

## Chapter 3 - Finding Prospects for 4D Projects

### 3.0 Developer, Consultant, Salesperson

Make no mistake about it: to become a successful 4D Developer and Consultant, you have to also become a good Salesperson - selling your talents and expertise to clients who need what you have to offer. This is true whether you are an in-house developer or an independent consultant: if you don't sell, you don't eat. Like it or not, you will have to develop some selling skills along with your 4D skills. Therefore, a large portion of this book will directly or indirectly devoted to Selling Skills: teaching you how to sell your services with the least effort and the maximum profit.

This chapter is your first lesson. It covers the first step in the selling process: Prospecting. To make sure that we're talking the same language, let me give you a working definition of Prospecting.

***Key Point:***

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*Prospecting is the act of finding people or organizations who want or need your services, ranking them in order of their probability of buying your services, and spending your time and efforts on the prospects that are most likely to buy your services. This ensures that you spend your time on the prospective accounts that will give the highest return. In other words, Prospecting is not only Finding, it is also Evaluating, Deleting, and Focusing.*

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### 3.1 Looking for Prospects

How do you look for prospects? In a nutshell, you follow the advice that is more than 2,000 years old:

*"Seek and ye shall find."*

You might recognize that quote. It is from the bible, and it is the best advice I ever heard of for prospecting. However, there are many unanswered questions here: How do you seek? Where do you seek? How do you know when you have found? The answers to those questions are the subject matter of this chapter.

Before I was a 4D developer, I was a salesman, sales trainer, and sales manager - for 19 years - in the Mutual Fund, Insurance, and Real Estate industries. And I can tell you that the principles

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of prospecting are same whether you are selling stocks, or insurance, or buildings, or 4D development services.

Finding prospects in this business is incredibly easy - so easy that I don't need a whole chapter to tell you how to do it. I can tell you how to find prospects for 4D work in one sentence:

***Key Point:***

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*Keep your eyes and ears open for organizations that have data-processing problems.*

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When you find an organization that has a data-processing problem, you have found a prospect. When you open your eyes and ears, you may be astonished to learn that, in the course of a typical day, you will make contact with literally dozens of potential prospects. Let's take a few examples:

- You walk into your favorite restaurant for breakfast. As you do nearly every morning, you order Honey for your pancakes instead of syrup. However this time, the waitress tells you that they ran out of Honey about 30 minutes ago. You recall that the last time you were there, they ran out of Coffee Mate. Your antenna go up; this restaurant might need a new Purchase Order system.
- You stop by the Stationery Store to buy paper for your printer. The store has thousands of items and they have a Point-of-Sale system. As you were waiting to pay for your paper, you noticed that two of the 12 items that the previous customer was purchasing were not recognized when the clerk scanned the bar codes.. Also, your box of printer paper has no price on it; the clerk has to send someone to that aisle to look at the price. Alarm bells go off in your head, alerting you that this store may need a new Inventory Control system and Point-of-Sale system.
- On the way to the office, you remember that you need to renew your automobile insurance, so you stop by your insurance agent's office. The clerk looks everywhere, but she can't find your file folder. Finally, she locates the file on another clerk's desk in her "Renewal" stack. As the clerk writes up your renewal application by hand, the light comes on in your head: this small office a needs a computer system!

And so it goes throughout the day. Even now, in the 21st century, the number of organizations that need computer systems - or need to update their existing systems - is astonishing. Prospects are organizations that don't yet have computer systems, as well as organizations that have systems but want or need to upgrade to something better. This second category will be the vast majority of your prospects: I have yet to find an organization that was 100% happy with their present system; they always want more, better, faster, more reliable.

### 3.2 Ten to Win

So you see, the problem is not finding prospects; prospects are all around you all the time. The problem is deciding which of those prospects you will go after, and try to get their business. If you go after the wrong prospects, you will waste a lot of time, make very few sales, and

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eventually, get discouraged and quit the business. You need a system that helps you make intelligent decisions about which prospects give you the best chances of success. The system that I use for evaluating prospects is one that I learned more than 30 years ago, when I was a salesperson. It's called *Ten to Win*.

I have found that salespeople, when they are new in the business or when they become desperate to make sales, will try the "law of averages" method of selling. They try to make a sale to everyone they meet, hoping that the law of averages will bring them some business. This method will work to some extent, but it is very inefficient and very discouraging. When you use the Law of Averages method, you waste a great deal of time with unqualified prospects, and you encounter a great deal of rejection along the way. This, in turn, undermines your self-confidence and makes you start doubting that you are "cut out for this."

*Ten to Win* is a much smarter way to prospect. The basic philosophy of *Ten to Win* is very simple:

***Key Point:***

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*Some prospective customers are more likely to buy your services than others. The smart way to spend your prospecting and selling time is to concentrate on the prospects who are most likely to buy.*

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The idea of focusing on the most promising opportunities is not new, and it is not confined to Sales. For example, when mining companies look for a precious metal or a mineral (e.g. gold), they don't just go in and start digging. First, their scientists look for geological signs that gold might be present. When they find a site that has the geological signs, they evaluate whether or not they have the equipment and the financial resources to extract the gold from that particular site. If the geological signs are there, and if they have the equipment and the finances to undertake the project, *then and only then* do they start digging for gold.

