A $120M price game, due around March 8"? It's up to $120M with no volume guaranteed, price is 40%, and bids are due February 24.

A CRO at a 15,000-person electrical equipment maker gets up to speed on a public utility's tender before the bid kickoff, with any AI chat his company allows.

THE RESULT Dev's briefing for the CEO and bid team. Fictional company.

OSTRANDER ELECTRIC · REVENUE

Lakeshore switchgear tender: briefing

For: Paul Brennan, CEO, and the bid team
From: Dev Malhotra · Tuesday, February 2

WHAT MATTERS FIRST

Two things could knock us out before price matters. The tender requires 60% US-made content in each panel, and legal hasn't confirmed our Monterrey panels comply; our partner's view that the rule was dropped is contradicted by the tender. And questions to the Authority close before legal's answer arrives, so we ask this week. · Inputs 2, 4, 5

KEY DATES AND FACTS

Questions to the Authority	Bids due	US-made content	Value
Mon Feb 8	Wed Feb 24, 2 p.m.	Unconfirmed	Up to $120M
10 working days; we work to Fri Feb 5 until the bid manager confirms	30 calendar days, not March 8	Legal answers Feb 10, after questions close	Five years; no volume guaranteed

SCORING, AND WHO CONFIRMS

SCORING

Price is 40%; technical is 35%
In 2024 (a maintenance tender, price 60%) we were 4% above the winner and lowest of three on technical, 18 of 30. No price cut is agreed on this evidence. · Inputs 2, 3

BY FRI FEB 5

Legal: a first view on Monterrey, and on asking about the uncapped late-delivery liability
Changes to the Authority's terms can only be raised through clarification questions. · Inputs 2, 5

AT KICKOFF

Owners for technical, pricing and supplier diversity
Supplier diversity is 10% of the score and we have no information on it yet. · Input 2

CAUGHT ON REVIEW

1. **"A $120M deal"** is up to $120M over five years, with **no volume guaranteed**
2. Bids are due **February 24**, not March 8: **30 calendar days**
3. The partner's "rule was dropped" is **contradicted** by the tender: **60% US-made**

UC-005 · SC-03 · REV A	
FOR **Chief Revenue Officer**	SECTOR **Electrical equipment (public-sector utility tender)**
COMPANY **15,000 people · 14 sites · US and Mexico**	TASK **Get up to speed on a public-sector utility tender before the bid kickoff**
WRITTEN FOR **ChatGPT · Claude · Gemini · Copilot**	
AI TEST **Claude, Nov 15, 2026 · 7 of 7 found**	

STEP 0 · THE MESS

What landed on Dev's desk

A short email from the CEO, the bid manager's summary of the tender rules, a debrief from the customer's last tender, and notes from a partner, legal and the account team. Everyone has a view. Only one input is the rules.

EMAIL · CEO [1]

Lakeshore tender

"$120M over five years, the biggest public-sector deal we've ever chased."

1 **$120M of what?**

TENDER RULES [2]

Bid manager's summary

"Bids due: 30 calendar days after publication."

2 **The rules.**

DEBRIEF [3]

Lakeshore 2024

"Technical score was the lowest of the three: 18 of 30."

3 **Not only price.**

PARTNER NOTE [4]

Keller Electrical

"The domestic content rule was dropped for switchgear last year."

4 **Says who?**

LEGAL [5]

Open questions

"Expect an answer Wednesday, February 10."

5 **Too late?**

ACCOUNT TEAM [6]

Assumptions

"We have 30 working days, so the bid is due around March 8."

6 **Calendar or working?**

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

12.7%

of GDP across OECD countries went on public procurement in 2023, with most of it spent by sub-national governments.

OECD, Government at a Glance 2025, Size of public procurement. Source

STEPS 1–3 · HOW IT WORKS

Three steps, one chat

Here the AI briefs a leader on a subject that's new to him. The prompt makes it treat the tender rules as the authority and count every date as the rules define it.

1 Open a new chat

Use the AI tool your company approves: ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini or Copilot.

2 Paste the prompt and the inputs

Copy the prompt and the six fictional inputs from the appendix into one message.

3 Count one deadline yourself

Thirty calendar days from Monday, January 25 is Wednesday, February 24. Then decide what the CEO reads first.

THE PROMPT, PART BY PART

COPY-READY VERSION IN THE APPENDIX

I'm Chief Revenue Officer at an electrical equipment maker. We're bidding on a large public-sector utility tender, and public procurement is new to me. Our CEO wants a one-page briefing for him and the bid team before Thursday's kickoff, February 4. Today is Tuesday, February 2. Below are the CEO's email, our bid manager's summary of the tender rules, the debrief from the customer's last tender, a note from our installation partner, a legal note and our account team's assumptions.

