

GOVERNMENT & COMMERCIAL PROPOSALS  
PROPOSAL BEST PRACTICES  
PROPOSAL INDUSTRY NEWS  
PROPOSAL TIPS, TRICKS, & SECRETS

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

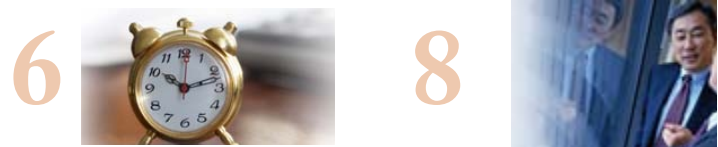
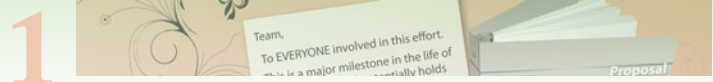
# EXECUTIVE Summary

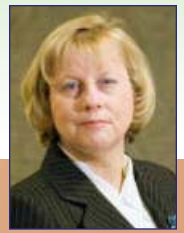
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by Brenda Crist

# It's Not Over Until It's Over



Team,  
 To EVERYONE involved in this effort. This is a major milestone in the life of our company, and potentially holds one of the keys to our growth in the coming years.  
 We thank you for the time you spent working on this, for the time you spent away from your families, and for the time you spent with many others collaborating on this project. Here is to you!

*Brenda Crist*

**WIN!**

Just because you delivered the proposal on time to the right address, and got a receipt, there are more strategic proposal wrap-up activities. This article describes everything that happens after the proposal is delivered. It covers how to develop a Final Proposal Revision (FPR) for the government, acquire useful information from the government's debrief, and support the company's decision to protest a bid.

## Thank You Note

As soon as the proposal is delivered, the wrap-up phase begins. Start the phase by writing thank you emails to all the people who participated in the proposal's development, production, and delivery. Most proposal teams often go far beyond the call of duty to deliver a high quality product, so let them know the proposal was successfully delivered and recognize their efforts.

## Proposal Archival

The Proposal Manager's next task is to properly archive softcopy proposal files, RFP and amendments, and any hardcopy materials. Start by creating PDF versions of the proposal files delivered to the client, as well as your delivery receipt. Save the PDF files and the original source files (Word, Excel, graphics, drawings, etc.) to your knowledgebase or central repository. Copy your files to a clearly marked directory such as "Proposal Name Final Delivery MM\_DD\_YYYY."

Although the final proposal may be delivered, we don't recommend deleting the previous proposal versions. Continue to maintain baselines of any background, RFP or review team documents. You may need to access these documents at a later date. These documents will be used during the lessons learned review. Do delete any working files that are redundant or no

longer necessary for the bid to save space and avoid version confusion. A side benefit of maintaining your files in well-organized baselines is you can demonstrate you are following a defined document management process, which is helpful in achieving industry certifications, such as ISO 9001.

To protect the integrity of your files, implement a Security Plan defining access to the documents and their level of authority to modify, move or delete the documents. Work with the system/security administrator to implement the plan. Consider only making PDF file versions available to appropriate staff members and limit access to original source files to proposal management or executive staff members with a "need to change".

## Cataloging Files

How many times have you said, "I remember writing that, now where did I put it?"

## It's Not Over Until It's Over

Know where copy is by setting up a catalog system for softcopy proposal files, supporting materials, and hardcopy materials. A collaboration tool, such as Microsoft SharePoint, is terrific for its searching capability and will greatly assist in efficiently retrieving the information needed.

### Shredding/Decomposing Content

The term “shredding or decomposing” literally means to cut valuable information out of old proposals and insert them in a knowledgebase, so the information can be used at a later date to create new proposals. Implement a standard operating procedure (SOP) or checklists for shredding proposals identifying the type of information you want to retain. Try to shred proposals within 72 hours of delivery, so your associates can quickly benefit from the information you just collected.

### Respond to Requests for Information

To make an award, the Contracting Officer may want to clarify his/her understanding of your business or technical volume. In this case, the Contracting Officer will send a list of questions and instructions for responding to them. Common questions Contracting Officers ask include:

- Are the key personnel still available?
- Can you clarify the relationship between the prime and the subcontractor?
- Is this your final price?
- Can we modify a term or condition?