You should do likewise in your 4D prospecting: look for potential clients that have the geological signs of buying, and determine if you have the correct skill set to meet that potential client's needs. If you get a "yes" to both questions, *then and only then* should you spend your time and effort digging for "gold." The Ten to Win system is a structured, organized way for you to find answer to three vital questions:

- "Do they need help?"
- "Do they know that they need help?"
- "Can I help them?"

### 3.2.1 How It Works

As you have probably already guessed, *Ten to Win* is a system that involves looking the 'geological signs' that an organization is a good prospect. But the prospect is only one-half of the equation; the other half is you. The complete Ten to Win system works like this:

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- Each of you has 10 potential points - you and the prospect - for a total of 20 potential points.
- Your prospect's point score comes from their 'preparedness' to purchase your services; your point scores come from your 'preparedness' to serve this particular prospect and meet their specific needs.
- To calculate the prospect's score, you evaluate the prospect in ten crucial areas; to calculate your score, you evaluate yourself in ten crucial areas.
- You add the two scores. If the total score is below 10, don't waste your time with this prospect. If the total score is 10 or more, you have a reasonable possibility of making a sale. The closer the total score is to 20, the more likely you are to make a sale - and after the sale, have a successful long-term relationship - with that prospect.
- It takes at least *Ten to Win!*

### 3.2.2 The Ideal Prospect

Let's talk about the prospect first. For 4D consulting work, your ideal prospect:

#### 3.2.2.1 Has the Money to Invest

This seems so obvious; however, when 4D developers tell me about their attempts to bring in business or their efforts to get projects approved within their company, I have noticed that they will often go after accounts or try to get projects approved when the company is in financial trouble, the division's budget has been cut, and so on. Then, when they don't make the sale, they feel that they did something wrong. Yes, they did; but the biggest thing they did wrong was trying to make a sale to that prospect in the first place!

When you are choosing prospective clients to pursue, you should first feel reasonably sure that they will have the "wherewithal" - the money to invest in the hardware (if needed), the 4D software, and the development costs. As much as possible, do your homework about the financial capabilities of every prospect before you put a lot of effort into trying to make the sale.

(And by the way: notice that I use the word "invest" instead of the word "spend." When you are talking with prospects, talk about the "investment" in the project, rather than the "cost" of the project. This is a basic sales technique.)

So here is the *Ten to Win* rule for Has the Money to Invest:

*If you are satisfied that the organization or the division will have the money to invest in the development costs and the other associated hardware and software costs, then you can give this prospect one point for "having the money to invest."*

#### 3.2.2.2 Has a Strong Need or Want for Your Services

Again, this is obvious: if the organization does not want or need your services, they are not a true prospect - no matter how much money they have. But I am writing about these things to remind you that they are really, really important!

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Now: before we go on, let me clarify something here. When I say "your services," I am talking about something that is within your current skill set - something that you already know you can do. Here is an example of what I mean: I once watched a 4D developer contract with a client to do a complete Accounting system. There was only one problem: the developer had never done an accounting system before. But he figured that it would be no problem: take some code he had written here and some code there, study a few books, and viola! a custom accounting system. He estimated that the project would take about 3 months.

One year and many thousands of dollars over-budget later, the accounting system still was not working to the client's satisfaction. The client's auditors were screaming for blood; the client's banks were screaming for reliable financial information; and the client was screaming at the developer. Finally, the client discontinued the whole project, threatened to sue, and refused to pay the developer another cent.

The real irony of this story is that the developer learned to write accounting systems as a result of that experience. If he had the job to do again, that same developer could give that client an excellent accounting system. However, before that experience, a complete accounting system was just too far beyond the developer's skill level and experience. So the moral of the story is this:

***Key Point:***

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*If the organization has a want or need that is far beyond your current capabilities, then that organization is not a good prospect for you.*

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You can extend your capabilities by purchasing the expertise of another 4D developer who has successfully done that type of job before - either by subcontracting to that developer, or by purchasing the developer's documented code.

So here's the *Ten to Win* rule for Need or Want:

*If the prospect has a strong want or need - and if that want or need is within your current capabilities in 4D, or if you can purchase the expertise of another developer who has successfully done that type of project before - then you can give this prospect one point for having a "strong want or need for your services."*

### 3.2.2.3 Feels the Urgency to Act Now

In the early days of my sales career, when I was in training, they taught us that we should 'create a sense of urgency' in the mind of the prospect in order to make a sale. However, as I matured in sales, I realized that trying to *create* a sense of urgency was very difficult; in fact, it was almost impossible. I realized that instead, I should look for prospects who *already felt* a sense of urgency.

A feeling of a sense of urgency usually comes as a result of a crisis. If there is no crisis, there will not be a sense of urgency. And you cannot create the crisis; it has to already exist before you arrive on the scene. This is one of the reasons that there is an element of Luck in prospecting. The timing of your contact with the prospect can be very important: a cold prospect

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yesterday can become a hot prospect tomorrow, because a crisis occurred today. Here are some examples of the types of crises that could cause a cold prospect to become a very hot prospect: These are situations that I have actually seen happen to prospective clients - events that caused the prospects to feel the urgency to act Now.

