



**SPAC
20**



RSVP for the Win Party!

David M. Stearman



A Heresy



A Heresy

Proposals don't win!



A Heresy

Proposals don't win!

(Good news: They don't lose, either.)

Proposals Don't Win (or lose)





Proposals Don't Win (or lose)

- A proposal is an **artifact**—the tangible expression of a specific offer.



Proposals Don't Win (or lose)

- A proposal is an **artifact**—the tangible expression of a specific offer.
- Each **offer** is based on a strategy.

Proposals Don't Win (or lose)

- A proposal is an **artifact**—the tangible expression of a specific offer.
- Each **offer** is based on a strategy.
- Winning or losing is determined primarily by the **strategy**, not the artifact.

Proposals Don't Win (or lose)

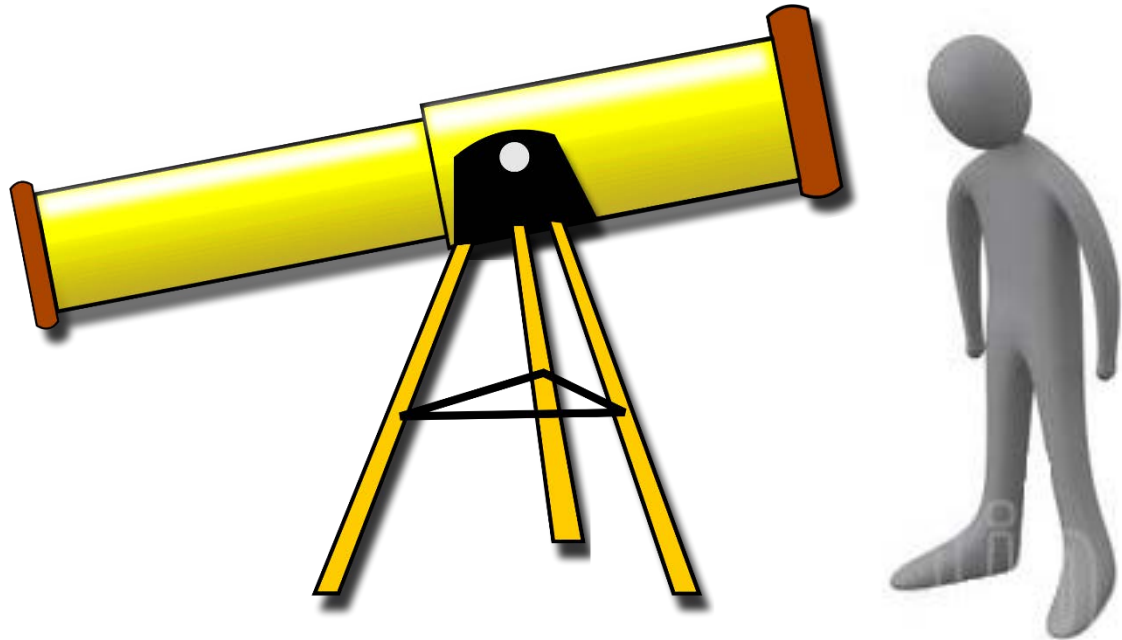
- A proposal is an **artifact**—the tangible expression of a specific offer.
- Each **offer** is based on a strategy.
- Winning or losing is determined primarily by the **strategy**, not the artifact.



