

This is a real interview for a real contest. Permission has been obtained from the vendor for PSP Enterprises to use this interview as a sample. The vendor names have been changed at the request of the client.

Summary of key points:

Active Consulting win over Atlas at a law enforcement agency for \$34M.

- **This customer has a mix of good Active Consulting feelings along with disappointment over costs and changes which lead to much of this project being canceled.**
- **Active Consulting really understood the client's IT strategy, Atlas did not:** *"I would give Active Consulting a very high rating because they really got what we were trying to do. [Atlas] just tried to pedal mainframe stuff because that's where [they] made more money."*
- **Active Consulting demonstrated good business knowledge:** *"Active Consulting had people who were justice and public safety specialists, who were actually assigned to the project and they stated that right from the get go. The depth of knowledge in the subject area was critically important to us. And the fact that they had a Judge, a former Judge, former prosecutor on their team was critically important. They had very deep subject knowledge and that was critical for us. These guys go around the country and lecture on this. We were very impressed and their technical people are good too. And they were nice. They weren't arrogant. They weren't rolling us over. They worked very closely with the team and you could see they would work as a team."*
- **Active Consulting won because they listened well:** *"They really seemed to listen to our needs and our desires. Instead of trying to force their opinions on us. They had a very deep knowledge set which was very impressive to us. These guys really knew."*
- **Atlas tried to bait and switch professionals:** *"Atlas brought in their court and public safety experts to close the business but they were only putting their services people out here to do the project with no court or jail knowledge. Atlas flashed all these, you know, hot shots in front of us. And when we actually pushed them. Well, no they're really not going to be here. They'll be available by phone."*
- **Atlas would not commit to meet the schedule:** *"Atlas was not willing to meet the schedule. And Active Consulting griped but was willing to meet it. When a vendor just stands up and says. "Your timetable is ridiculous. Forget it we're not agreeing to it." That doesn't really endear them to us. That's what Atlas did."*
- **The subcontractor for Atlas jumped ship and went with Active:** *"The subcontractor for Atlas was the strongest, and they ended up going to Active Consulting for the project. Atlas's own subcontractor went off to Active Consulting."*
- **Both Active Consulting and Atlas overcharge:** *"They weren't equal but they were both equally outrageous. Both of them did very poorly because they were very greedy on this project in terms of price. They [Atlas] were just like eons beyond. They must have thought that we were just the dumbest people on the planet."*
- **Atlas lost because of arrogance:** *"They were arrogant. And abrasive. They just ignored us."*
- **Customer felt neither vendor was hungry enough:** *"I thought that they [Both] didn't need the business because of Year 2000. And so they could charge a premium because it would have been easy to walk away from it. They weren't hungry."*
- **But next time this customer will build his own:** *"I think next time it will be a build. We learned our lesson. We'll build from the ground up. We'll hire someone to do it. We won't attempt to do it ourselves, but we'll look for something different next time."*

- The subcontractor caused much of the project to be postponed:** *“The subcontractor came back and identified approximately 180 changes that they said our clerk office would then have to write up. They then put us through several months of change control meetings and the like. On a Year 2000 constrained system, with a go live date of I think July of '99. Or April of '99, I guess it was. And then they asked for a 4-1/2 months delay. At one point they asked for \$1.8 million. At that point our Board thought that it was too high risk to continue, because we couldn't afford to spend another couple of million to remediate [Y2K] and spend \$13 million for this. So they canceled that piece of the project and went straight to our [Y2K] mediation.”*
- The respondent was very uncomfortable when both primes brought in paid lobbyists to fight for the business:** *“I think it was tremendously uncomfortable that they used paid lobbyists to try and get the business. They both did. Which was new for me in my career. I've never seen it done before. But I guess when you're talking about this kind of money, I guess those kinds of things will happen.”*

Summary of scores:

	Importance Rating	Gap	Winner			
			Active Consulting	Atlas	TechX	ABC consulting
Understanding IT Strategy	7	+6	9	3	5	6
Business Process Knowledge	9	+4	9	5	5	4
Schedule	10	+3	7	4	3	1
Reputation	8	+1	8	7	5	3
Proposed Solution	6	+1	5	4	3	4
References	10	0	6.5	6.5	6	5
Technical Expertise	8	0	8	8	6	4
Price	6	0	2	2	4	5
Partner Strengths	9	-2	7	9	6	7
Overall Rating		1.4	6.8	5.4	4.8	4.3

Please note: the respondent was not aware that Active Software was doing this interview. This is to keep the responses as unbiased as possible.

