
GOVERNMENT & COMMERCIAL PROPOSALS

PROPOSAL BEST PRACTICES

PROPOSAL INDUSTRY NEWS

PROPOSAL TIPS, TRICKS, & SECRETS


NCA APMP NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA

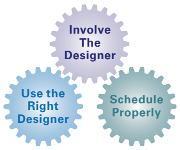
# EXECUTIVE summary


**Spring 2016** | Volume 23, Issue 2


This Issue's Theme: **Developing a Successful Proposal Response Team**

## Inside:







*A Publication of the Association of Proposal Management Professionals (APMP) National Capital Area (NCA) Chapter*

President's Corner

# Five Ideas to Help Your Teams (and Yourself)!

by Lisa Pafe, APMP-NCA President, CPP APMP Fellow & PMI PMP

Happy Spring to our members! Spring is a time of new beginnings, renewal, and change. The APMP-NCA Spring eZine focuses on Developing a Successful Proposal Response Team which requires that we make changes—small or large.

Typically, as proposal managers, we do not have complete control over who is on our response team. The team is usually some combination of who is best-suited to help win this opportunity and who is available. The team is most often comprised of professionals with varying degrees of competency, experience, and commitment. Team members may cycle in and out, depending on the phase of the proposal process or other circumstances such as re-assignment to another high priority, leave due to vacation or illness, or dismissal due to lack of fit. Team members may be on-site or remote, increasing the level of complexity related to team-building. Partner companies on the team may have their own agendas.

So what is a proposal manager to do? Here are five ideas that I have implemented successfully:

1. **Don't get stuck storming!** All teams go through five developmental stages that psychologist and educator Bruce Tuckerman identified: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Adjourning. Three-fifths of team time is typically consumed by the first two difficult stages leaving little time to get the team integrated and productive. In the forming stage, clarity and communications are paramount. Ensure the team is clear on what this win means in terms of strategy, positioning, growth, profitability, and jobs. Often team members avoid asking questions because they don't want to appear uninformed. Spend time off-line with each team member to answer questions privately while building rapport.

   Storming is the most challenging stage, but it is necessary in order to norm and perform. Conflicts arise that can lead to anger, confusion, hurt feelings, and/or frustration. Avoid getting defensive, listen respectfully, but exert your authority as the proposal manager to make decisions. Additionally, avoid waiting too long to review work products. Require contributors to upload work daily so you can provide feedback and coaching. Use storming as the pathway to continuously clarify and build a stronger team.

2. **Focus on sustainable employee engagement.** Studies show that employees who feel trusted and appreciated are happier and more productive. As the famous cosmetics titan Mary Kay Ash said: *"The two things people want more than sex and money are recognition and praise."* However, just because employees are willing to contribute because they feel more valued, does

not necessarily mean they are able. Sustainable employee engagement requires that the proposal manager advocate and enforce physical, emotional, and social well-being. How? Create a happy team with ergonomic furniture and equipment, breaks that include physical activity, healthy food and snacks, positive reinforcement (compliment a job well done), and support (coaching) for those who are struggling. Avoid emailing the team after hours, and make it clear that everyone should take time to exercise, see family and friends, and get enough sleep.

3. **Stop wasting time.** Take an objective look at how the team spends valuable time. Are people invited to meetings they do not need to attend? Does your management style allow people to hijack team meetings with unproductive discussions and arguments? Have you set and enforced priorities with actionable, clear steps and deadlines? The proposal manager should analyze team dynamics and re-direct the team if all or some people are moving off-course.

4. **Practice mindfulness.** Don't dismiss mindfulness as the arena of yogis. Mindfulness simply means being aware. Most proposal managers worry unproductively. Instead of simply re-visiting past blunders, take action. Apply lessons learned to the present moment. Rather than stressing, focus on immediate actions and achievable goals. Accept that perfection is unattainable. Cultivate your team to do the best that they can within constraints (time, budget, resources, and competencies).

5. **Take care of yourself.** You are the most important person in your life. Why? Because if you don't take care of your physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, you will have nothing left to take care of your team. An exhausted and uninspired proposal manager can hardly expect the team to achieve performance excellence. Take breaks when you need refreshment.

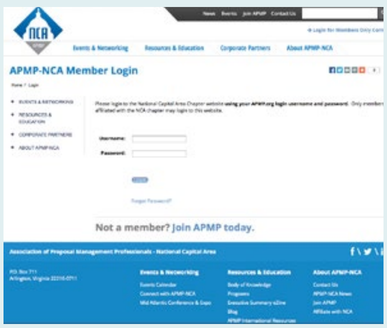
Spring is about change. Change causes stress in the short term, but it may also result in better outcomes for your proposal response team.

Lisa Pafe is a CPP APMP Fellow, PMI PMP, speaker, LinkedIn Publisher, and ISO Internal Auditor with more than 24 years of capture and proposal experience for small to large companies serving civilian and defense agencies. She is the current President of the APMP-NCA and served on the board previously as Vice President for two years and the Chapter's Speaker Series Chair for two years. Prior experience includes: VP of Corporate Development at Ace Info Solutions, Inc., President of Vision Consulting, Inc.; VP of Business Development for GovConnect, Inc.; and Director of Marketing for MAXIMUS, Inc. She holds a BA from Yale University, MPP from Harvard University, and MIS from The George Washington University.

**Click here to check out APMP-NCA upcoming events!**

## APMP-NCA Members!

When was the last time that you logged into apmp.org and updated your profile information? It is easy to do and only takes a few minutes. Log in, and under "My Profile" go to Manage Profile and click on Edit Bio. Update your information and click on the blue "save changes" button at the bottom. It is that easy. Having your correct contact information makes it easier for the NCA Chapter to keep you informed on upcoming events and activities.



Proposal Innovations

# Four Teamwork Innovations

by Hélène Courard, APMP-NCA Vice President, JD, CF APMP


Teamwork. It is important in many industries, but it is essential for proposal development. Effective proposal development often requires multi-dimensional teams that bring varying levels of expertise in diverse fields all working together toward a common goal. Add the element of short deadlines, and it could be a recipe for disaster. To be successful, the most critical skill all proposal team members need is teamwork. The magic comes from learning to work together, listen to each other, and rely on each other for each other's area of expertise. The most successful proposal team is not necessarily built of the smartest minds in each discipline; it is composed of individuals who know how to get along and work together.

The key to getting along is mutual respect and trust. So how do we build trust among proposal team members—hard working, often Type-A personalities, with a lot on their plates? This article shares four key principles that I like to establish early in the effort and retain at the forefront of all interactions among the team—especially as the going gets tough, and the timeline gets shorter.

1. **Everyone is here for a reason.** There is rarely an excess of people working on a proposal. Each person recruited, engaged, or assigned to support the proposal effort brings a unique set of necessary skills and expertise. Respect that one may have the best insight with the customer's needs (e.g. the BD lead), the SME likely is an expert on technology being offered, and the editor is the most competent of everyone at crafting direct, clear, and grammatically correct writing. I advise team members to bring the best of your area of expertise, but defer to others for their areas.

2. **Assume the best of everyone.** Proposal environments are often high-pressure. Usually, people intend to provide the best content and support possible. If you have a conflict with a fellow proposal team member, keep in mind it is unlikely they are trying to mess with you or *"ruin"* the proposal. Our communication practices should reflect this truth. The way we communicate can make or break a good team. If a comment or response from your fellow team member strikes you as too pointed or challenging, first assume s/he is only trying to do their best on the proposal. Likewise, before sending any written communication, take a moment to reflect if it could be misconstrued and revise accordingly.

3. **Face-to-Face first.** This is another principle that centers on team communications. In today's interconnected world, email and messaging are great tools to convey information to a large group quickly. However, if you need to discuss an issue, make sure you take the time to actually discuss it. When communicating via email, the discussions can quickly devolve into position statements and directives of *"what-I-think-is-right"*. Unfortunately this means people are more inclined to dig into their position prematurely and defend their opinion,

spending more time crafting their written argument rather than listening to other opinions. It is much more productive to have a conversation where a topic can be discussed so that participants can have an open give-and-take to evaluate an issue and mutually discuss alternatives. When face-to-face communication is possible, it is always best. When that isn't possible, pick up the phone and talk. Use email communication to summarize the conversation and document actions and next steps. This will minimize miscommunications.

