

Thanks for your hard work, now please go away

 By [Sylvia Schutte](#)

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Every agency, freelancer and consultant in the business knows the story: you get called in to pitch on business, there's pressure to get the proposal back on a tight deadline, you submit on time and then... nothing.

You give it a few days and send an email. You wait another day and then phone. You leave a message and still... nothing.

At this point you either have to accept that you'll never hear from this potential client and you simply give up on the pitch, or you carry on phoning in the hope that your call will be answered, even if it is accidentally.



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We've all experienced this frustration. So, the next time you have to tell someone that they didn't get the job, here are three simple guidelines on how to do it gracefully.

1. Get it done quickly

Once you and the internal team have made your choice, let all the non-winners know as soon as possible. The longer you delay, the more frustrated everyone becomes. And please don't wait until you've received three follow-up voicemails to make the call. It's like ripping off a Band-Aid, you always think it's going to be worse than it turns out to be.

2. Tell them in person

Yes, sending an email is an easy way to avoid that dreaded face-to-face or telephone conversation, but have the courtesy to tell them in person. This shows that you value your relationship with them and that you respect them as a professional. Even though you're giving them bad news, they should respect you for delivering the message in person.

3. Give a reason

Prepare a valid reason why they didn't get the job so that it provides an idea of what they could have done better and how

they can improve their chances next time. Focus on the positives instead of pointing out all the negatives of why they weren't chosen. Stick to the facts and make sure you give accurate information.

If it's a matter of you just liking one candidate over another, be honest and say it's about chemistry. You need to be confident and comfortable with your chosen team so you can work well together and produce your desired results.

Sometimes, however, it's about the price. If you believe a bidder is not market-related with their pricing, your feedback should be that they are not competitive in the market. When no price is low enough, or when both bidders were equal except for price, then you can use price as an excuse.

It's never easy to be the bearer of bad news, but by doing it quickly, politely and professionally, it can be a positive experience for all involved.

ABOUT SYLVIA SCHUTTE

Sylvia Schutte is the MD of Stratitude, a full-service marketing agency that provides strategic and creative solutions focussed on making an impact on their clients' brands and their bottomlines.

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