GOVERNMENT & COMMERCIAL PROPOSALS

PROPOSAL BEST PRACTICES

PROPOSAL INDUSTRY NEWS

PROPOSAL TIPS, TRICKS, & SECRETS

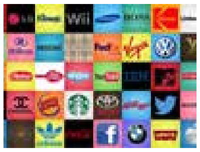
NCA APMP NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA

EXECUTIVE summary

Fall 2017 | Volume 24, Issue 4

This Issue's Theme: **Reducing Proposal Costs and Still Winning**

Inside:



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

President's Corner

Doing More With Less Is All About Strengths

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

How to do more with less is an age-old question. The simple answer is that we must increase productivity to achieve maximum results for time and effort expended. In the proposal world, productivity means more than generating more bid activity; it means generating more wins within resource constraints.

Typically, as companies in the government marketplace grow, they spend a greater percent of money on Bid and Proposal (B&P) costs. This indicator makes sense, as larger companies pursue larger and more complex opportunities. Pre-RFP, the cost of maintaining an adequate pipeline, training personnel, maintaining teaming partners, researching competitors, investing in tools, pursuing capture and solutioning activities, and maintaining databases and repositories all mount.

These investments may or may not pay off with wins, so they are good places to seek cost savings. Often, companies keep pouring money into capture activities and tools without also undertaking adequate gate reviews and making informed bid/no-bid decisions at multiple stages of the business development life cycle. Capture Managers may fail to properly vet the proposed solution with the customer(s), making projections of win probability unreliable. These sunk costs take a toll on B&P budgets and demonstrate poor return on investment (ROI).

Post-RFP, limited time is available to spend money, yet too often companies pour resources into attempting to write and review and poorly defined solutions. The ratio of wasted time and money to demonstrated results may actually increase once the RFP drops because of two basic problems:

Lack of Effective Solutioning Pre-RFP with Proper Hand-Off Post-RFP

Solutioning done pre-RFP is often free form in style. The capture team and solution architects create a solution that does not necessarily focus on what the customer wants, but rather on what they want to offer. A solution of that nature falls apart after RFP release. Why? Because the highest scoring solution needs to directly tie to the evaluation factors and subfactors per the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR).

The FAR dictates that government evaluators score the proposal based solely on the evaluation criteria stated in the RFP. For best value, trade-off methodology bids, the Source Selection Board typically scores the proposal based on strengths, weaknesses, deficiencies, and risks. A strength is a proven benefit, related to an evaluation factor or subfactor, that exceeds an RFP requirement in a way the customer finds beneficial.

If solutioning pre-RFP fails to identify vetted strengths, then the proposal writers have a very difficult time writing high-scoring prose. Instead, they strive to meet requirements and achieve compliance. Compliance may be king, but it is like a cake without icing. No one, including a proposal evaluator, wants a dry cake. Evaluators look for the icing: substantiated benefits that provide added value beyond compliance. All the time and effort expended pre-RFP is unproductive if it fails to place emphasis on identifying the best and possibly the most strengths – vetted by the customer(s).

Ineffective Reviews

Clearly, ineffective solutioning that contributes to ineffective writing will make reviews and recovery time consuming and difficult. Color team reviewers often lack the training needed to score the proposal like a government evaluator. They may look for compliance issues, and they may look for win themes and ghosting, but rarely do they review for strengths. As a result, debriefs place an incorrect focus on the likes and dislikes of the reviewers rather than the strengths, weaknesses, deficiencies, and risks that government evaluators seek to identify.

Adding to the wasted time and money common to typical color team reviews is the size of the review teams. Bloated color team review teams often include the following types of ineffective reviewers:

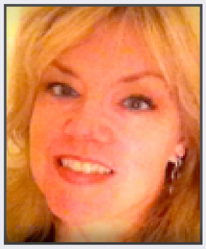
- **Unprepared:** did not read all the solicitation documents and related materials
- **Unbriefed:** was not briefed on the voice of the customer, potential discriminating strengths that set the offer apart, potential weaknesses and risks that require mitigation, competitors, and the value proposition
- **Untrained:** received no training in how to score like a government evaluator
- **Overwhelmed:** assigned to review more material than can be reviewed properly within schedule constraints
- **Uninterested:** does not want to be there and does a poor job, making comments that are not actionable
- **Too Late:** brought into the process too close to delivery to make a difference

The best way to increase productivity pre- and post-RFP is to train all business development life cycle participants in strengths-based capture, solutioning, writing, and reviewing. When all players focus on defining and articulating discriminating strengths and mitigating or managing risks and weaknesses, win rates increase, assuming that the proposals are priced to win. The most cost-effective, winning value propositions are all about the strengths. A focus on strengths increases productivity.