4. **Think outside your head.** We all have other obligations: other work deadlines and personal matters with ourselves, family, or friends. Unless you are good friends with your colleagues outside of the work environment, you don't know what is going on with their lives outside of proposal meetings and sessions. Respect the individual and the team. If you are in the position to set assignment deadlines, make sure to give your team members plenty of advance notice, and validate that the schedule you have established is feasible. Give them an opportunity to work with you to accommodate other arrangements if needed. Of course, some deadlines are non-negotiable. But if someone has to take their parent to a chemo treatment next Wednesday afternoon, or they are responsible to pick up their child from day care by 6PM, see if you can be flexible. Could you get that individual's inputs on a rolling basis instead of all at once? Or maybe you can extend a deadline until start of business the next day rather than COB if you really aren't going to work on it until the following day.

Proposals can be stressful. A little perspective and selflessness as part of the team can go a long way to make an otherwise challenging time more collegial and, dare I say it, even fun.

With nearly 20 years' experience leading and motivating teams to success, Hélène has been engaged with APMP-NCA since 2007. She has chaired several committees, mentored junior members through the NCA Mentor-Protégé program, and is currently serving as NCA's Vice President. She is the Director of Unisys Corporation's Global Proposal Center, leading a team of more than 30 professionals in the preparation and delivery of winning proposals worldwide for national, state, local, and commercial clients. She holds a BA from Saint Joseph's University, and JD from Santa Clara University School of Law.

# APMP-NCA Mentorship Program

APMP-NCA is having a stellar year thus far in Professional Development. We have an active Mentor-Protégé Program with 17 pairings of mentors with protégés; each pair with specific plans of how to meet their individual goals for achieving professional development for the protégés. We held the annual, in-person kickoff meeting for the Mentor-Protégé Program in early February (delayed due to the blizzard in January), as well as monthly teleconferences and quarterly meeting at ManTech for the mentors and protégés to share their progress, questions, suggestions, and future plans.

As another aspect of professional development, NCA has awarded five scholarships for the 2016 APMP International Bid & Proposal Conference in Boston, MA May 25-28. The five recipients of the scholarship have already completed their online early bird registrations for the conference with the APMP-NCA paying the registration fees. The five winners are: Tara Durr (The Library Corporation), Hannah Bauman (Ace Info Solutions), Nicole Tripodi (Chenega Applied Solutions), Richard Lum (fs2e Consulting), and Carmen Singleton (Baker Tilly). Hannah, Nicole, and Carmen all participate as protégés in our Mentor-Protégé program. CONGRATULATIONS to each of the five recipients as they continue their professional development with NCA Chapter support!

Ask the Graphics Guru

# Getting the Best Out of Designers

by Mike Parkinson, CPP APMP Fellow

> *"Designers can be difficult."*

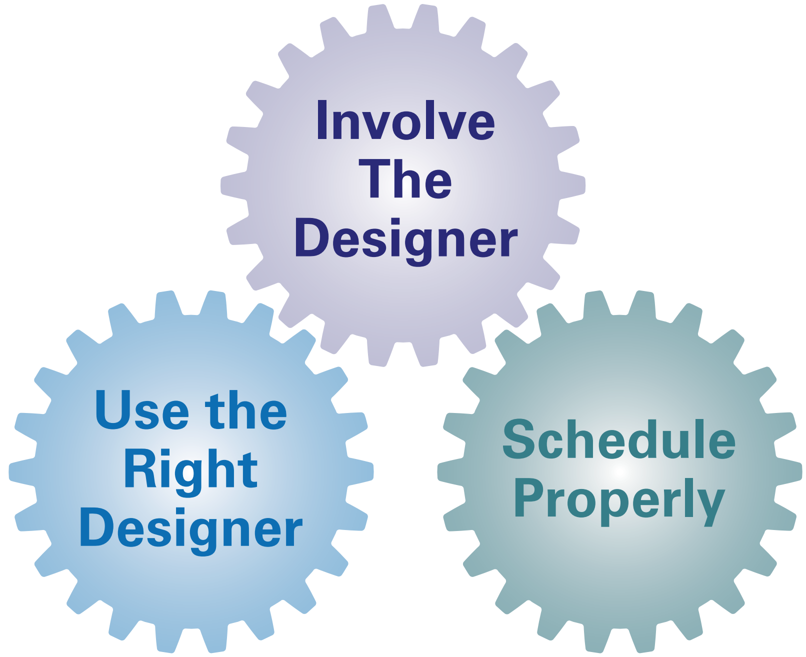
I've heard this statement regularly in my graphics and solutioning workshops. *(Don't worry designers; I hear the same about subject matter experts, authors, and proposal professionals alike.)* It can be frustrating to hear, especially since I am a graphic designer, which is why I want to address how to work with and get the best performance from the designers in your life.

To bridge the gap between designers and the proposal team, start by viewing the process from the designer's perspective. A wise man said, *"Seek first to understand and then be understood."* Empathy gifts the perspective needed to find mutually beneficial solutions that play to everyone's strengths.

As a designer *and* a proposal professional, I have a rare perspective. From a designer's perspective, the perfect scenario is for you to give them something *"cool"* to design, go away, and tell them the finished graphic is *awesome* and there are no changes. Of course, this rarely happens.

## The Problem

The following three situations are almost guaranteed to frustrate designers—*again, from the designer's perspective:*




1. **Subjective edits.** When non-designers make subjective and/or frequent edits that are purely aesthetic, it tells the designer that they are not much more than a human make-it-pretty machine.Most artists have formal design training and years of experience. Receiving design instructions from a non-designer, who vetoes the designer's input, devalues the graphic artist's expertise, which often results in defensive responses.
2. **"I'll know it when I see it."** Designers do their best to translate your content into a winning graphic. To do so they need key pieces of information that are rarely shared with them (e.g., win themes and insights into the customer's hopes, fears, and biases). Graphic artists are limited to the information they have and their experience with you. Without this key information, the designer's only choice is to make a more professional version of the graphic he thinks you will like. This approach costs your organization time, money, and lowers your win rate. It doesn't take full advantage of the designer's skills. Additionally, **you** are not the target audience. The artist should not focus on making you like it; instead he should create a graphic the customer will understand, remember, and love.
3. **The dump.** In proposals, the vast majority of graphics are submitted to designers at once. Due to schedule requirements (e.g., color team reviews, "pens

down") almost all contributors submit their graphics on the due date—not earlier. The designer(s) must turn five to 50 graphics in a short period of time. At that point, an artist is no longer a visual communicator. She becomes a machine that makes professional, compliant graphics. There is no time to improve the message, concept, or content. The resulting feedback on the graphics produced is weak because the designer had an unrealistic deadline creating graphics for an end customer they didn't understand.

## The Solution

Use the following three solutions as a guide to getting the most from your design team:

1. **Involve the designer.** Artists and authors are communicators. The author primarily communicates with text and the designer primarily communicates with visuals. Text and visuals together communicate far more effectively than either alone. In a document of text without graphics, information is lost in a sea of words. In a document of graphics without text, the information is lost to ambiguity. For artists to effectively contribute, they must understand the content, customer and strategy. The more they know, the better the output. Open, frequent communication between both is key.
2. **Use the right designer.** Some designers are excellent conceptualizers—turning words, data, and ideas into graphics. Other artists prefer to focus on rendering—making aesthetically appealing, compliant graphics. Use the designer with the right skill set to meet your needs. Ask the artist what he prefers or look at his portfolio to make an educated decision.
3. **Schedule properly.** Calculate how many hours are needed and plan accordingly. Rendering most proposal graphics require two to four hours per graphic—including all iterations. Concepting and rendering most graphics require six to twelve hours per graphic—including all iterations. Cover creation require five to twenty hours depending upon complexity and the availability of key elements such as logos and specific imagery. (If there are fewer graphics in your proposal, increase the development hours on each because those graphics will become more important to communicating the winning story.) Schedule support accordingly. If five SMEs ask one designer for 5 concepts and renders in one day, the outcome will fail to meet expectations. Staff up for spikes (e.g., outsource or bring in-house designers to the team), stagger the graphic due dates for teammates or increase the design duration. For example, Author One's graphics are due Tuesday and Author Two's deadline is Wednesday. Alternatively, graphics must be delivered to the designer four days prior to a review to ensure visually appealing and error-free final versions.

