

# Case Study #2: The Pitch of Your Life

# 17

## **Your Role**

You are a senior consultant with an elite international consulting firm based in Boston. You have risen rapidly through the ranks in the Strategic Planning practice.

You were born overseas, speak fluent French, German, and Italian, and retired after twenty years in the Foreign Service.

You lead a multi-lingual, multi-cultural team of ten consultants, all with either PhDs or MBAs in International Finance or Strategy. Half of your team is in London, the other half in Boston. Several members of your team are older and nearly all have more years of experience than you as a consultant.

You are married to a brilliant French biochemist who has a strong management background.

## **The Scenario**

You have been tasked with leading the team to create and make the pitch for a major consulting contract with a multinational pharmaceutical based in Switzerland.

Your boss has made it quite clear than she expects an all-out effort on this project, and that if the contract is awarded to the firm, you can expect elevation to partner next year.

### **The Assignment**

You are having dinner with your bride on Saturday evening, and you want to brainstorm about how best to approach this problem.

**State the problem**

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**List your top 10 questions and the answers that would give you pause:**

Q1

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Bad answers to Q1:

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Q2:

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Bad answers to Q2:

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Q3:

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Bad answers to Q3:

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**11 QUESTIONS GREAT MANAGERS ASK & ANSWER**

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Q4: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Bad answers to Q4:  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Q5: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Bad answers to Q5:  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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Q6: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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Bad answers to Q6:  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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Q7: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Bad answers to Q7:  
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Q8: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Bad answers to Q8:

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Q9: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Bad answers to Q9:

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Q10: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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Bad answers to Q10:

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### **My problem statement:**

I need to create a passionate and engaged team of near-peers who will work insanely hard over the next three months to prepare for and win a very challenging consulting contract.

### **My ten key questions:**

1. Is the problem statement compelling?
2. What's in it for the members of my consulting team?
3. What do history and best practices tell us?
4. What parts/tools/personnel/monies do we need?
5. Have we "Red Teamed" this solution?
6. Who is going to do what?
7. When are we doing what?
8. How long will it take?
9. What system are we using to track progress?
10. How do we promulgate lessons learned?

### **My discussion**

You are about to ask ten extremely smart and hard-working people to work even harder on a task that may or may not pay off. And the principal beneficiary of success is likely to be you, not them. If you don't find a motivational key, a WIFM for your team members, you will not engage the passion you need to succeed.

There are significant cultural rip currents. You, the leader, are American. Your team is based in London. The client is Swiss, where four languages and cultures – German, French, Italian, and Romansh – compete. You will need to navigate cultures very, very carefully.

This project will benefit immensely from the knowledge base of your own organization and your peers/mentors. You should spend a lot of time upfront to learn how to succeed based on past experience.

Building this pitch will not be cheap. How will you make sure you have the financial and resource support you need to make sure it gets done right?

Consulting firms are often hotbeds of competition. If you are up for partner, how will you get the help you need from peers to effectively “Red Team” your pitch? How will you avoid sabotage?

Odds are high your team already has full plates. How will you parse the workloads so you don't run your team into the ground?

Finally, does this proposal have a chance for success, or are you simply spinning your wheels? Many consulting contracts are preordained and opening the floor for competing bids is merely an exercise - the game can be rigged. You need to have a long and difficult conversation with your boss to make sure that if the bid fails, that you are not professionally harmed.