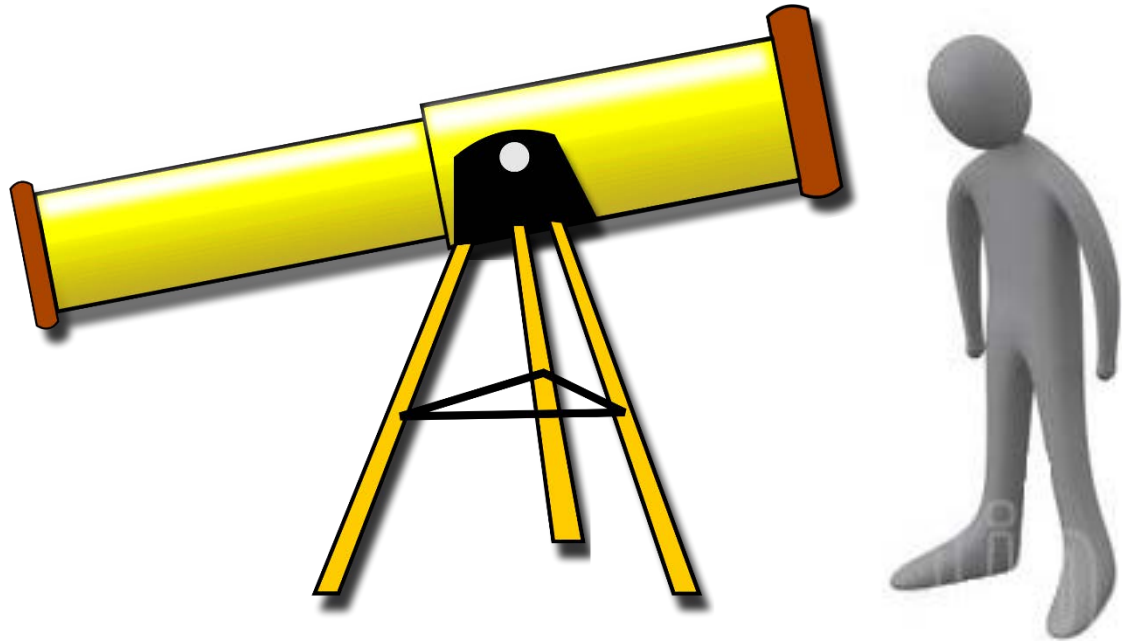


The Wrong End of the Telescope

The Wrong End of the Telescope



The Wrong End of the Telescope



- Focusing on the proposal as the sole reason for winning or losing is like looking through the wrong end of a telescope.



What Is Strategy?



What Is Strategy?

- Plans



What Is Strategy?

- Plans
- Processes



What Is Strategy?

- Plans
- Processes
- Tasks



What Is Strategy?

- Plans
- Processes
- Tasks
- Schedules



What Is Strategy?

- Plans
- Processes
- Tasks
- Schedules
- Decisions



What Is Strategy?

- Plans
- Processes
- Tasks
- Schedules
- Decisions
- Assumptions

What Is Strategy?

- Plans
- Processes
- Tasks
- Schedules
- Decisions
- Assumptions
- Brainstorming

What Is Strategy?

- Plans
- Processes
- Tasks
- Schedules
- Decisions
- Assumptions
- Brainstorming
- Analysis

What Is Strategy?

- Plans
- Processes
- Tasks
- Schedules
- Decisions
- Assumptions
- Brainstorming
- Analysis
- Risk

What Is Strategy?

- Plans
- Processes
- Tasks
- Schedules
- Decisions
- Assumptions
- Brainstorming
- Analysis
- Risk
- Opportunity



What Is Proposal Strategy?



What Is Proposal Strategy?

- Market Research



What Is Proposal Strategy?

- Market Research
- Lead Qualification



What Is Proposal Strategy?

- Market Research
- Lead Qualification
- Opportunity Assessment



What Is Proposal Strategy?

- Market Research
- Lead Qualification
- Opportunity Assessment
- Customer Intelligence



What Is Proposal Strategy?

- Market Research
- Lead Qualification
- Opportunity Assessment
- Customer Intelligence
- Competitive Intelligence

What Is Proposal Strategy?

- Market Research
- Lead Qualification
- Opportunity Assessment
- Customer Intelligence
- Competitive Intelligence
- Positioning

What Is Proposal Strategy?

- Market Research
- Lead Qualification
- Opportunity Assessment
- Customer Intelligence
- Competitive Intelligence
- Positioning
- Gap Analysis

What Is Proposal Strategy?

- Market Research
- Lead Qualification
- Opportunity Assessment
- Customer Intelligence
- Competitive Intelligence
- Positioning
- Gap Analysis
- Teaming

What Is Proposal Strategy?

- Market Research
- Lead Qualification
- Opportunity Assessment
- Customer Intelligence
- Competitive Intelligence
- Positioning
- Gap Analysis
- Teaming
- Marketing

What Is Proposal Strategy?

