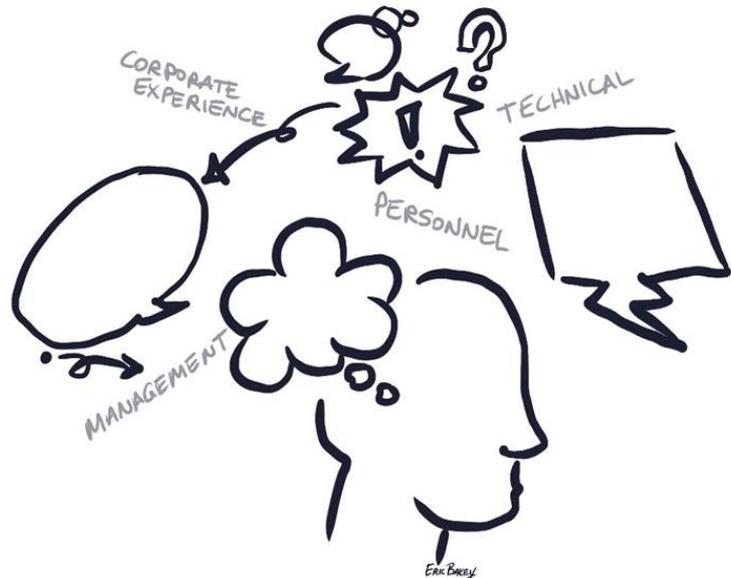


Do You Know the Key Factors Necessary to Win Your Next Competitive Pursuit and Why They Are Important to the Customer?

Key Factors

Key factors are what any company bidding a competitive pursuit must bring to the table to address the customer's hot-button issues. They are like table stakes in a game of poker. They are not the solution but help frame it. So, why key factors?

- They address the customer's hot-button issues.
- They address technical, management, personnel, and corporate experience perspectives.
- They provide a framework for your company's discriminators.
- They address evaluation criteria.
- They sell "without selling"



Again, look at key factors from a technical, management, personnel, and corporate experience perspective. You must align key factors with the hot-button issues that you identified for the customer. They have a many-to-many relationship with them as well. Key factors are not the solution, but they help to frame it. You need to have proper customer context to identify them. Address key factors to respond to both customer requirements and evaluation criteria. Very likely, your company and competitors address many of the same key factors. Introduce them early during pre-solicitation meetings with the customer. Use key factors to influence the customer in a way that the competition does not. You want to influence the customer to change the evaluation criteria in your favor. The key, though, is to do this subtly.

The requirements of a solicitation sometimes reflect key factors but usually do not. Often the customer will be communicating them in some manner to you and will be looking for them in your response to their solicitation. For example, a government solicitation might require a project manager (PM) with at least 10 years of experience working on a project of similar size, scope, and complexity; have a 4-year technical degree; SECRET-level security clearance; plus have a project management certification; and not state anything else. You know though that the particular customer also wants a PM who has walked the halls of the government agency before and knows its policies; processes; protocols, personalities, and politics. This might be important to the customer because they want to minimize the PM's learning curve in the agency and also, they know the criticality of communications management with agency stakeholders. Therefore, you ensure that your proposed PM meets these personnel-related key factors too.

The aforementioned example is an example of the customer pushing down key factors. On the flip-side, sometimes before the customer (particularly the government) goes silent and they are no longer talking to industry, you can meet with and educate them and influence and shape the deal in your favor by saying, "Hey did you ever think about doing this because..." Then all of a sudden when the solicitation comes out in a competitive bid, all of the other competitors are scratching their heads and wondering, "Where did that come from?" For example, you might say to the customer "Did you ever think about ensuring that your next industry PM has experience walking the halls of your agency and knows its policies; processes; protocols, personalities, and politics because this will minimize their learning curve and ensure better communications management with your agency's stakeholders."

The Problem

Understanding the customer's key factors and why they are important to the customer is typically something that evolves over time. Regardless, on how we obtain this information, it still must be analyzed to ensure that you have the right context of it. It might sound basic but poorly performing the activity of Key Factor Analysis in a competitive pursuit is the surest way to end up with a loss in a competitive pursuit. The challenge though is how do we best perform this business-critical activity? In particular, how do we do this in the new hybrid work environment with the same analytical rigor that we once did pre-pandemic when we were able to have collaborative, face-to-face, deep dialogue exchanges?

The Need

There is a need for a capability to help us get back to that collaborative, face-to-face, deep dialogue, and analytical rigor that we once were able to do in order to win that next competitive pursuit. A capture-as-a-service (CaaS) capability where being able to perform Key Factor Analysis in such a manner is possible is a key part of it.

The Benefits

The benefits of such a CaaS capability are that it would be able to:

- ❑ Capture key factors (i.e., technical, management, personnel, and corporate experience) that are essential to win a competitive pursuit, their importance to the customer, and their prioritization in the eyes of the customer.
- ❑ Select which customer hot button issues are addressed by a particular key factor or set of key factors.
- ❑ Allow for customer-focused psychographic analysis. For example, is the individual on the evaluation committee? Are they an influencer or decision-maker? How do they feel about your company?— Are they a company advocate or adversary? Are they a leader, visionary or egotist?
- ❑ Enable automatic generation of key factor-based narratives to support pursuit team communication and later proposal development.
- ❑ Permit push-button movement of Key Factor Analysis data to support other essential capture-related activities (e.g., proposal strategy formulation, building a strengths-based budget against the evaluation criteria).
- ❑ Allow select-identified key factors to be part of a visual blueprint that explains how you are going to win the overall competitive pursuit in the eyes of the C-Suite and the target customer.

Knowing What Is Important to the Customer and Why It's Important to Them Is Essential to Winning a Competitive Pursuit

We believe that if such a CaaS offering enabled conducting Key Factor Analysis in the manner described that a company's understanding of the customer would improve and contribute to the company experiencing a higher win rate. The bottom line if your company cannot materially prove that it knows what is important to the customer from a technical, management, personnel, and corporate experience perspective and why it is important to them, then your company will not win. For this reason, we have developed a capture-as-a-service offering for the GovCon marketplace for its use where one key part of it is the ability to perform Key Factor Analysis in a way that overcomes the challenges of the new hybrid work environment and provides the aforementioned benefits and more.

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