Title:
Winning Freelance Work: Beat The Skeptic

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Summary:
I've spoken to hundreds of editors, employers, and project managers about how they choose a freelancer for a job. Whether they were reviewing job applications or considering project bids, they all had one thing in common. As every one of them started to look at the applications, they had their skeptic's hat on.

How a Project Manager Thinks

Here are a few quotes from project managers and employers to show you exactly how they think.

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How a Project Manager Thinks

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1. Jaime, Editor – "The First Elimination"

My process of judging proposals is one of elimination. The first step is about a general impression. If it's vague and unconvincing – eliminate. If it's fluffed up but with no substance – eliminate. If it has real details and seems credibale – keep. Many times this process only leaves one person. That's how easy it is to get a job – be credible and convincing.

2. Jacob, Project Manager - "I only believe what I see for myself."

I read every proposal while questioning what I'm being told. Some people make things up. Most people exaggerate. Many people think they're better than they really are. I've been working with contractors for a long time and I've found that the only way you can judge a person is by what they do.

3. Randy, Project Owner – "Don't Tell Me, Show Me"

Don't try and impress me with ramblings. Lots of positive words strung together does nothing for me. You know, "I am keen, reliable, prompt, easygoing, articulate, generous, kind, competitive, athletic..." I have no reason to believe you're any of those things. If you want me to pick you for the project, you have to do more than just tell me. You have to prove it to me.

How to Beat the Skeptic

It's not about what you say, it's about how you say it. Three small changes will make all the difference to your credibility and will get you more work more often.

1. Use Real Evidence

It's always better to sell yourself with a real example.

Not so good – "I am reliable."

Much better – "You will never be left wondering how the project is going because I will provide timely updates to keep you informed."

2. Use Your Results

Telling project managers about your past results is also a good way to sell yourself.

Not so good – "I write effective web site copy."

Much better – "With my new and improved content, my last client increased their sales by 120% in the first month."

The second statement clearly communicates the quality and effectiveness of the work. And at the same time, it's likely to excite the project manager into

thinking that the same result could occur for them.

3. Be Specific

If you can use facts and figures to make your point, do so.

Not so good – "Most of my business is repeat, showing that my clients are happy with the service I provide."

Much better – "96% of new clients have returned to use my services again."

Not so good – "I have completed various similar projects."

Much better – "I have completed 19 similar projects in the last year."

Make these three simple changes to your bids and job applications and you'll win more clients, jobs, and projects.