The first question is what motivated the (Department Name) to implement this solution?

What motivated your company to begin this project?

O.K. Well, it wasn't just the (Department name). It was actually started by the Chief Administrative Judge in the (Another Dept.) of the (Number) Circuit Court.

O.K.

Who initiated this selection process?

Administrative Judge

And he, in his criminal cases, saw a tremendous disconnect between all of the different judicial agencies. In terms of information, automation, sharing of information to the detriment of the system as a whole. So he got all the elected officials including the Sheriff who has since passed away, and we have a new Sheriff together. They met as a task force and they all agreed in order to provide better services for the citizens that they really needed to put their parochial, you know little kingdoms aside and be willing to be open and sharing of their information and automation. So that was how it all got started. The Sheriff was a player but he was not the driver.

What was your role specifically in the selection process?

What was your role in the selection process?

Project Manager

I was a Project Manager all the way through. Through all three phases.

So you really know what happened here.

Oh, yeah. Yes, I do!

Now did you hire any outside consultants to contribute to your selection process?

Yes, all along the way. We used Mark Methodology.

Yes.

O.K. So we went through two laborious planning segments. We did the ISP. And then we did the business area analysis. But what we did is we broke it in two at that point when we did the business area analysis. Because we couldn't do everything and so we did those systems that were Year 2000, constrained and also those areas that were the primary judicial system. So it was the Clerk of the Courts system. Which has the docketing calendaring, case management. And the Jail management system. And in addition there was going to be a data warehouse which was scaled back to be more of a data exchange. Less permanent of a setup. And child support . . . (coughing). . . excuse me.

Sounds like you have a bad cold going there.

Actually this is my fourth week. I just can't shake this thing. It's Summer, you know. It's just so humid I just can't get rid of the darn thing. So I just have my cough hanging on here.

O.K.

Did any outside consultants contribute to your selection process?

Warner Group

So those were the first two phases. At that point starting with phase one, we competitively bid and we retained the Warner Group in Woodland Hills, CA. Initially it came down to them and Miter Tech, the two finalists.

And this was the consultant to help you make a selection. Correct?

Correct. Well, to do all the planning and then to take it to the next step, to the implementation phase. The acquisition, implementation phase. O.K. And it came down to Miter Tech and the Warner Group. And the day that both of them were in, the Warner Group and the S and C dropped their price 25%. And at that point the entire committee went unanimous. (Several chuckles.)

O.K.

And so we ended up with them. And they helped us through the selection. We went through an RFP process to acquire a vendor. It was the most laborious, largest RFP. Well, it was an RFI actually. That we ever sent out. It contained the ISP. It contained a sample contract. It contained all of our business requirements. It contained all of the. . . When I say business requirements I mean like our contract language, like our commissioners are especially fond of and will not allow us to negotiate on.

I see.

It contained all of our business requirements, down to a very detailed level for all of our applications. And our “data dictionary”, which we had developed. And all of our reports and forms. I’m trying to think what else. You get the picture. It was pretty. . .

It was very involved. Well, let’s keep going here on the questions. Approximately when did you initiated the selection process?

Well, which one?

Well. . .

For the acquisition?

For the acquisition itself? Well, actually what I’m interested in is how you chose the IT vendor?

Can you hang on for one sec?

Sure.

Sorry about that.

Oh, no problem. The question was when did you actually initiate the selection process to pick a vendor to actually do the job?

I want to say it was in, well we started. When you say started the process did you mean when did we put the committee together or when did we actually send out the first piece of paper soliciting bids?

The first piece of paper when you went out to solicit bids.

O.K. It was April of '97.

Approximately when was this selection process initiated?

April of '97

And then about when did you finish the process?

Oh, god it dragged on and on and on.