Lisa Pafe, Vice President at Lohfeld Consulting Group, is a CPP APMP Fellow and PMI PMP with more than 25 years of project, capture and proposal management experience for small to large companies serving civilian and defense agencies. She is the President of the APMP-NCA Chapter, and she previously served as Vice President and Speaker Series Chair for two years each. 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 B.A. from Yale University, MPP from Harvard University and MIS from The George Washington University.

Click here to check out APMP-NCA upcoming events!

Note From the eZine Chair and Chief Editor, Mary Claire Tracy, 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.
We look forward to hearing from you!

The Cost of Bad Behavior

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

Often in our industry, the common perception is that if you want to be part of a high-performing organization, you just need to tolerate the jerks because that is what it takes to win. Working people to the bone is deemed a badge of honor in some circles; if you work in a sweatshop atmosphere, at least you are part of a hard-hitting, winning team. That it is a necessary evil to get the best out of proposal teams. The poor treatment is just 'par for the course' of being in a winning, effective proposal organization.

The claim that treating proposal support teams terribly – degrading them, disrespecting their time and effort – is just what needs to be done "because we want to win." It seems to justify the behavior and implies that by caring about the team as people and wanting to show them respect means you somehow don't want to win. But I have never accepted the idea that people have to work in toxic environments or with toxic individuals to succeed.

Thankfully, scientific research getting more attention these days demonstrates that treating people badly and being a jerk, or an "asshole", actually exacts a heavy cost on organizations… and that this cost can be quantified. Robert I. Sutton, Ph.D., is a leading expert and professor of management science and engineering at Stanford University, and a prolific author on the subject. In his 2007 book, The No Asshole Rule: Building a Civilized Workplace and Surviving One That Isn't (New York: Grand Central Publishing), Dr. Sutton dedicates a whole chapter to the cost of such jerks and jerk-y behavior on organizations.

If you have not read the book – which I highly recommend you do – the central premise of the "No Asshole" rule is that organizations that intentionally defend against assholes and asshole behavior are stronger, and operate more effectively and efficiently, than those "organizations that ignore, forgive, or even encourage nastiness." (p. 2) Getting to the cost issue, Dr. Sutton breaks down and quantifies the negative effect of these people and this kind of behavior on an organization. According to a number of studies worldwide, Dr. Sutton explains, "[t]he damage that assholes do to their organization is seen in the costs of increased turnover, absenteeism, decreased commitment to work, and the distraction and impaired individual performance." (p. 36) This begs the obvious question: by how much? Can we quantify the cost of assholery on an organization?

While Dr. Sutton cautions that it is unrealistic to calculate the exact "total cost of assholes," or the TCA, he does delineate a series of "Factors to Consider When Calculating the Total Cost of Assholes to Your Organization." (pp. 48 – 50) These factors include –

- Assessing the cost of the damage to victims and witnesses (e.g., distraction from tasks, absenteeism, turnover)
- Woes of certified assholes (e.g., victims and witnesses; hesitation to cooperate with them or retaliation)
- Wicked consequences for management (e.g., time spent

appeasing or disciplining assholes, time spent reorganizing teams so they do less damage, management burnout)

- Legal and HR management costs (including anger management training or other counseling, legal fees for claims brought because of the individual's behavior)
- Overall negative effects on organizations (such as reduced innovation and creativity, or impaired ability to attract the best and brightest)

Dr. Sutton drives this point home with the example of Ethan, a salesperson whose company quantified the TCA for one year of Ethan's behavior and decided to decrement his annual bonus by the $160,000 that his behavior cost the organization. When ROI is critical and margins are thin, it simply does not make financial sense to spend that kind of money on subsidizing bad behavior. It's a simple cost-benefit analysis.

