

Contracting mindset tips: think in terms of the value you can offer your client

Contractors get hired because of the value they can add to their clients' organisation. Contractors who focus on communicating how they can add value through productivity and profits, and not just on their specific expertise, will win better contracts.

Are you interested in the model of blowtorch your plumber uses?

You're online looking for an emergency plumber to fix your leaking pipe, which is already causing your new laminate flooring to peel up and threatening to short your electrics. You find one based just around the corner, but his ad is full of the cutting edge equipment and gadgets he uses.

After calling another plumber, you spend ages on the phone as she explains how it took her years years working at night school to qualify to repair boilers. She goes on to explain that as an ex-RAF technician, she's also qualified to fix the hydraulics on fighter jets.

When you're looking for a plumber to fix a specific problem in a short time-frame, are you most interested in the one with the best tools or the most experience? Or are you more likely to favour the plumber who quickly demonstrates that, in addition to being suitably qualified to fix your leaky pipe, they've fixed many just like it before, can deal with it now and will make sure that the pipes around it are sound too.

Clients hire contractors to add value

Clients, and to a lesser extent recruitment agencies, are looking for relevant evidence from past assignments that you can apply your skills and experience to add value to their project.

Filling the pages of your **CV** with lists of technical programming languages you can use, the equipment you are rated on or even the latest IT or technology buzzwords that sound good, but don't say what you've done with them, is likely to get your CV binned on the first scan-through.

And when you are at your interview, which for contractors is really a sales meeting, don't ramble on about how you have just taught yourself the latest technology in your spare time and what cool things it can do, unless the job ad or client asks for it.

Demonstrate how you can measurably add value

Value means different things to different organisations. Find out what your potential client values and what they are seeking to achieve from the project you are pitching for. If they are a high tech, innovative company, they may value the latest Eurocodes or web languages on your CV. But most won't – that's why you need to find out first.

Always include measurable outcomes of your projects in your CV and explain them subsequently during the interview. Spell out how you applied the technical skills and experience you have and achieved X outcome over Y timescale, which resulted in Z greater productivity/higher sales/bigger profits.

Tailor the message to the client. One client may be seeking a safe pair of hands with years of experience in the programming language used in their legacy system. Another might want your experience of agile development to help stretch its own developers. But whatever the case, they will want to see what value you can add to their organisation.

Contractor mindset tip:

Clients hire contractors based on the proven and quantifiable value their skills and experience can bring to their organisation.

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