- Market Research
- Lead Qualification
- Opportunity Assessment
- Customer Intelligence
- Competitive Intelligence
- Positioning
- Gap Analysis
- Teaming
- Marketing
- Capture Planning

What Is Proposal Strategy?

- Market Research
- Lead Qualification
- Opportunity Assessment
- Customer Intelligence
- Competitive Intelligence
- Positioning
- Gap Analysis
- Teaming
- Marketing
- Capture Planning
- Win Themes

What Is Proposal Strategy?

- Market Research
- Lead Qualification
- Opportunity Assessment
- Customer Intelligence
- Competitive Intelligence
- Positioning
- Gap Analysis
- Teaming
- Marketing
- Capture Planning
- Win Themes
- Discriminators

What Is Proposal Strategy?

- Market Research
- Lead Qualification
- Opportunity Assessment
- Customer Intelligence
- Competitive Intelligence
- Positioning
- Gap Analysis
- Teaming
- Marketing
- Capture Planning
- Win Themes
- Discriminators
- Pricing



A Simplified Model: RSVP

A Simplified Model: RSVP

- Relationships



A Simplified Model: RSVP

- Relationships
- Solutions



A Simplified Model: RSVP

- Relationships
- Solutions
- Value

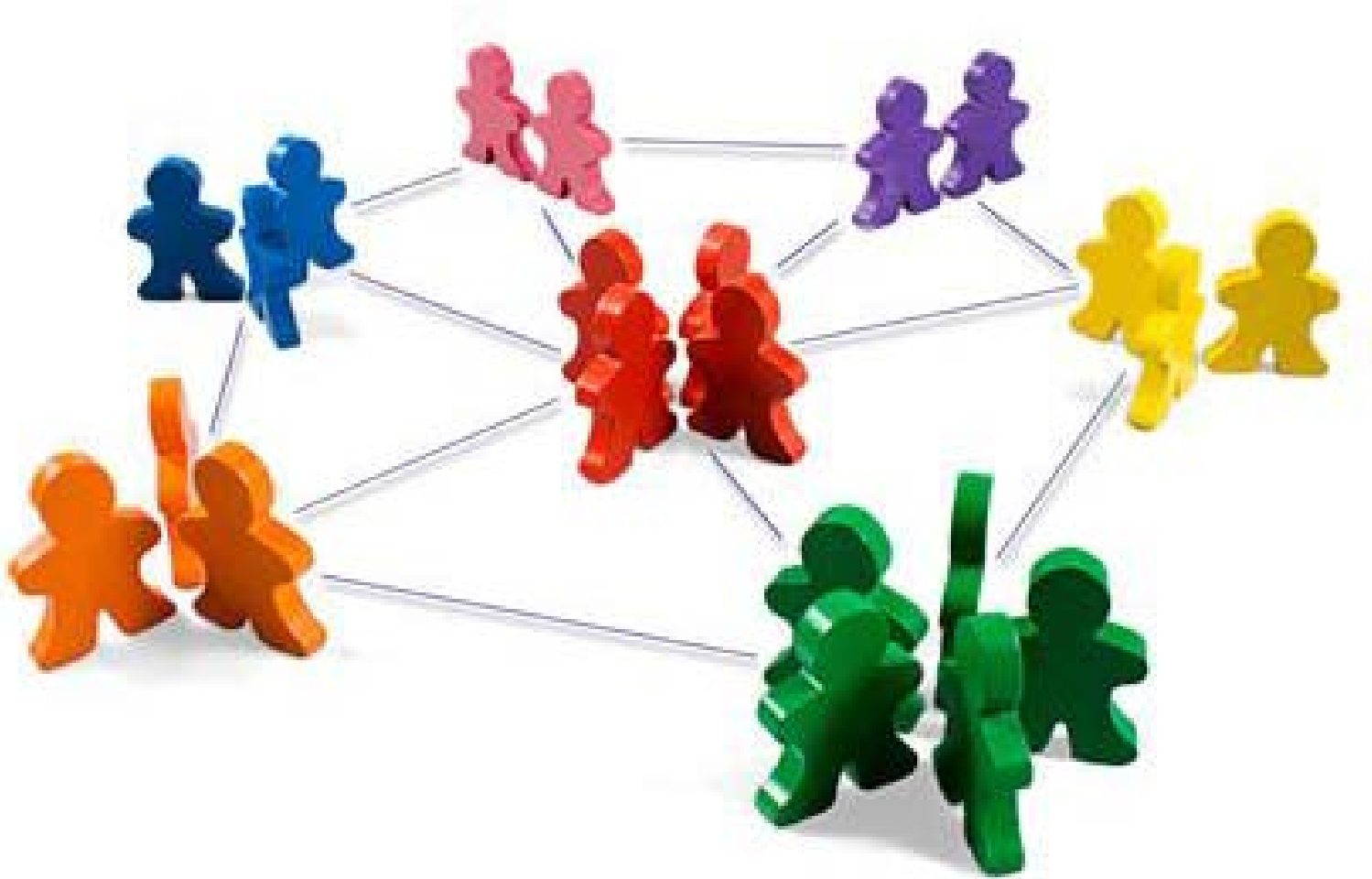


A Simplified Model: RSVP

- Relationships
- Solutions
- Value
- Proof



Relationships





Relationships

- Customers



Relationships

- Customers
- Stakeholders



Relationships

- Customers
- Stakeholders
- Competitors



Relationships

- Customers
- Stakeholders
- Competitors
- Partners/Team Members

Relationships

- Customers
- Stakeholders
- Competitors
- Partners/Team Members
- Vendors/Suppliers

Relationships

- Customers
- Stakeholders
- Competitors
- Partners/Team Members
- Vendors/Suppliers
- Staff/Internal Functional Areas



Why Do Relationships Matter?

Why Do Relationships Matter?

- Strong relationships enable you to gather essential information, forge important connections, and accomplish necessary tasks.

Why Do Relationships Matter?

- Strong relationships enable you to gather essential information, forge important connections, and accomplish necessary tasks.
- Those relationships enable you to identify and develop a winning **solution**.

Solutions





Solutions

- Address the customer's needs



Solutions

- Address the customer's needs
- Solve the customer's problems

Solutions

- Address the customer's needs
