

Title:

Your Proposal Didn't Win? Make Sure You Get Something From Losing

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490

Summary:

No matter how successful you are, eventually you will lose potential contracts. This is not always a bad thing - losing contracts can present you with opportunities to get closer to the client and get valuable feedback. It allows you to analyze what you did wrong, what was done right, and how you can improve your products, services...and proposals.

If you do lose a contract you should always ask for feedback and find out why you lost. Client's are often happy to provide feed...

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Article Body:

No matter how successful you are, eventually you will lose potential contracts. This is not always a bad thing - losing contracts can present you with opportunities to get closer to the client and get valuable feedback. It allows you to analyze what you did wrong, what was done right, and how you can improve your products, services...and proposals.

If you do lose a contract you should always ask for feedback and find out why you lost. Client's are often happy to provide feedback to "soften the blow" of losing a contract. This is especially true if there was an elaborate qualification period or your proposal required an extensive amount of preparation and research.

Quite often, the deciding factor may be price and you may lose out on contracts where you proposed a superior product or service. Everyone who has lost a contract has been told that it was lost because they were too expensive...but how often have you been told you won because you were cheap?

Even if price is the primary reason, it's good to know. It may mean that you misinterpreted the tender requirements and proposed something above the specification. Alternatively you may need to re-evaluate your pricing, or even serve to shift your focus to higher end clients who pay a premium for the

products and services you offer.

It may be they liked another company's track record better, they may have previous dealing with the chosen supplier, or sometimes you may not have fully addressed their concerns in your proposal. Whatever the reason, there is always something that can be learned.

Try and get a face to face meeting. This will enable you to get the most honest and detailed feedback possible - clients will often be prepared to say things off the record that they won't commit to paper. You can also use the lost opportunity as a chance to get to know the client better, build rapport and start to position yourself for future contracts. Any opportunity to develop a relationship with a perspective client serves to better your business base so always take advantage of these opportunities whenever you can.

Remember to also ask for feedback when you win. Ask the client why you were chosen, exactly how you stood out from the rest of the field and how your proposal could have been better - check if there were any parts of your proposal that caused doubt or uncertainty with the client.

All of these options offer you a chance to improve your products and services, eventually resulting in more clients and better business. In such a competitive marketplace you need to grasp any potential advantage you can find. Finding out exactly why you lost makes a huge difference the next time around. Be willing to look at your faults and be prepared to change - it's about what the client wants, not what you have to offer.