(Several chuckles.)

Well the way it works is we have a committee. A selection negotiating committee, who had been appointed by a commission. Who are really the only people really authorized to either collect taxes or to spend money.

Yes.

So they appoint a committee who act on their behalf and select in cases like this. But the selection committee can only recommend to the Board and then the Board has to act. So we went through the whole process. We did the RLI and two sets of questions to short list vendors. The first went out in April. Then July, then I think September. We had a mandatory vendors meeting in October. Then the end of October for a week we had vendors in to do demos of every one of their products for an entire week, that they proposed. That was pretty grueling. The committee recommended in November. The Board acted in early February of '98.

Approximately when was this selection process finalized?

February of '98

Gotcha. So you finished basically in February then. O.K. Is the project finished or are you still ongoing with it?

Well, half was canceled.

Really?

The big piece was canceled. That was courts, and the jail system is delayed but is due to go live this Sunday.

So you are in the process of the project.

Well, what's left of it, the big piece was canceled.

Any particular reason for that cancellation?

Yeah, the vendor, when they went through and did the requirements in preparation for the SRS. The subcontractor came back and at that point they identified approximately 180 changes that they said our clerk office would then have to write up. They then put us through several months of change control meetings and the like. On a Year 2000 constraint system, with a go live date of I think of July of '99. Or April of '99, I guess it was. And then they asked for a 4-1/2 months delay. At one point they asked for \$1.8 million. It just, you know at that point. And at that point we hadn't even got to the SRS point yet.

Yes.

And so at that point our Board thought that it was too high risk to continue, because we couldn't afford to spend another couple of million to remediate and spend \$13 million for this.

Yes.

So they canceled that piece of the project and went straight to our mediation.

Well, let me . .

I think they'll come back to it in 2 years.

Sure but once you get through the Y2K problem.

Right, exactly.

All right let's once again go back to the process you used to actually choose the vendors to do this. Can you give me an idea of what your selection criteria was?

Oh, my god. It's so lengthy, I mean we sliced and diced their response. First of all it was percentage of fit.

Percentage of fit with what?

With our requirements.

O.K.

O.K. So we knew which of our requirements we had to have, future but needed or just nice to have. We know all that already. And then we did a match against that against their responses for either existing, custom or never going to have it don't even ask. And we did that. So we were able to do a comparison there. And then we did reference checks.

Hold off. Why don't I make this a little easier for you. I do have a list of criteria here. Now I'll give you a list here and see if we can narrow this down.

O.K.

One thing you did mention was the service vendor reputation. Is that right?

Right.

And you also mentioned their references.

Yep.

How about was a pre-existing relationship with the vendor at all a factor?

No.

How about their responsiveness to your changing needs?

Well, we wouldn't have a way to gauge that.

It sounds to me like that was one of the reasons why it ended up getting canceled. Part of it at least.

Yeah.

But ultimately.

You know if you don't have a relationship with a vendor then anything they tell you, you don't know what's true and what's not.

That's right. Yeah.

You know, there wasn't really a way for us to gauge that. There really wasn't.

How about understanding your IT Strategy and Vision?

Yes, that was very important to us. They had to adhere to our vision and we did give them our vision and our strategy.

How about Price and other Financial considerations?

Yes.

How about their ability to meet your schedule?

Yes, critical. That's critically important.

How about their partner or subcontractor strengths?

Yes that was also critically important.

O.K.

And that's where the failure was, I might add.

Yep, that's what I heard. How about their knowledge of your business process? How well did they know what you were trying to do?

Well, let me put it this way.

Yes.

It would be impossible for them to know our business processes. Because they are the most convoluted on the planet.

(A few chuckles.)

But in terms of being the depth of knowledge in the subject area was critically important to us. And the fact that they had a Judge, a former Judge, former prosecutor on their team was critically important. They had very deep subject knowledge and that was critical for us.

So would you call that technical expertise then?

Well, they had that also. I mean they had the technical expertise as well, but they also had the subject area.

I would call that the business process knowledge.

Sure, exactly, yeah.