Approach the work in a way the leverages the strengths of each contributor and lowers the high cost of proposal development while increasing your win rate. Avoid disconnects and discontentment by seeking first to understand the situation and then letting your expectations be understood. The goal is for authors and designers to empathize and see the situation from the other's perspective. To succeed, everyone should be on the same team, working for the same goal—to win the proposal.

Mike Parkinson, CPP APMP Fellow is an internationally recognized visual communications guru and proposal expert, professional trainer, and award-winning author. He is a partner and head of marketing at 24 Hour Company (24hrco.com) specializing in bid-winning proposal graphics. His *Billion Dollar Graphics* book and website (BillionDollarGraphics.com) share best practices and helpful tools with professionals. Contact Mike at mike@24hrco.com or call 703-533-7209.

Legal Corner

# Paying Your Proposal Team on the Right Side of the Law

by Shlomo D. Katz, JD

Recently, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), proposed revamping the rules for determining which employees are entitled to overtime pay. Also, DOL, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and many state governments are working to find and punish employers that avoid overtime, tax, and health insurance obligations by misclassifying employees as independent contractors. Given their focus on overtime, the prevalence of excess hours in proposal development, and the many misconceptions about overtime, the discussion of successful proposal teams should include how the team will be paid.

## Background

A federal law called the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requires that covered employees be paid at least the minimum wage—currently $7.25 hourly—and overtime for all hours worked over 40 in a workweek. At face value, it seems proposal professionals should make a lot of overtime, but, some employees are exempt from these requirements. Notable exceptions include those who meet the applicable test for the executive, administrative, professional, computer, or outside sales exemption.

Despite a common misconception, no employee is exempt from overtime pay just because he is salaried or because she is a very important employee. Only employees who meet one of the exemption tests are exempt. In some cases, those tests include, in addition to a duties component, a salary component.

## Proposal Managers

Logically, the first exemption to consider when classifying a proposal manager is the executive exemption, which specifically mentions *"management"* in its definition. Indeed, many proposal managers likely perform some or all of the typical duties of management listed in DOL's regulations, including (but not limited to) the following:

- Interviewing, selecting, and training employees
- Directing the work of employees
- Planning the work
- Determining the techniques to be used
- Apportioning the work
- Planning and controlling the budget; and monitoring or implementing legal compliance measures.

However, one of the requirements of the executive exemption is that the employee's primary duty include *"management of the enterprise in which the employee is employed or of a customarily recognized department or subdivision thereof,"* as opposed to managing *"a mere collection of employees assigned from time to time to a specific job or series of jobs and a unit with permanent status and function."* In some large organizations, there is a proposal department with an ongoing existence. The manager of such an organization would qualify as an exempt executive if he or she meets the other elements of the exemption test. Frequently, though, proposal teams are only an *ad hoc* grouping of individuals with expertise relevant to the particular proposal being prepared, including subject-matter experts, cost or pricing experts, technical writers, proofreaders.

In such a situation, a different rule may help: *"Continuity of the same subordinate personnel is not essential to the existence of a recognized unit with a continuing function. An otherwise exempt employee will not lose the exemption merely because the employee draws and supervises workers from a pool or supervises a team of workers drawn from other recognized units, if other factors are present that indicate that the employee is in charge of a recognized unit with a continuing function."* But, if the proposal manager is not in charge of a recognized unit with a continuing function, she will not be an *"executive."*

Still, other exemptions may apply for proposal professionals. In some instances, the proposal manager may be a professional such as an engineer, physicist, chemist, lawyer or physician who is actually using his or her advanced knowledge to guide the proposal preparation process. Such an individual might qualify for the

The stakes are high; improperly classifying employees can lead to liability for back pay, liquidated damages, tax penalties, attorney fees and more.

professional exemption. Be careful, though. The mere fact that the manager has an advanced degree doesn't qualify him or her as exempt if his or her primary duty doesn't require that degree.

## Team Leaders

Many proposal managers satisfy the administrative exemption test as a *"Team Leader."* This comes from a public concern that the executive exemption doesn't reflect the modern practice of using cross-functional or multi-department teams to complete major projects. In response, DOL said that an employee who leads teams to complete major projects may qualify for exemption under the administrative, rather than executive, exemption. To make this clear, DOL included in the regulations that: *"An employee who leads a team of other employees assigned to complete major projects for the employer . . . generally meets the duties requirements for the administrative exemption, even if the employee does not have direct supervisory responsibility over the other employees on the team."*

This exemption for a team leader should, in many cases, cover a proposal manager as well, since a proposal manager is likely to *"exercise discretion and independent judgment regarding matters of significance,"* which is the essence of the administrative exemption. It also may cover the leaders of discrete working groups within the proposal team; e.g., the individuals heading the technical and cost proposal teams.

## Technical Writers

A technical writer is less likely to qualify for the administrative exemption if she works with the material that she is given and does not exercise the required level of discretion and independent judgment. As with the proposal manager, a technical writer whose primary duty requires an advanced degree may qualify for the learned professional exemption. For instance, if only a registered nurse could write a proposal for medical case management services, then he may be performing exempt learned professional duties when he writes that proposal.

## Editors and Proofreaders

In an Opinion Letter, DOL discussed an employee who spent 55% of her time editing proposals for grammar, spelling, and punctuation mistakes and ensuring that the bids were written in plain English. She also spent about 30% of her time checking spreadsheets and cost estimates prepared by other employees for accuracy and completeness. She did not have any input into the substantive technical, environmental, or scientific aspects of the bids. DOL opined that this employee was not exempt because her duties primarily involved the use of skills and technical abilities in following known standards or criteria in editing other employees' work. She did not exercise discretion and independent judgment regarding matters of significance, which is a requirement for the administrative exemption.

## Independent Contractors

There are several tests for determining who is an employee versus an independent contractor. Suffice it to say that a *"consultant"* who works in your office day-after-day, year-after-year, using your computer network, email domain, and other resources, might not be a consultant after all.

## Conclusion

Remember that an employee's FLSA status is determined by his specific duties. The size of the project and the team often influence the level of discretion and independent judgment that the participants exercise, which affect their likelihood of qualifying for exemption. The stakes are high; improperly classifying employees can lead to liability for back pay, liquidated damages, tax penalties, attorney fees and more. So, when you assemble that crackerjack proposal response team, make sure the team is as successful as the proposal is by paying team members appropriately.

Shlomo D. Katz is Counsel in the Washington, DC office of the international law firm of Brown Rudnick LLP, a Corporate Partner of APMP-NCA. Shlomo specializes in all aspects of Government contracting and is a regular presenter at chapter events. If you have any questions about the topic of this article or other proposal or contracting issues, please contact Shlomo at 202.536-1753 or skatz@brownrudnick.com.

# Developing a Successful Proposal Response Team – that's what the Membership Committee is all about!

## Join APMP-NCA for knowledge and networking—and savings!

**Membership in APMP-NCA brings a new level of professionalism to your career:**

- Show you are a professional by affiliating with the leading proposal-related professional organization in the Washington, DC region. APMP-NCA affiliation reflects professional stature, and networking helps you build the professional connections to promote your career.
- Access our Body of Knowledge, including back issues of publications and notes from past educational presentations.
- Subscribe to Executive Summary, our quarterly eZine packed with insights and advice from industry leaders, plus the latest news in the proposal community.
- Receive discounts at all of our events, from the bimonthly Speaker Series to the annual conference.