The Contracting Officer may also ask

specific questions about the technical or management approach.

### Provide Information for Negotiations

If the Contracting Officer wants to enter into negotiations, the Proposal Manager should be ready to quickly provide background or supplementary information needed to conclude legal, price, or technical negotiations.

- Legal negotiations could require information about the change in a teaming partner, the change of a teaming partner's small business status, contract terms and conditions, or the explanation of certain clauses.
- Technical negotiations could

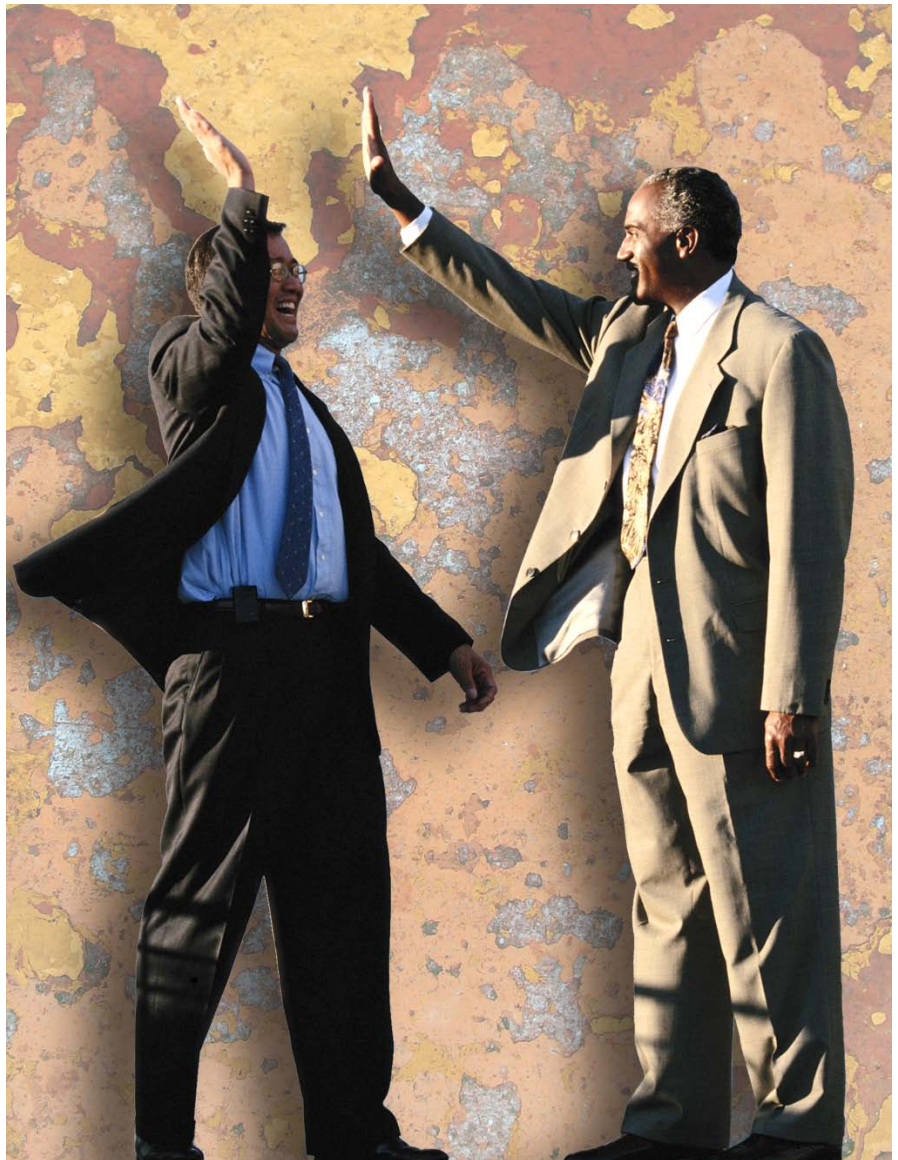
require the background information needed to clarify work plans, schedules, or staffing.

- Price negotiations could require various financial information, such as information about indirect rates, compensation plans, or incentives/disincentives.

Negotiations are performed during a short timeframe, so be sure the information can be quickly located to facilitate negotiations.

