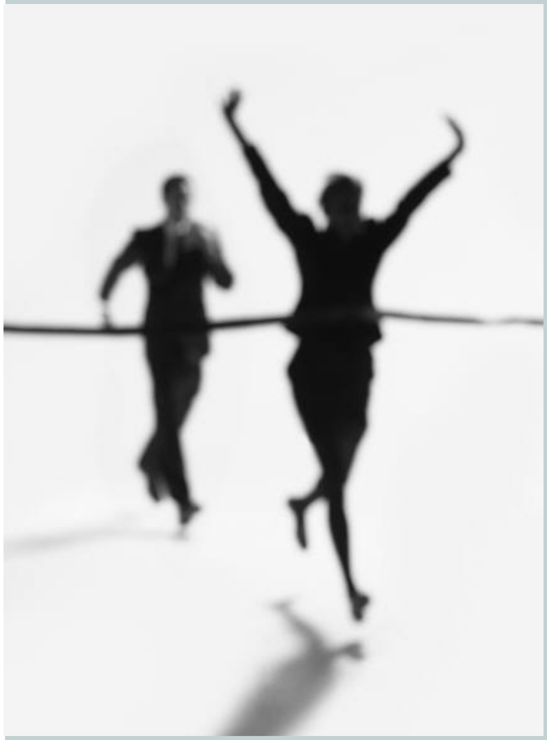
Executive Summary

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

Fall 2007 Volume XIII, Issue 4

Special points of interest:

- As an NCA member you have more opportunities for networking and education than anywhere else in the country!
- Access presentations from previous APMP-NCA Roundtables at www.apmpnca.org/presentations.html
- Self-update your email address directly on the NCA *Member and Colleague Database* page on NCA's Web site



After a year of "test driving" the accreditation program, my recommendation is to give it a try. It might prove to be a key driving force in your career.

President's Corner

Crossing the Finish Line: APMP Professional Accreditation is a Winner

Michael A. Scruggs, PPM.APMP

My "test drive" of APMP's Professional Accreditation Program began right after last year's annual conference. Several conference speakers promoted the three-part program, and I was psyched to give it a try.

Everyone I've talked with about the first level of the program—the Foundation Level—told me it wasn't terribly difficult. Perhaps for them. I wrote an article about my Foundation experience explaining how the sample questions were challenging enough, and my approach to preparing for the on-line test.

The Practitioner Level, the second part of the program, is designed for professional self-assessment. In a second article I described my approach to prepare and complete the Proposal Practitioner Assessment Questionnaire, or fondly known as the "PPAQ."

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Sponsored by the NCA Chapter

Professional Day 2007 Update

Patricia Kent

As proposal management and business development professionals, we are besieged daily with capture meetings, project schedules, document deadlines, and a myriad of other proposal development responsibilities. At times, the workload seems never-ending. Ah, but there is always that refreshing one-day "oasis" each fall when we can leave the office phones and interruptions behind and come together to *re-energize* at NCA's Professional Day.

Professional Day 2007 is scheduled for Tuesday, October 16, with a slate of speaker sessions that is sure to provide you with pertinent, professional development information. Based on last year's feedback and your suggestions for this year, the Planning Committee is confident we have a terrific line-up of speakers and topics that will make this Professional Day an event you will not want to miss.

So far, the line-up of featured speakers for this year includes Patty Nunn and Bob Guerra. Ms. Nunn, a well-known and respected proposal management professional, will speak to capturing best practices. And in response to the positive feedback received on his panel's presentation last year, Mr. Guerra has agreed to return—this time with a panel of Federal executives who will address ways to improve proposals.

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In this issue:

Learn how to format your proposal so it doesn't get disqualified for being non-compliant.

Today's Government evaluators use new tools and techniques that you need to know about!

Find out what the Government evaluation board is looking for—and deliver more "wins" for your proposal team at:

Win More Bids with Today's Evaluator-Friendly Proposals

APMP-NCA's September Roundtable
September 19, 2007; 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Fairview Park Marriott, Falls Church, VA

Bring your entire proposal team to the September 19 Roundtable and you'll all know how to:

- Use the words that Government evaluators look for in today's winning proposals.
- Make it friendly to the latest automated evaluation software that more and more Agencies are now using.
- Format your proposal so it doesn't get disqualified for not being in compliance.

Our presenter, Gary Clay, chaired more than 50 large-scale proposal evaluations!
Gary Clay is Acquisition Project Manager of GSA's Federal Systems Integration and Management Center (FEDSIM). GSA FEDSIM's breadth of experience ranges from managing an Agency's entire IT program to delivering global IT solutions in Third World countries, to supporting a large complex telecom project. Last year GSA FEDSIM added over $1.4 billion in client projects to its portfolio.

Register now *at www.apmpnca.org/announcements/090607*. Space is Limited!

Agenda: 5:30 p.m. Networking
6:15 p.m. Dinner (vegetarian entrée upon request)
7:15 p.m. Announcements and Program

Registration Fees: $65 (payment received in advance) or $75 (register at the door; limited seats available and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Corporate Partners: Please RSVP by September 13 even if using a free coupon.

Location: Marriott Fairview Park, 3111 Fairview Park Dr., Falls Church, VA 22042-4550
703.849.9400

If you plan to attend...*register now* at *www.apmpnca.org/announcements/090607* and pay online by September 13, 2007 using PayPal, or RSVP via email at ***rsvp@apmp-nca.org*** and mail your check to APMP NCA, POB 3063, McLean, VA 22103-3063.

Find out what Government evaluators look for and deliver more "wins" for your team.

2006 Panel Members: Brett Jarvis and Kathleen Yoshida with Speaker's Committee Chairman, John Amazigo.

Refresh your knowledge of winning practices and make connections that count at Professional Day on October 16.

- Take back the latest proposal development trends and techniques from respected professionals—and give your next proposal a winning edge over your competitors.
- Renew your relationships with current colleagues—and meet new people to expand and enrich your professional network.
- Give yourself a day away from the office to reflect on your own professional development and career.

APMP-NCA's Professional Day

October 16, 2006; 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Northrop Grumman IT

12900 Federal Systems Park Drive, Fairfax, VA

Registration fees include continental breakfast, lunch, and networking reception!

- Payment received by September 14: APMP Member: $95 Non-Member: $135
- After September 14: APMP Member: $125 Non-Member: $165

IMPORTANT: Online advance registration required by October 10—Security requirements prohibit on-site walk-ins.

Professional Day Chairman, Bob Lohfeld; Moderator, Bob Guerra; Panel Members Tiffany Hixson, Joanne Underwood, and Lisa Akers; and APMP-NCA President, Michael Scruggs at NCA's 2006 Professional Day..

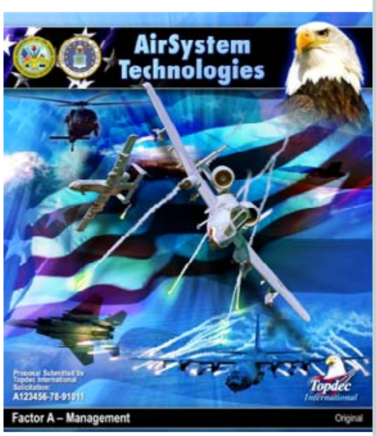
Check out the lineup of topics and expert presenters online at: www.apmpnca.org/professional_day/index.html.

