



THOUGHTS OF THE ALCHEMIST

The EXPERT IN WIN STRATEGIES does NOT sit IN Sales?

The poor Sales Professional is trying to answer about the Win Strategy. They are leading the opportunity; they are the expert. No, they are not, and the sad thing is that usually they do not even know this. It is sad, as sitting right next to the is the expert.

I am an expert in Win Strategies, as you may be as well. We live for them; we are in our roles because we love playing this game of sales. We drive ourselves by beating the competition.

A Sales Professional, and particularly those that manage accounts, undertake a volume of small sales and bids to reach their target. Every so often, their customer wants to make a major procurement and it lands in the Sales Professional's lap.

If an Account Manager is serving a five-year contract, then it may be five years between major bids for them. For us, it is every day.

For the Sales Professional, they are successful at winning the £1 million deals, so they know how a £100 million deal will work. No, they do not. The game is the same, but the rules are different, and the competition are serious. The cost of entry (bid costs) may be £1 million for each competitor. No one is competing on a punt. This is a real battle and for real battles you need an expert in the Art of War.

The best book on building win strategies for bids, is Sun Tzu's "The Art of War". I recommend you read it. It is not easy going, but the tactics and strategies he defined are as relevant to our bids as they are for winning battles and wars.

We are the experts in the art. We tackle deals like this more than any Sales Professional. We know tactics to deploy and those the competitors will throw at us. We understand the capabilities of our army and we know how to motivate the to go over the top, one more time.

There is a term that the army use, the 2IC, "Second in Command" and this fits very well with our role. The Colonel gives the intent and the 2IC forms the battle plan to make it happen.

It is the best way to play are role. We will never convince the Sales Profession of our acumen, until they see it for themselves. We need to create a win strategy and visually take them through it. We need to have the tactics ready and we need to protect them from the tactics of the competition. We are the ones who need to get the deep thinking of winning battles to win the war. Which enemy to fight and when.

We need to lift this into a living plan of action. We cannot accept a win strategy being "*We will be highest quality and lowest price*". That is, at best, an intent, not a particularly good intent and not necessarily achievable. You certainly will not find an army going to battle on "*We will have the best troops and the most weapons*"

If you do not believe that this is part of your role, you are denying your organisation the depth of your experience. You are also missing out on the real fun in Bid Management; beating the competition.