When assessing how to make your organization more efficient and cost-effective, you can certainly look at the usual suspects for cost containment – improved tools and systems, smartly leveraging consultants to control costs, and looking at alternate staffing models – but also take the time to assess what costs you are incurring if you employ such jerks or tolerate that type of behavior.

Dr. Sutton has just released the sequel to this book, The Asshole Survival Guide: How to Deal with People Who Treat You Like Dirt, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing, which I am very much looking forward to reading to make sure I continue to build organizations and lead proposal teams that embrace the "No Asshole" rule so we can be more efficient and cost effective.

With nearly 20 years of 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 currently serves 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.

Ask the Graphics Guru

I Hate My Company's Brand! What Can I Do?

by Mike Parkinson, CPP APMP Fellow

Sticking with your brand can help you to save money and increase your chances of winning. In a recent Billion Dollar Graphics class, I was asked, "What happens if I'm railroaded by my company's PowerPoint template?" Meaning, "What happens if I'm forced to use my company brand standards and templates even if I don't like them?" My answer may surprise you. However, before I share my solution, let's conduct an experiment.

Question 1: How many of the following 40 logos do you recognize?

Question 2: What package delivery company do you think of when you see this (brown) color?

Question 3: Which color is associated with Home Depot's brand?

Question 4: Which row of logos are colored correctly (i.e., are the correct brand colors)?

How many logos did you recognize in question one? My guess is that you knew 30 or more of the 40 brands (especially if you live in the United States). For question two, did you answer UPS? Did you answer "A" (orange) as the appropriate Home Depot color for question three? Lastly, did you select "row 1" as being the correct brand colors for Starbucks, McDonald's, and Coca-Cola?

If you identified most correctly, why might that be?

The answer is "mindshare." Consistent, repeated exposure to a brand makes it recognizable and memorable. The audience associates it with specific emotions. The brand occupies a permanent space in your target audience's brain. It has a small share of their minds (i.e., it has mindshare). No exposure or inconsistent exposure to the brand results in little to no mindshare, which is why you may not have recognized some logos or answered some questions incorrectly.

Mindshare is critical when building trust. Familiar things are trusted. Trust is the closest thing to a silver bullet in proposals. In almost every situation, no trust equals no sale. Keep in mind that trust is associated with positive and negative choices. For example, if your audience has had bad experiences with your brand, then they will trust that they will have another bad experience and will not buy your brand. To avoid this negative association, continue to do good things as a solution provider. Repeated positive customer experience is an important factor to creating your brand and building greater mindshare.

One of the fastest ways to build mindshare is to be and stay consistent with your branding (such as colors, fonts, logo, styles, and message). Each exposure to your brand drills it deeper and deeper into your audience's brain. Every time you deviate from your brand, you dilute or eliminate the

"Consistent, repeated exposure to a brand makes it recognizable and memorable."

potential for increased mindshare.

For this reason, when making a proposal, I recommend picking one of two paths:

1. Use your company's brand, because it either builds mindshare or already has, which elicits feelings of trustworthiness.
2. Use your customer's brand, which is known, and similarly, elicits feelings of trust.

Mixing the two results is a watered-down version of each. It is often unidentifiable as either brand because brand elements conflict. Mixing is only acceptable when done judiciously with a specific, clear purpose (e.g., to identify roles). Be consistent and make professional choices.

If your company's brand standards and templates are unprofessional, advocate for a change. Show examples of good branding and share the benefits of making the switch. In the meantime, unless they are egregiously bad (I mean really, really unprofessional), use them.

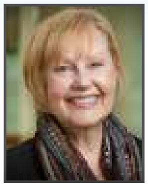
Your personal bias for or against your company's brand (assuming you are not the target audience) is eclipsed by the power of mindshare. Mindshare builds trust and trust is needed for almost every sale. Even if you do not win (because of LPTA and price-driven acquisition decisions), you are still building mindshare with that customer so that future efforts are easier to win.

Therefore, my short answer to proposal professionals who don't like their corporate templates is to use it, because you want your company to become a recognizable brand. It takes time to build mindshare and it is absolutely worth it.