- Solve the customer's problems
- Ease the customer's "Pain Points"



Solutions

- Address the customer's needs
- Solve the customer's problems
- Ease the customer's "Pain Points"
- Fulfill the customer's desires



Why Do Solutions Matter?



Why Do Solutions Matter?

- The solution is the technical element at the heart of the offer.

Why Do Solutions Matter?

- The solution is the technical element at the heart of the offer.
- No matter how good the proposal is, offering the wrong solution will almost always cause you to lose.

Why Do Solutions Matter?

- The solution is the technical element at the heart of the offer.
- No matter how good the proposal is, offering the wrong solution will almost always cause you to lose.
- The right solution is an essential aspect of your **value** proposition.

Value





Value

- Something the customer wants/needs



Value

- Something the customer wants/needs
- Something competitors don't offer

Value

- Something the customer wants/needs
- Something competitors don't offer
- Something you can provide that adds value

Value

- Something the customer wants/needs
- Something competitors don't offer
- Something you can provide that adds value
- Something the customer can afford



Why Does Value Matter?



Why Does Value Matter?

- The value proposition answers the question: **Why Us?**

Why Does Value Matter?

- The value proposition answers the question: **Why Us?**
- Value is a combination of the right solution at the right price.

Why Does Value Matter?

- The value proposition answers the question: **Why Us?**
- Value is a combination of the right solution at the right price.
- You can't simply claim your offer provides value; you have to provide **proof**.

Proof





Proof

- Metrics/data



Proof

- Metrics/data
- Demonstrated success (i.e., past performance)

Proof

- Metrics/data
- Demonstrated success (i.e., past performance)
- Case studies

Proof

- Metrics/data
- Demonstrated success (i.e., past performance)
- Case studies
- Customer testimonials

Proof

- Metrics/data
- Demonstrated success (i.e., past performance)
- Case studies
- Customer testimonials
- Graphics



Why Does Proof Matter?



Why Does Proof Matter?

- Proof is tangible evidence that you **can do** what you promise you **will do**.

Why Does Proof Matter?

