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PERSUASIVE OFFERING

CREATING BETTER BUSINESS PROPOSALS

CONTENT

SUMMARY

To remain competitive in the multinational business customer (MNC) mobile segment, the project »Persuasive Offering« has been launched within the Deutsche Telekom AG MNC Pre-Sales department. The objectives of the project were to rapidly improve the proposal quality with a lasting effect and to enable persuasiveness to become an important differentiator in gaining new business.

The main strengths on the way to success were the team's experience, the customization of the answers and the changing teams for each deal, which brings different ideas. The perceived lacks regarding the quality of proposals as well as the lack of expertise and the high workload within the team were in turn part of the weaknesses. Opportunities were to polish MNCs image and to speed up the »Create Proposal« process. New market developments, internal conflicts of interest and employee turnover were among the detected threats.

In line with principles derived from text linguistic, psychology of influence and communication theories, the results of the SWOT analysis were used to define the following main strategies:

S1 Improve customer contact and develop more customized solutions.
Benefit from a polished image.
S2 Reduce workload through establishing state of the art standards
S3 Grow the people: coach them on »how to«
S4 Continuous improvement of proposal process and tools, based on customer interviews
S5 Improved proposal quality to avoid competitive disadvantage

The planned deliverables of the project were finally set into the four project phases Analysis, Implementation, Control and Improvement and mainly consisted of evaluated feedback, updated sets of standard offering documents in each phase and trainings for the team.

Measuring the overall project success under consideration of four initially defined Success Factors, »Persuasive Offering« turned out to be a complete success:

Success Factor		Achieved
SF 1	Templates implemented	✓
SF 2	75 % improved expertise	✓
SF 3	90 % internal satisfaction and 70 % deliverables usage rate	✓
SF 4	75 % external satisfaction and quality-check for all deals	✓

In addition, the overall company and unit objectives, such as to increase the customer satisfaction and the unit's efficiency, could be greatly supported through the successful completion of the project.

Regarding the cost-benefit ratio, both decreased costs and increased revenues are easily covering up the 50.000 € project costs: The minimum of savings will be more than ten times higher than the project costs until 2015. The savings will be achieved through a decrease of 8 % in time and effort. Based on customer and expert opinion, up to 20 M € within 4 years can be generated through the 0.8 % of influence of the offering documents on the final purchasing decision.

The recommendation of future activities to be carried out will finally ensure a long-lasting positive effect of the project and an enduring top quality and high persuasiveness of MNC's business proposals.

1   INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

»We must change our company, streamline our processes and organizations in order to remain competitive in an industry that is undergoing dramatic change« said René Obermann, CEO of Deutsche Telekom AG (DTAG) during the company's shareholders' meeting on May 24th, 2012 in Bonn.

To remain competitive in the multinational business customer (MNC) mobile segment, the project »Persuasive Offering« has been launched within the Deutsche Telekom AG MNC Pre-Sales department. A crucial step to reach competitive advantage is to detect the customers' requirements and needs and delight them with high-quality services. Therefore, the first step to convince customers to purchase these services from DTAG is to provide them with a persuasive proposal. Deutsche Telekom Multinational Corporations (MNC) Unit »(...) offers an elaborate strategic approach to (their customer's) (…) mobility.« [www.multinationals.telekom.com, 25.06.2012] – In other words: MNC tailors customized, reliable cross-border solutions for mobile communications that save both the customer's time and money. The MNC Unit serves key accounts such as Continental, BMW, Siemens, Henkel or Clifford Chance.

COMPETITIVE SITUATION

A rapid progress has taken place in the competitive situation between the Pan-Western European Mobile Service Providers since 2008 [Ruud, 2011]: Both in regards of the completeness of the vision (x-axis of the Magic Quadrant) and the ability to execute (y-axis of the Magic Quadrant), Vodafone is still perceived to have the competitive edge followed by Telefónica O2 and DTAG in the MNC mobile communications segment.

Various factors contribute to a provider's position on the Magic Quadrant: »Geographic reach (network »footprint«), sales execution and the customer experience are particularly important. (…)« [Ruud, 2011]. In 2011 the three providers on this Quadrant »significantly enhanced their vision (x-axis) about where and how mobility can now make an impact in facilitating and enabling enterprise goals and objectives« [Ruud, 2011]. On the y-axis the ability to execute indicates the position of the providers. This means »how basic services are executed, (how) (…) migrations, installations, general orders, the resolution of faults (or) the responsiveness of account teams'« [Ruud, 2011] are experienced by the provider's customer.

The ability to execute starts with the official offering documents provided to the customer as they include the above mentioned aspects. In this respect, MNC has decided to launch the project »Persuasive Offering« with the aim to increase the persuasiveness of their business proposals and to attain competitive advantage.

THE IMPACT OF »PERSUASIVE OFFERING«

The way the proposal is communicated has a direct impact on the final purchasing decision and can become a competitive benefit. To make this more tangible, the decision pyramid as in Illustration 1 has been created based on the decision making pyramid a multinational company in the automotive industry has used for their mobile communications Request for Proposal (RfP) in 2011.

1 | Decision–Making Pyramid of a multinational company in the automotive industry for purchasing mobile access and services.

The basis of the pyramid is the deal makers - basic factors that simply have to match the customers' requirements if the suppliers want to be invited to bid.

The medium range differentiators include factors, which kick out the first range of suppliers. Those who match the customer's requirements then reach the top performer differentiators. The remaining bidders – mostly Vodafone, Telefónica and DTAG together with Orange, TeliaSonera and Telecom Italia Mobile via FreeMove Alliance – are then fiercely fighting to win the deal with highly competitive Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and tariffs. As the differences in these factors were marginal in the above mentioned automotive customer case, the final decision was mainly argued through pricing.

The project »Persuasive Offering« aims to increase the persuasiveness of the proposals – in other words of the offering documents. Within the indicative decision making pyramid, the factor »Offering documents« colored in magenta, has an influence of at least 0.8% on the final purchasing decision.[1] Therefore the project aim of »Persuasive Offering« is to support and even extend the overall objective of René Obermann: DTAG MNC has to create better business proposals in order to not just remain competitive but to become the provider of choice.

2   INITIAL SITUATION AND PROJECT OBJECTIVES

To detect the current internal situation and the related problems, three methods will be applied in the following: Interviews, an initial internal survey on »Persuasive Offering« and an External Analysis.

INTERVIEWS

A series of interviews with five employees has been driven at the starting point of the project. The result of these open-question interviews that lasted about one hour each, is the following:

Since 2009, the MNC Unit has significantly increased the amount of its employees. There are customary challenges, well known in the sector, such as the adequate coaching of new joiners. In parallel experienced team members have to keep their own knowledge up to date and expand it at the same time.

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1   Even though the customer stated that he would estimate the influence on the final decision making of the offering documents with about 2 %, the influence of the offering documents on the final purchasing decision has been estimated with 0.8 % due to the professional experience of the author. This corresponds approximately to deciding once based on the quality of the offering documents in 125 offerings.

According to several interviewees, time pressure, a case-by-case approach in regards of the responsibilities and missing expertise in writing, graphic design, layout and office tools lead to a quality of the proposals being delivered to multinational customers that needed to be improved.

In addition, there are cross-departmental dependencies within Sales, Pre-Sales, Marketing and Service that result in further challenges:
– Constantly changing project teams
– Changing tasks
– Different levels of expertise
– Dependencies in the handover of sub projects

Being at the heart of the MNC efforts, the Pre-Sales and Bid managers drive the entire Proposal Creation process: From developing the response, guiding the team through the various stages, ensuring the compliance with rules of governance to incorporating input from different countries and internal team members [Pre-Sales Manager Role description, 2008].