Mike Parkinson, Microsoft PowerPoint MVP (1 of 16 in US) and CPP APMP Fellow, is an internationally recognized visual communications, solutioning, and proposal expert. He is also a professional trainer and award-winning author. He is a partner at 24 Hour Company (24hrco.com). 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.

Proposal Tip...

You should use one scalable, flexible process for all your proposals, whether they are high profile procurements or small task orders.



The Cost of Your Bid vs. The Cost of Bidding

by Diane Wurzer, CPP APMP, Vice President, Proposal Operations, MAXIMUS

We all know that bidding the lowest price typically puts us in a good position to win, given a compliant response to the RFP and a solution that meets the client's needs. But what about the cost of developing the proposal itself? What can you do to help keep the cost of doing business in check to maximize your profit margin?

Before considering ways to reduce or minimize costs to develop and produce a proposal, you will need to determine what those costs are. Otherwise, it will be impossible to gauge the effect of your cost-saving measures.

First, do an analysis of the last few proposals that includes all time spent by business development and capture managers, proposal manager/coordinator, writers, solution architects, Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), reviewers, desktop publishers, graphic artists, production team, and consultants. You may need to enlist the help of someone who knows the salary ranges and can put numbers to the hours worked and rates charged. If you do not track any of this information now, start tracking it going forward to be able to analyze this cost.

Next, add the "obvious" costs for printing, shipping, pizza, and other costs associated with getting the proposal submitted on time. These should be relatively easy to quantify or at least estimate.

Now comes the hard part. What are the other factors that increase proposal costs? You will need to define these for your particular company environment, but some examples include:

- **Lack of Capture.** An RFP drops out of the sky that we should have known about in advance…but didn't. Although all conventional wisdom says that we shouldn't bid if we didn't know about it…well…welcome to the real world. Companies DO bid on these opportunities despite the lack of capture work ahead of release. So what costs are entailed? In almost all cases, the proposal team will spend a lot more time finalizing and understanding the solution, researching the opportunity and client, and developing the response. One may argue that these costs apply in all cases, but in an ideal world have already been taken into account prior to the RFP release. Depending on how you wish to define this exercise, you could argue that "proposal development costs" occur after RFP release. You will need to define this to fit your company. Keep in mind that this scenario may also indicate a lower chance of winning.
- **New Staff.** New writers may require more of the proposal manager's time for monitoring and answering questions. A new proposal manager may require more oversight by management and may be slower to complete tasks, resulting in workflow or schedule disruptions. Whenever more of anyone's time is required or key tasks take longer, it translates into higher costs.
- **Lack of Resources.** Workloads may require us to rely more heavily on consultants, which can increase costs if not closely managed.

To track these costs, you may need to evaluate several bids and start documenting the information. Once you have a firm grasp on what you spend on proposal efforts and what factors affect that cost, you can formulate a plan to reduce costs where it makes sense to do so without scrimping on quality. Questions to ask yourself and your team:

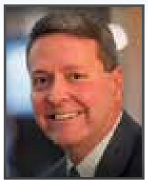
- Can you help cut back on unnecessary travel by learning to effectively manage team members remotely? Can the tools you use accommodate remote collaboration?
- Can you find SMEs within your own company who could help on certain proposals, thereby slashing the cost of (usually) higher-priced consultants?

- If you do need to use consultants on a regular basis, can you negotiate a lower rate by guaranteeing them a certain number of hours or agreeing to refer them to other potential (non-competitor) clients?
- Can you do your own production (at least on smaller efforts) rather than jobbing it out to a printing/copying service?
- Can you ship a bit early to avoid last minute, very expensive overnight shipping charges?
- Can you conduct some in-house training for your team to make them more effective the next time out?
- Can you create a knowledge base of winning re-use materials to help pull together responses more quickly?

It is unlikely that any one of these actions will overhaul your entire cost structure…but if you can implement several of them over time, they will eventually add up to savings in your proposal development costs. In addition, making your team aware of this initiative may make them consider spending more thoughtfully going forward.

Work closely with your finance/accounting department to define what constitutes proposal development costs for you. Weigh those costs against your win rate and, more importantly, your profit margin. Was the cost of that bid more than the potential profit? Be prepared to use the information gathered to support bid decisions, consultant usage, and staff allocations.