That's my list and you checked pretty much everything here. What I would ask you now to do is to give me an idea of the relative importance of these issues. And by that I would suggest that we use a scale of one to ten. Where one is that it was of almost no importance, and ten is it was very very very important to you.

Sure.

So, let's see we started off with the service vendor reputation.

Criterion	Service Vendor Reputation	Importance	8
------------------	----------------------------------	-------------------	----------

I'd give that about an eight.

About an eight. How about the Strength of Reference?

Criterion	Strength Of References	Importance	10
------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------	-----------

Oh, ten.

Ten. How about understanding your IT Strategy and Vision?

Criterion	Understanding Your It Strategy And Vision	Importance	7
------------------	--	-------------------	----------

Seven.

Seven. How about Price?

Criterion	Price	Importance	6
------------------	--------------	-------------------	----------

Well, when you get up into the \$30 million range, I mean it's like another million here or there you kind of get a little numb to it.

(A few chuckles.) I'd like to be there some day.

Well, you know the problem is that it's like, you know, after awhile you know you hear these vendors say, "Oh \$42 million and \$58 million". It's like geez. After awhile you just can't comprehend it anymore. So Price, well, it was important obviously. So, I guess I would have to say six.

Six, O.K. How about the Ability to Meet your Schedule?

Criterion	Ability To Meet Your Schedule	Importance	10
------------------	--------------------------------------	-------------------	-----------

Oh, that was a ten.

How about their Partner or Subcontractor Strengths?

Criterion	Partner Or Subcontractor Strengths	Importance	9
------------------	---	-------------------	----------

That was a nine.

O.K. How about their Business Process Knowledge?

Criterion	Business Process Knowledge	Importance	9
------------------	-----------------------------------	-------------------	----------

I'd say that was about a nine.

And their Proposed Solution?

Criterion	Proposed Solution	Importance	6
------------------	--------------------------	-------------------	----------

Six.

Six.

I know that sounds weird, but you know all the rest. If you have the rest that falls in to place.

Right. How about the Technical Expertise of the Vendors?

Criterion	Technical Expertise Of The Vendors	Importance	8
------------------	---	-------------------	----------

Oh, that was really important I guess I'd have to give that about an eight.

About an 8. Now what I would like to go into is the actual IT vendors that you looked at. Not the consultant that helped you figure out the needs. But rather the vendors they looked at that would actually do the implementation. By the way you might have looked at twenty. I'd kind of like to keep this to the top three or four, perhaps.

Who were the IT Vendors that bid?

	1	2
Name of IT Vendors	<u>Active Consulting</u>	<u>Atlas</u>

Because this was a very specialized project and required a large systems integrator. There were only two, Atlas and Active Consulting.

Atlas and Active Consulting. All right, so now what I'd like to ask you to do is to take a look at. We'll go down through the list of criteria that you mentioned. And then what I'd like you to do is rate the vendor on how well they matched the criteria. Again I'd like to ask you to use a scale of one to ten. Where one is they didn't match our criteria at all and ten is they were perfect. O.K. And so the first criteria that we talked about was the service vendor reputation. So how would you rate Atlas and Active Consulting on that?

Service Vendor Reputation		
	Rating of service provider	
Importance Rating of criterion:	Active Consulting	Atlas
<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>

Well, do you want to do one vendor first and do the other after? Or do them at the same time?

We'll do them at the same time.

O.K.

Because I'm going to ask some questions here as we go along.

O.K. I would say for Atlas for reputation a seven.

And how about Active Consulting?

Eight.

An eight. And was there any particular reason why you rated the vendors the way you did?

Primarily, well we went to the Gartner Group for one thing.

Yes.

For feedback on their performance in March. Scale, automation is the prime, so we used that. We also called their references where they had acted as a prime. And we got a little bit more negative feedback on one than the other.

O.K. So, that's why you rated Active Consulting a bit higher, interesting. So let's talk now about the strength of the references of the two vendors. How would you rate them on their Strength of References?

I'm trying to remember.

This would be where they might have taken you to another site and showed you something similar.

Yes, we didn't go to any sites.

Oh, that's right. Did you call them, perhaps?

We called them, yes and we had an actual interview sheet. We had a standard set of questions that we asked all of them.