Casting an eye on the internal Bid and Pre-Sales Manager's role description, their business is especially relevant for the project »Persuasive Offering«, as they have to formulate the final bid in a consistent style and format.

Due to their workload, they asked for more manpower and defined, simple processes and responsibilities in the proposal creation phase during the interview. This is from their perspective to be achieved with only a minimum of time, effort, money and change in tools and processes.

INITIAL INTERNAL SURVEY

The second step after leading qualitative interviews was to get a quantitative evaluation of the initial situation. To achieve this, all MNC Pre-Sales employees were invited to participate in an anonymous, internal survey beginning of 2011. With a return-rate of over 80 %, the results can be considered representative.

The results of the first question were the following: Asking whether the employees were satisfied with the overall quality of the proposals they produce for MNC customers, no one was »totally satisfied«, 75 % stated »neutral« and 25 % affirmed to be »disappointed« [Initial Pre-Sales Internal Survey on Persuasive Offerings, 2010].

The second question asked for the Pre-Sales team's estimation of how the provided offers were being perceived by the customers. This question referred both to their gut instinct and the feedback they received during customer meetings. The result was even more explicit: the majority was rating the customer satisfaction as »neutral« or »disappointed«. Concerning the current

»look and feel« of the proposals, more than 60% considered it to be neutral, another 30% judged it »disappointing« [Initial Pre-Sales Internal Survey on Persuasive Offerings, 2010].

The following questions were much more about the details of the proposals. The outcome confirmed the statements already heard during the interviews. The major improvements have to happen in the communication of a clear key message and the length of the proposals. Issue number three is the readability which the majority judged not to be satisfactory. The point ranked best is the punctuality of the delivery [Initial Pre-Sales Internal Survey on Persuasive Offerings, 2010].

Another question referred to the internal and process issues such as the cross-departmental dependencies which were mentioned in the interviews by several employees. The outcome is that the work within the Pre-Sales team and even within the NatCos can be considered rather good: More than 30 % are totally satisfied with both. Another 30 % see room for improvement in the collaboration with the NatCos, more than 10 % would like to see improvements in the Pre-Sales internal team work [Initial Pre-Sales Internal Survey on Persuasive Offerings, 2010]. The major issue is the collaboration with other MNC departments such as Service, Marketing or Sales, which is ranked unsatisfactory.

The second biggest issue is the availability of the necessary information, which means templates with up to date text elements, graphics or product descriptions are not yet available [Initial Pre-Sales Internal Survey on Persuasive Offerings, 2010]. Moreover, this issue has also been addressed during the interviews and it turned out, that there are several platforms for the storage of the material, which resulted in the fact that employees do simply not know where to search for the necessary information and where to find the latest version of it.

EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

To gain an overview of the external situation, the independent information technology research and advisory firm Gartner has analyzed RfPs from important MNC customers and the match, quality and format of the proposals that answer these RfPs. To summarize, the outcome of this research concerning »Persuasive Offering« was:
–   In many cases the response is (...) too long
–   The response is repeating info included elsewhere
–   The response includes areas, which appear to come from customer material
–   Titles are unclear and could be interpreted as misleading e.g. customer references.
–   The title of the headings is not clear
–   Too much marketing in the tone
–   (...) Spelling mistakes and required edits
–   Format of Q & A inconsistent [Ruud et al., 2011]

This in turn leads to the situation that the customer might get a bad first impression and that they do not understand what MNC offers to them or even worse: they might get the wrong impression that they are not important to MNC as they do not seem to put enough effort to deliver high-quality proposals.
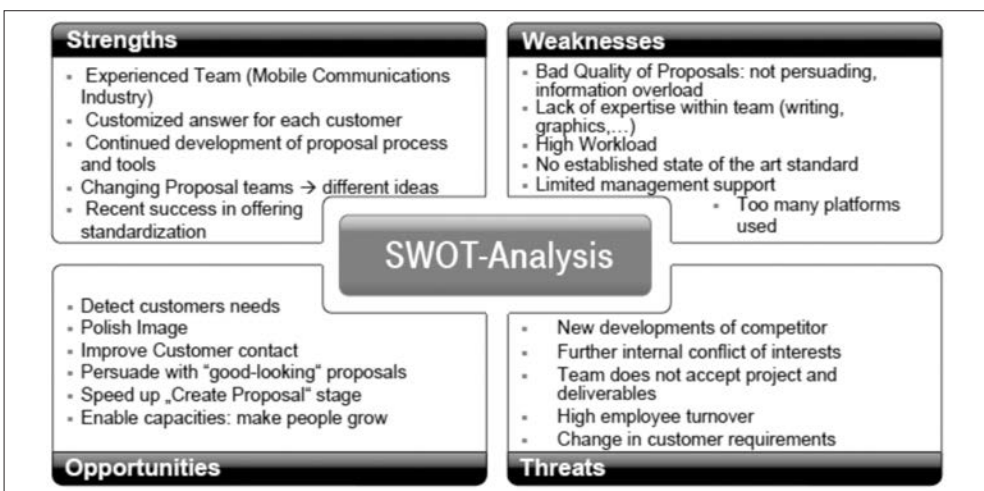
On the whole the internal lack of expertise and the weighty time pressure cause a quality of proposals that needs to be improved and discontent on the MNC customers' side. Dissatisfying these large business customers means offering the major competitors Vodafone and Telefónica a great chance to retain their own business and in addition acquire business from DTAG and the FreeMove Alliance.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The first step to resolve the existing gap was to evaluate the current overall situation and establish the extent of the existing gap. Therefore, various environmental analyses were carried out: PEST, stakeholders, internal processes and responsibilities, project environment and strategies, and a risk study. All analyses were summarized and put into a common context within the SWOT analysis.

The SWOT Analysis has been chosen as the fifth and last analysis to be driven in order to elaborate on the situational and environmental circumstances of the project. The strengths and weaknesses have to be derived from the internal environment, the company, the opportunities and threats from the external environment [Young, 2003].
Every business has strengths and weaknesses and faces opportunities and threats. As these have to be taken into account for the strategy, an overview on the SWOT analysis is provided in Illustration 2:

Strengths
- Experienced Team (Mobile Communications Industry)
- Customized answer for each customer
- Continued development of proposal process and tools
- Changing Proposal teams → different ideas
- Recent success in offering standardization

Weaknesses
- Bad Quality of Proposals: not persuading, information overload
- Lack of expertise within team (writing, graphics,…)
- High Workload
- No established state of the art standard
- Limited management support
  - Too many platforms used

SWOT-Analysis

Opportunities
- Detect customers needs
- Polish Image
- Improve Customer contact
- Persuade with "good-looking" proposals
- Speed up „Create Proposal" stage
- Enable capacities: make people grow

Threats
- New developments of competitor
- Further internal conflict of interests
- Team does not accept project and deliverables
- High employee turnover
- Change in customer requirements

2 | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the project »Persuasive Offering«.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND SUCCESS FACTORS

The first step to solve a problem is a concise description of the issues that need to be changed. For the project »Persuasive Offering« the main problems have been elaborated. The four major areas for improvement (AI) are all to be linked to each other:

AI 1 Lack of state of the art standard for proposals

AI 2 Lack of expertise within Pre-Sales team

AI 3 Pre-Sales internal discontent

AI 4 External Customer discontent

The project »Persuasive Offering« can be considered a full success, if these four areas can be improved. More concretely this means that until the project closure in June 2012 the following Success factors (SF) have to be achieved to ensure that the project was successful:

SF 1 Templates implemented

Concrete templates (Executive Summary, Cover Letter and Proposal) have to be developed and used.