**Not a member yet? You can:**

**Join APMP right now.** The annual individual membership fee is $150, or $75 for retirees and students—an amount you can easily recoup with discounts on events. Be sure to affiliate with the National Capital Area chapter.

**Sign up for our emails.**

Contact the membership committee at membership@apmpnca.org for more information.

## Proposal Tip...

If you do more than the minimum as a proposal manager, your team will love you, and your job will be easier. Doing more to work less seems contrary, but extra reminders and support for your team means you're more likely to receive better quality work on time.

# Insight into Winning Large GWAC/IDIQ Contracts

by Russell Smith, APMP-NCA Speaker Series Chair

The February 17 meeting was the best attended in several years with 125 registered. This meeting featured a panel discussion focusing on techniques to prepare better proposals for large GWAC/IDIQ contracts. Moderator Hilary Fordwich facilitated an interactive experience, based on her long years as a television personality.

Afterward, the audience was abuzz with discussions about the content.

Panelist Mitchell Ross, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Procurement Director, commented about *"Category Management."* This is new trend started primarily by Ann Rung from the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) and Tom Sharp from the General Services Administration (GSA). In a nutshell the idea is as follows: GSA and OFPP will regulate procurement so that (1) there will no longer be a large number of catchall programs; and instead (2) there will be a limited number of procurements for each *"category"* of product/service. Categories might include items such as cloud computing, various classes of security services or professional services, etc. The change to category contracting will be disruptive, because the grouping of services/products into contract vehicles will be fundamentally different from the omnibus approach to large programs of today.

Left to right: Hilary Fordwich, Mitchell Ross, Jim Fraser, Kevin Plexico, and Mark Day

Panelist Jim Fraser, who heads ManTech's Proposal Center of Excellence, said there is already less duplication in the multiple award IDIQ programs. This includes the Air Force, Army, DHS, and others.

Panelist Kevin Plexico, Vice President of Deltek, commented about market share for small business increasing from 23% to 26% during the past year. However, the number of small business obtaining prime positions on contracts has declined by 30% in five years. He conjectured that the decline has driven an increase in small business acquisitions.

Panelist Mark Day, a former GSA Commissioner, remarked on GSA's vision to bring order to the market and increasing the GSA market share. They are becoming aggressive in their efforts to kill off open market contracting. He cited category management as their primary tool in trying to achieve their goal.

Mitch Ross continued the discussion by asserting that that programs such as his NOAA Pro-Tech *"are completely contrary to GSA aggressiveness."* He stated that GSA contracts are "fine for common products," but that the GSA

> Kevin Plexico advises bidders facing brutal competition to "differentiate so they cannot be commoditized." And they need to achieve "customer intimacy on the vehicles the customers are gravitating to."

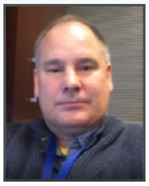
model is not appropriate for "mission-oriented services programs" such as Pro-Tech. NOAA can't successfully "buy engineers by the pound" when supporting their critical programs such as weather satellites. He further commented that *"if GSA would stick to its own knitting – commodity, product, and service – we would get along better."* Agencies like NOAA need mission solutions and not staff augmentation.

Mark Day gave the following advice about building better relationships with customers:

*"Most bidders make empty claims about being different. Don't spend five minutes telling me about your company. Tell me something new that addresses my problems with insight. Whether it is the cloud, CRM, or whatever, get me to care about your ideas and vision. Then I will be interested in your firm too.Most people fit into the undifferentiated class. We all have skills. But can we put them together in a different way? If we sort right, we can sell smarter. And Category Management is all about that."*

For example, Mark asked the audience to consider the cloud. According to the Gartner hype, we have stuck the easy-to-do tasks in the cloud. This is only Phase 1; the next phase will be the "hybrid cloud" with external and internal parts, with legacy systems and hundreds of billions of dollars in old functionality included. Figuring out how to utilize, monitor, and regulate all of this is a huge task. Mark assured the audience there is a lot of money available for someone who can figure it out.

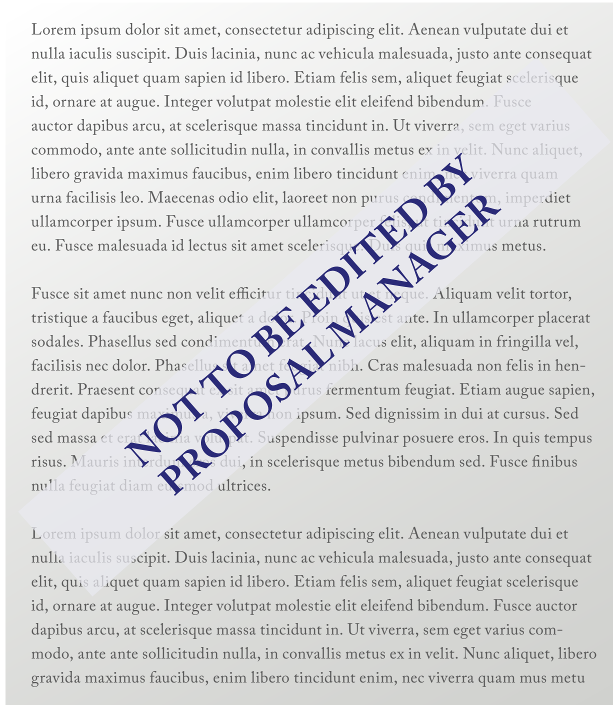
Russell Smith has been president of Organizational Communications Inc. (OCI) in Reston, Virginia for 31 years. OCI provides best value proposal consultant services to customers nationally. Russell has been an active member of APMP NCA since 1994. He served as president in 2004. Additionally, he served as Chair of the Speakers Series Committee from 2001 – 2003 and from 2014 – present.



# Team Dynamics: Dealing with Threats to Harmony

by Anthony Shifflett, MA, MBA, CP APMP

Information Technology (IT) proposals often require a number of companies and individuals to meet past performance and/or proposal requirements, with the companies and the cast of characters changing from proposal to proposal. This requires flexibility and "quick read" skills from the proposal manager and capture manager when sizing up capability, commitment, and cooperation. Prior to the kickoff meeting, both should agree on team member assignments for the proposal effort. It is important that the proposal and capture manager work together to achieve team harmony because poor team dynamics can lead to a losing bid. Below are three threats to harmony and how to deal with them.


Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean vulputate dui et nulla iaculis suscipit. Duis lacinia, nunc ac vehicula malesuada, justo ante consequat elit, quis aliquet quam sapien id libero. Etiam felis sem, aliquet feugiat scelerisque id, ornare at augue. Integer volutpat molestie elit eleifend bibendum. Fusce auctor dapibus arcu, at scelerisque massa tincidunt in. Ut viverra, sem eget varius commodo, ante ante sollicitudin nulla, in convallis metus ex in velit. Nunc aliquet, libero gravida maximus faucibus, enim libero tincidunt enim, nec viverra quam urna facilisis leo. Maecenas odio elit, laoreet non purus condimentum, imperdiet ullamcorper ipsum. Fusce ullamcorper ullamcorper felis, ut tincidunt urna rutrum eu. Fusce malesuada id lectus sit amet scelerisque. Duis quis maximus metus.

