

## The Time We Sold Out

Written by Nick Sanders  
Thursday, 13 October 2016 00:00

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Remember [that time](#) we walked away?

We decided a potential client was too big, too bureaucratic, and that life was just too short to put up with it.

Remember that? We wrote a blog article about it. We wrote that article *knowing* that the client we walked away from was going to read it.

That article generated some interesting reader feedback. One reader from a place “where it’s always sunny, unless it’s raining,” emailed to say—

*Your article on the almost-client, really hit home. Regardless the fee, better to be battling with the client than against their people or policy. Nice to have that option. Keep it up, I've made sure my folks read it, as many haven't been on the other side.*

We also received some feedback from the almost-client. The client still wanted to hire Apogee Consulting, Inc.! The client could not overrule the determination by its Procurement Department that only the most current Form W-9 would be accepted; Apogee was going to have to live with that and there was nothing to be done. However, the client offered a compromise: they would fill out the new W-9 for us and all we would have to do was sign it and send it back.

Also the client offered payment terms that were within industry standards. (As readers may recall, we were afraid that a client that big would also require onerous payment terms.) To be clear, the payment terms were not our normal 15-day-after-receipt-of-invoice requirement, but they were okay.

(Why insist on 15 days as our standard payment terms? Because we’re a small business and most of our clients are defense contractors. They are supposed to pay their small business suppliers that quickly, according to DoD policy; many of their prime contracts require it. We’ve written about this before on the site; look it up.)

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So a compromise was offered. For us, it was a choice of revenue versus principles. Guess which one won? (Hint: see this article's title).

Also our newest client wanted us to say nice things about them. Sure. Did you know the client is one of the largest EPC (Engineering, Procure, Construct) firms in the world? That they are publicly traded and, unlike other such companies, they actually pay shareholders a dividend? That they have a long history of successful project execution and are very well respected in the industry? Well, all that is true and we would have said those things even if they weren't (now) paying us to say them.