- An audit revealed that several receivable accounts were more than 120 days past due, but the company was still extending credit to those customers. Because of pressure from the parent company, this subsidiary company was motivated to purchase a computerized Billing system.
- An audit revealed that tens of thousands of dollars' worth of merchandise was missing, and no one had any idea where it might have gone. Because these losses were so great, the company was strongly motivated to tighten up security and install a computerized Inventory Control System.
- Monthly customer statements were not going out properly. Statements for one month might go out by the end of the following month - if they were lucky. Also, customers often contested the statements because of mistakes. This consumed several dozen hours of employee time to research and reconcile those accounts. Because of a desire for more prompt collections, a desire to improve customer service, and a desire to reduce the time spent researching disputed accounts, this company was motivated to purchase a computerized Billing system.
- Due to changing market conditions, the company's sales volume was increasing at a rate much higher than originally anticipated. The company was happy to get the business, but the paperwork was swiftly getting out of control. In certain aspects of the paperwork, including the billing, they were as much as three months behind. As a result, the company's cash flow was suffering. If they didn't do something, their Sales Success could bankrupt the company. So this company was highly motivated to invest in the development of a front-end sales processing system that would record transactions at the moment they happened (rather than after-the-fact), and follow-through with an Order Fulfillment and a Billing system, both of which were tied to the front-end sales tracking system.
- A company was using an old IBM System 36 mini-computer system. IBM had announced that, within 18 months, they would completely phase out support for the System 36: no more spare parts, no more system software updates, no more crisis support. So this company was highly motivated to invest in the hardware and software to replace their aging - and soon to be orphan - System 36.

The above are just a few of the many examples of events that occurred in my prospects' companies before I arrived on the scene. These crisis events gave the prospects a sense of urgency - the desire and motivation to act Now. Before you move on, stop for a moment and think back over organizations that you have observed, and recall those that have had a sense of urgency because of a crisis: a system crash that resulted in loss of data, the loss of a key developer, an unsatisfactory rating after an audit, etc.

Here is the *Ten to Win* rule for Sense of Urgency:

*If your prospect has had a crisis that created a sense of urgency to act now, you can give this prospect one point for 'feels the urgency to act now.'*

#### **3.2.2.4 Has an Open Mind**

A sense of urgency usually opens the mind to new potential solutions, but sometimes the prospect's bias may be so strong that they will choose some other solution - or no solution - rather than your solution. In the days when 4D was Macintosh-only, we often encountered this type of bias: the corporate executives and/or the IT department felt that Macs were not real business computers; they felt that "Macs are for kids, geeks, and Graphics departments."

Sometimes, strong anti-4D opinions exist within the Data Processing (DP) or Information Technology (IT) department of the company. If the DP or IT department has a strong bias against Macs or against 4th Dimension and you come in to do a demo of 4D on your Mac, this will be two big strikes against you. To make a decision in your favor, decision-makers will have to override the IT department. That override happens sometimes, but don't count on it.

(Note: In the days before 4D natively supported SQL, there was a great deal of justification for their bias: in many organizations, 4D was the only database system did not support a full complement of SQL commands, and so the IT department had a very hard time pulling data and statistics out of 4D. This put them in a difficult position, because Management wanted organization-wide data reporting, but the IT department had to 'jump through some special hoops' to get the data from 4D.)

Back to *Ten to Win*, here is the rule for Open Mind:

*If the decision-makers in the company have a reasonably open mind, and if there is no strong bias against the solution you are proposing, then you can give this prospect one one point for 'having an open mind.'*

#### **3.2.2.5 Is Decisive**

How many people will be involved in the decision-making process? How often do they meet? Will they have to get approval from 'upstairs?' These are the types of questions that you want to find the answers to when you are evaluating a prospect for decisiveness. Personally, I like to deal with organizations where *one person* has the decision-making power. In a large organization, that is not normally the case; but a crisis can change things. If the situation is bad, and someone has been told: "Clean it up - I don't care how you do it!" then that person probably has an unusually high level of autonomy and decision-making power.

When you are meeting with a prospect for the first time, take careful note of the chain of command in the room, and how decisive the top-ranked person appears to be. Little things can give clues: who answers your questions about the problem to be solved; who makes the decision about where people will sit; who makes the decision about when and where the next appointment will be. All of these things - and many more - can give you clues as to who has the power, and how decisive that person is.

Here is the *Ten to Win* rule for Decisiveness:

*If the decision-making process will involve very few people (preferably one, but no more than three), and if you feel that those people will not procrastinate when it comes time to make a decision, then you can give this prospect one point for 'decisiveness.'*

### **3.2.2.6 Is Honest and Direct**

I cannot stress enough the importance of Honesty in a prospect. Few things are more frustrating than dealing with someone who is not giving you honest answers. You are much better off dealing with someone who gives you a direct "no" than you are dealing with someone who gives you an evasive "maybe." When you get a "no" you can always ask "why?" If you get a direct and honest answer to this question, then you may be able to adjust your proposal to their concerns and try again; or you may decide that you should not expend any more effort at this time with this prospect. Either way, at least you know where you stand.