Register online by September 14 and save $30!

www.apmpnca.org/professional_day/index.html

...Last year's event was a sellout!

Graphics help evaluators understand and remember your solution.



Graphics increase the likelihood of a win. Professional, visually appealing graphics increase your likelihood of success by 43%.

Ask the Graphics Guru

Mike Parkinson

Do covers really matter?

Yes. Covers really DO matter. One of the best examples I've heard was for a ballistics bid. (The names have been changed to protect the innocent.) The U.S. Army needed a bullet that flew 2,000 yards and then fell from the sky. They had a favorite, Company A; however, Company B hoped to establish a relationship with the Army as well. Company B had tested this type of bullet before and, using these results, wrote its best proposal. It believed it had a chance to win despite information that suggested Company A was a certain winner. After writing the proposal, Company B opted for a simple approach to the cover and used a photograph of a ballistics test tracer round from one of their experiments. This photograph showed exactly what the Army had requested—a bullet traveling 2,000 yards and dropping. (It was actually an image from a failed field test of an earlier project for a bullet that was intended to travel farther.) With the cover in place, Company B submitted its proposal.

Weeks later Company B won the bid, and the winning team met with the Contracting Officer. Company B asked how it won—especially being the underdogs. The Contracting Officer said the cover won the bid, despite the fact that the proposal wasn't well written and almost resulted in a loss. Company B showed on the cover image that it already had the bullet, which gave it the edge over other bidders who still needed to design the bullet.

Most of the time, relationships and/or the contents of proposals—cost, past performance, an understanding of the customer's need—win the effort. Nonetheless, the cover forms a lasting impression. It is the first thing that the evaluator sees, and he or she cannot help but be influenced. Behavioral psychologists agree that most of our decisions are based on intuitive judgment and emotions. Herbert A. Simon, Nobel Prize-winning scholar at the Carnegie Mellon Institute in Pittsburgh, studied corporate decision-making and found that people often ignored formal decision-making models because of time constraints, incomplete information, inability to calculate consequences, and other variables. Intuitive judgment was the process for many decisions.

If you want a winning edge, think about your covers. Covers carry enough weight that they can, and have, significantly contributed to wins and losses. You use a lot of resources, not to mention time and money, to develop your proposal; do not ignore such a powerful tool in your proposal arsenal.

How long should it take to render a proposal graphic?

The short answer is 4 hours per graphic for large proposals (over 50 graphics). That estimate includes all iterations. However, the long answer is that it depends on the graphic's complexity and the available time to create the graphic (work tends to fill the available time). For example, an 11" x 17" graphic illustrating how you manufacture, set up, and remove network-operating centers will take longer than a simple 10-person organizational chart. Less complex graphics take anywhere from 15 minutes to 2 hours. This includes iterations.

Available time also has a large impact on rendering time. In my experience, I found that the greater the number of graphics, the lower the hours per graphic, because less time is available for authors and designers to focus on each visual.

Over time, you and your company will develop a library of graphics and a relationship with your design resource. Both will factor into final rendering times. For example, when 24 Hour Company first works with a new client, rendering times are a bit higher than normal because we are learning more about their processes, preferences, and needs. On subsequent efforts, rendering times drop significantly because we better understand our client's needs and have a database of their graphic styles to pull from as needed.

How many graphics should I include in my proposal?

Shipley Associates says one per page. In a perfect world, I agree. Why? Because your audience is fractured—pulled in many directions at once. Giving them an easy way to digest and review information on every page is wise. Graphics help evaluators understand and remember your solution. They also increase the likelihood of a win. Professional, visually appealing graphics increase your likelihood of success by 43% (3M-sponsored study at the University of Minnesota School of Management).

Joan Miller (name changed), a Proposal Manager, taught a proposal writing course for over 10 years. The class began with students forming source

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Gene Dawson Dies at Age 87

Lou Robinson

Albert Eugene (Gene) Dawson died at his home on July 11 from a heart condition. Gene was a member of APMP for about 10 years and was active in the NCA during most of this time. He attended most of the roundtable meetings and Professional Day events.

He was always a pleasure to be with at these meetings. He was first a gentleman in all that he did. He had good words about everyone and seemed to be close to all those he knew. He always had a smile and generally had a funny story to share with all.

Gene had been a personal friend of mine for 25 years and a business partner for 16 years. He was always kind, considerate, and understanding but was able to effectively stand up for what he believed. During the entire time of our relationship, there was never a disagreement that was not quickly solved and without anger.

Before his career in proposals, he had a long career in the U.S. Air Force where he served as a Navigator and an Intelligence Officer. He flew many combat missions and lost many friends to the rages of war.

There must be a special heaven for proposal people. They suffer so much on earth that they must be given good care in the hereafter. I am sure that Gene has found his place, and he is writing down funny stories to tell us when (and if) the rest of us arrive.

...there must be a special heaven for proposal people... they suffer so much on earth that they must be given good care in the hereafter...

(Graphics Guru...Continued from page 4)

selection teams to evaluate two proposals and choosing a winner based on the established evaluation criteria. Proposal A was attractive, well written, and contained a large number of professionally rendered, visually appealing graphics. However, the proposal was not compliant with the evaluation criteria. Proposal B was not well written and used a smaller number of dense, difficult-to-read graphics, but it was compliant. Not surprisingly, Joan often found that Proposal A (the easy-to-read, graphically appealing proposal) received the highest grades. When asked, the students said that they were so caught up in the presentation that they had failed to realize the proposal was not compliant.

Unfortunately, we do not always have access to the resources needed to put a graphic on every page. When this is the case, choose key concepts to illustrate. For example, show a graphic overview of your technical solution highlighting major benefits and discriminators. Use your scarce resources on critical graphics. The fewer the graphics, the greater the weight placed on those visuals. You want to make each graphic count.

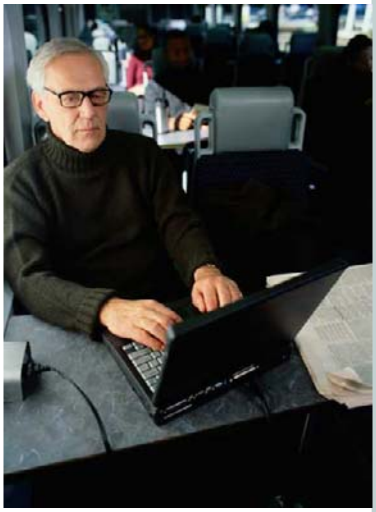
The fewer the graphics, the greater the weight placed on those visuals. You want to make each graphic count.

Should I use photos or clip art or both?

Before I answer this question, I want to clarify how each is defined and used in proposals. A photograph is called a "raster" image. Rasterized images are resolution dependent—the designer needs to know the dimensions and resolution before rendering the final graphic. If not, the file size can be bloated or the graphic can look pixilated. Clip art is called a "vector" image. Vector images are resolution independent—the graphic can be scaled to any size and still retain its clean edges. Vector images typically have lower file sizes. Most proposals are created using vector art (Microsoft PowerPoint, Adobe Illustrator, CorelDRAW), and then the graphic is rasterized (e.g., saved as a jpg) for placement in a proposal document. For more robust graphics, Adobe Photoshop is used to create raster graphics like photo collages, covers, and higher-end visuals. Rasterized graphics are typically more visually appealing. Clip art is appropriate as long as it is professional and clean. If you use clip art, be sure to avoid cartoon-like graphics, which can send the message that you are not serious about the opportunity.

