



THOUGHTS OF THE ALCHEMIST

We live in a biNary world

The world of bidding is simple. There are only two outcomes; you win, or you lose. This is our single focus; being on the winning team and knowing that we are better than the losing teams.

The fact is when we are on the losing team, when we come 2nd, we lose by a small margin. In my studies, I have found that the difference between 1st and 2nd place is between 2 and 5%.

This is rational, if you were further behind than this, the customer would have ended the procurement race earlier. No point in a third “Best and Final” offer, if they have already made the decision.

Think about it, losing by 2%. All that hard work amounts to nothing for the sake of a couple of percentage points.

Think about it harder, if we had worked a better value proposition, fully answered the questions, made the proposal easier to read, we could have gotten that extra 3%. We could be on the winning team now.

That is the problem with the binary world, it sits in linear time. We cannot go back and make those changes now.

All we can do is learn that we do not like being on the losing team and strive not to be there again.

It is all about the little things, not necessarily the bid things.

The first mind-set of the losing team is to blame something outside their control. Human nature. The price was too high because the costs are unreasonable. The products are not good enough.

This may be true, in cases, but these are big things to change in an organisation and will not happen fast, if at all.

If we accept this, then we accept being on the losing team again.

I have performed “forensic autopsies” of bids and found that the loss is not down to the price, we did not sell the value. It is not down to the products; we did not see the quality. We wrapped it all up in a complex and badly written proposal. We talked about ourselves and not the customer. We made it hard for them to select us.

The sad news is that we could have won, just by doing the hard and smart thinking that we know is necessary. Not accepting anything as good enough, it must be best.

We can blame time, resource, products, pricing, commercials, but our competitors do not live in a utopian world, their grass is not a nicer shade of green. We all have the same constraints; it is just how we deal with them.

If you do not want to be on the losing side again, forget the blame game and embrace; *“Good enough, is not enough, because good must become better and better must become best.”*