

“TECHNICALLY SPEAKING”

(Don't Assume Technical Superiority Wins the Sale)

At some point in the sales process, you'll have to demonstrate your competence, convincing the client that you are technically capable of providing excellent service. Generally speaking, however, a prospective client perceives that there are at least two or three other firms (perhaps more) that can demonstrate a reasonably similar level of competence. Once you've made the first cut, dozens of other factors influence the client's ultimate decision, such as personality styles, familiarity with your firm, opinions of their peers, the size of your firm, office location, etc.

Many professional service firms operate in highly specialized or highly technical areas. And it's easy to fall into the trap of believing that your technically superior proposal, solution, project approach, etc., will win hands down. Any reasonable client looking at the facts could come to no other conclusion, right?

Unfortunately, clients aren't always reasonable. And they often base their reasoning on a different set of criteria than yours. Perhaps they are more familiar with another firm. Maybe someone from their health club had a positive experience with you or your firm. Perhaps a competitor has more experience in the client's industry, has a relationship with someone who can influence the project's success (public official, regulatory agency, judge, etc.), or has more experience in a geographic area (which may or may not actually be a relevant factor). Perhaps the competitor has less experience in your industry, but the client sees this as an advantage because they want a fresh approach or set of eyes. Or maybe they're concerned that you'll bring ideas from working with their company to a competitor in the same industry. The list goes on and on. Based on these other criteria, the client feels that his or her decision is perfectly logical.

Striving for perfection and continuously looking for the best solution for your clients are admirable traits. However, don't focus on the solution to the exclusion of all else. For example, an automotive engineer strives to maximize the performance of a new model during the research and development phase. Market research, however, allows the manufacturer to assess a multitude of factors that will

help the company present the car in a package that will be most appealing to the client. Likewise, consider all factors that might affect your client's decision and package your services accordingly.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

This article is an adapted excerpt from *Selling the Fuzzy Widget: Secrets of Selling Professional Services* by Craig Cortello. Craig is the President and founder of Fuzzy Widget Sales Solutions, a sales consulting and training firm dedicated to serving professional service industries. He is also the National Sales Manager of Trinity Consultants, a nationwide environmental consulting firm, an author, an entrepreneur, a Rotarian, a husband & father, and an accomplished musician.

Craig is a proud resident and native of the New Orleans metropolitan area, and a Hurricane Katrina survivor!

For more info see <http://www.fuzzy-widget.com>

©2006, Fuzzy Widget Sales Solutions