1 Who you are, that the subject is new to you, who the briefing is for, the kickoff date and today's date.

Please help me get up to speed:

1. **What I need to know**, in five lines.
2. **Each claim** from the partner, the account team and the CEO: supported, contradicted or unverified, with the input that shows it.
3. **The key dates**, worked out from the tender rules.
4. **What we don't know yet**, and who confirms each item, by when.
5. **A one-page briefing** for the CEO and bid team: what we know, what we don't, who confirms.

2 Five lines to know, each claim checked, the key dates, what's unknown and who confirms, and a one-page briefing.

Treat the tender rules as the rules and everything else as a claim to check. Count every deadline exactly as the rules define it. Don't add facts that aren't in the inputs; if you assume something, say so. Name the input for each point.

3 The heavy lifting: treat the tender rules as the rules and everything else as a claim, and count every deadline exactly as the rules define it. It found all seven planted problems.

WHERE TO PASTE

Every tool has one message box. Paste the prompt, add a blank line, paste the inputs, send. Long tender documents can be attached as files if your tool allows it.

SAFE TO TRY

Practise with the fictional inputs first. Real tender documents, legal advice and pricing are confidential: use only your company's approved tool.

THE AI'S FIRST ANSWER

What Claude actually wrote

Exactly as it came back, not edited. Read it the way Dev did: check each point against the source it cites.

UNEDITED Claude · fresh session, no other context · Nov 15, 2026 · one run

Getting up to speed: Lakeshore Public Power switchgear tender

I counted working days as Monday to Friday, starting the day after publication, with no public holidays. Everything below is an assumption the bid manager should confirm (see section 4).

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1. What you need to know, in five lines

1. **Clarification questions are due Monday, February 8.** That is 4 working days from today, and only 2 working days after Thursday's kickoff. The bids are due Wednesday, February 24 by 2 p.m. They are not due March 8. [2] `found`
2. **Legal's answer on the domestic content rule comes Wednesday, February 10.** That is two days after the last chance to ask the Authority a question. Bidders can only propose changes through those questions. [2], [5]
3. **The domestic content rule is in this tender.** At least 60% of each panel's component cost must be US-made. Keller says the rule was dropped, but the tender rules show it still applies. Whether our Monterrey panels comply is unknown. [2], [4], [5]
4. **This is not a price game like 2024.** Price is 40% of the score, not 60%. Technical, delivery and service, and supplier diversity together make up 60%. The 2024 tender was for maintenance services, a different scope. [2], [3]
5. **"$120M" is an upper estimate, not a deal size.** It is "up to $120M" over five years, with no minimum volume guaranteed. The Authority's standard terms have no cap on liability for late delivery. Legal hasn't yet looked at whether to raise this. [2], [5]

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2. Each claim checked

#	Claim	Who	Verdict	Input that shows it
1	"The domestic content rule was dropped for switchgear last year"	Keller [4]	**Contradicted**	[2]: "at least 60% of each panel's component cost must be US-made." Whatever happened last year, this tender has the rule. `found`
2	"Your Monterrey panels are fine"	Keller [4]	**Unverified**	[5]: Legal is still checking whether Monterrey panels meet the 60% rule and expects an answer February 10. Keller's reasoning rests on claim 1, which is contradicted.
3	"It's a price game again, like 2024"	Account team [6]	**Contradicted**	[2]: price is 40%. Technical (35%), delivery and service (15%) and supplier diversity (10%) add up to 60%. `found`
4	"In 2024 price was 60%"	Account team [6]	**Supported for 2024 only**	[3]: price 60%, technical 30%, delivery 10%. But that tender was for switchgear maintenance services. This one is a supply framework [2], so the 2024 weighting doesn't carry over.
5	"We should go in 5% lower"	Account team [6]	**Unverified, no basis given**	No input supports a 5% figure. [3] shows Ostrander was 4% above the winner on price and had the lowest technical score (18 of 30). If Ostrander is us (an assumption; the inputs don't say), the debrief points to technical as much as price. The inputs don't give the other bidders' scores, so we can't tell whether a lower price alone would have won. `found`
6	"We have 30 working days"	Account team [6]	**Contradicted**	[2]: bids are due 30 **calendar** days after publication.
7	"The bid is due around March 8"	Account team [6]	**Contradicted**	[2]: January 25 plus 30 calendar days is **Wednesday, February 24, 2 p.m.** March 8 is what you get by counting 30 working days, which is the wrong rule. `found`
8	"A $120M deal"	Account team [6]	**Contradicted as stated**	[2]: "Estimated value up to $120M. No minimum volume is guaranteed." Winning gives a place on a framework, not $120M of revenue. `found`
9	"$120M over five years"	CEO [1]	**Partly supported**	[2]: five-year framework, estimated value up to $120M, no guaranteed volume. The figure is a ceiling, not a commitment.
10	"Switchgear framework"	CEO [1]	**Supported**	[2]: five-year framework for medium-voltage switchgear.
11	"The biggest public-sector deal we've ever chased"	CEO [1]	**Unverified**	None of the inputs mention our past public-sector bids.