For most efforts, pick either raster or vector to use throughout the proposal. However, if you have access to an experienced designer, using both is acceptable because he or she will know what works and will choose the best visual elements to ensure the graphic is clear, compelling, and communicative.

Mike Parkinson is a partner at 24 Hour Company specializing in bid-winning proposal graphics. His Billion Dollar Graphics web site (www.BillionDollarGraphics.com) shares best practices and helpful tools with proposal professionals. Contact Mike at mike@24hrco.com.



The effectiveness of success stories is directly related to the quality of the story. Each has to be short, fact-based, and present some measure of success.

Use Success Stories to Bolster Evaluation Points for Corporate Experience

Jan Butorac

RFPs have become more specific about the distinction between past performance and corporate experience. In many RFPs, the Government stipulates that past performance will be evaluated totally separately from corporate experience, as noted in the following recent RFP:

"Offerors should understand the difference between experience and past performance. *Experience reflects the offeror's capability of performing a requirement.* Past performance reflects how well it has performed similar requirements. In assessing past performance, the quality of the offeror's past performance is of primary significance…*An offeror's experience will be evaluated in the technical proposal.*

Of course, we've always known that we need to "weave in" the experience story as we describe our technical and management approaches—but sometimes the anecdotes get lost in the shuffle. So, how do we ensure that the proposal evaluators will notice the experience nuggets that we are sprinkling throughout our text?

Try *success stories*. The success story describes—usually in a call-out box—a specific corporate or team success that is relevant to the topic at hand. Success stories directly address the experience evaluation criterion while bringing out the best your team has to offer—linked specifically to the RFP requirements. The benefits to using this technique are well worth the effort:

- It brings the attention of the evaluator directly to an experience example.
- It forces a "best practice" in detecting, gathering, and refining the stories that substantiate your corporate experience.
- It breaks up the "walls of text" that are so daunting to evaluators—hey, if you don't have a graphic, put in a success story!

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(Success Stories...Continued from page 6)

- It enables you to highlight corporate/team experience on contracts that are not presented in the past performance section because they are too “old” or don’t necessarily have a “blue” rating.
- It enables you also to highlight your selected past performance citations by bringing relevant stories “up front” to the technical/management proposal.

Measuring Success: Everything’s got to be measurable these days, right? The effectiveness of success stories is directly related to the quality of the story. Each has to be short, fact-based, and present some measure of success.

An effective formula for success stories is shown in the following examples. Note that *Results* always contains a *factoid* of some sort. Numbers are best!

Success Story

Customer: XXX, Department of XXX

Services: We continually perform statistical process control on software development and operations and maintenance activities and use process improvement to control cost and improve quality. The XXX contract is externally certified at CMM Level 5 and has been at Level 3 or higher since 2000. We have been ISO-9001 registered since 1999.

Result: Our defect prevention activities have reduced the number of software defects found in the field by 38% over two releases and deployments containing 3 million lines of code.

Success Story

Customer: XXX

Services: We provide unified messaging and accessibility via Web, client, and PDA as part of e-mail services, including support of 100,000 mailboxes and 1,000 PDAs. We use a clustered Microsoft Exchange and Active Directory environment for substantial redundancy for hundreds of domain controllers across the United States.

Result: Uninterrupted 100% availability for e-mail and PDA communication devices for the past 6 years.

Success Story

Customer: XXXX Program

Services: We transitioned services from four incumbents into a single consolidated contract. The XXX Center transition was scheduled for 90 days, but the incumbent provider was terminated, causing an immediate void in services. In addition, a critical reporting system being developed by another contractor was 1 year behind schedule and over budget.

Result: We successfully assumed operation of the XXX Center within only 45 days. We restructured the reporting system design and began incrementally delivering reports within 30 days of contract award; reports are now being used at all levels within XX.

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Success stories come from the entire proposal team, including your subcontractors. Brainstorming sessions can elicit a wealth of success stories.

(Success Stories...Continued from page 7)

> **Success Story**
>
> **Customer:** XXX Organization
>
> **Services:** Manage 98 subcontractors and consulting team that provides a broad range of engineering and functional expertise across this $265M ID/IQ contract, characterized by:
>
> - High management and technical complexity;
> - 6,000+ deliverables;
> - 83 delivery orders;
> - 1,289 tasks; and
> - Managed allocation of 270 analysts, engineers, and SMEs in first year.
>
> **Result:** Resulted in 95% management performance rating and 98% technical rating. Received more than 270 commendations, letters, and messages of appreciation for support.
>
> "Performance of duty has been exemplary... professionalism and technical competence were instrumental in the successful development of this crucial architecture and will help ensure XXX maintains the excellent reputation."

How Do You Cover the Bases? If you decide to use this technique, you have to cover all the bases. To be really effective, success stories have to be consigned for every major element of the Statement of Work (SOW), as well as management and transition aspects. It's not effective to have several in one section and none in other sections. So, during the storyboarding process, each author is assigned to define areas where a success story would be useful. The result is a list of proposal elements that becomes the basis for the hunt.

Where Do These Stories Come From? Success stories come from the entire proposal team, including your subcontractors. Technical SMEs who are drawn from your ongoing programs need to be interviewed by the section authors. The past performance guru of the company/division, if there is one, can be brought into the effort. I've found that the past performance volume lead is a good source for stories from the contracts selected as citations, as he/she is in touch with the program managers anyway. Each team member should be assigned to bring forth success stories in his areas of expertise. Brainstorming sessions among business development people, SMEs, and authors can elicit a wealth of success stories.

Where Do They Go? Be sure to drop in the success story where the relevant discussion occurs. A success story about the Rational Unified Process will look out of place in a network architecture discussion.

Corporate experience is a major evaluation factor in all technical proposals. For your next proposal, consider using success stories. Success stories of your company and your team will spell success for your proposal.

What's Your ROI for Joining Our Chapter?

Patricia Westlein

As a member of the APMP-NCA Chapter, you may wonder what is your return on investment (ROI) for staying active in NCA?

The NCA Chapter was started in 1992. By the mid 1990s, more than 200 members had joined. Today, our claim as APMP's largest chapter is substantiated by our growing membership of more than 650 professionals. As a member, you are in good company. With annual dues of $125, you reap many benefits.

By attending regularly scheduled program events, you can enjoy Roundtable meetings kicked off with happy hours offering many networking opportunities. Fresh presentations for each meeting include the NCA Board's carefully selected speakers who offer relevant and appealing topics for business development (BD) and proposal professionals. Another popular event is our renowned annual Professional Day. Attendance grows every year, and the event offers great speakers presenting tips, tools, and lessons learned in proposal processes and Government acquisition know-how from private and public sectors, respectively.

By attending these events you can gain career enhancements that keep you job-market smart—whether you are looking or recruiting for a new position. Moreover, both employers and employees benefit from NCA's dynamic job bank and inexpensive advertising. You can find the best BD and proposal development jobs or advertise for them, no matter where you live in these United States.

