



ARE YOU GOING TO WIN? CONSTANTLY QUALIFY YOUR OPPORTUNITIES

Constant qualification is the process of continuously evaluating all of your opportunities to check that you still want to and should be bidding. It is possible to get caught up in an opportunity that you are unlikely to win and that diverts valuable resources and time from other more suitable opportunities.

First off, you need to understand the importance of having a formal bid/no bid process. This is to help you understand when and why you should bid, and to make sure you avoid projects that you have a low probability of winning. Sometimes a decision is made early to bid but is that still the right decision as you learn more about the opportunity?

As you get greater understanding of the specification you may realise that it isn't as suitable for you as you first imagined; circumstances change – an existing client may need a project extending and you haven't got the required resources; or you find out that the client hasn't got the budget that you thought they had. Although you've invested time in the opportunity that doesn't mean it's too late to get out.

With any opportunity, one thing you need to do is keep finding out more about it. Ask questions and learn about the clients true needs. This is done because you want to offer the client the best solution possible, but you are also finding out whether you can deliver that solution.

At regular points during the opportunity take a look back at your original decision to bid. Is it still the right decision now that you have more information available?

You should plan and use structured methodologies for qualification throughout the bidding process. This is to help you make objective decisions and to justify the time and resources spent pursuing the opportunity.

The Learn to Write Proposals (www.learntowriteproposals.co.uk) Prospect Qualification Tool gives you a methodology for making the first bid/ no bid decision as well as being able to quantify the win probability as you progress through the bidding process.

This constant qualification also allows you to see where you need to strengthen your bid. You may want to continue with the opportunity but realise that you need to take action to strengthen a particular area of your bid. Constant qualification and evaluation allows you to keep your bid focused and moving in the right direction – towards the solution that the client needs.

Qualification and preparation are the least liked processes of contracting by the majority of people involved. However, it's an accepted fact of life. No matter your personal feelings, you should lean from what you do and make any attempts necessary to better yourself.

Overall, the goal is constantly qualify to evaluate your win chances. Qualifying for those contracts give you a greater understanding of what your business needs to succeed. No other way can more effectively pinpoint the areas where you need to improve.

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