ABB UPS success story

Aviation industry
ABB’s flexible UPS design fully meets the non-standard requirements of a major aviation customer

It is laudable to win a UPS order, but to win an order that was not initially pursued is quite exceptional. Especially if it is a multi-million dollar project, the region’s biggest project in the aviation sector. This is what happened with the recent project with a major aviation customer in the Middle East.

The new international airport organization had a requirement for a major UPS package and the contractor put the job of supplying it out to tender. However, ABB could not participate in the submission process due to the requirement of some 600 kVA UPS units (ABB’s UPS product line covers up to 500 kW in one single unit). Several manufacturers competed for the order. The contractor responsible for the project awarded a conditional letter of intent (LOI) to one of the competitors.

However, following Winston Churchill’s advice of “never, never, never give up”, ABB and its channel partner continued to monitor the project despite it already being at the LOI stage. As it happens in most major projects, the loads underwent revision and we got another opportunity on this one when the 600 kW units became irrelevant. With this change, ABB / channel partner immediately reentered the race with a series of product presentations and technical discussions. The inept handling and unclear inputs from the competition greatly helped at this stage.

Fully backed by technical support from the ABB UAE unit and the factory, the channel partner then convinced the main contractor to allow them make a joint ABB / channel partner presentation to the authorities and consultants. The presentation was a great success and opened the door for the ABB submission to be put forward.

This, however, did not close the matter as there were several complex requirements in the specifications that required very close cooperation between channel partner and ABB, as well as several technical sessions with the main contractor’s engineers, to resolve.

After a few months of close collaboration, ABB and the channel partner were awarded an LOI and, subsequently, the final order. This was the largest single order for ABB in the MEA Region.
While ABB UPS systems were a relatively new entrant into the market, it is noteworthy that adept presentation of competence in Engineering and Production could convince the client and consultants to go with us. Last but not least, because another manufacturer had already been awarded an LOI, scrutiny of the ABB bid was intense and the manufacturers who were originally shortlisted engaged in fierce lobbying.

At the end of the day, what paid off was the channel partner’s tenacity and close pursuit coupled with a clear technical advantage over the competition – for example, the proven transformer-less design of ABB UPS systems, and the compliance and flexibility of the UPS design with respect to non-standard requirements.

Technical superiority was complemented by sheer hard work – such as continuous follow-up and perseverance in replying to queries; time spent at the site to completely understand the project’s requirement; ABB’s visits and participation in various workshops conducted by the channel partner at project site; and on-time response from factory for the queries raised during workshops.