The largest sale I ever made - in terms of initial payment and continuing consulting fees - was to a client who told me, back in the days when 4D was Macintosh-only, "My company hates Macs. We are a true-blue IBM shop. If this was not a crisis, I would not even be here talking to you." With 19 years' experience in Sales, that was music to my ears: I knew that I was dealing with someone who would give me honest answers. Because of the extreme nature of the crisis, they bought my Insurance Agency system - which I had developed for my own Insurance agency - and their plan from the very beginning was to study how I did it, and replace my system with a system that ran on a SQL back end with a Visual Basic front end. Over a period of years, they did exactly that. But in the meantime, I made a lot of money building Insurance Agency systems for them in three countries, and supporting those systems.

On the other hand, if you are dealing with someone who is being evasive and dishonest with you, you never really know where you stand, and it is nearly impossible to make progress toward a sale.

So here is the *Ten to Win* rule for Honesty and Directness:

*If you have good reason to believe that the prospect will deal with you honestly and directly, telling you exactly where you stand, then you can give this prospect one point for 'honesty and directness.'*

### **3.2.2.7 Is Positively Preconditioned**

Has the prospect heard about you in a favorable light? This could be from exposure at a trade show, from advertising, from word-of-mouth, from a newspaper article, or even from a seminar that you conducted. If the source is non-paid exposure (as opposed to commercial advertising), the positive pre-conditioning will be stronger. This is why sales training courses make such a big deal of "getting referrals." But I have found that the best types of referrals are those that were not solicited by you: in other words, when your clients say great things about you to other prospective clients, without you having asked them to do so. This type of word-of-mouth activity is extremely powerful for getting you new clients.

So here is the *Ten to Win* rule for Positive Pre-conditioning:

*If you have good reason to believe that the prospect has already heard about you, and that what*

*he or she heard was favorable word of mouth - especially from a satisfied client - then you can give this prospect one point for 'positive preconditioning.'*

### **3.2.2.8 Is a Referral from a Happy Customer**

This factor is related to the previous factor about Positive Preconditioning, but it deserves a separate point all by itself. A strong positive recommendation from a happy customer won't guarantee you a sale, but it will almost certainly guarantee you a favorable hearing. Think about it: aren't you more likely to trust someone who comes to you highly recommended by someone else that you trust? Yes, and most people are the same way.

So here is the *Ten to Win* rule for Positive Preconditioning:

*If this prospect is a strong referral from a happy customer, you can give the prospect one point for being a Referral from a Happy Customer.*

### **3.2.2.9 Is Accessible**

How difficult is it to get in to see the decision-maker? Can you just walk right in? can you make an appointment and know that he or she will keep the appointment? or, at the other extreme, do you have to go through three layers of bureaucracy just to talk to the key person? This is a crucial question. You can waste a lot of time trying to get in to see someone who is not easily accessible. And the fact that it is so difficult for you to meet with them is an indication that they are not likely to do business with you.

So here is the *Ten to Win* rule for Accessibility:

*If you have easy access to the decision-maker(s), you can give this prospect one point for being Accessible.*

### **3.2.2.1 Is a Center of Influence**

This factor is one that looks beyond the sale that you are trying to make now, looking ahead to other sales that you want to make in the future to other prospects. Think about the person that you will be dealing with most often if this prospect buys your services: is this person an influential member of the business community or of his/her specialty? An influential member of the civic community? An influential member of an organization that might have many other needs for your services? If so, this prospect is worth some extra effort to make the sale; you might even want to lower your price just to get your foot in the door.

So here is the *Ten to Win* rule for Center of Influence:

*If the prospect is an influential member of the business community, of the civic community, or of his or her organization, you can give this prospect one point for being a Center of Influence.*

Do you see what we have done with these ten rules? We have given you an objective basis for evaluating every prospect, and for deciding if it will be worth your time and effort to pursue the sale. If you get good at this, you will be light years ahead of all the developers who are *not* using these rules to evaluate prospects.

### 3.2.3 The Ideal 4D Consultant

Now let's talk about you. Your success in finding prospects and building your 4D consulting business depends partially on the quality of the prospects that you pursue, but it also depends on the quality of you: just as the prospect must be qualified for you, you must be qualified for the prospect!

We will divide your qualities into two categories - Personal and Professional - and we will look at five qualities in each category. Let's take the five personal qualities first. The ideal 4D consultant:

#### 3.2.3.1 Has a Good Attitude

Consider this line of pseudo 4D code:

```
Altitude := Attitude * Abs(Attitude) * Aptitude
```

What does this mean? A Negative attitude will yield a negative result, no matter how high your aptitude for the business. Also, notice that your attitude geometrically accelerates the positive or the negative results.

***Key Point:***

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*The single most important thing that you can do in order to improve your 4D success is to improve your attitude! No matter how talented you are, in the long run your talent cannot overcome the negative effects of a bad attitude.*

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Just so we will be speaking the same language, let me define a 'bad attitude' and contrast it to a 'good attitude' when it comes to 4D consulting. I will point out certain situations, and describe the differences in the reactions of a person with a good attitude versus a person with a bad attitude.

- **You encounter a 4D Bug**

- **Good Attitude:** You acknowledge the existence of the bug and then you immediately start looking for a work-around. When you find the work-around, you report the bug and the solution to Tech Support, and then you move on.
- **Bad Attitude:** You keep trying the same thing, refusing to acknowledge that it's not working. When you finally do acknowledge the bug, you complain bitterly about 4D Inc. and their (lack of) quality control; you send a harshly-worded message publicly over the internet, and when someone suggests a work-around, you complain that 4D should fix the bug, because you 'shouldn't have to use such a kludge.'