Fusce sit amet nunc non velit efficitur tincidunt ut et neque. Aliquam velit tortor, tristique a faucibus eget, aliquet a dolor. Proin quis est ante. In ullamcorper placerat sodales. Phasellus sed condimentum erat. Nunc lacus elit, aliquam in fringilla vel, facilisis nec dolor. Phasellus sit amet feugiat nibh. Cras malesuada non felis in hendrerit. Praesent consequat ex sit amet purus fermentum feugiat. Etiam augue sapien, feugiat dapibus maximus a, viverra non ipsum. Sed dignissim in dui at cursus. Sed sed massa et erat lacinia volutpat. Suspendisse pulvinar posuere eros. In quis tempus risus. Mauris interdum eros dui, in scelerisque metus bibendum sed. Fusce finibus nulla feugiat diam euismod ultrices.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean vulputate dui et nulla iaculis suscipit. Duis lacinia, nunc ac vehicula malesuada, justo ante consequat elit, quis aliquet quam sapien id libero. Etiam felis sem, aliquet feugiat scelerisque id, ornare at augue. Integer volutpat molestie elit eleifend bibendum. Fusce auctor dapibus arcu, at scelerisque massa tincidunt in. Ut viverra, sem eget varius commodo, ante ante sollicitudin nulla, in convallis metus ex in velit. Nunc aliquet, libero gravida maximus faucibus, enim libero tincidunt enim, nec viverra quam mus metu


Content received in this format will quickly sink your proposal, but the proposal manager's skillful leadership can transform this problem into a benefit for the proposal.

1. **Unequitable workshare.** The capture manager should brief the proposal manager on all team components—why they are there, percentage cuts, and writing assignments—so the proposal manager understands overall team dynamics and investment in the proposal. For instance, if, one team member has 20% of the writing assignments for a 10% share, the team member may be uncooperative. The proposal manager should verbally confirm with team contacts their participation requirements and deliverables.

2. **Decreasing commitment from team members.** Often, teammates will try to shave their participation down in order to invest their resources on other efforts. To prevent this from happening, use stand up calls and reviews to highlight participation, or lack thereof. Expand these calls to talk about participation issues in addition to any content development issues that arise. Exposing a teammates lackluster performance tends to increase their commitment level.

3. **Know-it-all contributors.** Another harmony-buster is know-it-all content development. Proposals must be in clear English that a high school graduate can understand. Sometimes subject matter experts bully the proposal manager into accepting content that either does not belong, interferes with proposal flow, or is so dense it will sink the entire proposal to bottom of the evaluation pile. I have even received content with a watermark that read: *"NOT TO BE EDITED BY PROPOSAL MANAGER."* The content included paragraphs that were over 20 lines long, with some sentences stretching four or five full lines. Despite their expertise in their field, content contributors are not experts in proposal content. Do not be bullied.

These kinds of scenarios, the proposal manager needs to educate the offending content developer. Practice patience and remember that the goal is winning the proposal, not protecting your ego. Use APMP, Shipley, or other educational materials to help to resolve the problem. Schedule a meeting with the offender and be prepared with a clear understanding of his motivations. In my example above, the offender was a scientist with four university degrees, which meant he respected education and logic. You may need to adapt your approach based on the motivations of your know-it-all.

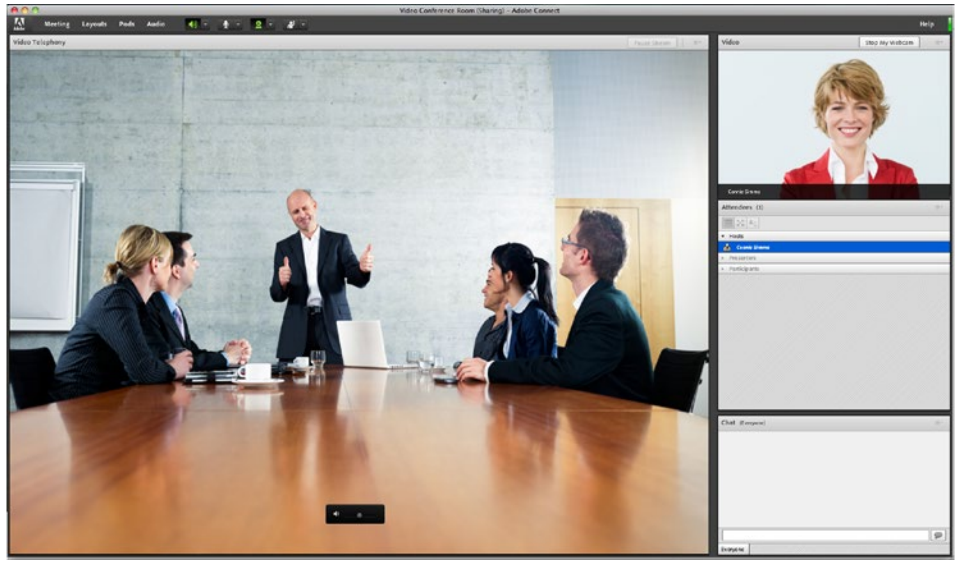
Tackling threats to harmony is difficult work, but a skillful proposal manager can lead the team to unity and benefit the proposal. For example, dealing with my know-it-all prompted me to distribute educational information to the entire team. Interest in education spread and other content developers actually asked for additional materials relevant to their sections. Further, the contributor who initially caused me so much frustration is now a respected colleague, who I am linked with both on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Anthony S. Shifflett has been a Proposal Manager for over 10 years and has done a wide range of proposals of varying sizes and requirements for a wide range of government and commercial clients. He intends to work in the proposal field the rest of his professional life.

# Delivering the Right Client Experience in Proposal Development

by Kevin Switaj, PhD, CF APMP

In the 2016 Winter issue of *Executive Summary*, I wrote about how proposal managers and departments need to focus on delivering the best possible client experience for our capture managers through preparation, approach, and communications. The proposal manager's job is to run bids smoothly and create an experience exceeds the capture manager's expectations. To accomplish these closely tied objectives, the proposal manager needs to focus the entire bid team on the opportunity's needs and ensure the entire team works together effectively. This is accomplished by selecting the right resources, providing the right environment, and preparing your resources properly.



## The Right Resources

Delivering a positive client experience requires the right people. As Richard Branson, the innovative entrepreneur behind the Virgin brand, states in ***Entrepreneur***, *"you must hire wonderful people"* committed to delivering on your value proposition. Bringing the best-suited people to supporting an opportunity relies on knowing the needs of the bid and the internal client. First, look at the type of work that the bid requires and try to find the resources best positioned to help. The right team member has the time available to commit to the bid and can apply his/her technical knowledge to the development of consistent, compelling content that incorporates not only the "how" but focuses on the approach's benefit to the end client.

The best resource complements the skills and mitigates the weaknesses of the bid leadership team; the roles on an individual bid can fluctuate to optimize the team's skills. If the capture manager is focused on pricing and teaming, the team requires a strong solution architect to lead the technical volume and champion the development of consistent messaging throughout. If the capture manager is a *"big picture"* person, the proposal manager should focus on the minutia of the bid.

A proposal manager also needs to take personalities into account when composing the team. This helps make the process run smoothly by eliminating unnecessary conflict. For example, if the capture manager has a tendency to react emotionally, calmer individuals on the proposal team help avoid conflict.

## The Right Environment

How can the proposal manager ensure the team remains focused on delivering the right client experience for the capture manager? He/she needs to provide a productive environment and provide the team the tools to succeed. Research from the ***Harvard Business Review*** proves that teams built around *"positive and virtual practices"* do better. In a high-stress environment like the proposal war room (physical or virtual), leadership needs to make providing support and ensuring respect for all team members their top priority. Criticism should be delivered in a constructive manner.

In addition, proposal managers should notice when the stress around the bid is escalating and arrange some way to diffuse it. For example, take the team for a happy hour or organize a potluck lunch for the team. If the team is tired or caught in a rut, change things up by holding a stand-up meeting outside. These techniques allow the team to focus on delivering for the internal client instead of their own well-being. A positive team can focus on delivering a better client experience for the capture manager and the organization.

## The Right Preparation

The proposal manager needs to prepare the bid team for success. During his time as manager of English football powerhouse Manchester United, Sir Alex Ferguson's teams became notorious for scoring in the final minutes of a match to win, so much so it became known as *"Fergie Time."* This was not simply by chance. One of his assistant coaches states, *"we practice for when the going gets tough, so we know what it takes to be successful in those situations."*[1] Such wins allowed Manchester United to deliver a great experience for their fans, whether they were in person or watching on television around the world.