SF2 75 % improved expertise

The team has to have the necessary expertise to prepare persuasive MNC proposals. A minimum of 75% of the employees have to state by themselves that their ability to create persuasive proposals improved significantly.

SF 3 90 % internal satisfaction and 70 % deliverables usage rate

Internally, at least 90 % of the team shall state their satisfaction with the project outcome; in addition, the internal acceptance should be proved through a usage rate of at least 70 % of the new deliverables as of June 2012.

SF4 75 % external satisfaction and quality-check for all deals

The external customer satisfaction has to be measured on a regular basis, which means that the created quality check documents have to be used for 100 % of the deals as of June 2012. A minimum of 75% of the interrogated customers have to state their satisfaction in regards of the proposal documents.

Therefore, the objective is obvious: the proposal quality has to be rapidly improved with a lasting positive effect. Persuasiveness shall become an important differentiator and support gaining new business that is closing more lucrative deals through retaining own business and acquiring competitor's fleets.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The overall project objective to increase the quality of the proposals and to increase the customer satisfaction and improving the win-ratio can be split into several sub-objectives. These have been defined as follows:

– Define and establish state of the art standard for MNC Proposals to improve quality and
    persuasiveness of offers
– Develop standard offering templates
– Include proposal quality criteria in standard review process: Pre-Sales internal and MNC
    Unit where applicable
– Trainings: Planning and implementation of deliverables (listed in the following)

In addition, the following concrete tools and deliverables shall be ready at the project closure:
– Templates
– Checklists (Text, Formality, Style)
– Proposal Structure and their components
– Evaluated Feedback: internal and external
– Bibliography

The project assignment also contains one optional point which has to be mentioned: »How to adjust to electronically bidding tendencies (online auctions)[2]« - as online auctions became more important in the recent years, this point can also be taken into account to cover this new tendency. When the project was launched within DTAG, an explicit scientific background was determined for the methodology: The systematic approach for »Persuasive Offering« shall be of linguistical, psychological and communicational nature.

3   STRATEGY PLAN AND MEASURES

The insufficient quality of layout, graphics, structure, text and format of the delivered proposals lead to both internal and external discontent. In turn, the insufficient quality might most probably originate from the missing text and layout expertise and the very tight periods to be handled within the Pre-Sales team, responsible for the proposal creation. Considering these facts, different sciences highlight different approaches for the solution of the problem. In the following, linguistic, psychology and communication theories will be used as a basis.

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2   Electronically bidding tendencies can be put on a level with online auctions. This means that the customer
     is providing a web based platform, on which operators can put in prices for access and services like on ebay.
     The operator bidding the lowest price is finally winning the auction and can close the contract.

EXISTING APPROACHES

The approach chosen for »Persuasive Offering« can partially be found in other proposal writing theories and trainings. One very famous example is Tom Sant's approach to proposal writing [Griffin, 2007].

»Being an internationally known expert in proposal writing, Dr. Tom Sant has been called America's foremost practitioner of proposal writing by the American Management Association« [www.tomsant.com, 15.7.2012]. With a focus on writing and syntax, he trains people to write winning proposals. In 2001, he was named the first-ever Fellow of the Association of Proposal Management Professionals (APMP) »for lifetime contributions to the profession of proposal writing« [www.tomsant.com, 15.7.2012]. Tom Sant's as well as other industry experts', scientists' and consultants' work has inspired the project »Persuasive Offering«.

Nonetheless, the scientific disciplines described in the following can be understood as both a key enlargement and a key concretion of his approach. The amplification and sharpening have occurred due to the aim to ideally meet and even exceed the internal and external expectations as well as the current and future industry standards.

LINGUISTICS

Within linguistics, one can differentiate between applied and theoretical linguistics. Examining texts as communication systems, text linguistic belongs to the applied part. Originally, text linguistic described text grammars – today it is seen in a much broader way: The focus is on the entire text. An important thing to clarify from the beginning is the fact that for the project »Persuasive Offering«, we solely talk about written and not spoken text.
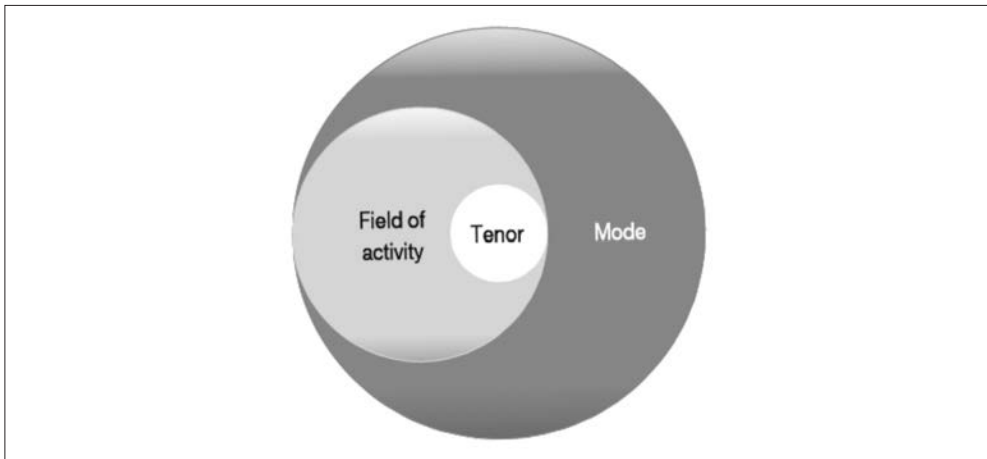
BASICS OF TEXTLINGUISTIC

On this basis, the constitutive principles of textual communication, cohesion and coherence have to be explained. Cohesion is the way in which linguistic items are interconnected in sequences. The way in which the meanings within a text are established and developed is described by coherence [Sant, 2012]. Both combined are the basis of the text linguistic theory.

To really sum up all textual criteria, the text function also has to be listed. At the very beginning, there must be a word, a lexeme. Different lexemes can be linked to a grammatical unit which consists of one or more words. Arrived at that level, we already talk about sentences, we can state, that these sentences always express something: a suggestion, a question or a statement for example.

The next level is the text level, in which the sentences described before are linked to each other in a way that makes sense. On the text level once again, we can differentiate between different types of text: descriptive, narrative, expository and argumentative [Coseriu, 2007]. These types in turn can be assigned to different kinds of texts: advertisements, novels, letters and so on. One more of these types are business proposals. Each of the types has different characteristics. First characteristic is the mode, which means whether the text is »persuasive, rhetorical, expository (or) didactic« [Coseriu, 2007]. The field of activity refers to what actually occurs. It includes the distinction of particular domains such as a lesson, a correspondence or an interview. Third characteristic is finally the Tenor. This refers to the participants, in particular in which relationship they are [Coseriu, 2007].

BUSINESS PROPOSALS AS A TEXT

Since the aim of business proposals is to sell something to a customer, it focuses on written persuasion in regards of the mode. Taking a closer look at the field of activities, the business proposals can be arranged into sales activities. Regarding the tenor it might be difficult to be concrete due to the differing relationship from the Global Account Manager (GAM) to the customer case by case. Nevertheless, the relation between the sender, who is usually the GAM or the Senior Vice President (SVP) of MNC and the receiver, is in general a vendor-buyer one. More concretely, in a business sense, it could also be described as a relation between a sales person and an IT purchaser. Illustration 3 shows that the social information within cognitive texts is provided through mode, field of activity and tenor of the text.

3 | Social information within cognitive texts is provided through mode, fields of activity and tenor of the text.