- **You Lose a bid for a big 4D Project**

- **Good Attitude:** You write a letter or an email to thank the prospect for the chance to compete for the business. You say you hope that they will have a successful project, and that they will give you an opportunity to bid on the next project. You analyze the experience to see what you can learn from it, and then you move on.

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- **Bad Attitude:** You tell yourself (and anyone else who will listen) what a lousy company that is, and that the company never intended to give you the job in the first place. They were too blind to see that you were the best person for the project. You take no responsibility for possibly having been the cause of the company not accepting your proposal. You cross them off your list.

I could give you many more examples of Good Attitude versus Bad Attitude, but let's generalize the discussion so that you can use some criteria to evaluate your own attitude.

A person with a Good Attitude:

- gives other people the benefit of the doubt, assuming that they may have good reasons for the things that they do.
- reacts positively and constructively to the disappointments in life.
- looks for some good that might come out of every experience, no matter how undesirable the experience may seem on the surface.
- realizes that we cannot always control what happens to us, but we *can* control how we react to what happens to us.

A person with a Bad Attitude:

- Seems to think that anyone who does not agree with him is an idiot.
- reacts negatively and destructively to the disappointments in life.
- is always looking for someone else or something else to blame.
- rarely looks for the positive lessons to be learned from adversity.
- never seems to realize that a negative reaction multiplies and extends the undesirable effects of the undesirable situation.

So here is the *Ten to Win* rule for Good Attitude:

*If you respect the intellect of other people, even when they don't agree with you; if you make a habit of reacting positively and constructively to the disappointments of life; if you look for lessons learned whenever things don't go the way you want them to go - then you can give yourself one point for having a Good Attitude.*

### 3.2.3.2 Is Motivated

Your level of motivation makes all the difference. Here are a couple of quotes for you:

*"Every human mind is a great slumbering power until awakened by a keen desire and by definite resolution to do."*

-- Edgar F. Roberts

*"Doubt and discouragement are the things we see when we take our eyes off our goals."*

-- Anonymous

Do you jump out of bed in the morning looking forward to a brand new day, or do you lie there dreading getting out of bed? Obviously, it is better to look forward to every new day. You will probably agree with me that your level of motivation has a tremendous impact on your level of achievement. But let's stop and think for a moment: what is motivation? If you break the word down into its two parts, you will see that Motivation means "Motive for Action." There has been

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a great deal of research into motivation, and what they have found is a chain of facts that is very simple:

- Your level of motivation is directly related to your motives for action;
- Your motives for action are directly related to your level of desire;
- Your level of desire is directly affected by the mental pictures of the future that you hold in your mind.

So what can we conclude from this? To get motivated and stay motivated - in spite of doubt, discouragement, setbacks, or the criticism of others - all you have to do is hold in your mind pleasant mental pictures of the things that you want to accomplish. This will give you a desire so strong that it overcomes your brief moments of disappointment and it helps to you keep moving forward through the good times and the bad.

And one more thing: contrary to popular thinking, you don't have to know exactly *how* you will achieve a goal in order for that goal to be 'realistic.' Many people don't set goals - or they have no faith in their ability to achieve goals - because they don't know exactly how they will accomplish their goals. They don't know, in advance, every step they will take along the way, and so they don't think their goal is realistic. This is a common fallacy. When you set a goal, you don't need to know in advance every step you will take toward that goal. All you need to know is the first step - what will you do first? - and the follow-on steps will be revealed to you as you march toward the goal.

So here is the *Ten to Win* rule for Motivation:

*If you know where you're going and why - and you continually project for yourself pleasant mental pictures of your goals - and if you keep yourself reminded that you don't have to know exactly how you will achieve the goals - then you will sustain a high level of motivation, and you can give yourself one point for Motivation.*

### 3.2.3.3 Is Creative

Think about it: yesterday's ideas seldom sell at a premium. If everyone can do it and is doing it, then it has limited value in the marketplace. We have seen many glaring examples of this in the world of electronics: prices of cell phones, computers, flat-screen TV's, and other electronic gadgets are dropping every day, because more and more vendors are jumping into each market.

If you want to command a premium rate in the marketplace, you will have to increase your Creativity to a very high level and then maintain that level. As a 4D developer, your job is to create practical, usable applications from thin air, so to speak. With your 4D skills, you are literally creating value. To do your job and do it well, you need a very high level of creative energy. You need creativity when you analyze data storage problems; you need creativity when you plan database designs; you need creativity when you present your proposals to clients; you need creativity when you design screens and write code; you need creativity when you install and test your applications; and you need creativity every day, as you support the application. You can never afford to become complacent; never think that yesterday's good is today's good enough. You have to constantly compete with yourself, strive to be better.

