

Case Study: Justifying the Cost Before Quoting It

A Proposal Built Around the Buyer's Arithmetic

How a B2B software company went from describing what its product did to showing a buyer what it was worth.

The Situation

The company sold an automation platform into enterprise IT teams. The technology was strong and the sales team demonstrated it well. What they could not do was tell a buyer what it was worth.

The Problem

There was no proposal. The value was described in meetings using a presentation deck, then the process moved to a demonstration and sometimes to a proof of concept. A prospect who liked what they saw had nothing written down that told them what it was worth, and nothing they could take to whoever signed for it. So the conversation came back to price, and discounting became the way deals closed.

The Approach

We built a proposal, and structured it so that value was established before cost was mentioned.

- **Opened with the customer's own words.** The challenges section restated what the prospect's own people had said during discovery, attributed to the individuals who raised them. Nothing in it was the vendor's characterization of their problem.
- **Mapped the solution to each challenge.** Point by point, against the list the customer had just read and recognized as theirs, then set out what the platform would take on and what was left for their team to do.
- **Calculated the cost offset in the customer's terms.** Fully burdened engineering time freed at L1, L2 and L3, the reduction in helpdesk tickets, and end user productivity recovered. Each line was a number the customer could check against their own payroll.
- **Put the price last.** By the time a reader reached it, they had already worked out what the alternative was costing them.

The Result

The immediate effect was on discounting. Where a customer pushed for a price reduction, the answer ranged from a nominal discount to none at all, depending on how strong the business case was for that customer. Deals that would previously have been discounted heavily closed at or near full price.

On a typical enterprise proposal the calculated cost offset came to roughly three times the annual fee.

Growth Pillars Applied

Proof of Value	Revenue Generating Assets
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