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3. Key dates, from the tender rules [2]

Date	What	How it was worked out
Mon, Jan 25	Tender published	[2]
Mon, Feb 1	Legal note written	[5]
Tue, Feb 2	Today	Your message
Thu, Feb 4	Bid kickoff	[1] and your message
Mon, Feb 8	**Last day for clarification questions**	10 working days after Jan 25: Jan 26, 27, 28, 29, Feb 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, **8**. *Assumes the count starts the day after publication, Mon to Fri, no holidays. If publication day counts as day 1, the deadline is Fri, Feb 5. The bid manager confirms.* `C: work to Feb 5`
Wed, Feb 10	Legal's expected answer on domestic content	[5]. This is **after** the clarification deadline. `found`
Wed, Feb 24, 2 p.m.	**Bids due**	Jan 25 + 30 calendar days (6 days to Jan 31, then 24 more). The time zone and submission method aren't in the summary.

The account team's March 8 is 30 working days from January 25. It is 12 days after the real deadline.

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4. What we don't know yet, who confirms, and by when

Unknown	Who confirms	By when	Why that date
Exactly how the clarification deadline is counted (day 1, holidays), the bid time zone, and how bids are submitted	Bid manager, from the full tender documents	Kickoff, Thu Feb 4	The deadline may be Feb 5 or Feb 8, and either is days away
Whether Monterrey-built panels meet the 60% domestic content rule	Legal	A preliminary view by **Fri Feb 5**; the full answer is due Feb 10 [5]	Any clarification question on this must go in by Feb 8 (or Feb 5)
Whether to send a clarification question on the uncapped late-delivery liability	Legal, with the bid manager	Decide at kickoff Feb 4; submit by Feb 8 (or Feb 5)	Changes to the standard terms can only be proposed through clarifications [2]
What Keller's "rule was dropped" claim is based on	Keller (ask via the account owner)	Before kickoff	The tender rules say otherwise, and the tender rules govern
Our position on supplier diversity (10% of the score)	Bid team. *No owner is named in the inputs; assign one at kickoff.*	Kickoff	Not covered by any input `found`
Whether "Ostrander" in the 2024 debrief is us	Account team	Kickoff	Changes how we read the debrief `A: Dev knows`
The basis for any price position (the "5% lower" has none)	Account team, with whoever owns pricing	Before pricing is set, well ahead of Feb 24	Price is 40%, and no input supports the 5%
Volumes we can realistically expect under the framework	Bid manager or account team	Before pricing	No minimum is guaranteed [2]
If Monterrey panels fail the rule: whether we can source or build to 60% US content	Operations or supply chain (not named in the inputs)	Soon after Feb 10	That leaves 14 days to the Feb 24 bid

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5. One-page briefing

Lakeshore Public Power: switchgear framework tender *For: Paul Brennan and the bid team. Kickoff Thursday, February 4. Prepared Tuesday, February 2.*

The opportunity

- A five-year framework for medium-voltage switchgear. The estimated value is **up to** $120M, and **no minimum volume is guaranteed**. Plan for this as a framework place, not booked revenue. [2]
- Scoring: price 40%, technical 35%, delivery and service 15%, supplier diversity 10%. [2] Price is not the deciding factor it was in Lakeshore's 2024 maintenance tender, where it was 60%. [3]

Deadlines (from the tender rules [2])

- **Clarification questions: Monday, February 8.** This may be Friday, February 5, depending on how day 1 is counted; the bid manager confirms at kickoff. It is our only chance to propose changes to the Authority's terms.
- **Bids due: Wednesday, February 24, 2 p.m.** That is 30 calendar days after publication. The account team's "around March 8" is wrong.