Preparation is a key component of delivering the client experience. It helps minimize the need for late nights. At the beginning of the proposal effort, ensure everyone is on the same page and focus efforts on the end result. A *"rock star"* proposal manager takes this to the next level by preparing the entire team unexpected changes. By getting the entire team focused on what scenarios might arise, you can mitigate or eliminate panic. For example, when developing questions for the Government, the proposal team should have an assumption of the answer. I usually develop a worst-case scenario assumption (a section is included in page count, there will not be an extension, a PWS section means the worst possible interpretation for our bid) to allow the team to be prepared for whatever comes. When the team prepares for the worst, it can deliver its best.

## Conclusion

A proposal is only as good as the team that develops it, and that team is only as good as its leadership. A proposal manager who provides an exemplary client experience for the capture manager allows that individual, and the organization as a whole, to focus on end client delivery. The proposal manager must identify the right people, keep them focused, and give them the tools to succeed.

Kevin A. Switaj, PhD, CF APMP is the Director of Proposal Development for LongView International Technology Solutions, a mid-sized Government contractor based in Reston, VA. He has been published in both *Executive Summary* and the *APMP Journal*.

[1] Anita Elberse, "Ferguson's Formula," Harvard Business Review 91, no. 10 (October 2013): 116–25.

# Proposal Tip...

Make sure everyone who contributes on a proposal (no matter how small the role!) is kept up-to-date on the award.

# Hire and Develop Great Writers

by Sarah Thayer, CF APMP

Proposal response teams are entirely what your company makes of them. A good team can successfully swing at the opportunities for which you prepare them. A great team can take the ones you knew about and the ones you didn't see coming and still increase your win rate.

New proposal writers can be trained, so I am always looking for great writers. With the right development and mentoring, proposal writers will not only make your proposals read like novels (rather than manuals), they will highlight the strengths and features of your offer to your customer, focus your Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) on the best solution, and help the entire proposal team answer the *"so what?"* aspects of your offer. Source Selection Boards aren't made up entirely of SMEs. To appeal to both the engineers and the executives, good writers break down very technical concepts into accessible language and benefits to the customer.

I came up *"through the ranks"* as a fresh-out-of-college proposal writer and learned quickly that research and asking the right questions is critical. In the roles where I have had proposal writers supporting me, they are responsible for writing every word — including technical sections. That way, the message is consistent through every sentence and has one-voice.

How do you develop proposal writer potential? In the beginning, it takes a lot of time and patience. As a proposal manager, I review every iteration of a proposal, and those first few proposals your new writers work on will require careful review and specific suggestions. Don't rewrite it, however tempting that may be. People learn by doing, so after initial training, you need to let them fly. Ask pointed questions, suggest specific places to find information, and most of all, be constructive. Comments such as, *"This is not how we do this,"* or, *"This is all wrong,"* are not helpful, and won't encourage learning. I tend to ask questions back to my writers and guide them to answering their own questions. While reviewing, be sure to also point out what they did well so they know to repeat it. Think of it like the improv approach: *"Yes, and -,"* rather than *"No."*

## Encourage Growth

Are you a cybersecurity shop? Point your writers to the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) Information Assurance Support Environment (IASE) Online Training Catalog (e.g., CyberAwareness Challenge). Get everyone on your team IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) Foundations training. Once new writers feel less overwhelmed by the alphabet soup that is government contracting, it is critical they learn the other lingo in your industry. Being in a room where everyone else appears to know what they're talking about and throws around terms they assume everyone else knows is almost numbingly overwhelming (been there, done that).

> I can't stress enough how important it is to be available. Take time out of your day. Spend time working in the same room so everyone is accessible to answer questions.

Take time to explain concepts and proposal basics, and understand that it will take some repetition for it to sink in. I can't stress enough how important it is to be available. Take time out of your day. Spend time working in the same room so everyone is accessible to answer questions. Draw things out, make connections if necessary, but try to let the writers make the connections themselves, and then reaffirm them. Once writers get their feet wet, send them out of the office. Encourage them to attend conferences, industry days, and local trainings. Grow your people.

## Encourage Research

Research works in conjunction with capture. Great writers can pull the best out of your whole offer; they need to understand the basics to achieve this. There are two major research areas: **customer and technical.** For totally new topics, I start with something like Wikipedia, just to get a handle on what it is I'm talking about. Find keywords; see how they interact with the main topic. Encourage writers to use every resource available. Keep in mind, your role shifts slightly to professor in these cases when you'll need to verify the writer's research. Look for videos, images, and blog posts. Forums, when used effectively, can even get into the technical details of why your company has chosen Technology X over Technology Y, providing the benefit of Technology X to your customer. Strategic plans are great starts to see if you can connect the scope of work with the customer's future goals. FAQ pages, CIO bios, and conference recordings are also good sources of information. The more writers understand the customer and your company's technical approach, the better the whole proposal will be. Giving your writers the tools they need to write with a basic level of understanding is key to putting together quality proposals.

## Encourage Questions and Interviews

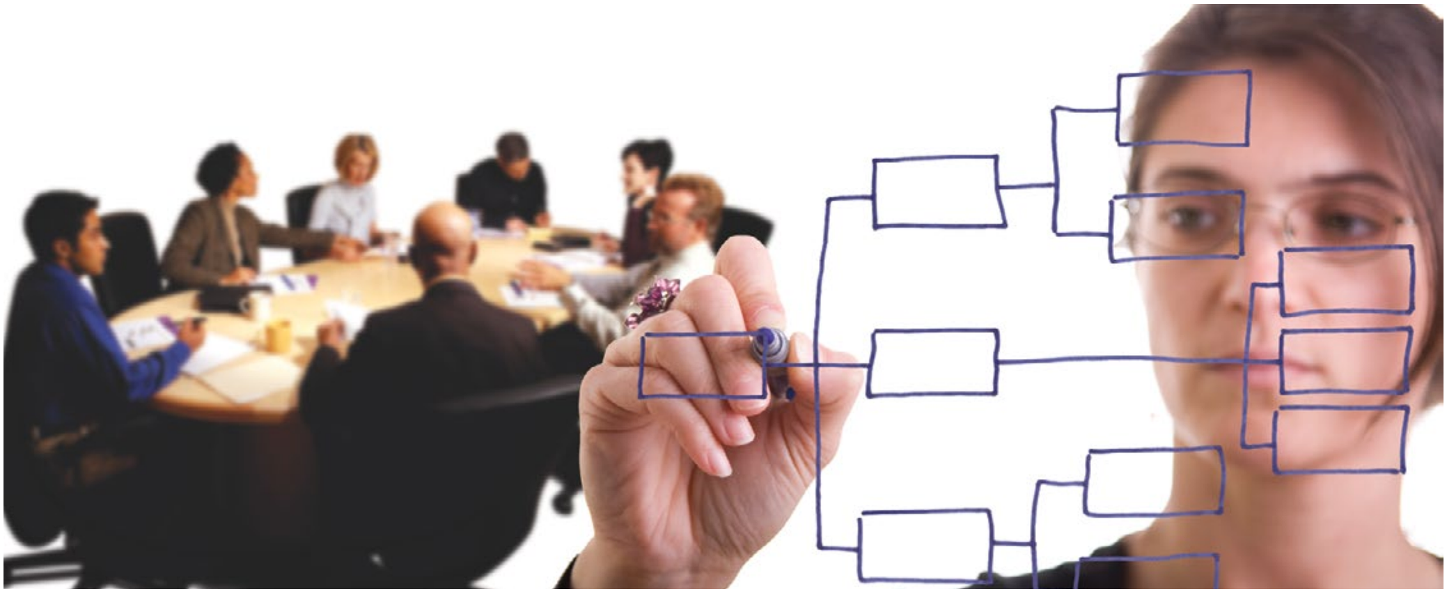
Quality research can take you far, but it won't take you all the way. Developing writers who can successfully interview your company's SMEs will help you get more input and details for a winning bid. Interviewing technical people is a great life skill, but difficult to learn. Make sure you are involved in these interviews, and prepare both the writer and the SME. Communicate expectations, scope of work, and results you are hoping to get out of the interview. It's helpful to frame questions in simple language (as opposed to proposal language) and respect everyone's time. For example, asking *"why is this solution more effective?"* will get you more than *"but why is this solution better for this customer?"* Ask SMEs to describe their roles step-by-step, put a process on it, get them to brag, and explain how they would depict it visually. Encourage your writers to push and get what they need. Encourage confidence.