By attending Chapter events you can effectively network and find experienced proposal professionals from whom you can learn, enjoy mentoring, or seriously empathize about the best and worst proposal and business development experiences.

By attending these events you can effectively network and find experienced proposal professionals from whom you can learn, enjoy mentoring, or seriously empathize about the best and worst proposal and business development experiences. You may even get recruited by networking with consultants and organization representatives.

By not attending these events, couch members can still enjoy our *Executive Summary* newsletter available at www.apmp-nca.org for past and present issues. Furthermore, event presentations given at Roundtables and Professional Day are promptly posted to the site. The site's Body of Knowledge includes postings on best proposal and business development practices.

We look forward to seeing you at the next Roundtable, September 19, 2007 and at Professional Day on October 16, 2007. Please visit our web site for registration details.

Costs of organizing, setting up, and sponsoring meetings, conventions, symposia, etc., including rental of meeting facilities, transportation, subsistence, and incidental costs are often "allowable" expenses.

Contractors should not assume that the fact that a meeting includes a welcome dinner or a dinner event will result in the entire conference being considered a social activity...

Legal Corner

Allowability of Costs for Trade, Business, Technical, and Professional Activities

Shlomo Katz

A key aspect of proposal preparation is, of course, determining the cost or price at which your product or service will be offered to the customer. As is well known, when that customer is the U.S. Government, there are many rules that govern the elements that get included in a cost or price.

In particular, Part 31 of the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) contains what are known as the "Cost Principles," including guidance regarding the allowability under Government contracts of dozens of specific types of costs. Speaking very generally, if a cost is allowable, it may be made part of the cost that is passed through to the Government under a contract, either as a direct cost or indirectly, through overhead or G&A. If a cost is unallowable, it must be covered by funds from non-Government work or from profit.

If you are reading this article, there is a good chance that you or someone you know is a member of the Association of Proposal Management Professionals (APMP). This may mean that your employer has spent money for membership in the organization. Very possibly, you occasionally (or religiously) attend APMP NCA chapter meetings or the APMP-NCA Professional Day held every October. Perhaps your company has even sponsored such an event—again incurring a cost to do so.

What do the FAR Cost Principles say about the allowability of such costs? (Please note that this column is not intended to provide legal advice for specific situations, but only to identify issues that may be applicable in appropriate circumstances.) Under FAR § 31.205-43, the following types of costs are "allowable" in Government contracts:

- Memberships in trade, business, technical, and professional organizations; and
- Subscriptions to trade, business, professional, or other technical periodicals.

In addition, FAR § 31.205-43 provides that, when the principal purpose of a meeting, convention, conference, symposium, or seminar is the dissemination of trade, business, technical, or professional information or the stimulation of production or improved productivity, the following types of costs are allowable:

- Costs of organizing, setting up, and sponsoring the meetings, conventions, symposia, etc., including rental of meeting facilities, transportation, subsistence, and incidental costs;
- Costs of attendance by contractor employees, including travel costs; and
- Costs of attendance by individuals who are not employees of the contractor, provided such costs are not also reimbursed to the individual by the employing company or organization, and the individual's attendance is essential to achieve the purpose of the conference, meeting, convention, symposium, etc.

The above limits seem to be pretty straightforward, and this cost principle has generated much less litigation and other attention than many of the other rules in FAR Part 31. One issue that has arisen relates to the cost of business meetings that involve food. In a case heard before the Department of Energy Board of Contract Appeals (EBCA) entitled *Cotton & Co.*, the Agency argued for a rule that the cost of a meeting held in a restaurant was not allowable unless the contractor proved that the meeting could not have been held at any other time and place. The EBCA disagreed, holding that the applicable test was "reasonableness," not "necessity." Because the contractor had, in fact, discussed business matters at the restaurant and the purpose of the meeting was to stimulate production or improve productivity, as required by FAR § 31.205-43, the cost of the meeting held in a restaurant was allowable.

Many professional conferences include an entertainment component. Thus, another issue that can arise is identifying the dividing line between allowable professional activity costs and unallowable entertainment costs. The Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA) Manual states that this determination must be made on a case-by-case basis. Thus, for example, a meeting held in a dinner theater is more likely to involve the incurrence of entertainment costs than professional activity costs. However, contractors should not assume that the fact that a meeting includes a welcome dinner or a dinner event will result in the *entire* conference being considered a social activity if the reason for gathering, and the majority of the time spent, was dedicated to trade, business, technical, or professional activities.

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Web-based training can be used to cost-effectively reach project staff.

To improve your win rates, you need to begin following the practices that lead to consistent winning… skills and processes will mature over time, your win rate will go up, and your business will constantly reach for a higher potential.

Enhancing Your Win Rates Over Time

Courtesy of CapturePlanning.com

When people focus on improving their win rates, they usually implement a new "process" and put pressure on their staff to "win more." Demanding a superior win rate tomorrow never works. There are things that you can do to improve your win rates. Trying to do them all at one time often introduces more chaos than success. What I have found to be more reliably successful is a process of deliberate continuous improvement.

Your business development processes are probably based on a few simple principles. You should clearly define a set of goals to guide the pursuit of those principles. The steps that you follow in your process will be less important than achieving the goals. Identify a baseline set of steps for achieving the goals and make sure that they are implemented well. Once people have mastered the process, raise the bar. Add detail. Pursue higher standards for the same goals. Or if you find better goals, implement a new baseline around them.

Your processes should never be complete. When it looks complete, raise the bar again. Then repeat. Every few weeks, once people have mastered the current process, take some part of your process to the next level.

Example. If your goal is to plan before you write and write to the plan, you might decide to start every proposal off by writing a proposal plan. At first, what's in the plan may not matter. Just get people used to starting off their proposal efforts by being able to articulate a plan in writing. Once your organization is able to achieve this reliably, you might choose to define what should be in a proposal plan. Then you might identify standards that define what an acceptable plan is. An acceptable plan might require that the outline be fully cross-referenced with the RFP. Or it might require that all outline items be assigned to an author by name, with deadlines. Even at this stage, the format people use for their outlines and schedules may not matter much. Later you can implement forms/templates for people to follow. By then, instead of the forms being perceived as a burden, they may be perceived as a way to expedite getting the plan in writing.

Your people should also be continuously improving their skills. It's not a question of whether the people you hired know what they're doing. Most people learn on the job. This means that they do a lot of bad business and proposal development before they teach themselves the skills to do an adequate job. The truth is that most people never get very good learning this way.

Raising the skill levels of your staff means training. But training does not necessarily mean sending people out to classes. Training can and should take multiple forms:

- Teleconferences
- Brown bags
- Web-based
- Job Aids
- Books/Manuals
- Coaching/Mentoring
- Instructor lead training (internal)
- Instructor lead training (external)
- Train-the-trainer
- Facilitated discussion/planning sessions

All of these approaches can be part of your organizational training model. Each has different goals, costs, and benefits. But the combination provides you with options to ensure that your staff can develop their skills continuously.