What we know

- The 60% US-made rule applies to each panel's component cost. [2] Keller's claim that the rule was dropped is contradicted by the tender rules. [4]
- The Authority's standard terms have **no cap on liability for late delivery**. [5]
- In 2024, Ostrander was 4% above the winner on price and had the lowest technical score of three bidders (18 of 30). [3] *Assumption: that bidder is us. The account team confirms.*

What we don't know

- **Whether Monterrey panels comply with the 60% rule.** Legal's answer is due February 10 [5], after the clarification deadline.
- Whether we will raise the liability cap in a clarification question. Legal hasn't looked yet. [5]
- Our supplier diversity position (10% of the score).
- Any basis for "go in 5% lower". [6]
- Realistic volumes under the framework.

Decisions needed at kickoff `B: knock-outs first`

1. Ask Legal for a **preliminary view on Monterrey compliance by Friday, February 5**. Decide whether to send a clarification question on domestic content.
2. Decide whether to send a clarification question on the **uncapped late-delivery liability** (Legal and the bid manager), to be submitted by February 8.
3. Bid manager confirms the exact clarification deadline, the bid time zone and the submission method.
4. Assign owners for supplier diversity, technical response and pricing.
5. Set price only after the technical and compliance position is clear. No price cut is agreed on the current evidence.

Who confirms what

Item	Owner	By
Deadline counting, time zone, submission	Bid manager	Feb 4
Monterrey domestic content	Legal	Preliminary Feb 5, final Feb 10
Liability clarification question	Legal and bid manager	Decide Feb 4, submit by Feb 8
Source of Keller's claim	Keller, via account owner	Feb 4
Whether the 2024 bidder was us, and the pricing basis	Account team	Feb 4
Supplier diversity position	Owner to be assigned	Assigned Feb 4

Sources: [1] CEO email, [2] tender rules summary, [3] 2024 debrief, [4] Keller note, [5] legal note Feb 1, [6] account team assumptions Jan 29.

`found` caught a planted problem `A–C` Dev changes it; see the next section

THE HUMAN PART

What Dev changed, and why

Claude found every planted problem and counted both deadlines exactly. Dev's edits add something only he knows, change what the CEO reads first and pick the safer of two possible dates.

WHAT CLAUDE FOUND: 7 OF 7 PLANTED PROBLEMS — One run

✓ "$120M" is a ceiling	✓ Price is 40%, not 60%	✓ Technical was weak too	✓ Calendar days: Feb 24
✓ Partner's claim contradicted	✓ Legal answers too late	✓ What's missing	

THREE EDITS, ONE FACT AND TWO JUDGMENT CALLS

	CLAUDE WROTE	DEV'S VERSION	WHY · FACTS
A	“Whether ‘Ostrander’ in the 2024 debrief is us”, listed as an unknown, and “Assumption: that bidder is us.”	**Dev states it: Ostrander is us. So the 2024 technical score of 18 of 30 is ours, and it goes on the page as a fact.**	The prompt never named the company, so the AI couldn't know. Tell the AI who you are, or fix it in the edit.

	CLAUDE WROTE	DEV'S VERSION	WHY · PRIORITY
B	The briefing opens with the opportunity and the scoring. The domestic content question comes under “What we don't know”.	**Dev opens with the two things that could knock the bid out before price matters: the 60% US-made rule and questions closing before legal answers.**	A CEO who reads only the first lines should see the risks that end the bid, not the size of the prize.

	CLAUDE WROTE	DEV'S VERSION	WHY · DATE
C	“Clarification questions: Monday, February 8. This may be Friday, February 5, depending on how day 1 is counted.”	**Dev works to Friday, February 5 until the bid manager confirms, and asks legal for a first view by then.**	If the earlier date turns out to be right, a question sent on the 8th is a question lost.

What only you can do — Supply the facts only you know, put the risks that end the bid first, and plan to the earlier of two possible deadlines. The AI read the rules. You decide what the CEO hears.

YOUR TURN

Make it yours

Use it whenever you must brief leaders on a subject that's new to you: a public tender, a new regulation, a market you haven't sold into.

YOUR PROMPT: FILL IN THE BRACKETS

I'm **[your role]** at a **[industry]** company. We're **[the situation]**, and **[the subject]** is new to me. **[Who]** wants a one-page briefing before **[the meeting]**, **[date]**. Today is **[date]**. Below are **[the rules or source documents, past debriefs, partner and legal notes, and what my team assumes]**.