Yeah. Good.

Because it was the only way we could really do a fair evaluation.

Sure.

And I'm trying to remember now because it's been a long time.

Yep.

I remember Orange County was a really great reference for Active Consulting. I remember that Atlas had references but not doing work like what we needed them to do. More statewide type implementation than just county.

I see.

They were both O.K. You know I can't. It would be hard for me to give you an honest answer to that because I don't really recall it. Nothing jumps out at me. Certainly nothing negative.

So would you give them both the same rating then?

I would, yeah, I would.

Any guess on what that rating would be? If you were to give it to them.

Strength Of References		
	Rating of service provider	
Importance Rating of criterion:	Active Consulting	Atlas
10	6.5	6.5

Six maybe seven.

Six-an-a-half O.K.?

Yeah, O.K.

That's all I need. How about understanding your IT Strategy and Vision?

Understanding It Strategy And Vision		
	Rating of service provider	
Importance Rating of criterion:	Active Consulting	Atlas
7	9	3

O.K. I would rate Atlas very poor. I think that I would rate them around about a three.

Yes.

And I would give Active Consulting a very high rating because they really got what we were trying to do. So I would have to put them at about a nine.

Excellent, O.K.

They did a really great job there.

Any particular reason Atlas fell down so bad?

Because they just ignored us.

Yes.

And you know, they knew what our environment was. And even though we wanted to move away in a different direction they came in and proposed to our current environment instead. They tried to pedal why that would be much better.

Keeping with what you presently had. Okay rather than listening to what you wanted to do.

Right.

And I assume you advice to Atlas would be listen to the customer?

Correct. **Don't try and pedal mainframe stuff because that's where you make more money.**

Absolutely. O.K. I think the next criteria we talked about was Price. How would you rate the two vendors on Price?

They were comparable, but they were very high. So I would rate them poorly. Both of them very poorly because they were very greedy on this project in terms of price.

Price		
	Rating of service provider	
Importance Rating of criterion:	Active Consulting	Atlas
<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>

So I would give them a real poor rating like about a two.

Two meaning the high price.

They were extremely high.

Were they both equal in Price?

They weren't equal but they were both equally outrageous.

Equally outrageous. All right. The next criteria was.

I mean we knew because we called around the country. We knew the most expensive project that had ever been undertaken in the entire country for an integrated project like this was \$15 million. The cheapest bid we came in at was about \$34 million.

Ouch.

And Atlas's was like \$47 million and they wouldn't even Price one phase. This was only just the bare bones. And so we knew already what we should be paying for these systems. And we knew that the jail system should have been about \$2.7 million and the court system should have been about \$7 million. And the integration would have been a couple more. **They were just like eons beyond. They must have thought they we were just the dumbest people on the planet.**

Do you think that was the reason or was there high risk involved, or what?

Well, there was risk. Basically that they factored in the risk. I just thought that it was Year 2000 and greed, both. I thought that they didn't need the business because of the Year 2000. And so they could charge a premium because it would have been easy to walk away from it.

O.K.

They weren't hungry.

And that goes for both of them?

Yes, exactly. They weren't hungry.

Right.

You know, if we had hit them three years earlier they would have been drooling. But they weren't hungry.

Well, that's because of all the Y2K work.

Exactly, because their services people were busy. They didn't need this.

Yep, understood. Well, when you go back to the project and do this again. They may be much more hungrier at that point.

Yeah, but we aren't. **I think next time it will be a build. We learned our lesson.**

It will be a what?

A build.

What do you mean by that?

We'll build from the ground up. We'll hire someone to do it. We won't attempt to do it ourselves, but we'll look for something different next time.

Interesting, but let's go back to the paradigm here.

O.K.

The next criteria is the Ability to meet your schedule. How would you rate the two vendors on that?

Ability To Meet Your Schedule		
	Rating of service provider	
Importance Rating of criterion:	Active Consulting	Atlas
10 _____	7 _____	4 _____

O.K. **Atlas was not willing to meet the schedule.** So I would rate them at about a 4.

I see.

And Active Consulting griped but was willing to meet it. So, I guess I'd rate them around a 7.