For example:

- Web-based training can be used to cost-effectively reach project staff
- Instructor lead training may be merited for key staff
- Facilitated discussion/planning sessions can be a cost effective way to achieve continuous improvement
- Coaching/Mentoring is a good way to reinforce inexperienced staff
- Job-aids (checklists, guides, forms) help to ensure training results in performance
- A train-the-trainer program is a good way to extend the reach of an internal training program
- Teleconferences can reach everybody

To improve your win rates, you need to begin following the practices that lead to consistent winning. You cannot implement all best practices in a single implementation, send everybody to training, and get an organization that will fulfill its potential. What you can do is raise the bar on a regular basis and develop the skills of your staff over time. Skills and processes will mature over time, your win rate will go up, and your business will constantly reach for a higher potential. Growing skills continuously over time is much more effective than sending people to a class once in a while.

If you continuously improve the process, while simultaneously continuously improving the skills of the staff executing the process, your win rates will go up reliably and consistently. And the best part is that it does not require radical action. It does require the

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Content of the management plan will vary widely depending on the company, the program, and the circumstances. However, a majority of management plans have in common certain sections.

(Enhancing Your Win Rate...Continued from page 10)

diligence to make improvements every couple of weeks. And while continuous training and process improvement sound like they may consume a lot of resources, the truth is that it will take less effort and provide a better return on investment than radical change. In fact, radical change, such as bringing in a whole new process and trying to nail it start to finish on the first try and expecting everyone to adapt to it quickly, is much less likely to succeed and will consume far more resources in the attempt. If you want a better win rate, just start improving things. Little things. Slowly and surely. And make sure that you improve the skills of your people as well as the process.

What Makes a Good Management Plan?

Russell Smith

During the days when I had time to actively assist in proposal writing, I was often elected to prepare the management plan. During the past 20 years, I have probably prepared at least 150. I will never forget the first management plans I wrote. I was a Vice President at Computer Dynamics, a progressive small business in Virginia Beach. The year was 1983, and this was my first experience writing a management plan. If I had had an MBA degree, the work would have been fairly straightforward. However, my degrees were in English, History, and Education.

In order to get over the learning curve and prepare responsive management plans, I found several tools or aids available that would help. First, there were some basic management plans in past proposals. Although these materials were brief and not very strong, they did offer a starting point that could be expanded as time passed. Second, there were employees sitting just down the hall who had a wealth of knowledge on management techniques and who could be consulted. Third, I found that the bookstores had dozens of good college and professional management books, and some of these texts had useful material. Fourth, we frequently teamed with other companies in bidding, and it was nearly always possible to pick up useful management proposal paragraphs from the teaming partners as time passed.

Although the techniques used in a management approach can vary widely, the desired end result is the same—that is to present a plan the customer can easily see is reliable and sound.

The problem with the approach mentioned above—teaching yourself on the job—is that it is slow. It took more than five years of experience before writing a management plan became second nature. If your company does not have good management plan materials that address your different products and services, it is probably worth investing in a little consultant time to bring in someone who can prepare management plans appropriate to your needs. Depending on the complexity of the requirements, most companies can have significant management plan "boilerplate" prepared based on an investment of between two weeks and a month or two months of time.

A starting point in preparing any management plan is to define the higher-level categories that will be addressed. The requirements of the RFP usually spell out some of the categories. For example, nearly all solicitations require you to describe your proposed program organization and your subcontracting plan. Content of the management plan will vary widely depending on the company, the program, and the circumstances. However, a majority of management plans have in common certain sections.

The management plan categories that usually need to be addressed in a proposal include the following:

- Program Organization—includes an organization chart showing reporting relationships and describes how the proposed program organization functions.
- Program Management—describes how the overall program is directed by the program manager/ program management group.
- Project Management—describes the techniques used to plan, schedule, track, and direct project activities that may take place within the program.
- Problem management/escalation—provides a concrete means for identifying and handling problems in a reliable, repeatable, and timely manner.
- Personnel management—contains a description of how personnel-related affairs such as recruiting, retention, timekeeping, and benefits are handled.
- Financial management—describes what financial systems, processes, and safeguards are used to ensure reliable management of program finances.
- Risk management—demonstrates a clear understanding of program risks and provides a description of the plans and capabilities you have developed to ensure that risks are held to an acceptable level.
- Schedule management—provides an overview of the systems and processes your company uses to ensure that the program team consistently maintains schedule.
- Executive management—describes what methods you propose to use for the executive leadership to provide oversight and control over the program to ensure the program team successfully meets challenges and delivers quality performance.

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It will strengthen your case if you can give concrete examples showing how you have successfully managed similar programs in the past.

(Management Plan...Continued from page 11)

- Interface between customer and contractor at all levels—typically using a vertical organizational chart of both the contractor and the customer side by side, the bidder describes how he proposes to interface his organization to the customer organization at various levels including the executive, program, project, technical, financial, contractual, and other levels.
- Contract management—describes the processes, procedures, and systems that you propose to use to ensure that the program team delivers services/products consistently in accordance with both the letter and spirit of the contract.
- Subcontract management—describes the processes, procedures, systems, and contractual terms you propose to use to ensure that subcontractors are managed in a way that supports program goals and requirements.

There is no magic answer to the problem of writing a fine management plan. The basic requirement is to have a word processor and several years of experience. Although the techniques used in a management approach can vary widely, the desired end result is the same—that is to present a plan the customer can easily see is reliable and sound. It will strengthen your case if you can give concrete examples showing how you have successfully managed similar programs in the past. Assuming your marketers have done their customer research well, you will know what areas of management need the greatest emphasis. If the customer has had recent problems with schedule, for example, then he will expect to see a strong schedule management approach. Likewise, knowledge of the customer situation will help you write highly responsive approaches to the other management areas.

Anyone wanting to discuss a management plan problem or issue is welcome to contact me at 703.689.9600 (w) or rsmith@orgcom.com.

Mark October 16 as your day to learn more about how to surpass your competitors by employing tools and techniques that are sure to pave the way for winning business.

(Professional Day...Continued from page 1)

Here's the line-up of the six speaker panel topics and the type of professionals you can expect to hear from:

Capture Plan Development and Management

- Capture Management Best Practices and Lessons Learned (Capture Manager)
- The Hand-Off from Capture to Proposal Management—Best and Worst Case Scenarios (Proposal Manager)
- Effective Capture Management—a Case Study (Capture Manager)

Case Studies in the Selection, Configuration, Implementation, and Use of Proposal Tool Infrastructures

- Building Effective Proposal Management Infrastructures (Senior High-Volume Proposal Manager – Government and Commercial)

Executive Summaries

- Best Practices for Preparing Executive Summaries (Proposal Manager)
- Creating Compelling Graphics for the Executive Summary (Graphic Designer)
- The Client's Point of View on Executive Summaries (Federal Executive)

Government Feedback on Improving Proposals

- Feedback on How to Sharpen Your Management Approach (Federal Executive)
- Feedback on How to Sharpen Your Technical Approach (Federal Executive)
- Federal Executive on How to Sharpen Your Past Performance (Federal Executive)

Task Order Proposal Best Practices

- GWAC Proposal Management from the GWAC Manager's Perspective (GWAC Proposal Manager)
- Feedback on Evaluating Task Order Proposals (Federal Executive)

Trends in Proposal Development and Evaluation – 2008 (Senior Proposal Manager — DoD and Commercial)

- Then we will end the day with an opportunity for attendees to "connect" with speakers and each other at a **Speed Networking** session.

