

## Can You Afford to Continue Funding Losing Proposals?



### Are You Maximizing Your Federal Solicitation Opportunities?

Companies that consistently maximize their Federal opportunities have similar characteristics. They:

- ✓ Identify, select and pursue solicitations far in advance of public announcement
- ✓ Have rigorous capture planning activities to position themselves to compete
- ✓ Know their potential customers well
- ✓ Make investment in capture planning, solution development and proposal preparation a top priority; and assign their best talent to winning
- ✓ Know how to draw upon the best creative talent; and outsource when needed
- ✓ Have their solution architects/designers define a preferred client-centric solution and test it with clients before RFP release; and continually refine their solution
- ✓ Know their competitors and their strengths and weaknesses in detail
- ✓ Develop sound bid-no bid criteria and aren't afraid to shut down an effort
- ✓ Create proposed solutions that are "client-centric" rather than "company-centric" and don't believe their own hype

Few companies excel in planning and executing to these standards; yet waste a lot of resources in doing it poorly.

### What Did You Learn From Your Last Proposal?

Win or lose, there is much to learn from your last proposal. Your client's debrief may point to some specific details. But you can bet that almost all shortfalls are the result of:

- Lack of research and accurate understanding of your client's preferred solution
- Insufficient or poor investment of resources in solution design – the only compelling differentiator
- Weak technical and proposal skills of staff assigned to the proposal
- Lack of objective "client-centric" understanding of requirements and "hot buttons"

More importantly, what did you do to improve for your next pro-



posal? Have you sought out and invested in the best experts and resources to improve your capabilities?

### **Do You Have the Best Information?**

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Companies rarely have accurate and detailed information going into a proposal sufficient to create a compelling solution design and proposal – but believe they do. Despite meetings with clients, or even direct contract interactions, your staff comes away with meager knowledge of what the client really “wants.” We can state with absolute certainty that you don’t know your customer as well as you think you do; at least not as well as you need to predict what will affect the source selection decision. If you don’t believe it, you probably don’t live in the real world.

The term “market intelligence” couldn’t be more misleading. Most often it’s a collection of anecdotal “clips” that can seldom be pieced together with confidence.

### **Do You Have the Best Proposal Team?**

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Companies have proposal managers and technical writers (often your lowest paid non-administrative staff), and may hire outside proposal writers, but few have even one excellent solution designer that can create and articulate a compelling solution (even big companies have sparse skills in this area). Few companies have the breadth and depth of skills and experience to consistently win major proposals. You may have excellent proposal process skills and tools – but not solution design architects (which are rare in any company).

### **Will You Propose the Best Solution?**

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The single greatest failure in proposal development is failure to develop the client’s preferred solution (perhaps assuming it will emerge from the writing process – it almost never does). A solution must always be an integrated solution including product or service, method of delivery and management. Only after the total solution is well understood can meaningful proposal development occur – otherwise the proposed solution will lack coherence. Is it a solution that will clearly resonate with the client as the “winner?”

### **Can You Afford to Submit a Losing Proposal?**

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Preparing losing proposals costs almost as much as winning proposals, yet companies stick to business as usual and throw away B&P funds on losing proposals. An investment in professional proposal services from Federal Proposals can give you an immediate improvement in your proposal success and a jump-start on development of long-term improvements.

Send an email to me at [don@federalproposals.com](mailto:don@federalproposals.com) and let’s start a dialogue to win more proposals and increase revenue.

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