So here is the *Ten to Win* rule for creativity:

*If you are constantly thinking of creative prospecting ideas, creative database designs, creative programming techniques, creative workarounds to bugs, and create support strategies - then you can give yourself one point for Creativity.*

### **3.2.3.4 Has a Pleasing Personality**

*"Personality is to a man what perfume is to a flower."*

-- Charles M. Schwab

That quote is one of my favorites on the subject of Personality. Charles Schwab, the founder of Bethlehem Steel Corporation and many other successful ventures of the time, was one of the richest men in America during the early 1900's. He seems to have been one of those rare people who maintained balance: his life, both personally and professionally, was one success after another.

I believe that what Mr. Schwab wanted to point out with that quote about personality is this: like the fragrance of a flower, your personality precedes you - and your personality leaves a lingering scent after you are gone.

I have a theory that one of the reasons you and I like programming is that it gives us a chance to withdraw from interaction with people and to communicate with a machine - a computer. That's fine, except that we do have to go out into the real world in order to sell our services. Computers don't authorize database projects, and computers don't write checks unless a human being tells them to do so. Therefore, to be successful in 4D consulting, we will have to deal with human beings - real people - over the phone and face-to-face.

And while we are on this subject of a pleasing personality, let me point out two mistakes that I have seen many 4D developers (and other computer professionals) make when going out into the real world and dealing with people:

- Mistake number one: "Talking down" to their customers. Just because you know a great deal more about 4D and about computers than your customer knows, that does not mean that you are "smarter" or that you have the right to be condescending or talk down to your customer. If you make a habit of talking to them as if you are smart and they are dumb, then I can guarantee you that they will be looking for ways to reduce the number of times they have to interact with you; in short, they will be looking for ways to get rid of you. Your clients want to feel comfortable and at ease around you - and they, like everyone, want to feel important. Ignore that fact at your own risk.
- Mistake number two: Not paying attention to - and complying with - the dress code of the client organization. Whenever I go to computer conferences - for example, the 4D Summit - I notice that a large percentage of the attendees have long hair, thick beards, and other signs that they are "rebels" in the area of appearance. That type of appearance is fine at a computer conference, but it has no place in a client's or prospect's office - unless that type of dress is standard for that organization. Many organizations go to a lot of trouble to establish a dress code - some even to the point of providing uniforms for their employees. Therefore, whenever you go into a client or a prospective client's place of work, take a look at how they dress. Even better, do your homework: go there before

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your appointment, and find out the dress norm before you visit officially for the first time. Then when you go back for your appointment, make sure your appearance is not too far away from their norm.

Yes, I know, you may be thinking: "The way I dress has no effect on whether or not I can do a good job for them." But you are wrong; your appearance *does* have an effect on how well you work with them, because it affects how well you communicate with the members of the organization, and how comfortable they feel around you. I believe that this 'appearance' factor is one of the main reasons that so many 4D developers have a very difficult time getting projects in mainstream business and professional organizations: management is 'turned off' by the developer's appearance.

***Key Point:***

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*Whenever you visit a client or prospect's place of work, take special care to keep your appearance close to the parameters that have been established by the organization. If you don't do this, you will be silently regarded as a 'human virus' by the top management of the organization.*

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So here is the *Ten to Win* rule for Pleasing Personality:

*If you can easily and naturally establish rapport with people, making them feel comfortable around you; and if you are willing to pay attention to organizations' written and unwritten dress codes and tailor your own appearance to be close to those dress codes, then you can give yourself one point for Pleasing Personality.*

### 3.2.3.5 Is Self-Organized

Here's my favorite quote about being organized:

*"The art of progress  
is to preserve order amid change,  
and to preserve change amid order."  
-- Alfred North Whitehead*

The author of that quote, Alfred North Whitehead, was an English mathematician and philosopher who lived from the late 1800's through the mid 1900's. He had an impressive list of accomplishments, and was the mentor to two of the greatest mathematical minds of the 20th century: Bertrand Russell and Willard Van Orman Quine. Whitehead was also the co-author, with Bertrand Russell, of one of the most important works of the 20th century on mathematics and logic: *Principia Mathematica*.

I believe what he was trying to tell us is that it is important to maintain a balance between Order and Change. As a 4D developer, you will always have heavy demands on your time. Some of those demands will be about maintaining order, and other demands will be about creativity and change.

When you're just getting started, you have so much to learn: about prospecting, about systems analysis, about project scheduling, about 4th Dimension, about plug-ins, about operating

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systems, about user training, about customer support, and on and on and on. Somehow, you must learn to preserve Order in the midst of all this Change, but yet not let Order inhibit you from Changing when necessary.

After you have an established career, again you will be very busy. You must develop many "systems" to keep yourself organized: a system for paperwork, a system for analysis, a system for programming, a system for customer support - and yes, even a system for relaxing. Without all those systems, every day will be chaos; you will feel out of control. But at the same time you are using all those systems, you will have to find time to "sharpen the saw," as Steven Covey says. You will have to continually learn new software, new ideas, new techniques, and yes, perhaps even new computer platforms. Somehow, you must learn to preserve Change in the midst of order, and Order in the midst of change.

So here is the *Ten to Win* rule for Self-Organized:

*If you are organized - if you have systems for most of the routine activities that you need to accomplish each day; and if you also make time in your schedule for professional growth, for self-improvement, for exploring new technologies, and for relaxation - then you can give yourself one point for being Self-Organized.*

This completes the five Personal qualities of the Ten to Win system; now, let's look at the Professional qualities that can earn you points.

