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PRE-PROPOSAL ACTIVITIES

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to demonstrate the following knowledge and skills:

- Connect the sales process to the proposal process
- Be able to think like your customer
- Know the material you need before the Request For Proposal (RFP) is released
- Know what the client wants
- Know if your product or service is the best solution
- Evaluate your knowledge of the client and know if winning is probable, or at least possible, before you commit resources

The Proposal Process is Linked to the Sales Process

A good proposal is always about your client, not about your company. It should focus on your client's needs and goals, and how you can help accomplish them. Work closely with your client during the sales process and the proposal process will flow from that. When responding to government RFPs, you may not have contact with your client unless all other responders are given the same opportunity, as in the question and answer phase. So make sure you know as much as possible about the client before the RFP is issued.

Think like your customer! Make sure you can offer a solution that will increase their revenues and/or reduce their costs.

Analyze the part of your client's business that relates to your products and services. Act as a consultant to your clients, offering your expertise to help them define requirements and find solutions. This is called "consultative" selling. The more customer information you have, the better your proposals will be.

Think like your client. If you had to decide what product or service to buy and which firm to choose, what would you want to know? What would make you feel comfortable about your decision? Below are some questions you want to answer for your client.