Diane Wurzer, at MAXIMUS since 2000, has more than 16 years of proposal writing, grant writing, and management experience. She is Vice President of Proposal Operations, having served as the MAXIMUS Director of Network Operations for five years before moving into proposal operations. Her team of proposal writers and managers focuses on serving U.S. Health and Human Services at MAXIMUS. They also provide support to federal and international efforts, as needed. She is a member of the APMP-NCA chapter and is serving as a mentor in the 2017 Mentor-Protégé program. She was a presenter at the 2016 international APMP Bid & Proposal Conference in Boston and the 2017 conference in New Orleans, where she also attained the highest level of APMP certification – Professional.



The High Cost of Re-Work

by Brad Douglas, CEO Shipley Associates

Measuring the real cost of proposal development is a tough task – there are so many variables with a wide range of hidden costs – let alone the hard costs.

Clearly, re-work is a waste of money and resources during proposal activity – the never-ending cycle of trying to develop content or a graphic that fits the "I'll know it when I see it" syndrome from the Proposal or Capture Manager.

One way to reduce proposal costs significantly is to *minimize re-work and redundancy*. Here are common pitfalls that drive up costs and create unnecessary proposal re-work:

- **Poor understanding of customer requirements** – Whenever we fail to thoroughly read the RFP/RFI and create a compliance matrix, we are sure to encounter re-work and our costs will soar. Read the solicitation, word for word, capture each requirement, and diligently check compliance during proposal development.
- **Lack of direction on assignments** – Clear direction about roles and responsibilities for the proposal team and other contributors is essential to avoid re-work and waste. To keep costs down, make sure that your team is fully engaged and that responsibilities, timelines, and milestones are clearly articulated and tracked. To reduce proposal costs, keep your team accountable.
- **The "moving target" syndrome** – Whenever the solution is a moving target and the date assigned for "solution freeze" is missed, proposal costs skyrocket and re-work becomes the norm. Far too many proposals advance through decision gates and color team reviews without a defined solution. This guarantees higher proposal costs and re-work. Commit to a solution freeze date, adjust slightly as needed, and make sure that the proposal team is engaged at every turn.
- **Fitting a square peg into a round hole** – For some reason, we often expect excellent proposal content that is customer and benefits focused to be produced by our technical counterparts – why? Our technical counterparts wouldn't expect us to do their engineering. Expecting technical experts or subject-matter-experts (SMEs) to produce quality proposal content makes little sense and can create unnecessary re-work. A much better option is simple collaboration between the SMEs and the proposal writers – get it right the first time to save time and money!

APMP and industry best practices suggest that we should front-load our proposal development activities – that *we plan before we write* to save time and money. Proposal planning is worth every dime and every hour spent if done right. This planning requires interaction and collaboration with our sales or capture teams. We can't depend on a "throw it over the wall" approach to learning about discriminators, customer hot buttons, or needs.

The Proposal Management Plan (PMP)

To manage costs and reduce re-work and redundancy, the Proposal Manager should establish and publish a Proposal Management Plan (PMP) to guide the effort. A PMP is much more than a "document" – it is a project plan consisting of:

- An overview of the opportunity, customer, and potential competitors
- A compliance matrix with all requirements identified and listed
- A proposal outline that follows the RFP instructions, exactly
- A response matrix assigning contributors and authors to sections in the outline
- Potential storyboard templates or mock-up templates to shape and guide win themes and content development
- A summary of the win strategies as they evolve over time

This plan is an iterative plan – it evolves as the proposal is develops and matures. It holds the team accountable. Whether the plan resides on SharePoint or some other shared site, it must be the driver to manage costs and minimize re-work and waste.

If your organization's approach to leveraging a PMP is suspect or non-existent, talk to your peers; find out what works for them.

We all have resource and financial constraints when it comes to winning business. We must reduce re-work and waste and be more efficient in how we manage what we have. Studies validate that organizations with a well-defined proposal development approach combined with a culture of disciplined project management win more business and spend less.

Brad Douglas is a proven business development leader with more than 30 years of experience in marketing, business and proposal development, capture management, sales, and executive leadership. He has helped many companies compete for and win strategic contracts, both in the business-to-Government and business-to-business sectors. Brad is instrumental in developing strategic partnerships with clients and with companies in adjacent markets, including Price-to-Win, Competitive Analysis, and opportunity tracking and analysis partnerships.