- Proof is tangible evidence that you **can do** what you promise you **will do**.
- Proof is what puts meat on the bones of your proposal.

Why Does Proof Matter?

- Proof is tangible evidence that you **can do** what you promise you **will do**.
- Proof is what puts meat on the bones of your proposal.
- Proof engenders trust—an essential element of a successful proposal.

Do Proposals Still Matter?





Do Proposals Still Matter?

- Remember: The proposal is the tangible expression of the offer.

Do Proposals Still Matter?

- Remember: The proposal is the tangible expression of the offer.
- A well-constructed proposal—complete, compliant, compelling, consistent—can make it easier for evaluators to rate your offer highly.

Do Proposals Still Matter?

- Remember: The proposal is the tangible expression of the offer.
- A well-constructed proposal—complete, compliant, compelling, consistent—can make it easier for evaluators to rate your offer highly.
- A poorly constructed proposal can make it harder.



Proposal Professionals Have an Important Role to Play



Proposal Professionals Have an Important Role to Play

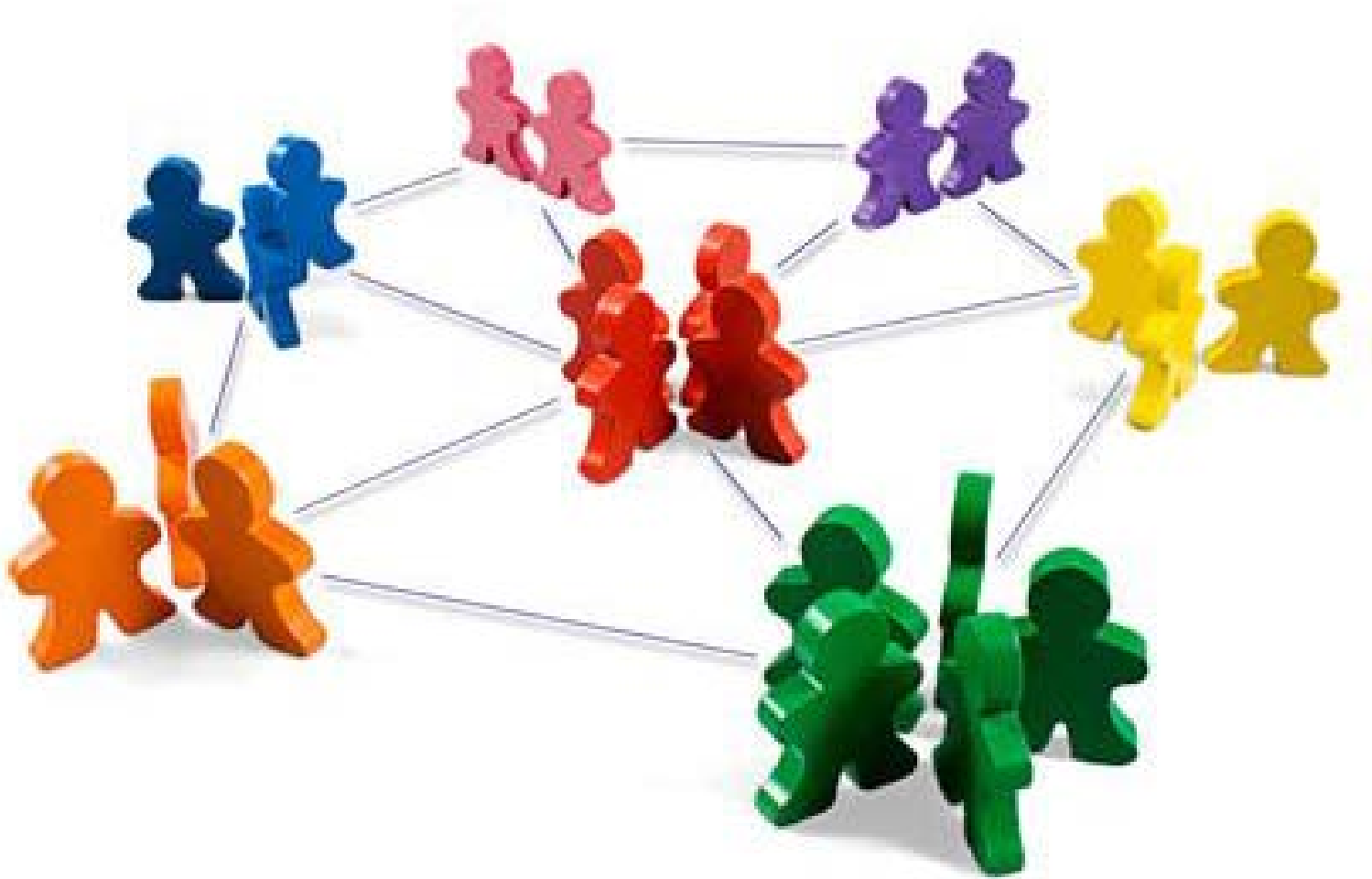
- Proposal professionals are—or should be—strategic thinkers, not merely technicians.



