

Pitching your ideas

Planning and preparation

There's no point in being brilliant if nobody knows about it. To make the most of your potential, you need to consistently tell people about your ideas and the great work that you do – you need to pro-actively go to them rather than expect people to come to you.

Even if you have already built a good reputation and are currently getting enough work through referral, you still need to look to the future to facilitate long-term work continuity.

TIPS ON PREPARING YOUR PITCH

Before you meet, telephone or write to prospective clients, put time and energy in to planning and preparing what you are going to say. Tailoring what you have to offer to the client's needs will help you achieve better results:

- 1** Decide on your objective/s (in order of priority), i.e. what you wish to achieve (in the context of what your audience wishes to achieve).
- 2** Assess the audience:
 - how many, what type of people?
 - what are their objectives?
 - what do they need to know about what you do?
 - what questions are they likely to ask?
 - what do you need to find out from them?
 - what kind of action would you like them to take as a result of what you've told them?
- 3** What is the best way to communicate in this instance – face to face, written or by telephone?
- 4** What subject areas do you need to cover and in what order? (What are your key messages (these will be based around your objectives)?
- 5** What research do you need to do?
- 6** What material do you need to provide to back up what you're saying (such as examples of your work and handouts for further information)?

- 7** How much time do you have to convey your message?
- 8** How will you create impact from the start?
- 9** What action steps will you ask the audience to take?
- 10** What deadlines will you suggest for the agreed action steps?
- 11** Do you need to prepare a formal presentation? Do you need to prepare a bullet point handout of the agenda and meeting content? Do you need to prepare a piece of work to perform? What props do you need? What evidence can you use to illustrate your talents and bring your work to life?
- 12** Do you need to practise what you're going to say?

If you put the groundwork in beforehand, you've a much better chance of succeeding. Remember, you may have to speak with the prospect several times over a long period of time before convincing them that they should hire you so be prepared to be persistent and creative.

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