### Generate a Final Proposal Revision (FPR)

A final proposal with revisions may be required to finalize the award decision. Continue to follow proposal best practices when responding to



the request for clarification. Hold a small kick-off meeting among the proposal team to review the revisions to the final proposal. If you do not understand the Contracting Officer's question, do not hesitate to ask for a clarification. The Contracting Officer does not have an obligation to respond, but any information you obtain may help the bid. As time permits, outline or storyboard your response and review it with senior executives. Clarification questions are not usually paged limited so use the space to nail your response by giving clear and complete answers to the Contracting Officer's questions. Once you have completed a draft, hold a formal review of your response.

The Contract Officer's instructions may ask you to simply respond to the listed questions, submit proposal change pages, or submit a new proposal. Follow these instructions carefully and completely and provide an updated compliance matrix, if needed, to show where the changes were made. Contracting Officers usually limit their questions to offerors in the competitive range; it is important to follow their instructions precisely, and listen for any clues or intent that may help you deliver the winning bid.

### Receive Award Notice

Congratulations, you won! The Contracting Officer will call and email documents to indicate you won. Immediately contact the supporting company executives, and send a notice out to the team to announce the award was made and any details about the award you may be able to share. Also, save a copy of the award notification letter from the Contracting Officer and update your Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

system with information about the award.

If you lost, immediately contact the supporting company executives, and send a notice out to the team to announce the award was made to another company along with their winning price. Send an email out to the proposal team inviting them to a consolation party.

### Attend Debrief

Whether you win or lose, ask the Contracting Officer for a debrief in person. According to Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 15.505, an offeror must request a debrief within three days after the date on which that offeror has received notification of contract award. The debrief should occur within five days of the request but, in some case, the Contracting Officer may not be required to provide a debrief. If you miss the three-day deadline, you waive your right to a debrief. The Contracting Officer may provide the debriefings orally, in writing, or by any other acceptable method, but in person is always best. In preparation for the debrief, make a list of questions to ask the Contracting Officer.

### Assist with Protests

To proactively avoid a potential protest, examine the RFP when it is first released. Determine if there are ambiguities, extremely restrictive/anti-competitive language, a very short response time, or other issues that may lead to a protest, and bring the issues to the attention of the Contracting Officer. In our experience, Contracting Officers prefer to answer questions in the pre-award phase rather than process a bid protest later.

If, after you have delivered your proposal and your company has reason to believe that the contract has been awarded improperly, unfairly, or it has been denied an opportunity to fairly compete, the Capture and Proposal Managers might be called upon to assist with a bid protest or civil lawsuit.

### Conduct Lessons Learned Review

After delivering a proposal, conduct a Lessons Learned Review and document your findings while they are still fresh in your memory. This is a best practice, but hard to implement with demanding capture and proposal development schedules. The alternative is skipping the meeting and repeating the same mistakes. If the purpose of the lessons learned meeting is process improvement, then all future proposals could benefit from the results. Consider adding to the lessons learned after other important milestones in the wrap-up phase, like the final proposal revision, negotiations, debrief, and protest.

Brenda Crist has 25 years of experience providing capture, proposal, and program management support for information technology companies serving the Federal market. She is currently the Managing Director, Strategic Solutions at the Lohfeld Consulting Group. Prior to becoming a full-time proposal professional, Ms. Crist served as a Group Manager for OAO Corporation and Project Manager for Harris Corporation. She has provided system, application, and network management solutions for civilian and military clients. She is the President of the APMP National Capital Area Chapter and was a speaker at the APMP National Conference in June 2009. She holds a Masters Degree in Public Administration from American University and is ITIL and PPM.APMP certified.



# Ask the Graphics Guru

At my company we have endless debates about color. What are the best colors to use and why?

by Mike Parkinson



**The answer is simple if you follow the steps below.**

## Step 1: Determine your goal

If your goal is to ramp up sales, use your customer's colors (even if they are downright ugly). Your customer trusts that which is familiar and wants to see themselves in your graphics.

If your goal is to increase mindshare and market your company, use your company's colors. Consistent exposure to your company's colors will, in time, breed trust. (Think branding.)