Absence Makes the PWin Fonder

by Lisa Shea Mundt, Chairperson, WashingtonExec's Rising Star Committee

If you want to reduce bid and proposal (B&P) costs while still maintaining a healthy return on investment (ROI), then you are hardly alone. We all know that a proposal is a necessary company investment within the business development life cycle, but the associated cost can sometimes pack a wallop…especially if you end up with a loss on your hands. There is one surefire way, however, to ease this financial pressure.

I believe the most advantageous way to reduce proposal costs while still winning is to manage your proposal virtually.

All of the "old school" proposal purists out there probably just picked up their pitchforks. If you fall in that camp then I implore you to read on in spite of yourself.

All types of working arrangements have pros and cons, but to dismiss virtual proposals as a valid method of not only performing work, but also winning contracts, would be to ignore a looming shift in the workforce. Virtual proposals are simply a cheaper way to win, and here are a few reasons why.

Tangible Reasons

Cost of Location. Have you ever taken the time to think about the cost of those four conference room walls? The average rent in the nation's capital in 2017 was $59.49 per square foot[1]. Although that's far cry from the most expensive cities in the world, the overhead hit from a large office space could be better spent elsewhere, especially with an increase in employees who desire the flexibility to work from home. In fact, the number of telecommuting workers has increased 115 percent in a decade[2]. Even if your company is "on trend" of renting shared work spaces vs. holding a traditional lease[3], conference rooms for more than 10 people in Washington D.C. can still run upwards of $700 a day[4]. By managing your proposals virtually, you could significantly cut overhead costs, which would result in a lower General and Administrative (G&A) costs in your price volume. That margin could be the difference between winning or losing a proposal.

Cost of Meals. There is an unspoken rule of proposal management etiquette: if you hold people in a room for more than four consecutive hours, you simply have to feed them. This can quickly spiral into feeding a group breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, and drinks. While not a detrimental blow to your B&P for a day, holding a group for five days a week over the course of a month or more can end up costing you $1040[5] per person, per year.

[1] http://wtop.com/business-finance/2017/03/most-expensive-office-rents-no-1-is-5-times-more-than-dc/

[2] http://money.cnn.com/2017/06/21/pf/jobs/working-from-home/index.html

[3] http://www.postandcourier.com/business/shared-work-spaces-evolving-into-a-new-normal/article_9fbbeef2-80fe-11e7-a319-5b2fcb6629de.html

[4] https://breather.com/

[5] "Say you have a relatively cheap lunch out twice a week, paying $7 each time, and you purchase a $3 cup of coffee twice a week. That would be $20 a week, or $1,040 a year." (https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/6-ways-working-remotely-will-save-you-money/)

Intangible Reasons

Time Wasted Commuting. Gone are the days of the 15-minute commute... if they ever existed in the first place. In fact, the Washington D.C. area has the second longest average commute in America[1]. People spend an hour a day in the car on average —and that is in *ideal* driving conditions. Although an hour every day might not jar you when it comes to your salaried employees, our industry is flooded with hourly consultants who have differing takes on when and what to "bill". The folks you choose may have the right credentials, aptitudes, and experience, but you may also end up paying for their locale. Regardless of who drives where, time spent in the car is time not spent on a proposal. And don't even get me started on gas reimbursement[2] or parking costs if you work in a larger city.

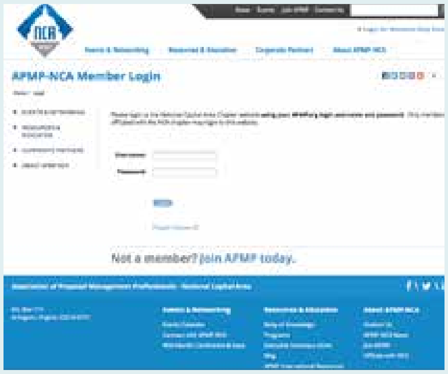
[1] http://wtop.com/traffic/2017/04/dc-area-has-2nd-longest-average-commute-in-america/

Less Productivity. The main argument virtual proposals is the question on everyone's lips: "What about productivity?" Some people will tell you that the only way to run a proposal is to sit in the same room to encourage focus, increased accountability, greater productivity, and a higher degree of collaboration. Remote work, however, tends to actually increase productivity[3]. There is an illusion of focus and productivity when work is confined to a war room. Yes, close quarters can encourage collaboration, but they also promote tangents, distractions, and the cross-contamination of swim lanes and assignments. It also fosters the psychological phenomenon of "group think," which actually decreases creative thought and increases the chance of "drinking the Kool-Aid," so to speak. Virtual proposals encourage fresh perspectives and offer opportunities for reach back to your global workforce. Working virtually does not remove the human element, it actually enhances it.

