



bernie
trueblood



pitching pratfalls
**YOU TOOK SECOND PLACE.
CONGRATUATIONS.**

TOPIC
OF THE
MONTH

Sad but true. The sales team reports their new-business pitch results: "we came in second place." Sadder still, Management congratulates them on a yeomanly performance. Such praise can be a commendable morale-building technique. Comforting, wound-soothing for sure.

But the bloody truth is that *second place is tantamount to last place*. In other words WE LOST. Worse, we wasted company resources and talent, with no return on the investment. There is no consolation prize in new business selling.



LETS LICK OUR WOUNDS. Better than papering over a loss with platitudes, we are proponents of the Lick Our Wounds meeting. At which the pitch team and colleagues address the issues of what went wrong and identify how to improve future pitch performance.

HERE' S HELP. As an aid to facilitating your L.O.W. meeting, we offer the *Pitching Pratfalls* checklist. A real-world compilation of the top mistakes that have lead to new business losses, from a recent survey of sales professionals and coaches. Have your team members rank the top 5 areas where you missed the strike zone, and brainstorm what it would have taken to take first place.

Better yet, be proactive. Use *Pitching Pratfalls* as a tool to check your team readiness *before* you leave for your next sales presentation.

ABOVE ALL, remember that you are selling Chemistry. No amount of History, Art or Finance can overcome the need to be perceived as "people we can work well with, together."





PITCHING PRATFALLS

reasons why we lost the new-business pitch

DISCOVERY

- Neglected to have a prospect pre-meeting, so we didn't find out that:
 - It was a "cattle call," an exploratory, not a serious search;
 - The prospect's budgets couldn't have supported our service model;
 - Their location is not conducive to regular personal contact;
 - The incumbent was pre-destined to win, we were being used as a benchmark;
 - Another competitor _____ had an insurmountable competitive edge;
- Failed to understand their hidden agenda pain reason for the RFP.
- Did not determine their evaluation process criteria.
- The time allotted was not enough for us to adequately prepare.

PREPARATION

- Neglected to identify and cultivate an inside supporter.
- Forgot to profile the attendees fans foes pecking order.
- Didn't understand how our prospect goes to market.
- Neglected to do research with customers, vendors, insiders et al.
- Failed to present recommendations driven by fresh insight.
- Didn't connect our cases and creative concepts to their needs/fever/issues.

PROPOSITION

- Presented notions that unrealistically exceeded their ability to execute.
- Proposed a costing plan with no obvious value proposition.
- Failed to differentiate ourselves from competition.

CASTING

- Didn't match one of our personalities to each of theirs.
- Brought only presenters, not real people who would actually work the business.
- Didn't have an assigned presenting role for everyone on our team.

PRESENTATION

- Didn't anticipate the limitations of the room.
- Stumbled over the material due to lack of rehearsal, we "read from the wall."
- Transitioned poorly between presenters due to lack of rehearsal.
- Didn't discharge "obvious concerns," e.g.: you're too big; small; inexperienced.
- Failed to convey our personal excitement about the opportunity.
- Dwelled on our case histories process, instead of creating relationships.
- Talked about us rather than them, didn't speak their language.
- Never engaged them, or aroused them to ask questions.
- Failed to use reversals in order to understand a question before answering.
- Answered questions several times, as though we had no single point of view.
- Failed to create a defining moment.
- Didn't know when to stop.

FOLLOW-UP

- Didn't get a post-game analysis from our insider supporter.
- Failed to keep their interest kindled with day-after, continuity reminders.