So register now for Professional Day 2007. **Mark October 16** on the calendar as your day to learn more about how to surpass your competitors by employing sound capture management methods, using first-hand knowledge of what the industry wants, and applying proposal development tools and techniques that are sure to pave the way for winning business.

Contractors should ensure that there is a valid business justification for attending [meetings], such that there is a direct or indirect benefit to the company's Government work...

(Legal Corner...Continued from page 9)

In recent years, some Federal Agencies (e.g., the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid) have attempted to limit their contractors' use of contract funds to sponsor or participate in professional meetings. While every situation must be judged by its own facts, if a contractor is able to demonstrate that the Agency was aware of, approved, and acquiesced to the allowability of these costs in the past, the contractor may argue that the retroactive disallowance doctrine, an equitable principle, bars the Government from retroactively disallowing a cost. In other words, where the Government has consistently accepted and allowed a cost or a cost accounting method in the past, and the contractor has relied on that position, the Government may not retroactively disallow a cost. This may be true even if the Government *erred* in allowing the particular cost originally.

Conclusion

To account appropriately for costs associated with attending meetings, contractors should ensure that: (1) there is a valid business justification for attending, such that there is a direct or indirect benefit to the company's Government work; and (2) meals or receptions either meet the test of reasonableness (e.g., working lunches, networking receptions) or that the portion of the meeting cost allocable to the meal is treated as unallowable.

Shlomo D. Katz is Senior Counsel in the Washington, DC office of the national law firm of Epstein Becker & Green, a Corporate Sponsor of APMP-NCA. If you have any questions about these or other proposal issues, please contact him at (202) 861-1809 or skatz@ebglaw.com.

SFA is often seen by sales people as just another step towards "Big Brother" watching their every move…ready with a big stick to hit them if they step out of line.

Typically, when the sales team is brought in for training on how to use "it," they conclude that it is a burdensome administrative system designed for management with little in it for them.

Real Customer Relationship Management/Sales Force Automation (CRM/SFA) Success for Government Contractors

Christopher Stahl

Abstract

If we accept that the technology for the SFA solution is sound and the software does work, then what can be the problem? It must be the people tasked with using the SFA. Who really wanted the SFA solution? Was it the sales and service teams at the sharp end? I don't think so. Senior management faced with the tumultuous changes over the last decade have attempted to ensure higher profit margins by reengineering, downsizing, cutting costs, outsourcing, sweating assets, and, of course, attempting to make their sales efforts more effective. The investment in the whole concept of CRM in the eyes of senior management is based on improving the bottom line and their own tenure.

People issues are still not easily addressed in a technology- and process-driven model of the world. But new ways of helping sales teams improve their methods, relationships, and productivity are appearing. There is still no "silver bullet," but if you can actually get some of it right, you have a chance.

White Papers on CRM/SFA Successes

- Using Intelligence to Win Contracts: *www.g4ichannels.com/showpage.cfm?pageid=166258*
- Responding to Katrina: Contracting in an Emergency Situation (Version 2.1.) by Catherine Poole and Bob Welch: www.acqsolinc.com/emergencycontracting/docs/adv05-09emerg3.pdf
- Economic Development Zones in China, First Comprehensive Analysis and Comparison by Strategic Analysis, Inc.: www.strategicanalysis.com/pdfs/Multiclients.pdf
- Winning Business in a Changing Economy by Shipley Associates: www.shipleywins.com/fact_sheets/pdfs/WBCE-04W.pdf
- The ROI of ERP: Look No Further for Practical, Effective Enterprise Performance Management by Epicor: www.tecwhitepapers.com/3296783182/275192/441533
- Tigerpaw CRM+ Awarded 2005 'Product of the Year' by Tigerpaw Software, Inc.: crm.ittoolbox.com/press/display.asp?i=137344

SFA, or operational CRM, as some would define it, is really aimed at improving the win ratio of a sales team and better managing strategic accounts—or so we might believe. It is here, however, that the real problems of CRM implementations have faced their greatest hurdles.

Faced with these hurdles, senior management has attempted every way possible to make their sales efforts more effective. Through the eyes of senior management, the investment in the whole concept of CRM is based on improving the bottom line. However, in their rush to the edge of the cliff, they forgot to find out what the outcomes should be for the user or even the customer. Overly compliant consultants hoping to implement multi-million dollar solutions from eager software/hardware vendors did not make good advisers. But, SFA implementations were seen by many as a way of improving the sales teams' effectiveness and providing oversight of their activities to senior management. Oversight might have been achieved, but often at the cost of effectiveness.

View Sales Activity

Much of the investment in operational CRM equates to more-efficient ways of monitoring sales activity and tactics. There are numerous reports available to comprehend the different aspects of the sales funnel and its makeup. However, 75% of field sales application projects are deemed not to have met expectations. Who believes they have failed? The sales teams that have to use the applications! Most sales teams claim that the solution they are given is a hindrance rather than an aid used for selling. Oftentimes, the SFA's administrative paperwork burden falls on the shoulders of salespeople, who have to become data input clerks. The top 20% of sale teams that produce as much as 80% of the sales are the first to find ways of not using the SFA. The next 60–70% of salespeople that believe a new system approach will be a benefit by matching the right products to the right customers also finds the system burdensome and fails to meet their real needs.

Talk To Sales Teams!

In many cases, the sales teams are not involved in the purchase, design, and communication or testing of the SFA. Typically, when the sales team is brought in for training on how to use "it," they conclude that it is a burdensome administrative system designed for management with little in it for them. They ask questions like, "Will it tell me which customer to call? What will be the best offer? Will it make me more commission and or improve my bonus? Will it reduce the administrative overhead? Can it write proposals for me? Can it help me quote?" The answer in most case is "No, sorry. If you key in the name and address, we can see…which customer you have called and determine your pipeline!"

Failure: A Gartner View

SFA is often seen by sales people as just another step towards "Big Brother" watching their every move…ready with a big stick to hit them if they step out of line. Gartner Research Group has identified what it believes are the top 10 reasons for 80% of the failed

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The Miller Heiman Sales Effectiveness Study findings showed that sales productivity improvements were mainly achieved through better training.

There must be account management processes that offer consistent approaches for development, growth, and retention of long-term, customer-centric relationships...

(CRM...Continued from page 14)

sales technology (listed below). Obviously, the SFA is a failed solution as it is currently implemented. Of the top 10, the top 5 identify failures that relate to sales effectiveness issues and the sales teams' involvement. Often it is not technology that is required to improve the 60–70% of the sales teams, but a thorough adherence to a sales method where the processes are solid and workable.

1. Projects initiated with unclear goals, metrics, and expectations (25%).
2. Lack of commitment from senior executives, sales management, and channel partners (13%).
3. Poorly defined or flawed sales process (15%).
4. Lack of strong end-use salesperson buy-in (12%).
5. Focusing on management needs with not enough emphasis on sales people or customers (10%).
6. Making do with inadequate resources for development and deployment (8%).
7. Insufficient and irrelevant training (7%).
8. Making poor software vendor/ESP selections (5%).
9. Over-standardizing (3%).
10. Overly fanatical by features, functions, or "cool" technology (2%).