### 3.2.3.6 Has an Effective Prospecting System

The ability to prospect for new business - intelligently and with no wasted effort - is one of the most crucial professional skills that you must develop. As long as you are a 4D consultant, your prospecting activities should never stop.

When I was a sales manager/trainer, one mistake that I frequently saw salespeople make was that they stopped prospecting when they had lots of business coming in - when they were working on quite a few pending sales at one time. As a result, they went through periods of "feast or famine:" when business was good, it was very good; but when all those pending sales had been wrapped up and turned in, they suddenly found themselves with no new prospects in the pipeline. They had been lulled into a false sense of security by the fact that they were busy wrapping up current sales, and they forgot to continually prospect for future business.

What I am recommending to you is that you need to have a prospecting system that keeps the pipeline full. Even when you are over-booked with current projects, you must still continue your prospecting efforts - always maintaining several prospects in each stage of the selling process. This way, you will never find yourself in a position where you wake up one morning and you don't know where your next sale is coming from.

So here is the *Ten to Win* rule for Effective Prospecting System:

*If you have a system that enables you to constantly be looking for new prospects, evaluating their likelihood of buying and your own ability to serve each prospect; and if you work this system even when you are over-booked with projects, then you can give yourself one point for having an Effective Prospecting System.*

### 3.2.3.7 Has an Effective Estimating System

*"Well begun is half done."*

-- Mary Poppins

That quote is a line from the children's movie, *Mary Poppins*. I was fascinated with the idea the first time I heard it. It struck me as excellent advice for 4D programmers! The beginning of every custom programming job is the Estimate of time-and-materials needed to complete the job. From that point on, everything depends on that estimate: the client's decision to go ahead is based on it; the price of the job is based on it; the expected completion date is based on it; and the developer's income expectations are based on it. Truly, if the estimate is well done, the job is half done.

But estimating is probably the most difficult part of being a 4D developer. I can tell you in all honesty that in 25 years in the business, I have *never* been exactly correct on any estimate for any project that was more than two or three weeks in duration. Estimating is not an exact science - not even close; sometimes it seems to border on 'voodoo science.' So if that's true, why am I talking about having an "effective estimating system?" Because there is no way you can have a successful 4D consulting career if you don't develop an effective system of estimating projects.

As I said earlier, estimating is probably the most difficult part of being a 4D developer. What makes Estimating so difficult? Well for one thing, there are so many unanswered questions: "Have I gathered enough information?" "Have I talked to the right people?" "How much time should I spend on the analysis?" "How can I get the customer to pay for it?" "How do I build in safeguards against moving-target specifications?" "How do I present the bid to the potential customer?" "What if I'm wrong?" That last question is especially important, because in the vast majority of cases, you *will* be wrong.

So the main thing you must do in an estimate is to *educate* the client or prospective client on the fact that 99% of the time, estimates for large jobs are wrong. So what do you do? You break an estimate down into very small pieces (I call them "Phases") - each phase capable of being completed in one-to-three weeks - and then provide an estimate for Phase 1. Beyond that, you must educate the client that it is virtually impossible to accurately estimate the rest of the job, because there is no way to predict the number of twists and turns the project will take as it unfolds. (In the chapter on Estimating, I will discuss this topic in depth, and teach you some strategies for educating the client.)

So here is the *Ten to Win* rule for Effective Estimating System:

*If you have a system for estimating jobs that breaks the project down into very small pieces, does a detailed estimate for Phase 1, and educates the client about the reality that 99% of the time, estimates of large projects are wrong - then you can give yourself one point for having an Effective Estimating System.*

### 3.2.3.8 Has an Effective Programming System

The ability to control your programming time; to write code that you or someone else can easily modify later; to get maximum results from minimum effort - these are skills that are essential for 4D consulting success. Writing 4D code is not so difficult; many people can do that. But to be *productive* and *effective* at writing code - well, that's another matter. Also "writing productive

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and effective code" is a moving target: you can't learn how to do it and then rest on your laurels and stick with that same system for the rest of your 4D career. Why? because of that little thing called Change. 4D is undergoing major upgrades every 3-5 years; operating systems are undergoing major changes every 3-5 years; and the marketplace is changing every day.

Have you heard the phrase "the time value of money"? This phrase points out the fact that money loses its value over time. As an extreme example: If I borrow \$10,000 from you and return it in a month, the money will probably have approximately the same purchasing power. But if I borrow \$10,000 from you and return it in 20 years, the money will buy less - a lot less.

4D Code has a time value also. A perfect 4D application, delivered one year late, may be useless and worthless; on the other hand, an imperfect but workable application, delivered on time, is very useful and very valuable. So your programming system has to prevent you from spending too much time making things 'perfect;' your system has to keep you moving forward and constantly reminded of the time value of code. If you are, by nature, a perfectionist (and many programmers are), then this will be difficult for you; in fact, it may be *very* difficult for you. But I can guarantee you that your life will be much better if you can get over your perfectionism and make it a habit evaluate your efforts not only by *what* is delivered, but also by *when* it is delivered. In the chapter called "Doing the Job - On Time," I will try to help you overcome your perfectionist habits. And in the chapter on Testing, I will teach you how to be reasonably sure that what you deliver will work - even though it may not be perfect, it is reasonably bug-free.

