

## IFI Bidding Success Factors and Support Needs

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*arises.” “It is easier to go to the client directly and get them pumped up about the equipment?” [43]*

- Repeat business is very important to the company. *“We work very hard not to lose a client once the relationship is established.” [43]*
- The company is ethical in its marketing. [43]
- The company works hard to continually reduce prices, partly to reassure clients that they will not be gouged if they make a commitment to this companies equipment. [43]

### **Comments on professional services - price, positioning, image and differentiation:**

- Personal reputation and the past quality of work for clients are vital. Reputation needs to be maintained and enhanced many different ways, including participation on international committees and associations of various sorts. [9]
- Many developing countries have adopted Canadian, and specifically Ontario, standards and practices for their pension systems and/or securities markets. This gives Canadian professional services firms a significant advantage in bidding for work in related areas. [12]
- Providing a good proprietary *“product”*, not just a general service that anyone can provide. [29]
- For anything to do with finance connections to New York are essential to credibility – the clients would like to get New York capabilities at Canadian rates. [29]
- It helps to be working in a business area in which Canadian firms in general have a good reputation. [40]

### **3.2 Understanding the IFIs and Proposal Skills**

Marketing to the IFIs directly, on technical assistance projects, or to governments and agencies in developing countries on IFI-financed work, is highly competitive and demands finely honed proposal preparation skills.

The largest number of comments we received from interviewers, in any category, related to aspects of the competitive proposals process. These firms were selected for interview because they had been successful in obtaining IFI-related contracts. Therefore it is interesting to hear them lay so much stress on proposal writing and proposal skills. Whether unsuccessful bidders would stress these skills as much, we do not know. We do know that even the successful bidders vary in their success rates – we heard success rates from 1-in-2 to 1-in-5.

Submitting proposals to IFIs and on IFI projects is a specialized business because there are