Further Evidence

The Miller Heiman Sales Effectiveness Study is an ongoing worldwide research effort that surveyed over 3,400 sales professionals in 2005 in 28 industries with 69% of the companies having 250 or more salespeople. Their findings showed that sales productivity improvements were mainly achieved through better training—particularly in developing the fundamental skills and methodologies necessary to access and win decision makers' approval. Conversely, CRM/SFA technologies were not regarded as having helped sales organizations either improve productivity or improve sales effectiveness.

The following specific weaknesses were identified:

- 50.6% of salespeople agree that CRM is not making their sales efforts more effective.
- 73% of sales leaders are not convinced CRM is used effectively for helping move sales opportunities through the funnel.
- 78.8% of sales leaders believe CRM is not being used effectively to improve account strategy and planning.
- 78.6% of sales leaders are not convinced CRM does a good job of defining an effective sales process for their organization.

Sales Methodologies Grafted to CRM/SFA

Some of the major methodologies that support sales cycle management are identified in Figure 1 on the next page. They offer a structured methodology for identifying, analyzing, and closing complex, multi-decision-maker, value-driven, competitive sales situations as solutions or transactions. The most exciting thing about these processes is that they are all being attached to new SFA solutions—either by being fully integrated or as add-ons integrated through APIs. The ePROMIS-CRM incorporates a version of solution selling that is integrated into the latest release.

The sales management process is at last being addressed through tool sets that enable the manager to coach, inspect, and analyze standardized sales processes. It also assists with recruiting, hiring, and training salespeople, as well as undertaking performance assessments, career counseling, and business reporting. These new tools allow sales managers to become proactive and enable them to do their real job of supporting the sales teams to become more professional, successful, and rapidly achieve the desired ROI.

To support the sales teams, you must go beyond sales administration (as stated above). There must be account management processes that offer consistent approaches for development, growth, and retention of long-term, customer-centric relationships with the key, mass-market accounts that the company has or wants. Quality contact management must enable strategic development for maintaining and enabling executive-level, decision-making relationships. But the derived information should make as much use as possible of data that the company already has. The data will come from billing, service, warranties, direct mail files, and any other system that is storing customer-relevant data. The information must be in a form that allows senior managers to be involved successfully when necessary. The technology must be robust and available wherever or whenever the sales team needs it.

Where is the Real ROI?

The customized GRSM sales application identifies the technologies that truly add value to business by serving the customer and supporting the sales process. The basis of the GR&SM will save cost over time, but it is the customer-facing activities that generate revenue directly and immediately.

Building for Success

Many of the tools identified in Figure 2 have been available for years in various forms. Some of the most dynamic tools, however, have only been available since the turn of the millennium.

These newer tools make use of the web to deliver their unique benefits. Even the past CRM/SFA systems only available for in-house installations are now being offered on hosted services by organizations such as Microsoft, Synchris, NetSuite, My SAP CRM 2000, Pivotal, Salesforce.com, Salesnet, and Siebel OnDemand. Each solution currently offers various levels of functionality and support for the sale teams. Some offer easy integration by third parties that

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Hosted solutions can be used to introduce a consistent sales process throughout an organization.

(CRM...Continued from page 15)

Vendor Products	Opportunity/	Sales Cycle	Executive/	Contacts	Account/
Team	Channels	Sales	Management		Miller Heiman
Strategic Selling	Conceptual	Selling	Selling	To	Vito
Large Account	Management	Process	Channel	Project	Manager
Managers	Coaching for	Strategic	Selling		Holden
Power-Based	Selling	Power-Based	Relationship	Team Account Planning	
Power-Based	Management		Siebel MCS	(On Target)	Target Account
Selling	Executive	Selling	Enterprise	Selling	Process
CHAMP	MTAS		Huthwaite	SPIN Selling	
Major Account Strategies	Effective Partnering Relationships	Managing	Major Sales		Sales Performance International
Solution Selling				Solution Selling Managers	
The Complex Sale	Controlling the Complex Sale		Total Enterprise Account Management		Coaching the Complex Sales
Value Vision		Value Selling			

Figure 1. Process Precedes Technology—Methodology/Process Types

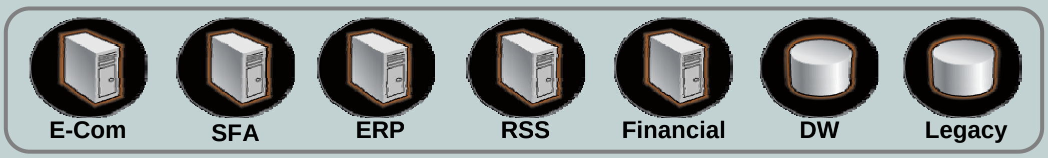

Figure 2. Available CRM/SFA Tools

enable sales teams to really reap the benefits that CRM/SFA has been promising…but not delivering. Some of the sales methodology vendors, like Millar Heiman, have started integrating their offering into hosted solutions. This integration by Miller Heiman includes strategic selling, conceptual selling, and large account management process methodologies that enables the sales teams to strengthen their approach and improve their close rates. In addition, these types of solutions can be used to introduce a consistent sales process throughout an organization. They also help in identifying strengths and weaknesses inherent in every sales force. Then, they can help ensure that cultural imperatives are shared through a range of training programmers.

Sales Tools

The sales teams want tools that can accelerate their ability to see and close more customers. Instead of tools to close sales, their management gave them administrative overhead. Instead of using customer analytics to identify opportunities, they used them to measure successes or failures—and not very effectively. Newer tools available in-house can make all the difference. These tools are integrated with SFA systems to offer functionality and benefits (branch, phone, e-mail, web, wireless, kiosk, partners, other). Recently, I came across a particular offering that adds considerable value in a web environment sale or a face-to-face sale by identifying with sales configuration, quote management, proposal generation, order management, and interactive selling.

Products

There are a number of new products that are changing the way SFA operates. These products are focusing on the actual sales time a sales person spends with the customer in support of improved sales productivity and relationship building. Many of these products are available for in-house and on a hosted (ASP) basis.

Let Me Close a Sale

An aspect of a good SFA that always delights sales teams is receiving that piece of insightful information that helps to close sales more quickly. Many SFAs include analytics of some kind—most of which help management—but, there are elements of guided sales analytics creeping in that really can help sales be more effective. Through analyzing what has worked and what has not, the sales process can be honed (by insight gleaned from the enterprise customer knowledge infrastructure), making the one-call sale very possible.

Christopher Stahl is on the Board of APMP-NCA and a managing partner of G4I Consulting (www.govg4i.com), which specializes in improving organizations' performance by applying human aspects and benefits of relationship management in all of its forms.

"With the introduction of tools that improve sales force methods, increase productivity, and speed up the sales process, we are just beginning to see the promise of CRM/SFA become a profitable reality."

The BD-KnowledgeBase identifies practices, process elements, and tools that are generally recognized as key practices and hallmarks of the BD discipline.

The BD-KnowledgeBase helps you to gain insight into how others in your profession are solving both the big and small problems they face every day.

Welcome to the BD-KnowledgeBase™

What if you could:

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How to find what you need:

- Full "Google type" search of abstracts and artifacts.
- Search by categories of metadata such as BD process phase, BD-CMM data, proposal manager competency, market, industry, and geography.
- Complete instructions are available on the web site.