Please help me get up to speed: **1. What I need to know**, in five lines. **2. Each claim** from **[who]**: supported, contradicted or unverified, with the input that shows it. **3. The key dates**, worked out from the rules. **4. What we don't know yet**, and who confirms each item, by when. **5. A one-page briefing** for **[who]**: what we know, what we don't, who confirms.

Treat **[the rules]** as the rules and everything else as a claim to check. Count every deadline exactly as the rules define it. Don't add facts that aren't in the inputs; if you assume something, say so. Name the input for each point.

FIVE CHECKS BEFORE THE KICKOFF

1. Every deadline is counted the way the rules say, calendar or working days.
2. Every "deal size" says whether it's guaranteed or a ceiling.
3. The scoring is this tender's, not the last one's.
4. Every claim from outside the rules has a source, or it's unverified.
5. No answer you need arrives after the window to ask closes.

MAKE IT REPEATABLE (OPTIONAL)

Save the prompt once and reuse it for every new tender or rulebook: a custom GPT in ChatGPT, a project in Claude, a Gem in Gemini, or an agent in Copilot. Some companies switch these off; copy and paste always works.

WITH REAL DATA

Tender documents, legal advice and pricing are confidential. Use only the AI tool your company approves, and follow its rules.

WHAT THIS EXAMPLE SHOWS

One run of this prompt in Claude found all seven problems planted in fictional inputs and counted both deadlines correctly.

WHAT IT DOESN'T SHOW

That every tool, setting or run will do the same, how much time it saves you, or what any real tender's rules say. Ostrander Electric, Lakeshore Public Power and their people are fictional. Legal and the bid manager confirm the real rules.

APPENDIX

Copy-ready: the prompt and the six inputs

Copy the prompt, then all six inputs, into one message in a new chat. Everything here is fictional and safe to paste.

THE PROMPT

I'm Chief Revenue Officer at an electrical equipment maker. We're bidding on a large public-sector utility tender, and public procurement is new to me. Our CEO wants a one-page briefing for him and the bid team before Thursday's kickoff, February 4. Today is Tuesday, February 2. Below are the CEO's email, our bid manager's summary of the tender rules, the debrief from the customer's last tender, a note from our installation partner, a legal note and our account team's assumptions.

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3. **The key dates**, worked out from the tender rules.
4. **What we don't know yet**, and who confirms each item, by when.
5. **A one-page briefing** for the CEO and bid team: what we know, what we don't, who confirms.

Treat the tender rules as the rules and everything else as a claim to check. Count every deadline exactly as the rules define it. Don't add facts that aren't in the inputs; if you assume something, say so. Name the input for each point.

[1] EMAIL FROM PAUL BRENNAN, CEO

Dev, Lakeshore Public Power has put its switchgear framework out to tender. $120M over five years, the biggest public-sector deal we've ever chased. Before Thursday's kickoff I'd like one page for me and the bid team: what we know, what we don't, and who confirms.

[2] TENDER RULES (BID MANAGER'S SUMMARY OF THE TENDER DOCUMENTS, PUBLISHED MONDAY, JANUARY 25)

- Five-year framework for medium-voltage switchgear. Estimated value up to $120M. No minimum volume is guaranteed.
- Clarification questions: within 10 working days of publication.
- Bids due: 30 calendar days after publication, by 2 p.m.
- Evaluation: price 40%, technical 35%, delivery and service 15%, supplier diversity 10%.
- Domestic content: at least 60% of each panel's component cost must be US-made.
- The Authority's standard terms apply. Bidders may propose changes only through clarification questions.

[3] DEBRIEF FROM LAKESHORE'S 2024 TENDER (SWITCHGEAR MAINTENANCE SERVICES)

Weighting: price 60%, technical 30%, delivery 10%. Three bidders. Ostrander's price was 4% above the winner's. Ostrander's technical score was the lowest of the three: 18 of 30.

[4] NOTE FROM KELLER ELECTRICAL, OUR INSTALLATION PARTNER

"The domestic content rule was dropped for switchgear last year, so your Monterrey panels are fine."

[5] LEGAL NOTE (FEBRUARY 1)

- We're checking whether panels built in Monterrey meet the 60% domestic content rule. Expect an answer Wednesday, February 10.
- The Authority's standard terms have no cap on liability for late delivery. We haven't yet looked at whether to raise this in a clarification question.

[6] ACCOUNT TEAM'S ASSUMPTIONS (JANUARY 29)

"It's a price game again, like 2024, when price was 60%. We should go in 5% lower. We have 30 working days, so the bid is due around March 8. A $120M deal."