

Sales Tip #3: Increase Close Rates with DRAFT Proposals

Goal: Use *DRAFT Proposal Review Meetings* to gain competitive advantages over other sales people and significantly increase your closing ratios.

Message to Sales Managers:

I had a sales manager once who coached me never to “Quote and Hope”. He believed that once the prospect receives what they perceive to be a final proposal (in whatever form), the doors close, and the sales person’s opportunity to impact the decision is over. I believe he was correct. The best sales practice defined below prevents the proposal from entering the “black hole” of decision-making, and will give your sales people a competitive advantage.

Best Practice:

Positioning an initial response as a “Draft” proposal allows the salesperson an opportunity to schedule a meeting to:

- discuss options related to pricing, terms & timing,
- be “LAST IN” to have the final impact on your prospect’s decision-making criteria, and
- collaborate with the prospect to tweak and modify the DRAFT proposal to the prospect’s complete satisfaction

Properly positioning and scheduling a *DRAFT Proposal Review Meeting* prior to submitting a formal proposal will create a formal venue for this discussion that is sure to increase your closing ratios. Your prospect should feel that he/she has contributed significantly to the resulting deliverable. Here are some more tips:

- Recommend the meeting – don’t request it.
- Clearly stating the goal of the meeting and providing a simple agenda will add to the credibility of the meeting.
- If at all possible, do NOT deliver the proposal prior to the meeting. Deliver it AT the meeting, and review it in detail with your prospect (either in person, or via web meeting if the presentation must be done remotely).

How Salesforce.com can help:

- Use Salesforce.com’s Word Merge feature to prepare a DRAFT Proposal Review Meeting agenda template. If you want an example, email me and I’ll send you one!
- Use Salesforce.com’s HTML Email Templates to formally position a Draft Proposal Review Meeting. Suggest two to three possible times to meet.
- Here is a sample email template that you can use to properly position your DRAFT Proposal Review Meetings:

Dear {!Contact.FirstName},

Based upon our conversations to date, I have prepared a draft proposal that is ready for your review. As I prepared the proposal, it became clear that we have several options to consider that may impact the pricing, terms and timing of the project. So I’d like to schedule a meeting to review the draft proposal with you in person.

The purpose of the meeting is for us to work together real-time to modify the draft proposal so that by the end of the discussion, we agree upon a scope of work and pricing model that exactly meets your needs and expectations.

My goal is to be in a position after the meeting to deliver a final proposal to you that you are 100% comfortable moving forward with.

Here are some dates and times that would work at my end:

- Option 1
- Option 2
- Option 3

{!Contact.FirstName}, if none of these options work for you, please feel free to suggest a couple of alternatives.

I’m looking forward to working with you and the rest of the {!Account.Name} team!

Best regards,

*{!User.FirstName} {!User.LastName}
{!User.Title}
{!User.CompanyName}*

I hope that this approach helps you to secure one last meeting with an important prospect that your competitors will likely not get (or even think to ask for!). I'm confident that if you get the chance to review a draft proposal and get your prospect's feedback prior to delivering a final quote, you will significantly increase your likelihood of success!

Good Selling everyone!