[2] "The average U.S. worker commutes 30 miles and 60 minutes round-trip every day, according to the U.S. Census Bureau and the Department of Labor. If the average gallon of gas costs $3.59, according to AAA, and you average 25 MPG, by not commuting to work, you will save $1,120 on gas every year" (http://www.salary.com/working-from-home-saves-money/slide/2/)

[3] "According to published research, workers who telecommute are almost twice as likely to work more than 40 hours a week as non-telecommuters (53% compared to 28% for non-telecommuters)." (https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/235285#)

Times Have Changed. Our collaborative tools have gotten better, and our patience for "meetings that could have been emails" has lessened. The rationale for virtual proposals is hardly exhaustive, but the results can prove lucrative.



The New (and nearly free!) Proposal Toolbox

by Erin Green, CF APMP

As a proposal professional, you have access to wealth of tools that can help you succeed in either making processes more efficient or setting them up properly. Some of these tools have very robust components that can cost nearly a million dollars. Some of these tools can cost nothing (or very nearly). Although both sides of the product aisle have benefits, I want to focus on the free and nearly-free tools that I've used as a proposal team of one at a small business that helped me tackle what felt at times like an overwhelming amount of work. As a disclaimer, I am not currently being (nor have I previously been) paid or influenced to mention these products.

For Editing and Writing

While the tried and true Microsoft Word is probably already pre-installed on the computer, writer.bighugelabs.com allows for a cleaner work-space and a more goal driven writing space. This website has a pro version that I have never used. The free version has prven more than adequate in allowing me to set up word/character goals so that I stayed on track writing longer (or character-limited sections). It also exports to almost any format.

www.hemmingwayapp.com has been, and will always be, my go-to editor when I'm trying to make things readable. It also has a pro version, which

I have never used. The free version allows me to pinpoint sentences that are too long, too hard to read and words that are easily changed to shorter options. My favorite feature is the color coding of the text.

Using Google Docs (if your security team allows it) is a great option for co-editing. Allowing multiple authors see the live edits helps with subject matter expert interviews; a process that usually takes some back and forth time.

For Project Management/ Task Management/Pipeline Management

www.asana.com is a project management tool that merges a task list with a calendar containing reminders. It is very simple to use and allows for integration with emails and documents. It also enables me to see a process at a granular level. My favorite part is assigning people to tasks in Asana and giving a "dashboard" for their tasks.

www.pipedrive.com (not free) is a lightweight customer relationship management (CRM) tool that is easy to use right out of the box, and requires minimal training to even the most technology-resistant team. It costs only $10 per user (based on writing today), and allows for tracking customer details and meeting notes. This featurealerts the user when a proposal has dropped and the most important issues to address when wriiting to the requirements.

Not all of these free (or nearly free) tools work for every environment, but I found that these tools helped me as a team of one in a small business. The tools not only allowed me to stay on track with task management and opportunity details, but they also make the writing part easy to produce, edit, and review.

Using tools outside of the standard box can help a proposal department run in a more financially efficient manner, ultimately saving time and money.