Background

APMP, in collaboration with the BD-Institute, has created a body of knowledge for APMP members. The BD-KnowledgeBase™ identifies practices, process elements, and tools that are generally recognized as key practices and hallmarks of the business development discipline. It provides:

- Managed resource for the key practices within the business development profession
- Foundation of facts and competencies for certification.
- Reference guide with practical applications for the BD-CMM model

The BD-KnowledgeBase was introduced to members at the 2006 Annual Conference in Savannah, GA. This "jump-start" version was built from readily available sources such as the *Journal of the Association of Proposal Management Professional, APMP Perspective,* and US, UK, and regional conference presentations.

Information included it the KnowledgeBase™ met three criteria.

1. Be considered useful to APMP members and other BD professionals
2. Represent and support BD-CMM key practices
3. Complement the APMP Certification Syllabus.

For more information contact Charlie Divine, Chairman of the BD-KnowledgeBase™ Working Group, at cdivine@bd-institute.org.

NCA Job Board

As an added value to our members, APMP-NCA has expanded the posting timeframe of our job board listings. Job postings now run on the board for 90 days. The price per posting is $60. Check out *www.apmp-nca.org/redesign/jobs/applicantresults.cfm*.

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Proposal Manager
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Proposal Writer
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Like any oral presentation, preparing your PPIP responses in advance allows you to shine.

(President's Corner...Continued from page 1)

Now that I had completed the drive through the *valley of self assessment*, it was time to accelerate into the final part of the test drive. The Professional Level consists of three parts: a professional reference that can vouch for your behavior and attitude; completion of a Proposal Professional Impact Paper (PPIQ); and participation in a 45-minute panel discussion. The discussion is a forum where you present and defend your PPIQ, much like a thesis in graduate school.

While I have no information regarding the contacting of the reference, I can attest that the PPIQ is time consuming, as I spent at least five full nights planning, writing, and editing before it was ready for submittal. The PPIQ has two parts: documentation of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) through earning Continuing Educational Units (CEUs) and demonstration and evidence of an example of *impact* in the proposals environment. The PPIQ is submitted on pre-populated MS PowerPoint slides provided by APMP.

Pulling together the CPD information was not difficult. You need to show that you have completed a minimum of 40 CEUs during the past two years, which isn't very hard to demonstrate. For example, writing an article published in NCA's Executive Summary newsletter earns 10 CEUs, attending an NCA Roundtable presentation earns 5 CEUs, and attending NCA's Professional Day conference earns you 10 CEUs. All of this is explained in APMP's Continuing Professional Development Guidelines for the APMP Accreditation Program.

The PPIQ is time consuming—I spent at least five full nights planning, writing, and editing before it was ready for submittal.

The second part of the PPIP is very challenging, and you need to think about it long before you get to the stage of actually writing about it. You need to demonstrate your claim that you have made a significant impact in the proposal profession. "Impact" here means that "you have made a significant difference, in real terms, to the success of your own or your customer's organization, as a direct result of your application of Proposal Professional skills." Be forewarned, however, because "routinely carrying out day-to-day activities will not usually meet the requirements for Impact." So, just performing your day job is unlikely to meet the standard.

From the time I completed the Practitioner Level accreditation I was thinking of a topic where I had a significant impact in the proposal profession. I hadn't developed another color review in the rainbow review process, nor had I discovered some new way of curing "incumbentitus." But after thinking about it for a long time, I had helped the NCA in its evolution as a chapter, so that became the focus of the Impact section of my PPIP.

After submitting my PPIP and $950 fee (this varies due to exchange rates between the dollar and the British pound), a member of the panel established a time for the presentation of my PPIP. I was given a three-day advance notice, and we arranged for a mutually-agreeable time for a phone conference.

A list of potential questions that might be presented is available at the accreditation Web site. I spent several hours reviewing the questions and developing responses.

Finally, I presented my PPIP to a two-person panel via a conference call. Following my PPIP presentation document, I explained how I met the CPE requirement by specifically reviewing the CEUs I earned. The panel agreed that I met the requirement.

Next, I presented the impact section of my PPIP explaining how my efforts contributed to making an impact to the profession. The panel asked about 10 questions, some of which were from the accreditation Web site. Like any oral presentation, preparing your responses in advance allows you to shine.

The two panelist-reviewers ended the call to discuss my work. We reconnected about 20 minutes later, and they announced that I had met the standards for Professional Level certification. My Professional Proposal Manager (PPM) certification arrived through the mail about three weeks later.

In retrospect, I'm pretty positive about the accreditation program. A few months after receiving PPM designation, I was recruited by a large Fortune 100 company. The interviewers were interested in my PPM certification and wanted to know about it. This opened the way for me to explain how the accreditation program allowed me to demonstrate my professional qualifications to myself and to others. At the least, you can tell your continuing education story and how you keep up with changes in the profession.

I believe APMP certification helps to differentiate you from others in the capture and proposal field. After a year of "test driving" the accreditation program, my recommendation is to give it a try. It might prove to be a key driving force in your career.

Make your next strategic move—to APMP-NCA. Membership in our Chapter is free with your paid APMP membership.

How Do I Join the NCA Chapter?

It's easy to join the National Capital Area (NCA) Chapter, and it's free. If you are just joining APMP (www.apmp.org/siteSpecific/customer/register_accountData.aspx), simply note on the APMP application that you wish to affiliate with the NCA Chapter. That's all you need to do—APMP will provide your information to NCA, and we will include you in our mailings.

If you are currently an APMP member and want to join the NCA Chapter, simply go to www.apmpnca.org/affiliate.html and complete the online form.

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Executive Summary

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2007 Publication Schedule

Issue	Artwork/Payment Due
Winter, by 11/1/07	10/2/07

Send all proposal/business development-related advertisement submissions to Beth Wingate, Editor, *beth@apmpnca.org* (artwork only) and Lou Robinson, Treasurer, *lou@apmpnca.org* (copy of artwork and payment details or request for a PayPal invoice for on-line payment).

Payment must be received via check made payable to "APMP-NCA" at APMP-NCA, PO Box 3063, McLean, VA 22103-3063 or via PayPal (contact Lou Robinson to have a PayPal link set up for you) by the advertisement submission deadline for the advertisement to appear in that corresponding issue. Late submissions will appear in the following issue of the *Executive Summary*.

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

APMP-NCA's Mission

Our Chapter's Mission is to provide our members with information and opportunities to improve their professional performance and advance their careers in Proposal and Acquisition Management.

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APMP-NCA Board of Directors Meetings Open to Members

The Board of Directors for APMP NCA meets the first Tuesday of every month. Every other meeting is a virtual meeting-telephone conference. These meetings are open, and APMP members may attend.

Anyone interested in the topic is invited to attend our meetings. You do not have to be an APMP member or even a proposal specialist to attend an NCA Roundtable. If you are interested in proposals, business development, and professional development, we'd like for you to join us!

Mark Your Calendar for 2007 APMP-NCA Events

September 19	Roundtable
October 16	Professional Day (held at Northrop Grumman, 12900 Federal Systems Park Dr., Fairfax, VA, check-in begins at 8:00 a.m.)
November 14	Roundtable

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