Building a successful proposal response team requires careful consideration of your company's approach to proposals. Clear expectations, dedicated mentoring, and professional development will allow your writers to exceed your expectations.

Sarah Thayer, CF APMP, is a Proposal Manager at Synectics for Management Decisions, Inc. (SMDI). She has six years of proposal experience across Phacil, Inc., Emagine IT, and SMDI. She is engaged with ACT-IAC's Acquisition Community of Interest (COI), AFCEA Bethesda's Night for the Children Gala, and was part of the 2015 ACT-IAC Associates Program. Sarah holds a BA in English and Computer Science from Trinity College.

# Pipeline Reporting: Best Practices for Increasing Team Effectiveness (Part 1)

by Chris Simmons, APMP Fellow



Too many companies chase after too many deals. They burn out their business development teams by trying to capture "must win" opportunities with make-do resources. The dream of winning new business becomes a recurring nightmare of losses because of poor planning, lack of resources, and ad hoc processes. A simple pipeline report can go a long way toward increasing your team's effectiveness, building a winning culture, and boosting the morale of your response teams.

## What's a Pipeline Report?

A pipeline report is a best practice for identifying, tracking, planning, and forecasting new business opportunities. Pipeline reporting opportunities include expanding existing customer contracts, securing new contracts with existing customers, or winning new contracts with new customers.

The pipeline report allows you to compare the value of projected future business with target revenue goals. It provides sales managers with the information they need to shift resources and priorities to increase win probability and to provide your company with a foundation for meeting sales targets with confidence.

Many companies have what they say is *"pipeline report"*, but they don't take the time, or make the effort, to accurately determine the real value of the potential revenue in the pipeline. Without a well-thought out pipeline that includes qualified opportunities and realistic win probabilities (PWin), sales teams have almost no chance of reaching their goals. Without these qualities, the resulting pipedream report inevitably leads to chasing too many deals, working too many hours, and not meeting your sales targets.

Before you commit precious resources to your capture and proposal teams, ask yourself these basic questions to determine how a pipeline report can work best for you.

1. Are we satisfied with the growth and direction of our company?
2. Do we have short- and medium-term revenue targets for achieving our company goals?
3. Do we know where the revenue is coming from to reach our target growth?
4. What is our PWin on the opportunities we have targeted?

## What's a PWin?

The key pipeline reporting metric is PWin. This metric is used to determine estimated sales revenue of each pipeline opportunity. To calculate estimated pipeline revenue, simply multiply the estimated contract value by the probability of winning the contract.

**Example**

Estimated Contract Value: $1,000,000

Current PWin: 30%

Estimated Pipeline Revenue: $300,000 ($1,000,000 * 0.3)

In the example, the "Estimated Contract Value" represents the revenues generated in a specific calendar (or fiscal) year. For a December 1 award date, no more than 1/12th of the annual revenue should be included in the pipeline. For a February 1 award date, 11/12th of the annual revenue is a more realistic number. This approach best aligns estimated pipeline revenue with sales targets and revenue forecasts for the planning period. Otherwise, estimated pipeline revenue becomes artificially inflated. Note that the PWin percentage is expressed as *"Current PWin"*. This distinction is important because the PWin is a dynamic number that increases over time as the opportunity reaches the final stages of the sales cycle.

If the PWin is not increasing sufficiently over time, then you and your team are not doing their job, and you'd likely be much better off with a no-bid decision.

## Basic PWin Calculation

Now comes the challenging part—how to calculate a reasonably accurate PWin. There are a number of ways to calculate PWin depending on the level of BD/capture maturity of your company. The simplest way is to apply an adjectival color-code (Blue, Green, Yellow, Red). The problem with this adjectival approach is that in order to calculate the PWin metric you need to quantify the probability with a number. If you like the idea of using color codes, assign a specific PWin probability to each color. **For example,** Blue = 90%, Green = 70%, Yellow = 40%, and Red = < 20%.

If your win rates have been historically low, adjust these percentages downward and consider including additional PWin percentages like 30%, 25% to reflect more realistic and accurate probabilities.

In order to make PWin calculations work best, you must consider the competition. If you are the incumbent, or the scope of work is a core competency, the PWin will necessarily be higher than if the project is non-core competency, a stretch goal, or a strategic investment that is mandated by your management. The number of competitors, the relative strengths of each, your knowledge of the competitive landscape, and your potential differentiators are important factors in determining PWin.

The larger the number of viable competitors, the lower the average PWin. For example, if there are a total of four viable competitors (including your company) and the bid is months away, a PWin of more than 25% is difficult to justify. If you are the incumbent contractor, have superior past performance, and the re-compete contract is similar to the existing contract, a higher PWin is justifiable.

No matter which PWin rating scheme you use, be practical and conservative in your calculations. Develop narrative descriptions for each probability percentage to increase the consistency of your PWin estimating process. This is especially important if more than one member of your team is responsible for assigning a PWin rating.

**For Example:**

***Blue (90%).*** Meets all PWin criteria and exceeds many. Exceeding additional win probability factors requires a few minor actions that can easily be accomplished before contract award.

***Green (70%).*** Meets most PWin criteria. Meeting or exceeding the additional win probability factors requires some minor actions and mitigation strategies that can be completed before contract award.

***Yellow (40%).*** Does not meet a significant amount of PWin criteria. Meeting or exceeding the additional win probability factors requires significant actions and mitigation strategies to address significant bid deficiencies that may not be able to be completed before contract award.

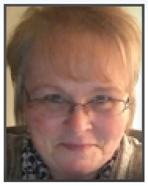
***Red (<20%).*** Does not meet most PWin criteria. Significantly increasing win probability factors requires actions and mitigation strategies that are highly unlikely to be completed before contact award. Re-evaluate the bid/no-bid decision.

**Proposal Response Team Implications.** If your team doesn't use some form of pipeline reporting, the chances are that they will either have a false sense of security that they are meeting their goals, or they may eventually be out of a job when they don't. The pipeline report provides a mechanism for fostering an efficient way to maximize response team effectiveness. It helps set realistic measurable goals as the basis for allocating the appropriate resources and time to achieve these goals. It also boosts team morale by putting your team in control of their own destiny and provides objective targets that promote increased effort and engagement to prioritize tasks and increase the PWin over time.

So before you commit precious resources to your proposal response team, make sure you have the right processes, tools, and templates in place to make good bid/no-bid decisions. The pipeline report is a key component that is easy to implement and guaranteed to increase your proposal team's efficiency and morale to take the pipedreams out of your pipeline reporting process and increase the probability of winning your next bid.

**Want to Learn More?** Part 1 of this series included definitions of a pipeline report and a key pipeline reporting metric, a basic PWin calculation, and supporting examples as the basis for increasing response team effectiveness and morale. Part 2 explores more sophisticated PWin criteria and calculations to achieve even higher levels of response team efficiency and effectiveness.

Chris Simmons is an APMP Fellow, former vice president of the NCA Chapter, and frequent contributor to both the *APMP Journal* and the *NCA eZine*. He is also the founder and principal member of Rainmakerz Consulting—a business development solutions company helping customers win more and work less. Contact Chris at chris@rainmakerz.biz, 202.255.2355, or visit www.rainmakerz.biz.