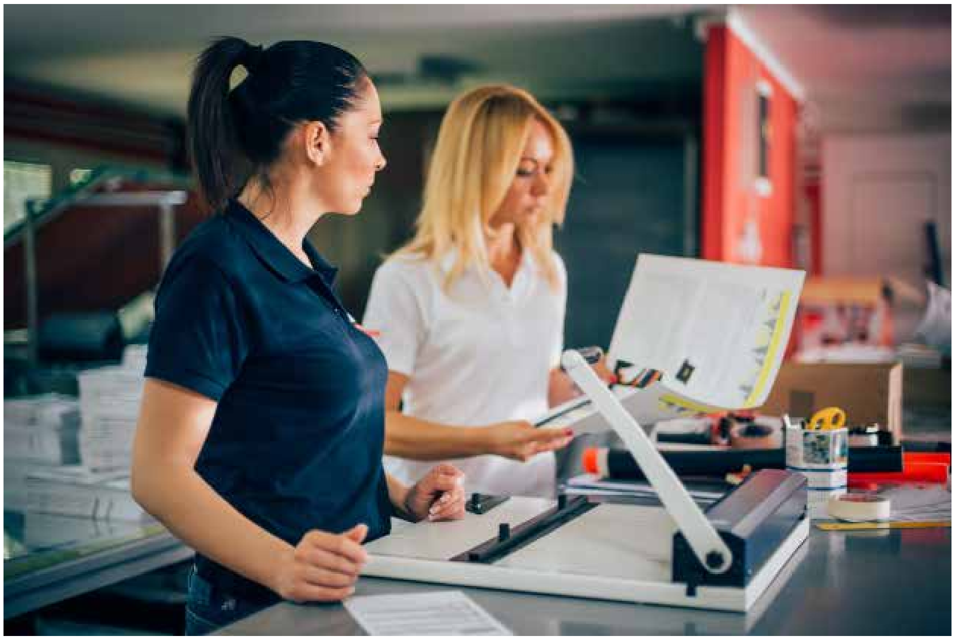
Erin Green, CF APMP, has more than 10 years of experience in Government procurement. She is a Proposal Manager at MAXIMUS, leading large and small efforts in the preparation and delivery of winning proposals worldwide for national, state, and local clients. Erin has been engaged with APMP-NCA since 2011. She is a graduate of the APMP-NCA Mentor-Protégé program, inaugural recipient of the APMP-NCA scholarship, and an award-winning author.

Save Your Proposal and Reduce Costs by Printing Offsite

by Chris Turo

It is a well-known part of proposal development that the costs, both in time and staff efforts, cannot always be controlled. Savvy executives and proposal managers have their own methods for keeping costs down, but printing outside of the office can provide cost and sanity relief. A couple of tips are presented below:

- Is there anything worse than seeing the finish line for your proposal, but capture or executive management keeps making last minute changes --- even after pens down? Printing at an offsite location ensures that no last-minute changes will derail your proposal. Not only can this save your sanity, but you won't be wasting paper, toner and other supplies that arise from unnecessary reprints.
- While the content of your proposal will ultimately decide your company's fate, having a professionally produced submission can be a make-or-break qualifier in an evaluator's eyes. Companies that specialize in proposal printing have higher grade materials that will make your hard work shine even brighter: high quality printers lend more vibrant colors and deeper contrasts to accentuate your graphic designer's hard work, and specialized thermal printers can make your CDs look less like a last-minute addition and more like a central part of your submission.



- Printing professionals will never read your proposals, but during quality control often catch formatting/editing errors that your team might miss because they are overly familiar with your proposal. Common errors such as font inconsistencies, incorrect headers/footers/page numbers and layout issues could be the difference between a contract award and an uncomfortable debrief with the contracting agency and senior executives.

> "Printing at an offsite location ensures that no last-minute changes will derail your proposal."

Chris Turo has worked as a proposal consultant with enexdi since April 2016, interacting with multiple clients. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from SUNY at Cortland in upstate New York.

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

Mary Claire Tracy
MAXIMUS
MaryClaireTracy@maximus.com
703-798-1046

Editors

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 Designers

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

Alvin Lowe, CF APMP
24 Hour Company
alvin.lowe@24hrco.com
703-533-7209

Circulation

James Farley
james.r.farley@gmail.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.

NCA APMP 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 2017 Corporate Partners

Diamond Partners

www.LohfeldConsulting.com
abarden@lohfeldconsulting.com

Platinum Partners

www.mantech.com

Gold Partners

www.aockeysolutions.com

www.brownrudnick.com

www.enexdi.com

www.deltek.com

www.intravation.com

www.ociwins.com

www.pleasetech.com

www.proposaldc.com

www.r3bsolutions.com

www.shipleywins.com

www.redteamconsulting.com

www.richterandcompany.com

http://www.potomacadvisors.com

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