



THOUGHTS OF THE ALCHEMIST

There is NO such Thing as an emotional WIN

The customer has made their decision and it is not us. We have come 2nd. *“Well, they have made a mistake and they will regret it!”*, *“The competition has bought the business!”*, *“They said they could not give it to us this time, but we will get it next time.”*

I suppose it is natural to try and deflect the pain of losing, but that is exactly what we have done. We have lost. No, the customer did not make a mistake, unless we lead them to it. No, the competitor has not bought the business, they were less costly than us. I do not care if we get the rebid in 5 years' time, we need the money now. You cannot pay the bills with moral high ground.

The truth is, either we made a mess of the proposal and proposition and the customer ended up thinking that a competitor was better. **Our fault.**

We could not compete on price and should have realised this and qualified out. **Our fault.**

The customer is not promising us a contract in five years' time, they are giving us soft soap and we are falling for it. **Our fault.**

When we lose, it is down to us. We need to be adult about it. We cannot expect to win all deals, but we need to accept that somewhere along the line we got it wrong, otherwise we will not learn. There are only two reasons why we lose:

1. We either did not have a proposition (product, service, commercials, financials) that could win the deal. In which case we should have qualified out as early as possible.
2. The competitor has run a better win strategy to us. That means they have been smarter than us and that hurts. I cannot stand to think that someone has been smarter than me or that they are smarter than me!

It reminds me of a comment made to me by a true Master of the game of sales, David Powell. *“Every time we win, we get a gold medal, but every time we lose, we get a lead one. The lead medals never leave your neck, they weigh you down”*. He is right, I still feel the pain and sometimes the shame of lost deals, but I have forgotten so many winning ones.

We cannot avoid the lead medals, otherwise we will all be travelling on 1:1 win rates. But we need to park the emotion, stop looking for blame and work out what we need to do differently next bid.

One job I get to do is a forensic analysis of a lost deal. I do not talk with the team; I review all the documentation against the assurance and governance rules. I look for what we did not do correctly or did not do at all. I have never found a lose to be down to someone in the team doing the wrong thing (the blame game), I find lots of mistakes we have made, lots of times when we settled for second best, lots of times when we have allowed emotion or hope to outweigh the rationale. All things we can learn from.

If you want some smart learning, I do recommend David Powell who you can find at Corporate Leadership (<http://www.corporateleadership.com>). He has also written a book that never leaves my bid library, *“Spirit Intelligence”*. Well worth a read-through and I bet your copy will become as well-thumbed as mine.

<https://www.amazon.com/Spirit-Intelligence-Practical-Inspiring-Business/dp/1920688196>