Excellent. Any comments to the vendors on meeting your schedule? Any suggestions to them about how they could do it better?

No, not really. Just because it was a very aggressive timetable. But I think that they just need to plan their resources accordingly when they want to meet an aggressive timetable.

O.K.

O.K. And when a vendor just stands up and says. “Your timetable is ridiculous. Forget it we’re not agreeing to it.” That doesn’t really endear them to us. That’s what Atlas did.

Nope. (A few chuckles.)

Of course if you tell them that, they’ll know just who said that.

All right, next question is the Partner or Subcontractor Strengths. How would you rate the vendors on that issue?

Real or perceived?

Well, it has to be perceived. Back when you were doing this. I know you’ve got experience since then, but we need to talk about what was happening at the time of the evaluation.

Partner Or Subcontractor Strengths		
	Rating of service provider	
Importance Rating of criterion:	Active Consulting	Atlas
9 _____	7 _____	9 _____

All right I would give Atlas a nine. And I would give Active Consulting a seven.

Atlas’s subcontractors looked stronger to you?

Well, one did and one didn’t.

Yes.

And they had two. And it was the exact reverse on the other side.

O.K.

O.K. But in terms of the dollar value of each of those segments. The largest segment, the subcontractor for Atlas was the strongest and that was on the court side.

Yes.

And they ended up going to Active Consulting for the project.

Interesting, so actually Atlas’s own subcontractor went off to Active Consulting?

Atlas’s own subcontractor went off to Active Consulting.

They wanted to keep the business then.

Yep.

The next criteria here I believe was the Proposed Solution. Now how would you rate the vendors on that criteria?

Proposed Solution		
	Rating of service provider	
Importance Rating of criterion:	Active Consulting	Atlas
6	5	4

O.K. Atlas I would give them about a four. And Active Consulting I would give them about a five.

About a five. So, they were pretty close on their proposed solution.

Well, I would say that they were completely different platforms. O.K. Active Consulting gave us what we wanted. But we didn't think it would work. Atlas gave us what they wanted and it was way over the top in terms of price.

O.K.

Excess extravagance. It was just way over the top.

I see.

Way, way over the top.

Sure.

But you know, that wasn't a critical factor for us, because we sort of figured we'd have to adjust in that area. And so as long as they could show that they had the technical competence to put together a reasonable solution and to work with us towards re-crafting that as we needed. We felt pretty comfortable, so it wasn't really that big of an issue for either one of them really. It wasn't the most important thing.

Understood.

It's silly of them I thought it wasn't.

I understand with the situation you've got there.

Well, you know we had pretty much every platform, so you know we have the luxury of being able to kind of mix and match.

The next criteria we have here was Technical expertise of the two vendors. How would you rate that?

Technical Expertise	
	Rating of service provider

Importance Rating of criterion:	Active Consulting	Atlas
8	8	8

I would say it was good on both sides. I would give them both an eight.

So there really wasn't a great perceived difference between the two?

Right. No.

How about their Business Process Knowledge?

Business Process Knowledge		
	Rating of service provider	
Importance Rating of criterion:	Active Consulting	Atlas
9	9	5

Oh, I would give Atlas about a five.

O.K.

And I would give Active Consulting a nine.

I assume Active Consulting had the judge on their team?

Right and they had people who were justice and public safety specialists, who were actually assigned to the project and they stated that right from the get go. Atlas brought in their court and public safety experts to close the business but they were only putting their services people out here to do the project with no court or jail knowledge.

So essentially they had their closers in and you looked beyond that. Excellent.

Right, right. Because what we did was that part of the bid we asked them to give us the resumes of all of the key team members and the project leaders. For both them and the subcontractors.

Yes.

O.K. And we asked to bring them to the meetings. And we asked them to get up and detail their experience in courts and jails. So, we knew who was going to be assigned. We knew what their expertise was.

And they also detailed for you what their roles were going to be once the decision had been made.

Right. On site, remote, this was the other thing. Atlas flashed all these, you know, hot shots in front of us. And when we actually pushed them. Well, no their really not going to be here. They'll be available by phone.