So here is the *Ten to Win* rule for Effective Programming System:

*If you make it a point to write code that will be easy to understand later; if you write code that allows for Change; and if you overcome your perfectionist personality and write code with the awareness that all code has a Time Value - then you can give yourself one point for Effective Programming System.*

### 3.2.3.9 Has an Effective Customer Support System

I had one full year of customer support problems that nearly drove me to throw up my hands and get out of the business. That was a terrible time for me, but it turned out, like so many things that feel bad when they are happening, to be a blessing in disguise. That unpleasant time showed me the necessity for thinking deeply about customer support, and the importance of developing an effective customer support system.

Once you have several clients with mission-critical applications, "customer support" can be a huge headache or it can be a huge source of revenue. I see customer support as a wonderful source of revenue. I like to convert clients to a "retainer" system. This means that they pay me a certain number of dollars every month to be on call, and I will be there whenever they need me. Being on retainer greatly simplifies my life: I don't have to log every minute of billable time and I don't have to estimate every little job that the client wants me to do. A Retainer system can be a much better deal for you, and for your clients - provided you are giving them support that they value.

Why do I say "giving them support that they value"? You have probably heard the saying "beauty is in the eye of the beholder." Well, let's paraphrase that and relate it to customer support: "good customer support is in the eye of the receiver." I have sometimes heard 4D developers say, "I gave them lots of free features and great support, but they didn't appreciate it."

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What those developers failed to understand is that ultimately, it is the *Customer* who decides what is good support, not the developer. What *you* consider to be good support may not be what the *customer* considers good support. This means you have to put some effort and thought into understanding the wants, needs, and priorities of your customer, and tailoring your support to fit those wants, needs, and priorities.

So here is the *Ten to Win* rule for Effective Customer Support System:

*If you are tailoring your support strategy to the client's idea of good support (not yours) - and if you are giving so much good support that your clients want to put you on retainer, so they will know that you will be available any time they need you - then you can give yourself one point for having an Effective Customer Support System.*

### 3.2.3.1 Has the Necessary Hardware and Software Tools

As I said in the previous chapter, any good mechanic will tell you that there is no substitute for having the right set of tools. Your fifth professional requirement in *Ten to Win* is that you must have and use the hardware and software tools that you need in order to create and support 4D applications. I have already given you a list of the tools that I use in the previous chapter, and I mentioned that you may need other tools, depending on your particular 4D practice and your market. If you don't remember what the required hardware and software tools are, go back and read that section of the previous chapter. After you review the list, think about what tools you need in order to do your job as a 4D consultant.

Here is the *Ten to Win* rule for Hardware and Software Tools:

*If you have the hardware and software tools that you need in order to write 4D applications and support them, give yourself one point for Hardware and Software Tools.*

### 3.2.4 Putting It All Together

Now that you know the basic elements of the *Ten to Win* system of prospecting, let's see how they all fit together to form a highly effective prospecting strategy.

#### 3.2.4.10 Evaluate the Prospect

When you think you may have found a good prospect, your first job is to do some detective work: find out how the prospect scores in each of the *Ten to Win* Ideal Prospect areas:

- Has the Money to Invest
- Has a Strong Need or Want that You have the capability to satisfy
- Has a Sense of Urgency
- Has an Open Mind
- Is Decisive
- Is Honest and Direct
- Is Positively Pre-Conditioned

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- Is a Referral from a Happy Customer
- Is Accessible
- Is a Center of Influence

Rate the prospect in each area. And remember: you are not limited to just a 1 or a zero. You can assign a quarter-point, a half-point, and even negative values if you feel it is appropriate. When you have assigned points (or no points or negative points) in all ten areas, total the prospect's points to get a score for this prospect. I have never seen a prospect who was a perfect 10.

### 3.2.4.2 Evaluate Yourself

Next, you need to do an honest evaluation of yourself. Rate yourself points, half-points, quarter-points, zero points, and even negative points (if appropriate) in each of the following ten areas:

- Attitude
- Motivation
- Creativity
- Personality
- Self-Organization
- Effective Prospecting System
- Effective Estimating System
- Effective Programming System
- Effective Support System
- Necessary Hardware and Software Tools

Be brutally honest with yourself and remember: if you feel you are not as good as you could be in any area, you can improve. In fact, an admission that we are not as good as we could be is always an excellent first step toward improvement. After you have rated yourself in all ten areas, add up your points to get a total score. I have never seen a developer who was a perfect 10.

### 3.2.4.3 Add Your Points to the Prospect's Points

The best possible score is 20, and if the total score of the prospect + you is less than 10, your chances of selling your services to this prospect at this time are not good enough to warrant spending time trying to make a sale. I have also found that even if the total score is 10 or more, the prospect's score must be at least five, or I am better off spending my time looking for other prospects. I always look for prospects that score 5 or higher.

If your score is less than 5, you have a lot of work to do! You will not successfully build a 4D consulting business until you make some vast improvements in yourself.

Back to *Ten to Win*: the closer the total prospect + you score is to 20, the better your chances of making a sale to this prospect. And if you have several prospects that you are working on (and



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you should at all times), don't forget to concentrate your efforts on the prospects that have the highest scores.

And remember: it takes at least *Ten to Win!*