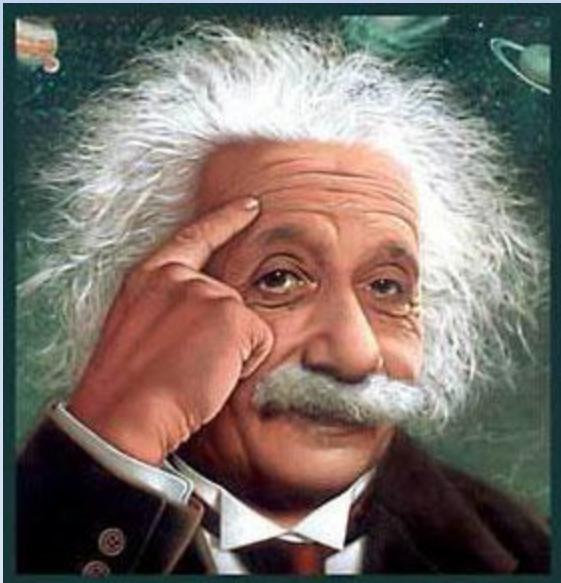


A Panelist's View of Consultant Presentations for Public Agency Contracts

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Why this topic

- Most of you are trying to find work
- Most of you will apply for work
- Most of you if you get to the interview, won't get the work.
- Most of you won't know why you didn't get the work.
- Most of you will respond to the next RFP without changing what you did in the last RFP.

Albert Einstein

(quotes)

- Definition of Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.
- We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.
- Any intelligent fool can make things bigger and more complex... It takes a touch of genius - and a lot of courage to move in the opposite direction.
- It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer.

What did you do with the RFP APPLICATION?

- Your Executive Management was fired up to go after this RFP.
- They directed the lower management staff to get the detail and information for the project.
- Management staff distributed the tasks to the technical staff.
- Technical Staff got all the work together and asked the intern to compile the work into a signal, cohesive, comprehensive presentation.
- Really, we should have just hired the intern for the job.

Why the Intern is the most knowledgeable person in the firm.

- The Intern was asked to “clean up” the errors and make the proposal look “really professional”
- The Intern “cut and pasted” from several “really good previous applications”, made ten copies and passed it back up to the management.
- Management had an administrative aide put the document neatly in a box and send them to the public agency.
- The only one who really knew what was in the proposal was the Intern.

So What Did the Reviewer See?

- Some really long narratives that sometimes referred to the project in the RFP and sometimes referred to some other project in some other state.
- The really embarrassing misspelling of “Public”
- Some brief information on an aqueduct project when the RFP was for a train station.
- A response so generic as to apply to a plane, train, automobile or submarine.

Welcome to the Interview

Here's what you need to know:

- Every five person panel has ten personalities
- Two panelist know more about the project than you do.
- One panelist only thinks they know more about the project than the two above.
- One panelist only knows one thing about the project...but they know that part very well.
- One panelist really doesn't know what they are looking for.
- One panelist already favors another consultant before you came in.
- Three others are waiting for you to make a mistake.
- One panelist didn't hear what you just said.

Surprisingly, most panels come to a consensus on their selection

- It usually comes down to two firms, seldom three who are above the rest.
- The most influential person in the final decision is the project manager.
- The PM is **not** the most influential prior to the final selection.
- What you wrote is very important to get you an interview, but what you said in the interview trumps anything written.

If you did your homework you
wouldn't have to fake your answer

- Some applicants try and answer everything in hopes of answering the key question
- Some applicants don't know the key question or when they actually answered it.
- Some don't know who their client is
- Some don't know what their client is looking for.
- If you could focus on the issues above, you would likely get more work.

So what is the Key Question?

- I have no idea, if I did I would be working for you for better money.
- Most sizable procurements have a history such as: board reports, pre-reports, internal reports, including budget reports that describe the reason and justification for the procurement in the first place.
- The project manager has a history of other projects - what was key in those projects?

Welcome to the Interview

- Who did you bring and why?
- Thanks for bringing some executive from some far city that will never be seen on the project again... I was really impressed.
- Do any of these representatives actually work on the project? Or do they just bill to it?
- Is anyone in the interview actually someone who I will work with day to day? If so why aren't they talking?

What am I looking for and why didn't you bring it?

- Three things I want:
- I want a successful project
- I want to look good
- I don't want any problems, surprises, drama or conflict
- I want to look good
- I want a successful project
- I want a really successful project that makes me look good.
- You pick the three things.

You know what I want, why are you saying something else?

- Knowing that I want a really successful project, with no problems that makes me look good. How are you doing in the interview?

Are you thinking long term or only this contract?

- Its hard to get a second chance to make a first impression.
- Remember that the contract you didn't get is your chance to show why you should get the next one.
- You think you are interviewing for one job, but you are pre-interviewing for ten more jobs.
- It may surprise you, but sometimes we really like the firm that didn't win better than the one that did.

Why didn't you use the RFP

- There is a model of your response in the RFP
- Use the format, just don't quote it, answer it.
- I really am not impressed with your marketing material.
- What's really important are the basics, experience of the team (working on the project), the firm(s), the schedule and **MOST OF ALL, PROJECT UNDERSTANDING!**

The Brooks Act means price is only an issue after the selection...

- 10,000 highly trained specialists from all over the world for a \$15,000 contract... or how I promised the world and delivered a rock.
- You sure you understand the project?
- I am sure one of those 10,000 specialists knows how to solve my problem. I just realized I can't pay for the other 9,999.
- So how do you get to the end?

It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer.

- Any intelligent fool can make things bigger and more complex... It takes a touch of genius - and a lot of courage to move in the opposite direction. (AE)
- Truly focus on the problem, not the presentation.
- Once you understand the problem, focus on the presentation.

Not many focus on why what they say matters.

- It's a tough world out there. Either you are smarter, stronger or more strategic than you have been or you will be a has been.
- Communication is not you talking about yourself, its about you telling me why what you do is good for me and solves my problem.
- Do you really believe in the work you do?
- Do you really believe that the project is worth doing?

Summary

- You are in this for the long term
- The public agency is in it for the long term
- Many panelists will be part of 4-5 selections a year.
- They remember who you are.
- Many panelist will only do one procurement a year.
- They remember who you are
- Give the panel a reason to remember you.