

Pre-Winning in Business Development

Business Development Best Practices Series

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As a professional working in the Business Development world, you are probably acutely aware that the reason for your existence is to Develop Business and that entails more than fine dining and golf! Pre-Winning plays a large role in your company's ability to secure the type of work, and build the type of relationships, that will produce the desired results.

Before the Pre-Win

What are the boxes that need to be checked before the pre-win takes place? Well, pre-winning is a targeted approach, so a logical first step is to determine which target markets deserve the limited time, energy, and resources you have at your disposal. The clearer you can make the target, the better your chances of hitting it become. This preliminary step is strategic, may involve SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis exercises, and should strive to map how you can position your company's current strengths to meet the needs of future market trends. Once your target markets become clear, you're ready to zoom into the next level: accounts.

Target Pre-Winning

Accounts are organizations, firms, or groups within a particular market that possess a pipeline of work. Choosing your account is just as critical as making proper market selections. Accounts, at their fundamental level, are simply groups of people. Whenever a group of people assemble with united purpose, they create a culture as well as a set of guiding principles that determine how they will accomplish the task at hand. So (as with market selection) before you decide whether to expend your limited resources, you should determine whether the culture and guiding principles of the account align with your own, and allow for a mutually beneficial relationship.

Assuming the answer is yes, then you may proceed to Pre-winning the account.

Action based Pre-Winning

Having a good understanding of how decisions are made within the account's structure is key, as well as knowing who ultimately makes those decisions. Keep in mind that hierarchy does not always equal influence.

And pre-winning is more than simply developing a relationship with the key decision makers: it's the type of relationship you form that determines whether you actually develop any new business.

So, what kind relationship should you try to develop? In short; one that compliments AND challenges the customer's way of thinking in a way that ultimately brings their organization more value. Before you can have this type of impact, ask yourself some questions:

Are you able to offer the customer a unique perspective?

Can you create meaningful dialogue that address their needs?

Do you know what the customer values, and do you know enough about the economic drivers that affect their business?

If the answer is yes, then you are in a good position to pre-win. If the answer is no, researching these topics would be time well spent.

As a business development professional, your goal is to make clear the value your organization will bring your client. If you have done this successfully, and properly identified your markets and accounts, you have pre-won (or just won...). Just call it a victory, and celebrate that victory with a round of golf and some fine dining.

Key Takeaways:

- Pre winning is a **targeted** approach
- Know who the **decision makers** are
- Build **meaningful** relationships
- Bring a **value proposition** to the client

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