Taking this as the basis, we can now verify which aspects and key rules of text linguistic have to be respected within business proposal writing. In general – in the stage of choosing the right words, it is more persuasive to say »we will provide the best product« than to say »we hope, we can provide the best product« or »we believe«. On the syntactical level it is more effective to use the active than the passive form: »we will implement our solution« is better than »our solution will be implemented« [Fuster, 2008].

The psychological aspect, which obviously plays an essential role regarding the formulation, will also be important for the realization of »Persuasive Offering«. On the text level, where the syntactical elements will be linked to each other, a certain order of text and layout is recommended to identify a business proposal as such [Fuster, 2008]. Tom Sant proposes to start with the customers' needs, followed by an explanation on how the customer can measure success. After this part he recommends to position the proposed solution and to prove that one can do it [Fuster, 2008]. For MNC proposals this means that customer references have to be integrated into the offerings.

Taking a closer look at the semantic of headlines, which can structure texts very well, we can conclude: they should be »simple, memorable and persuasive at the same time« [Fuster, 2008]. How to do this? Keep it short, omit auxiliary verbs as they can easily be left out without changing the main message and try to bring to the point what the following chapter is all about [Fuster, 2008]. Regarding the layout, there must be a good mixture of both text and graphics: Not too many graphics and pictures as it is not a comic, not pure text, as it is not a novel and would therefore not fit to the mode, field of activity and tenor of business proposals.

Last but not least comes the spell check. This should usually be done before the red team review. »A red team review is an exercise that involves reading and scoring the final draft of the proposal as if the customer were looking at it« [Fuster, 2008]. The spell and style check should be done by a person who was not involved in the proposal creation and who is ideally a native speaker. For MNC proposals this could be done by a Bid Manager who is not involved in the case.

To sum up before leading over to the psychological part: Regarding the entire text - talking only about the very basics - it is important to create a structured text, that motivates the reader respectively receiver to read until the end and to summarize in accurate words, which leads the receiver to say »yes« to the proposed solution, to say »yes« to the whole proposal.

PSYCHOLOGY

In the psychological science environment, Robert Cialdini is famous for his popular book »Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion« which was sold more than two million times [Fuster, 2008]. Initially, an association with the word »influence« could be manipulation – which sounds rather negative. Nevertheless, persuasion is a natural form of taking social influence.

Furthermore the saying »a picture is worth a thousand words«, which means that a picture tells a story just as well as a large amount of descriptive text, should be set analyzed within a theory to allow an elaboration whether more graphics and pictures shall be used within the templates produced as a deliverable of »Persuasive Offering« or not.

Starting with Cialdini's theory, he mentions the following six weapons (W) of influence:

W1   Reciprocity

For Cialdini, reciprocity as a weapon of influence means that »people tend to return a favor, thus the persuasiveness of free samples in marketing« [Sant, 2012].

For »Persuasive Offering« this means that to highlight the offerings which are free of charge, such as the GAM or the implementation management should be the practicable solution. Furthermore, the proposal should be written and provided in the most convenient format [Cialdini, 2006] for the purchaser.

W2   Commitment and Consistency

Weapon number two is commitment and consistency: this means that people are more likely to honor a commitment if they commit to an idea beforehand. The reason for this is that they establish the idea that this is congruent to their self image [Cialdini, 2006].

Applying this weapon to the new templates does mean to use the customers' words and formulations. The key to success could be to show them that MNC accurately follows their advice and offers exactly what they need. To make that clear on one page, a good technique could be to insert a compliancy matrix.

W3   Social Proof

The weapon »social proof«, which means nothing else than that people imitate people or in other words »people will do things that they see other people are doing«. This can easily be transferred to »Persuasive Offering« through the inclusion of reference customers into the proposal and through attaching case studies to the offering.

W4   Authority

The fourth elaborated weapon to be used to influence people according to Cialdini is »Authority« This means that people will tend to obey authorities even if they are asked to perform acts which they consider to be distasteful [Cialdini, 2006]. As MNC has made the experience in the last years, an executive relationship is not to influence from a Bid- or Project manager. Nevertheless it is sometimes a or even the crucial fact in decision-making to win the deal or not. Therefore it might be worth a try to highlight the relationship on executive level if there is a good one in place. In addition, both customer references and ISO-certificates should be presented in and attached to the offer.

W5 Liking

»Liking« is the weapon of influence number five [Cialdini, 2006]. Liking certain people can also influence purchasers in their decision making process. If the relationship is good with the GAM for example, this should also be stated within the proposal. Some customers might also appreciate that there is a whole core team who takes care of them within DTAG as this shows them esteem. Once again using the customer language is paying into »Liking« as it shows both esteem and a common understanding.

W6 Scarcity

The last weapon of influence Robert Cialdini lists is »Scarcity«. At first sight this weapon seems to be logical for products in supermarkets. People might take a closer look to a product like a certain chocolate if they see that it is diminishing in the shelves and offered for a good price. Here weapon number three »Social Proof« is taking effect: People see that many others have bought that chocolate before. Applying this principle to business proposals, once again customer references are a good choice. In addition, in order to show scarcity, offers shall be customized in terms of branded with the customer logo for example. In addition, a validity clause is legally necessary anyways and shows once again the scarcity to the customer. Moreover, the eligibility of becoming an MNC customer pays into the »Scarcity« MNC is serving a limited amount of 300 to 350 customers which can also be communicated to the customer showing exclusiveness.

This last weapon might be the one most challenging to apply for the project »Persuasive Offering«, but it can still impact the decision.

COMPREHENSION OF GRAPHICS

As stated before, there is the plan to include pictures and especially graphics into the new proposal templates. The reason is that in psychology, pictures and graphics are used to facilitate the understanding of the content. As the human brain is capable more easily to understand complex situations by mentally visualizing through internal cognitive processes, it is supporting to perceiving textual content with less effort.

The reason for this is that the cognitive process [Cialdini, 2006] behind looking at a graphic is as follows:

Stage 1   Detecting it within the page

Stage 2   Have associations or distinctions

Stage 3   Identification (matching objects and relation to existing knowledge)

Stage 4   Interpretation

Stage 5   Comprehension

»Comprehension (…) is achieved, when the viewer's interpretation can be accommodated by existing knowledge schemata« [Schrader, 2008]. For »Persuasive Offering« this means that graphics can verifiably positively influence the understanding of a message. Therefore the insertion of graphics should be stressed within the templates and the trainings.

The derivations of Cialdini's weapons of influence can be linked to the text linguistic model very closely by enclosing the derived weapons in the content and presenting it according to the text linguistic rules. The additional psychological approach which has been selected for the project »Persuasive Offering« is to use the power of visualization.

COMMUNICATION

Bearing in mind the text-linguistic model and the six weapons of influence as well as the aim to partially visualize the content of the future MNC proposals, we can step into a further model based on linguistics and communication now: Karl Bühler's Organon model already mentioned in the part about linguistics above, defines the communication functions according to which linguistic communication can be described [Bühler, 2008]. Taking a look at Bühler's Organon model, the three sides of the triangle are called sender, receiver and the objects and states of affairs.

SENDER–RECEIVER MODEL

The sign »S« is in the centre of the triangle and is a symbol for circumstances and purposes [Schnotz,1994]. For »Persuasive Offering«, the sender is the MNC Unit, the receiver is the customer and the state of affair is a request for proposal. »The three main functions of communication Bühler distinguishes in his model are representation, expression and appeal« [Schnotz, 1994]. The sign between sender and receiver is the proposal: the MNC Unit expresses its solution in the proposal - with the appeal to the customer to agree to the propositions.

