5 ways small consultancies can boost their sales

I'm going to talk you through a few areas, four in total, where the average small consultancies sales process can be improved. These should lead to an improvement on your pipeline, and your conversion rates. The evidence comes from working with my own clients who are small consultancies that want to grow and study their sales process, but also interviewing around 200 smaller medium sized consultancy owners over the last 15 years. Let me talk you through a standard sale process.

Let's start with the *lead* who is a client or potential client who has shown an interest in your products or services. The next step will typically be some form of meeting or telephone call where you will typically do three things: demonstrating your expertise, defining the challenge and opportunity for the client and then qualifying them.

Once they have been qualified, you should spend time exploring the value of the project. You do this, even if you're not doing value-based pricing because you want to show that your fees are an insignificant percentage of the value that you will be achieving to the client. If you *are* doing value-based pricing, then this is the point where you would insert metrics that would measure whether the project is successful or not.

The next step is submitting the proposal with the pricing for the project. If you are unsuccessful, then there's typically a feedback loop where you will follow up with the client or potential client to find out why you were unsuccessful. If you were successful, you then get on and do the work and then ideally, a new project will come from this, or you might even get a referral from it.

This is a fairly standard sales process. It obviously depends on the client, the project and the type of consultancy you are, but this would take as standard in terms of where things can typically be improved.

Let me give you five pointers on how you can improve your sales:

1. **Demonstrating your expertise** - demonstrating your expertise as early on as possible in your contact with the client helps build trust and show that you will be giving value for money. Many small consultancies are worried they are giving away the crown jewels. I would say in today's age, information isn't a scarce commodity but expertise is, so if you can share and advise as much as possible even in the first meeting, then you're going to be building trust and potentially putting your prices up as well.
2. **Exploring value.** This involves having the conversation with the client about the value of the project not only in qualitative terms but also in terms of finances and business goals. This conversation can lend itself to value-based pricing but even if you're doing fixed pricing or time and materials, then getting the client to have a good view of the value that you'll be delivering the firm is a great way to justify your fees.
3. **Getting feedback on failure or success.** Many consultancies seek to get feedback when they fail to win a project, but many also assume that because they won the project, they were perfect. When you win a big, you should ask ‘what did the competitors do better than us in the bidding process’?
4. **Offering and communicating the right services.** In addition to your ‘signature service’ (the one which you’re best known for), you should also have an ‘entry’ service (an exploration or discovery project which costs much less), a fallback service (what you offer when the client isn’t up for your signature service), and one or more follow-on services. The cost of sales is a massive expense in consultancies and can be reduced significantly if you expand what you can do with existing clients. An important addendum here is that many consultancies assume that clients are mind-readers – most clients don’t know what their consultancies offer other than the work their currently doing!
5. **Improve your proposals.** A . They . However, - . The

Obviously, all of this will be supported by some systematic CRM system or professional service automation system that will allow you to record your pipeline and interactions with the clients throughout the journey. There's lots more information at <https://joeomahoney.com/> that is all available free of charge.