

Thinking About Self-Employment?

Develop a plan that addresses the following:

- What is your core product or service?
- What is your target market for the product/service?
- What is the rationale for a “buy” of your product/service?
- Who are the most likely buyers of your services?
- How are you going to develop business opportunities?
- What alliances can you establish for generating business leads?
- What is your competition and how do you position your product or service?
- How are you going to set up and run your business?
- What resources will you need to run your business?
- What will you charge for your product/service?
- What is your exit strategy or long-term goal?

Model for Selling Professional Services

Selling professional services is a process of:

- Development of mutual understanding about the needs, wants and expectations of a potential client via fact-finding, analysis and clarification of issues presented by the client,
- Assessment of the issues and the planning of options for effectively addressing the client requirements,
- Preparation of a Proposal,
- Presentation, review and refinement of a proposal to effectively address the client requirements and
- Commitment to a project.

The process may require a few months to several years to move through all of the stages to a successful engagement. Briefly, the process is:

Discovery

Through a variety of means, identify and clarify the issues of the client (needs, wants, expectations)

- What are the final results sought?
- What is the client’s perception of the project?
- Who are the major constituencies served?
- Who is the senior manager prepared to sponsor the project?
- How is the decision made to commit to the project?
- Is there a budget?
- What are the final deliverables?
- What would exceed expectations?

Proposal

The drafting of a proposal includes the following:

- A summation of client needs, wants and expectations
- A statement of project goals
- A recommended approach to the project that summarizes the role(s) of the consultant(s) and client commitments to meet the project goals
- A review of the process, methods, timetables and resources to be used by the consulting team to achieve the project goals
- An understanding of the fee schedule, linked to deliverables at each stage of a project through to completion

Client Meetings

One or more meetings with the client may take place to clarify and conclude the final draft of a proposal that reflects the client views and commitments.

Performance

At each stage of a project, especially upon completion of a deliverable, the client is kept advised of project status. If new issues arise, discussions with the client may require adjustment to the scope or direction of the project.

Assessment

Upon completion of an engagement, the consulting firm requests a meeting and feedback on project performance.

Summary

The development and sale of a professional service or project starts with a client interest and continues through to the completion of the project.

Two key issues to keep in mind:

- **Professional services are sold**, and then continually sold at each stage until completion of the engagement.
- The essential elements of the project are technical qualifications and client management. With competency in those areas, client needs, wants and expectations can be achieved.

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