The Request for Proposal (RfP) can be seen as the origin of the proposal in this case. The classic Organon model is displayed in dark grey color, the model applied to the MNC proposal communication is mapped in lighter grey color within Illustration 4. Usually, one of the three functions is dominant: in case of a business proposal, the appeal function should be dominating the situation, as the customer should be summoned to buy the offered solution [Bühler, 2008].
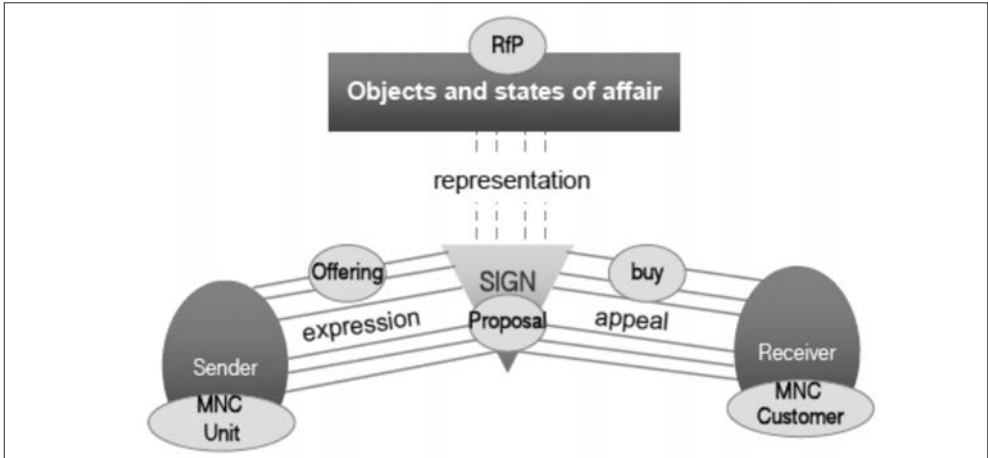
4 | Carl Bühler's Organon model applied to the Proposal Communication within MNC.

By regrouping the Organon model, the six weapons of influence and the text linguistic approach, we get a copious fountain out of the scientific theories. Deriving major principles in the following will allow all people affected by the project »Persuasive Offering« to easily understand what it is all about and what to keep in mind during the proposal creation. This solid fundament will significantly bend the success of »Persuasive Offering« forward.

THE 5 GOLDEN PRINCIPLES

In order to derive an individual approach for »Persuasive Offering«, the most important deductions out of the previously described three theories were put into a set of five golden principles. These shall bring to the point the most important criteria to improve the persuasion and through this the quality of MNC proposals.

CUSTOMIZE!

The first advice to be followed to make MNC proposals more persuasive is »Customize!« In the sense of psychology, this means to make the customer feel important.

This approach comes from the two weapons of influence »Commitment and Consistency« and »Scarcity«.

Set into practice, this means to use the customer's logo in the branding and to prioritize requirements in the same way the customer does. Using a compliance matrix summarizing in a table on one page, supports a clear communication and can highlight that DTAG via FreeMove offers exactly what the customer requires. From a text linguistic point of view, this can be even enforced by using the customer's formulation and language in the proposal.

»BE STRUCTURED!«

The second principle to be followed to offer more persuasively is »Be structured!«. This principle can be derived from all three previously presented theories: Textlinguistic, weapons of influence as well as the Organon model.

More concretely this means for the new template to insert headlines and to choose a logical order according to the customer's priorities. In addition the proposal should contain the well-known basic structure of texts starting with an introduction and closing with an ending [University of Craiova, www.scribd.com/doc/13384840/Lingvistica-Generala-Engleza, 26.06.2012].

»BRING IT TO THE POINT!«

Principle number three is playing on the point that less can be more: »Bring it to the point!« A clear communication is required within the Organon model. »Liking« and »Reciprocity« can optimally be scooped out by formulating to the point as it is an advantage for the reader. Furthermore from a textlinguistic point of view within the mode clarity is also very important.

»Bring it to the point« is both valid for the headlines, the text and the graphics within the project »Persuasive Offering«. Avoiding auxiliary verbs in headlines makes them shorter and more precise for example. Being clear about the benefits and evading too detailed information will make the proposal documents shorter and crisper.

»LET GRAPHICS SPEAK!«

»Let graphics speak« is mostly paying into psychology. The power of graphics in a psychological sense has been examined within several studies and they all have the common result that it makes the reader understand the text more easily [University of Craiova, www.scribd.com/doc/13384840/Lingvistica-Generala-Engleza, 26.06.2012].

Until now, both pictures and graphics were very rare within MNC proposals. In the future, the power of graphics shall be used more: »Let graphics speak!«. Inserting graphics will have a positive effect on the overall appearance: The proposal will look more diverse and it will facilitate the reader to understand the text [Griffin, 2007]. To explain the total savings over three years in a text for example either in numbers or percent might not be as clear as to show it in a pie chart or a bar graph where the reader can see the difference in front of his eyes.

Using pictures for example from people on the phone in the section about the dedicated team who will work for the implementation could support the liking as a weapon of influence [Schrader, 2008].

»MAKE IT FABULOUS!«

The last advice to create better business proposals is »Make it fabulous!«. Both the overall look and feel and the style and correctness of the proposal pay into this part. Regarding the look and

feel, a right proportion of text and image should be used. This means: use graphics where they support the understanding, but do not to visualize everything.

This means also to refer to the graphic within the text for example. One more crucial point to »make it fabulous« is correctness. Both in terms of grammar and spelling as well as punctuation the proposal has to be faultless. Therefore, a proof-reading by native speakers in addition to the automatic spell check is an absolute must.

By bringing the five golden principles listed in illustration 5 below derived from linguistics, psychology and communication theories, within the MNC proposals to life, the quality will significantly increase and customers will be persuaded more easily.

5 | The five golden principles to improve MNCs business.

STRATEGY PLAN

The environmental analysis as well as the theoretical foundation will be reflected within the following, as their results are crucial for the development of an overall strategy.

To derive a strategy to reach the objectives and to come a step further towards the vision, a starting point in formulating strategy is the SWOT analysis: Strengths and Weaknesses are internal to the organization and often relate to resources while opportunities and threats relate to the external environment, for example the threat of a downturn in the economy [Porter, 2008].

 »The best strategies accomplish an organization's mission by (1) exploiting an organization's opportunities and strengths while (2) neutralizing its threats and (3) avoiding (or correcting) its weaknesses« [Hill, 2010].

STRENGTH–OPPORTUNITY (SO) STRATEGY

Through combining Strengths and Opportunities, the organization's opportunities and strengths will be exploited [Dransfield, 2004].

For »Persuasive Offering«, the experience of the team plays an important role. Most of the employees have been working in the mobile communications segment for quite a while and can give useful feedback in the internal survey for example, to lead the project into the right direction. The opportunity is to increase the persuasiveness of the proposals and to win more customers through this.

The objective of the recent project »building blocks« was to create standard answers for certain parts of the proposal. The recent success in the implementation shall motivate people to not only accept but drive the change. One thing already detected through the internal survey: Although the quality of the proposals is to be improved, the degree of customization is good – this is a strength, which should be maintained and which can even be enforced through the team's experience. Therefore the strategy is to use the recent success and the experience to bring the project to success.

In addition the experience within the team shall be used more to learn from each other and enable speeding up the »Create Proposal« process. Furthermore, the changing Proposal Teams can do proofreading for each other and persuade with fabulous proposals to name one more SO-Strategy.

To contact the customer for feedback for the project »Persuasive Offering« shows the customer esteem, gives the MNC Unit important feedback and a clearer view on what the customer really wants and needs. Through more adequately offerings according to the results, MNC will improve the relationship and therefore improve their image.

