GETTING WORK

Small (and not so small) company perspective
One-person consulting practice established in 1988
1.2-person consulting practice since 2005

Technical Disciplines:
- Hydrology
- Water Quality
- Computer Modeling
- Hydraulics

Environmental Media:
- Ground water
- Surface water
- Hazardous waste
Client Base

Business by client type

- Consulting firms: 45%
- Legal: 30%
- Industry: 15%
- Government: 5%
- Private parties: 2.5%
What’s a small business like?

• Hard work:
  • Few helpers for work “crunches”

• Worries:
  • Work environment (isolation)
  • Cash flow
  • Business development

• Flexibility and Independence:
  • Control of:
    • Work
    • Schedule
    • Workplace

“Working for yourself is wonderful—you get to work any 100 hours a week you want.”
Business Development Process

Answer the phone!
What is the single most effective way to get new work?

Do a good job on the work you have now!
Sources of business

- Repeat work: 65%
- Referral: 33%
- Proposals: 1.5%
- Advertising: 0.4%
Sources of business

- Repeat work: 12% (Previous clients), 32% (Previous co-workers), 20% (New clients)
- Referral: 33% (New clients)
- Proposals: 1.5% (New clients)
- Advertising: 0.4% (New clients)
Elements of “doing a good job”

High quality technical work
Attention to client
Good communication
Example of Importance of Good Communication

Low-level radioactive waste disposal site
High public visibility and controversy

Hired as “good writer” for 3 days of work
Worked as project hydrologist half-time for 3 years
Sources of business

- Repeat work: 32% (9% from previous client, 3% from large project, 20% from new clients)
- Referral: 33%
- Proposals: 1.5%
- Advertising: 0.4%
Strategic Planning

Minimal for one-person business

Traps in small business:

• "There are only two problems in the consulting business."
• Need to service continuing clients
• Difficulty in forecasting
• “Frenzy feeding”
Proposal considerations for small business

Few proposals and even fewer winning proposals
  Saying no is often not an option

Size is often a neutral factor in competing
  Technology is an equalizer

Even losing proposals help develop business
The Proposal: Preparing the Proposal

Show the Client You Can Do the Project
  Research the problem
  Define your approach and objectives
  Write proposal as Chapter 1 of the final report

Show the Client You Can Write a Good Report:
  Proposal should be well written and error free
  Proposal should be attractive
  Graphics should be effective
The Proposal: Presenting the Proposal

Show the Client You Can Speak in Public:
  Speak clearly and effectively
  Make eye contact
  Use effective presentation aids

Show the Client What You Know:
  Consider the presentation as free consulting
Example of successful proposal presentation

Proposal Interview for NY State Environmental Impact Statement

Project manager knew the process cold
Addressed the client’s needs (meet schedule!)
Provided consulting: ‘What you have to do as soon as possible to meet your schedule is…’
Hired on the spot
Summary

Small business is the same…only different

Worry about your current business first, your future business second

In a proposal and presentation, show the client what you can do

Good communication is paramount