

TEAM MEETING PRESENTATION

The client's "end game" isn't choosing one firm over another at the presentation, but rather the completion and occupancy of their facility. Then why do firms present their qualifications for doing the project, instead of presenting their concept and methodology for achieving the client's end game goals? It's a mystery that presentation specialist Ernest Burden hasn't yet figured out, so he suggests a technique that addresses the end game. Try the "team meeting" format for the introductory part of the presentation.

The concept is simple; your presentation presumes that your firm has just been awarded the project, and you're conducting your first kick-off meeting, where you address (usually for the first time) how you will approach the project in detail, and which responsibilities each team member will carry out. To illustrate this concept, here's examples of this technique, from two winning presentations.

PROJECT # 1: Facilities for 3 bank offices in a Midwestern city. The JV team consisted of the small local firm and a large national firm, with extensive experience in office building design and construction.

The Problem: How to integrate the vast experience of the large firm seamlessly with the local knowledge of the smaller firm. The team turned to the use of video for the answer.

The Video Scenario: The principal of the local firm had just flown in to an international airport, and was met by one of the joint-venture partners, who showed examples of their work on the drive back into the city. (They just all happened to be bank or other office buildings of the scope of the new project). They illustrated unique design solutions to the sites, similar to those that will be encountered in the project they were seeking.

Once they arrived at the office, the team gathered for a meeting, (which was also videotaped), to discuss the parameters of the project. The opening comment by the Midwestern principal described the 3 bank entities served by central services, their plans for the structures, and future additions on a separate site. This opened up the discussion of the client's desires, such as:

"Jim, why would they want to expand on a separate site?"

"The alternative is to build the extra shell space now, rental space, and the economics have to be tested."

"We'll do a site evaluation report and get a cash flow output."

"All 3 banks could be located in one structure, served by a centralized service core."

"The plan will be governed by the impact of the electronic office and new technologies, but we'll also be dealing with the human element as well."

"There are many decisions to be made by the client, and the missing key players on this team, are the owner and construction manager."

That was the end of the 5 minute video, but not the end of the story. They won the job, not only for their innovative concept, but for their explanation in a format that allowed the client to hear discussions of all the critical issues that solved their end game.

PROJECT # 2: The construction management of an addition to a major metropolitan area hospital, combining two teams with lots of subconsultants; a local CM firm and a national health care specialist.

The Problem: How to address and describe the complex staging of construction in this major addition to a fully functioning metropolitan area hospital. They turned to a 7 minute video, and a team meeting format for the answer.

The Video Scenario: The project managers for the two prime consultants meet at the site and discuss the problems they will face in keeping the hospital open during construction - a key concern of the client. Back in the office they engage all the key players in a team meeting, and briefly discuss all the client's key issues; minority participation in the project, access, traffic ,

noise, debris and dust, first-cost analysis, quality control, and maintaining construction activity while the hospital is operational.

Each of these are specific items taken directly from the RFP, as project concerns. What sounds like casual meeting discussion is really hard-core information, spoken and later edited, for the client's ears. Comments like; "it's so important to be sensitive and listen to what their needs are; because they want that sink in that location."

Scenario #2: One of the team members in the meeting is now on the site of another major hospital project that was similar in scope to the prospective one. He is overseeing the installation of new technical medical equipment.

The Finale: Three clients from this major hospital discussed the job that one of the JV firms had done for them in a series of short testimonials. These were not "feel good" comments; they were all directed to reinforce the claims that were made in the first part of the team meeting, which confirmed their understanding of the RFP and the client's end game. Typical client comments:

"We were impressed with the dedication they brought to the project."

"There was a senior VP located on site on a daily basis for whatever I needed."

"We've been able to open on schedule, moving 750 beds, with a minimum of disruption, ."

"We were mandated to get local people who were unemployed on the job, and we're proud of their record to meet our requirements."

The team meeting concept has many advantages; it is a more relaxed format for a presentation, since people are more comfortable sitting around a table conversing than they are standing before a client group making a presentation. The only drawback; the most successful ones are those that involve a lot of strategy, planning, preparation and rehearsal, to make it all look seamless, natural and effortless. That is what gives it credibility, which is why clients are quick to select those presentations as winners nearly every time.