STRENGTH TREAT (ST) STRATEGY

The aim of ST strategies is to exploit the strengths while neutralizing the threats [Griffin, 2007].

The great experience of the team shall be used to detect new market developments. In addition the relationship to the customer shall be intensified through implying them into the project. This should also be used as a chance to get a signal if the competition starts innovative activities.

In regards of the changing proposal teams, this can also be seen as a measure to avoid internal conflicts as everyone just has to get along with everyone. The opportunity to work in a more effective and creative environment has to be highlighted and communicated.

One further ST-Strategy is to invest in the continuous development of proposal process and tools based on customer interviews, to get to know what the customer really wants. This is a strategy to serve the customer with exactly what he requires in the future.

WEAKNESS OPPORTUNITY (WO) STRATEGY

By »exploiting an organization's opportunities and avoiding (or correcting) its weaknesses« [Griffin, 2007], WO-Strategies can be derived.

The image of MNC vis-à-vis the customer should be polished through improving the quality of proposals. In addition the workload will be decreased through focusing on the really important aspects to communicate to the customer. This can be supported by detecting the customer's needs more specifically.

Furthermore the reduction of the workload could be achieved by using less platforms and establishing state of the art standards within new templates. In addition, a strategy can be to make people grow through coaching them on how to reduce workload and focus on most important points within the proposal.

WEAKNESS THREAT (WT) STRATEGY

The last set of strategies aims to neutralize threats and to avoid or correct weaknesses [Griffin, 2007]. This, of course, is the least favorable position for a company. But to establish a defensive plan helps to prevent that the firm's weaknesses become highly susceptible to external threats.
A WT-Strategy could be to establish a state of the art standard for proposals and satisfy the employees by reducing the workload. In order to avoid competitive disadvantage, the proposal quality has to be improved once again.

The problems resulting of employee turnover can be stemmed through decreasing the amount of platforms used in the create proposal phase. The learning phase would be shorter and workload would be reduced. »Effective strategies address three organizational issues: distinctive competence, scope and resource deployment« [Griffin, 2007]. All these aspects have been respected within the previous elaboration of strategic approaches.

Considering the previously driven analysis and bearing in mind the initial situation, the focus will be set on the following five strategies:
S1 Improve customer contact and develop more customized solutions. Benefit from polished image.
S2 Reduce workload through focussing on the most important, using less platforms and establishing state of the art standards
S3 Grow the people: coach them on »how to«
S4 Continued development of proposal process and tools based on customer interviews
S5 Improved proposal quality to avoid competitive disadvantage

Within the following, the derived strategies will be set into concrete measures for the project in the project plan.

WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE AND WORK PACKAGES

The next step after the definition of the objectives and the strategy is to derive concrete measures within a project and set them into a project work breakdown structure (WBS). The WBS will be the basis for time, resource and cost estimating. The hierarchical diagram of activities and end products organizes and defines all work that has to be done within the project.

The deliverables which are stated in the lowest level of the WBS are called work packages. All work packages can finally be divided into the specific activities to be performed [Griffin, 2007].

The WBS includes all deliverables of the project »Persuasive Offering«. Each work package, which is at the end of a level, has to be four »to eighty hours of work« [Richmann, 2002].

The WBS for »Persuasive Offering« has the following structure:

1. Surveys, Interviews, Consultants
    1.1. Internal Research
    1.2. External Research
2. New templates
    2.1. First Draft
    2.2. Second Draft
    2.3. Final Version
3. Bibliography
    3.1. Internet
    3.2. Library
4. Create Proposal Process
    4.1. Current Process
    4.2. Future process
5. Trainings
    5.1. Brief Jour Fixe Trainings
    5.2. Extensive trainings on new material
6. Proposal components
    6.1. Definition
    6.2. Detailed description
7. Project Management
    7.1. Cost
    7.2. Deliverables
    7.3. Timeline
    7.4. Human resources

In the following the concrete work packages for the major level 1, »Surveys, Interviews, Consultant«, will exemplarily be listed. The two levels below are named »internal research« and »external research«. Furthermore, under these come the work packages such as to collect feedback through internal surveys and interviews.

Going one step further, for the work packages within the mid level »External Research« this means that one person has to be responsible for accomplishing the work package. The different tasks within the work package feedback customer interview could be amongst others
– To align on whom to interview externally
– To concept external Interviews
– To lead external Interviews
– To evaluate external Interviews

The work packages have to be put into a concrete timeline in order to facilitate the tracking and to identify the critical path.

PHASES AND TIMELINE

The work packages will be implemented within a certain time frame. For the project »Persuasive Offering«, different project phases have been named. During the four phases analysis, implementation, control and improvement, different objectives shall be reached through driving specific activities and providing specific deliverables. Setting the most important tasks which came out of the WBS into the four project phases, already gives a good indication on the overall project evolution. Phase one is named »analysis«. In general, the main objectives are the definition of the areas for improvement and an awareness of the status quo within phase one. The main tasks during this period are to review the current processes and responsibilities. Furthermore research through internal and external surveys as well as the consultant's review should be done and a definition on the criteria of high-quality proposals should take place. The deliverables after this first phase will be evaluated feedback, agreed criteria for high quality proposals and a clear implementation plan for the next phase.

Phase two, implementation, has the main objective to start really increasing the persuasiveness of proposals. It is therefore called implementation. Furthermore the team has to be won over and to really use the new material. The most important overall action points to reach this are to train the team, to drive further internal interviews and to create the first set of new documents.

Phase three has the aim to control the successful implementation of phase two. The objective is therefore to further increase the persuasiveness of the offers and to further get the team to use the new material. Concrete actions will be customer interviews and their evaluation as well as internal interviews and trainings and to refine the material. As deliverables the reworked, second

set of documents will be available. The team will be trained and more feedback will be available. The last phase will finally aim to improve things that turn out not to be optimal yet within the control phase. Objective is therefore the further increasement of the persuasiveness and once again to get the team to use the new material. Activities during phase four are the monitoring of the results, training of the team and final improvements on the created offering documents. At the end of the phase, the following deliverables will be available: the final set of documents, an extensive bibliography and a review of the project including a best practice sharing.

Overall, a rough timing was indicated for the four phases shown in illustration 6 below.
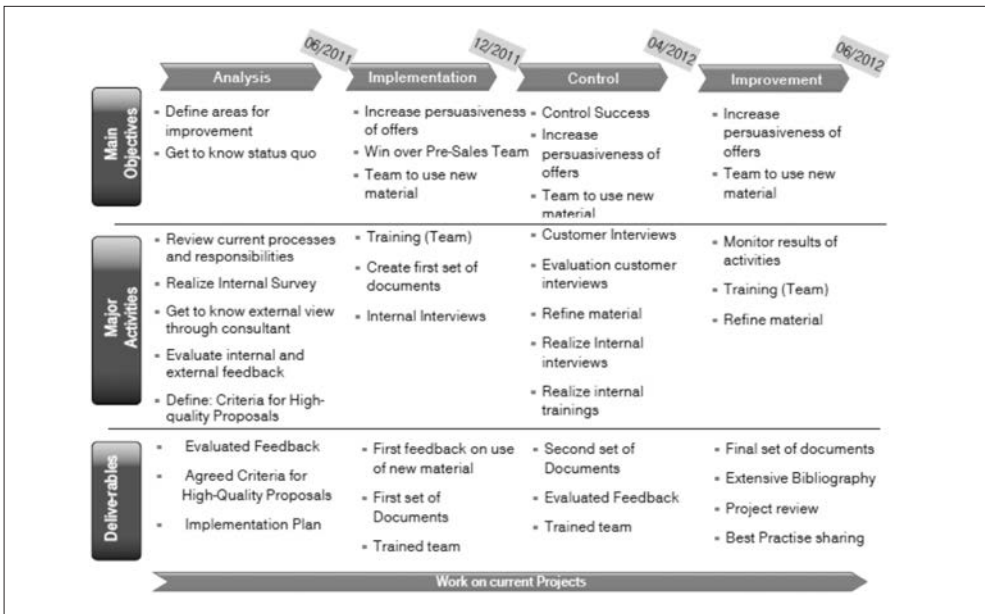
6 | The four project phases for »Persuasive Offering«.