(A few chuckles.) They'll be available when needed. Right. O.K.

O.K. The other thing is our committee consisted of the administrative judge, the public defender, the state attorney, the sheriff, our budget director for the county, the finance guy and a couple of attorneys. So, you know you're not going to snow these people. These guys are going to ask you questions and their going to know. The first thing that the public defender asked everyone of them was, "Where did you go to college? Where did you go to Law School? Where did you Practice? Why did you quit? Who do you know?" So there was no getting past these guys. If the commitment wasn't there for the knowledge experts then it was pretty evident.

Interesting. Now I need to ask you the key question here. Which is who won the bid?

Which IT Vendor was selected?

Active Consulting

I kind of guessed that. What do you feel were the major reasons why Active Consulting won the bid?

What was the major reason this IT Vendor was selected?

Well, number one because they wanted it. They projected that.

I see.

O.K. They really seemed to listen to our needs and our desires. Instead of trying to force their opinions on us. They had a very deep knowledge set which was very impressive to us. These guys really knew. I mean they came in and they started talking about the court process and outcome based judge reporting which is all brand new nationally. We're not even there yet, and I mean you know, these guys go around the country and lecture on this. We were very impressed and their technical people are good too. And they were nice. They weren't arrogant. They weren't rolling us over. They worked very closely with the team and you could see they would work as a team. So that was all important to us and their customers gave them excellent references. I'd been at a national conference just a couple weeks earlier and I just happened to chat up the guys who were one of their references. They were very honest and open. They just said all great things. That's pretty much it.

Well, let me complete this by asking. Atlas lost. What do you think the key reasons for Atlas losing were?

What were the major reasons the other IT Vendors were not chosen?

Well, they didn't have the depth of expertise. They didn't listen. They were arrogant.

Really.

And abrasive.

That sounds like a really bad combination. They didn't know what they were talking about and they were pushy about it. That's basically what you're saying.

Yeah. Pretty much.

Boy interesting.

It was pretty bad. It was pretty bad.

O.K.

They tried to object on rules and procedures through the bid process and stuff. It was pretty ugly.

Yeah. It sounds like it. What final advice would you offer to the vendors other than what you've already said. I think you've been pretty thorough here. But is there any last minute advice you'd like to offer to them.

No. Be gracious.

You've done a real good job. One last comment and you have said this several times during this conversation but let me just ask it anyway. Were there any sales tactics used by the vendors that you especially liked or did not like?

Were there any sales tactics used by the vendors which you liked or did not like?

Well, I think it was tremendously uncomfortable that they used paid lobbyists to try and get the business.

This was which one of them?

They both did.

They both did. Hum.

Which was new for me in my career. I've never seen it done before. But I guess when you're talking about this kind of money, I guess those kinds of things will happen. But that was very very difficult.

What advice would you give to each IT Vendor on how they could improve?

I think the most important thing is to be professional, ethical and listen.

Right.

And if you can do that then I think you have a great chance of success.

O.K.

And even if you don't have the deepest knowledge, if you're honest, you're ethical you know you bring forward the resources or show that you can and that you're authorized to. You know I think that just becomes them on issue.

Sure.

Because you know really, primarily what you need is when you're going through that process. You're looking at people and you're saying how are we going to work as a team? That's really where it's at. If you have to be able to work in a very open effective way.

And trusting.

Yes, exactly. Exactly. So you need to project those traits.

All right let me ask the next question. If you had to do this all over again, would you consider both of these vendors again?

Which of these providers would you take bids from in the future?

Oh, yes.

I thought so. If you had to do it all over again is there anything about your bid process that you would change?

Are there any changes you would make to your selection process if you were to repeat the process?

No, we can't legally.

I mean this was all state run so you had to do it the way you did it. And that is was there any other issue that we did not cover that was a factor in your decision?

Are there any other issues related to your decision which were not covered in this survey?

No, I don't think so.

We did a good thorough job here. Well, I really want to thank you for your time and effort here. And I want to wish you the best.

Oh, thank you. Thanks for calling. It was a pleasure to speak with someone who really understood this business.

Thanks and good luck.

Bye.