# Proposal Kick-off Sets the Tone and Cadence of Your Response

by Candy Jenkins, CP APMP, PMI PMP

Everyone agrees that communication is an important element of a successful proposal team. Good communication can go a long way to diffuse issues that are caused by misunderstanding, strong personalities, and conflicting opinions. The question is, how should proposal managers facilitate effective communication among team members? One of the strongest tools proposal managers can use to set the expectations and tone of their pursuit is a solid, well-developed kick-off meeting. Kick-off meetings should cover the following six topics that are critical for communication:

1. Introductions and definition of team roles and responsibilities
2. Well-defined assignments
3. Schedule
4. Explanation of purpose and cadence of tag-ups
5. Effective, concise training on the team room/document library
6. Establishment of proper tone

## Introductions

Don't assume that everyone on the team knows each other. In larger companies, employees come and go all the time and sometimes change roles within the organization. Taking a few minutes to introduce the team members and provide a high-level overview of their roles makes sure everyone knows the right person to approach with questions or issues. This is especially important when subcontractors or partners are part of the proposal team. Hallway discussions and war room conversations can result in important decisions that should to be communicated to the entire team, but subcontractors and virtual personnel sometimes miss out on that information or do not receive it in a timely manner. Make sure everyone knows all of the players and their roles.

## Assignments

Writing assignments should be presented at the meeting, along with due dates, allowing time for questions and brief discussion. If in-depth questions about certain assignments arise, those discussions should be tabled and taken up in a more appropriate forum. Collaboration among team members on various sections occurs frequently, and a clear understanding of who is responsible for what opens the lines of communication for successful collaboration.

## Schedule

Proposal managers should emphasize the importance of the due dates and firmly impress on the writers that the deadlines must be met. Well-defined expectations leave no room for confusion or miscommunication down the line that could lead to chaos and frustration. More often than not, deadlines are missed, which is one of the largest contributing factors to team stress and conflict. Setting the expectation early on that writers must submit their assignments by the appropriate due dates alleviates some of those complications.

## Tag-ups

Meeting duration, frequency, and

agendas largely depend on the deal size and complexity. Some pursuits may require a weekly meeting, others daily, and still others may require multiple daily meetings with each one concentrating on a different topic. While these tag-ups may evolve, grow, or decrease over the life of the pursuit, the proposal manager should establish a baseline during the kick-off meeting. Establish the frequency, duration, and the agenda of the tag-up meetings as well as who should participate (it might not be appropriate for all team members to attend the tag-ups). Setting the expectation that the meetings will adhere to their allotted time and agenda lets the attendees know how to prepare for the meetings and increases engagement.

## Team Rooms

Regardless of whether your organization uses a network server, SharePoint, or some other tool to manage proposal efforts, proposal managers need to control the tool's use and organization. Often times team members are reluctant to use tools with which they are uncomfortable and unfamiliar, which leads to version control issues, re-work, and team frustration. A brief, high-level overview of how the space is organized and how to use it correctly is an important element to include in the kick-off meeting. Proposal managers should make it clear to all team members that they will enforce the proper use of the space and offer additional one-on-one training or support to any team member who is uncertain about how to use the space. To alleviate team members' reluctance and increase compliance, provide a detailed guide on how to use the site. Post the guide in a prominent area in the space where everyone has easy access to it.

## Positive Attitude

Arguably the most important element to facilitating effective communication among proposal team members is intangible. Studies have repeatedly shown that a negative attitude in the workplace is contagious, but the reverse is also true. Proposal managers should keep in mind that a leader's attitude can have even more of an impact than that of a co-worker. The proposal world is stressful, but maintaining a positive attitude and refraining from negative and non-productive comments when dealing with team members can elevate the mood of the entire team. Setting that tone during the kick-off meeting makes it easier to maintain throughout the pursuit.

Individually, these are small elements of the kick-off meeting, but their importance should not be underestimated. Each one helps to keep the lines of communication open and flowing smoothly. Nothing will eliminate the stress of proposals, but focusing on communication from the kickoff will makes your proposal teams more successful and pleasant.

Candy Jenkins, PMP, is an APMP Practitioner-certified proposal professional with more than 20 years' leadership experience in personnel management, team development, and proposal management. She currently leads the Reston location of the Global Proposal Center for Unisys. She is actively involved in the APMP-NCA Chapter, volunteering as this year's Logistics Committee Chair for the Mid-Atlantic Conference. Her article, *Prioritizing and Assigning Federal Proposal Resources*, appeared in the June 2015 edition of the ***APMP Journal***.

## Note From the eZine Chair and Chief Editor, Julia Quigley, CF APMP

*We are always looking to improve the eZine and would love to hear from you!*

What did you think of this issue of the Executive Summary? What did you think of specific articles? Have questions, comments or suggestions for the authors or the editors? What articles, and themes would you like to see in future issues of the Executive Summary?

Please drop us a line at ezine@apmpnca.org or contact Julia directly at 571-421-7766. We look forward to hearing from you!

## APMP-NCA Board of Directors Meetings are Open to Members

The Board of Directors for APMP-NCA meets the first Tuesday of every month. Two out of every three meetings are virtual meetings. If you would like to join a meeting, contact us by going to http://www.apmpnca.org/contact/.

## *Special thanks to...*

### Executive Summary Editorial Staff

Executive Summary E-Zine Chair

**Julia Quigley, MA**
Lohfeld Consulting
ezine@apmpnca.org
571-421-7766

Editors

**Patricia Gordon**
GHD
patricia.gordon@ghd.com

**Lisa Pafe, CPP APMP Fellow**
**APMP-NCA President**
Lohfeld Consulting
lpafe@lohfeldconsulting.com

**Hélène Courard, JD, CF APMP**
**APMP-NCA Vice President**
Unisys
helene@apmpnca.org

Layout and Graphics

**24 Hour Company**
info@24hrco.com
703-533-7209

Sr. Graphic Designer

**Megan Skuller, CF APMP**
24 Hour Company
megan.skuller@24hrco.com
703-533-7209

Circulation

**Tom Skrobacz**
tom@diamond-wall.com

## Advertising Rates

| Page Size | Width x Height | Rate |
|---|---|---|
| Full Page | 8.5" x 11" | $500 |
| Half Page | 8.5" x 5.25" | $250 |
| Quarter Page | 4.25" x 5.25" | $150 |

Rates are for digitally provided actual-sized color or black and white artwork. Minimum resolution is 150 dpi. Minimum of .25" of negative space on all sides. Artwork may be provided in .jpg, .ai, .eps, or .pdf format. Send all proposal/business development-related advertisement submissions to Sareesh Rawat, Executive Summary eZine Chair, ezine@apmp.nca.org (artwork only) and Eric Schwarz, Treasurer, Treasurer@apmpnca.org (copy of artwork and payment details or request for a PayPal invoice for online payment).

Payment may be made via check or paypal. Payment and artwork must be received by the advertisement submission deadline for the advertisement to appear in the corresponding issue of the Executive Summary. Late submissions will appear in the following issue.

Please make check out to "APMP-NCA" and send to the following address:

APMP-NCA
P.O. Box 711
Arlington, VA 22116-0711

If paying by paypal, please contact Eric Schwarz at Treasurer@apmpnca.org to have a link set up.

APMP-NCA reserves the right to reject advertisements for non-proposal or non-business development-related products/services or for content it deems objectionable.

NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA

APMP-NCA
P.O. Box 711
Arlington, VA
22216-0711
**www.apmpnca.org**

A Publication of the Association of Proposal Management Professionals National Capital Area Chapter

# APMP-NCA 2016 Corporate Partners

## Platinum Partners

www.LohfeldConsulting.com
abarden@lohfeldconsulting.com

www.mantech.com

## Gold Partners

www.aockeysolutions.com

www.brownrudnick.com

www.deltek.com

www.enexdi.com

www.intravation.com

www.ociwins.com

www.proposaldc.com

www.privia.com

www.rainmakerz.biz

www.richterandcompany.com

www.r3bsolutions.com

www.shipleywins.com

www.24hrco.com
info@24hrco.com