4   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES

In order to allow a project conclusion, the highlights and lowlights shall be emphasized in the following: Unfortunately, the Global Account Managers within the MNC Unit did not initially support the carrying out of customer interviews, arguing that they had running RfPs, negotiation phases and so on. The involvement of the project owner and the project sponsors did not bring a resolution within the defined time frame - impacting on quality and time.

A main challenge at the beginning was the sceptical attitude the Pre-Sales team had concerning the project. Several counter measures were created during the risk analysis, and these turned out to be very successful: In the second project year, the team greatly supported the project and used the templates more than expected. In addition, the project manager participated in running projects and the creation of proposals. This also resulted in a very positive effect on the acceptance of the project.

OVERALL PROJECT SUCCESS

The previously stated highlights of the project partially reflected the project success. The measurable, overall project success shall be elaborated through evaluating the critical success factors which were set up earlier.

During the whole project phase the project schedule as well as the work packages have been adapted several times to reach the given project objectives within the planned budget and time. As this could be reached the overall project management was successful.

Coming now to the second part of the overall project success, it was stated before that the following four areas for improvement are crucial to be improved for the measurement of the project success:

AI 1 Lack of state of the art standard for proposals
AI 2 Lack of expertise within Pre-Sales team
AI 3 Pre-Sales internal discontent
AI 4 External Customer discontent

In order to allow a very concrete measurement which should show whether the project was successful or not, the following SMART project success factors were formulated:

Success Factor	Achieved
SF 1 Templates implemented	✓
SF 2 75 % improved expertise	✓
SF 3 90 % internal satisfaction and 70 % deliverables usage rate	✓
SF 4 75 % external satisfaction and quality-check for all deals	✓

In order to measure the results as specifically as possible, further interviews were driven both internally and externally to detect the satisfaction and level of expertise reached within the project »Persuasive Offering«. Furthermore, the team leaders have been interrogated on the usage frequency of the new templates and the expected decrease of the workload.

The outcome is the following:

SF 1   Templates implemented → 100% achieved
Overall the end product of the project, which was the deliverables, was ranked of very high and sat-
isfying quality during internal and external interviews. All required templates have been developed
and are used by the team.

SF 2   75 % improved expertise → 133% achieved
Regarding the expertise of the team in terms of having the adequate skills to create persuasive
business proposals 100 % state that their skills significantly improved since the launch of »Per-
suasive Offering«.

The critical success factor expertise of the team has therefore been reached for 100 %. As the ex-
pectation was to reach a rate of 75 % who state that their skill set increased, SF2 is over achieved.
Nonetheless, 55 % of the team state that they would like to see even more trainings with the intent
to expand their skill set.

In regards of the time pressure, the team leaders could confirm the accomplishment of 8 % de-
crease in time.

SF 3   90 % internal satisfaction and 70 % deliverables usage rate → 88% and 114% achieved
Internally the aim was to have about 90 % satisfaction, externally at least 70 %. The result of the
additional query about the usage of the new material is also very satisfying: For about 80 % of the
deals the new templates were used. The even better news is the reason why the templates have
not been used for the other 20 % of the deals: These cases were pricing only offerings for non-pri-
ority customers. In other words: the templates developed within the project are used whenever this
is appropriate. The initially critical view of the team vis-à-vis the project could be overcome through
changing the team's mind.

Regarding the satisfaction with the persuasiveness, the internal measurement took place through
interviews with the Pre-Sales employees. The 90 % of internal satisfaction could almost be reached:
More than 80 % are satisfied with the persuasiveness, the other 20 % still see some room for im-
provement. Nevertheless, it has to be kept in mind that 100 % of the interrogated employees saw a
clear improvement in regards of the persuasiveness of the MNC proposals.

SF 4   75 % external satisfaction and quality-check for all deals → 100 % achieved
Externally both the interviews were driven and some relevant questions were included into the an-
nual DTAG customer satisfaction survey. In the qualitative customer interviews, there was an overall
satisfaction with the persuasiveness of the proposals. Taking a look at the quantitative query through
the MNC customer satisfaction, about 85 % ranked the different criteria regarding the proposal doc-
uments to be excellent, very good or good in average [DTAG Customer Satisfaction Survey 2011].

It was internally confirmed, that the documents for the regular quality check have been sent to 100 % of the customers in 2012.

Overall we can state that the project was very successful both in regards of the project management and the project product. Partially, the success factors could even be exceeded.

The overall company and unit objectives such as to increase the customer satisfaction and the Unit's efficiency could successfully be supported through the successful completion of the project »Persuasive Offering«.

PROJECT COSTS AND FINANCIAL BENEFIT

The qualitative benefit which is reflected in the project success of the project »Persuasive Offering« has been described previously. The objective of this part is to quantify the benefit. To see the monetary value that the project »Persuasive Offering« brings to DTAG MNC, both the savings achieved through the project and the possible growth of sales have to be considered. This calculation is made to prove that the organization is influenced through the project in a positive monetary manner.

The project cost amounted to less than 50.000 € for 18 months and mainly consisted of personnel costs. The first way the project produces returns is in the form of reduced costs. Therefore, the Return on Investment (ROI) of the project will be evaluated for the savings. The ROI is a monetary measurement that is used to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of an investment made by an organization. »Investments take many forms – financial, human capital, equipment, and training programs – to name just a few« [Abudi, www.ginaabudi.com/articles/using-return-on-investment-to-evaluate-projectmanagement-training/, 21.06.2012]. The main costs for the project are personnel costs. In order to further develop the project, update templates and so on, an additional yearly investment of 50 Bid Management working hours have to be calculated as an investment for the upcoming years.

According to discussions with managers and team leaders, a decrease of 8 % in time could be achieved through the project. This results in annual savings of approximately more than 100.000 €. This means the minimum savings until 2015 will be ten times higher than the project costs. In 2011, there were no savings achieved yet as the deliverables were not finalized yet and some training sessions were still to be held. As the savings are higher than the costs as of 2012, the amortization takes place within this year.

The second way the project »Persuasive Offering« can produce returns is through increased revenues. By investigating in an increased persuasiveness, the ROI for the increased persuasiveness will be the additional revenue that the project generates minus the costs taken to produce and promote the more persuasive offerings. Even though the impact on the win-rate is hard to estimate, the following correlation has been chosen to bring the impact into a concrete number:

DTAG MNC serves 300 customers through FreeMove. Supposing an overall annual revenue of 750 Million Euro, the project is adding value to 3 Billion € of the total revenue in the medium term.[3] Considering now the decision making pyramid as presented in the beginning of the text, the influence of the offering documents on the final buying decision is 0,8 %.[4] The portion of the revenue generated through the project can be up to 20 Million € within four years.[5]

As the project »Persuasive Offering« both decreases costs and increases revenues, it definitely brings added value to DTAG MNC. However it is challenging to bring the value into concrete, reliable figures as factors such as the polished image through the project are hardly tangible.