Proposal Professionals Have an Important Role to Play

- Proposal professionals are—or should be—strategic thinkers, not merely technicians.
- Proposal professionals must be involved in building and nurturing key relationships; developing the solution; establishing the value proposition; and providing proof to support the proposal's claims.

Build and Nurture Relationships





Build and Nurture Relationships

- Customer Call Plan



Build and Nurture Relationships

- Customer Call Plan
- Teaming Discussions



Build and Nurture Relationships

- Customer Call Plan
- Teaming Discussions
- Internal Staff/Functional Areas



Build and Nurture Relationships

- Customer Call Plan
- Teaming Discussions
- Internal Staff/Functional Areas
- Proposal Team

Build and Nurture Relationships

- Customer Call Plan
- Teaming Discussions
- Internal Staff/Functional Areas
- Proposal Team

Proposal professionals should be involved in the pursuit well before the “proposal” begins!

Develop the Solution





Develop the Solution

- Customer issues, concerns, wants, Hot Buttons, Pain Points



Develop the Solution

- Customer issues, concerns, wants, Hot Buttons, Pain Points
- Solution architecture content and presentation

Develop the Solution

- Customer issues, concerns, wants, Hot Buttons, Pain Points
- Solution architecture content and presentation
- Proactive, strategic thinking

Develop the Solution

- Customer issues, concerns, wants, Hot Buttons, Pain Points
- Solution architecture content and presentation
- Proactive, strategic thinking

Proposal professionals should contribute to solution development!

Establish the Value Proposition





Establish the Value Proposition

- Strengths and discriminators



Establish the Value Proposition

- Strengths and discriminators
- Ghosting competitors



Establish the Value Proposition

- Strengths and discriminators
- Ghosting competitors
- Persuasive presentation

Establish the Value Proposition

- Strengths and discriminators
- Ghosting competitors
- Persuasive presentation

Proposal professionals add value to the offer!

Provide Proof





Provide Proof

- Data/metrics



Provide Proof

- Data/metrics
- Past Performance



Provide Proof

- Data/metrics
- Past Performance
- Customer testimonials



Provide Proof

- Data/metrics
- Past Performance
- Customer testimonials
- Graphics

Provide Proof

- Data/metrics
- Past Performance
- Customer testimonials
- Graphics

Proposal professionals put the proof in the pudding!

RSVP for the Win Party!





RSVP for the Win Party!

- Build and nurture **RELATIONSHIPS**



RSVP for the Win Party!

- Build and nurture **RELATIONSHIPS**
- Develop targeted **SOLUTIONS**



RSVP for the Win Party!

- Build and nurture **RELATIONSHIPS**
- Develop targeted **SOLUTIONS**
- Establish **VALUE**



RSVP for the Win Party!

- Build and nurture **RELATIONSHIPS**
- Develop targeted **SOLUTIONS**
- Establish **VALUE**
- Provide tangible **PROOF**

RSVP for the Win Party!

- Build and nurture **RELATIONSHIPS**
- Develop targeted **SOLUTIONS**
- Establish **VALUE**
- Provide tangible **PROOF**

IT'S PARTY TIME





Questions?



Thank You!

David M. Stearman

Proposal Strategy and Development Consulting LLC

www.proposal-strategy-consulting.com

703-642-2465

dstearman@proposal-strategy-consulting.com