

Love me tender

Fancy the idea of becoming a 'tenderpreneur'? You might want to think twice – applying for a tender is no easy matter, as our columnist recently discovered. By Eugene Yiga

What comes to mind when you hear the word 'tenderpreneur'? Many people picture a lazy businessman, stuffing his face with state contracts. But without access to people in high places, applying for a tender is no easy matter, as I recently discovered when bidding for a big writing job.

The first step was filling out a form that consisted of almost 50 pages. Never mind that this was for a copywriting gig; the non-governmental organisation to which I had to send my application insisted on using the same template they use for all their other work. This meant that I had to scroll through endless texts about environmental practices and occupational injuries and disease, all the while hoping I wouldn't be signing away the right to my firstborn son. Was I in a twisted Grimms' fairy tale? And would there be a happy ending to my sad story? Not yet, at least.

Next I had to submit a tax compliance certificate to prove I didn't owe any money to the South African Revenue Service. But I couldn't download it because the eFiling website insists on using Adobe Flash, even though, in the controversial but correct



words of the late Steve Jobs, 'Flash is no longer necessary to watch video or consume any kind of web content.' All I could do was take a screenshot and hope that would be enough.

Taxes ticked, I had to think about how to B-BBEE or not to B-BBEE. Fortunately, as a black South African operating as a sole proprietor, I'm considered 100% black-owned (you know, because I'm the boss of me) and therefore qualified for Level One status. But getting an affidavit to prove that was tricky.

First, I waited in line behind several grannies at the Post Office (because nobody uses email) only to find out that the

commissioner of oaths wasn't there (you know, because nobody comes to work on Thursdays). Then I had to go to a police station and wait patiently while an overweight officer arbitrarily organised papers on his desk, just to pass the time. Maybe I wasn't the boss of me after all.

But none of it mattered when everything was done. Yes, it took me several hours, but I had finally completed the forms, made four extra copies of all the documentation required (because nobody cares

about trees) and was happy when the courier arrived to speed my application off to its destination.

'The total cost is R137.53,' he said, confirming the telephone quote. 'We only take cash. And I don't have change.' I stared at him in disbelief, wondering why they didn't just round up or down, like Uber and every grocery store this side of the equator. Since I don't have a drawer full of 1 and 2 cent coins for occasions such as these, I just gave him R140 and told him to keep the change.

And away he drove, with my hopes and dreams. Now begins the wait for a response... and for the real work to start! 