However, the financial benefit of »Persuasive Offering« is tremendous compared to the budget of less than 50.000 € that had to be invested.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES

In order to guarantee the long-lasting positive effect of the project, the following seven future activities should be carried out:

Alignment with FreeMove
The first activity is to further uncover synergies and drive common activities with FreeMove where appropriate. For that, keeping on track the activities regarding the improvement of the offering documents both DTAG internal and FreeMove wide should be the major task. A quarterly alignment with FreeMove via conference call is sufficient and the preparation and including the wrap-up of the call, the whole activity should not take longer than eight working hours a year.

Updating process
Activity number two, which will be much more time-consuming as the first activity, is the execution of the updating process. The documents and deliverables in general were up-to-date when handed over to the project owner. Nonetheless, due to updates on products and services, a regular update will be necessary to ensure that the deliverables are contemporary. The suggestion is a biyearly review-session.

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3   The formula used to calculate the Return on Investment is the following: ROI = Change in Operations Cost / Costs of Project (Source: Six Sigma ROI Calculation).

4   For FreeMove offerings, there is always one of the four operators in the lead of a deal. Usually this is depending on both the location of the headquarter and the amount of SIM cards of the customer.

5   Medium term means a period of four years. This duration has been chosen according to the time interval between a contract signature and the re-launch of an RfP.

The assigned person will have to meet the marketing proposition managers who take care of the products and services as well as the business consultants who have the input for expense management solutions for example. After catching up with them individually they have the responsibility to provide the person in charge within Pre-Sales with appropriate documents out of which the Pre-Sales manager will create the new input for the templates according to the five golden principles. The final steps of this process are the proof-reading of the updated version through a native speaker within the team and the presentation of the new templates within the Pre-Sales team Jour Fixe. The whole process is drafted in illustration 7 below.
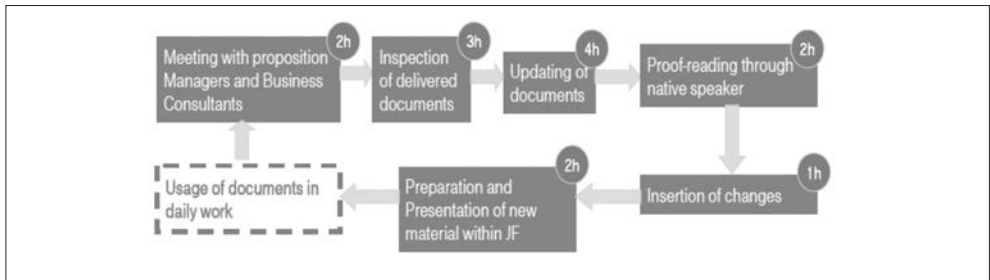
7 | Suggested updating process for deliverables.

The total expenditure of time for this process has been calculated with 14 hours. Driving this process twice a year, the total amount of hours to be calculated for the process is 28 hours a year. As the process has been experienced several times during the project phase, the duration can be evaluated realistically. A special tracking document for requested material to the two entities marketing and business consultants has in addition been developed to facilitate escalation processes.

Further trainings
Measure number four to ensure a long-lasting effect of the project »Persuasive Offering« is to provide the Pre-Sales team with further training possibilities. As within MNC teams have both team trainings and individual trainings, at least one of the trainings per year should be somehow linked to enlarge the skill-set of the team in regards of how to create better proposals. During the best practice session, the team has already stated that further trainings would be required. Therefore their needs shall intensively be considered when the trainings will be selected.

Bibliography
An extensive bibliography on how to create better business proposals was one of the deliverables of the project. The material has been stored on the shared drive and is accessible to all Pre-Sales managers. As their interest has been aroused on this topic, the strong recommendation is to use the material and to read it. In addition a library could be created in the future in one of the offices to give the Pre-Sales managers the possibility to access latest relevant literature.
Regular Quality Checks

Furthermore one important activity which is combined with necessary man power is the evaluation of regular quality checks. The regular quality checks which are now included into the proposal process have to be evaluated and adequate measures have to be derived to ensure the continuous improvement. The recommendation for the evaluation should jointly take place with the Sales colleagues. Every Pre-Sales manager is responsible for reviewing the customer's answers of those customer deals he was working on.

One Pre-Sales resource shall in addition collect the evaluations and provide the management on a quarterly basis with a brief overview on the outcome.

Proposal associations and forums

The next recommended activity goes once again to an assigned Pre-Sales manager. The objective of this activity is to stay on track on long-term developments on the topic of persuasive offerings. This could be achieved through joining a proposal association or at least forums or groups within social networks. This will broaden the view and make new ideas through seeing developments also in other industries accessible. Interesting groups to be recommended to join are »APMP« or »Bid management/ Proposal Management« within Xing and »APMP« or »Bid and Proposal Management« within the social network LinkedIn.

Assigned responsible within Pre-Sales

The key to successfully implement these recommended activities will be a human resource designated to be the responsible Pre-Sales manager for the activities. Therefore it is absolutely crucial to do three things when assigning the resource:

– Verify the qualifications of the team members for this task
– Ask within the team who would in general be interested in this task
– Implement these activities into the assigned persons targets

The costs for these resources driving the above listed future activities have already been included into the previous calculation of the financial benefits. In total, 50 working hours per year shall be owed.
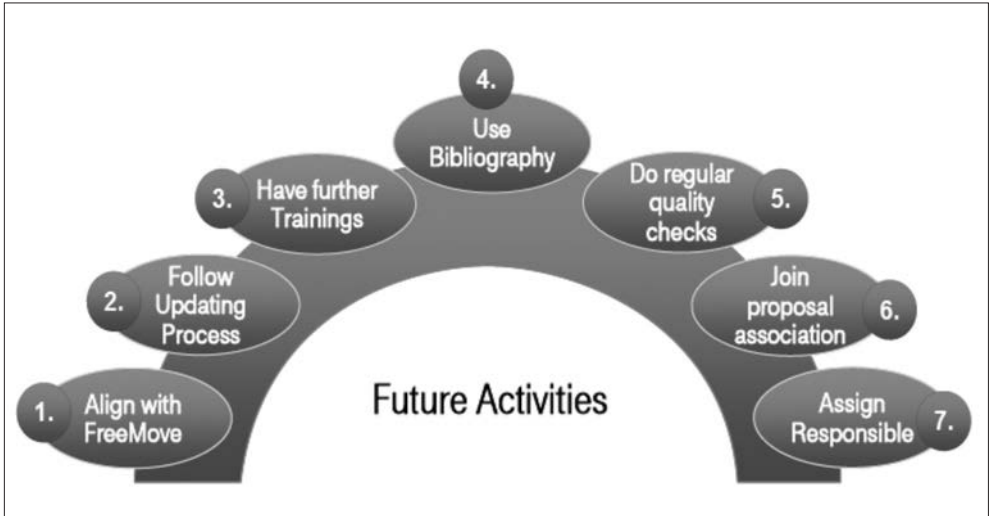
8 | The 7 recommended activities to ensure long-term success of the project.

Through bringing to life the recommended activities, the project success of »Persuasive Offering« will be made even more sustainable. This will finally result in an enduring top quality and persuasiveness of MNC's business proposals and therefore pay into René Obermann's strong mission to »remain competitive in an industry that is undergoing dramatic change«.

APPENDIX

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APMP   Association of Proposal Management Professionals

DTAG   Deutsche Telekom AG

EU   Europe

GAM   Global Account Manager

FM   FreeMove Alliance

IBU   International Business Unit

MNC   Multinational Corporations

NatCos National Companies

PEST   Political, Economical, Social, Technological

R&D   Research and Development

RfP   Request for Proposal

SLA   Service Level Agreement

SMART   Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time bound

SVP   Senior Vice President

SWOT   Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

VP   Vice President

WBS   Work breakdown structure