If you want to play it safe, use blues and greens. Most Western cultures vote blue and green as the most appealing colors. With that in mind, you want to know your customer and their culture. For example, the color green is associated with luck in the Middle East but is connected with death in South America. Know what each color means to your customer when you choose alternate color schemes.

Still need help? Here are some free online palette tools that aid in color selection:

- <http://colorshemesigner.com>
- <http://kuler.adobe.com>
- <http://www.degraeve.com/color-palette>

## Step 2: Know basic color theory

Ignoring the best practices associated with color results in ugly, illegible or confusing proposals—guaranteed. Color is the first thing people see when they look at your

proposal and helps or hinders your win rate. Below are the color theory basics you should know.

Color consists of three variables:

- Hue – where the color appears on the color wheel (blue vs. yellow)
- Saturation – the intensity or vibrancy of the color (neon vs. pastel)
- Value – the lightness or darkness of the color (adding black to darken your color or white to lighten your color)

To simplify things, there are two color “families” of which to be aware:

- Analogous – colors that appear next to one another on the color wheel like blue, green, and yellow
- Complementary – colors across from one another on the color wheel like red and green

Avoid using complementary colors. Complementary colors—for example, red and green or blue and orange—vibrate when next to one another or placed over one another, such as orange text on a blue box. You'll give your readers a headache! Analogous colors are a better choice when developing your color palette. It is safer to use two or three analogous colors with multiple shades (or tints) of each. The colors you choose do not have to be analogous, but when choosing your colors make sure they work well together (are harmonious when side-by-side). Add additional colors to your palette, but save these colors for special circumstances. For example, you might choose blue



as your primary color and green as your secondary color with various shades of each. You could then use their complementary color of yellow or orange to highlight special boxes or features.

When it is time to set up your template avoid the following:

- Strong gradients. It is difficult to read overlapping content.
- “Cheesy” effects (strong bevels, bright highlights, dark shadows, and other “fancy” effects). It looks amateurish and undermines your company’s professionalism.

- Large color jumps in your palette (dark blue to light blue with no options in between). Large color jumps limit your options.

### Step 3: Be flexible

Printers, monitors, projectors, and different paper styles rarely show a single color consistently. Your audience will not have a point of comparison, so the color is correct as far as they are concerned. As long as you follow steps one and two, the eccentricities associated with color display are negligible. Your graphics will be cleaner, more attractive, and more consistent, and your readers will want to read your proposal more closely.

Mike Parkinson is an internationally recognized visual communications expert and APMP Fellow. He is a partner at 24 Hour Company ([www.24hrco.com](http://www.24hrco.com)) specializing in bid-winning proposal graphics. His Billion Dollar Graphics web site ([www.BillionDollarGraphics.com](http://www.BillionDollarGraphics.com)) and Billion Dollar Business Graphics book share best practices and helpful tools with proposal professionals. Contact Mike at [mike@24hrco.com](mailto:mike@24hrco.com) or call 703-533-7209.



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# 2011 Proposal Basics Boot Camp

by Alex Brown



**4:36 PM: There are no voices, other than the occasional groan and whimper that comes from a cubicle on your floor; the air is filled with the sound of keystrokes and the ticking of the clock. On the white board of the war room, written in red are the words that hold you in an icy grip: "Pens down today COB (12:00 AM)!"**

**Y**ou awaken at your desk in a stir, laptop still on. Someone has left a post-it note on your forehead asking you to keep it down. You breathe a sigh of relief until the realization hits: the deadline is even closer, the pressure is palpable, and you got a long road to finishing your section. Most of us in this profession have, at one time, felt close to this person.

Many things can cause this level of anxiety (we are, of course, talking about work-related panic attacks, not your fear of furry caterpillars or spiders), but some are within your control. At work, one of the greatest stress inducers is your ability to perform. Good news is that you don't have to undergo hypnosis or other therapy to get a cure. The sure-fire method to give you confidence and help you sail through the hardest of professional challenges is education. Do you know exactly what you need to know to do your job in the best and most efficient way? This is where APMP Boot Camp can help.

Three years ago, APMP-NCA created the Proposal Basics Boot Camp since there are many in our profession who need basic instruction on how to perform at an optimal level. It has helped hundreds gain the necessary skills and knowledge. Each year the

Boot Camp has been sold out weeks before the event.

This year will be no different; Boot Camp is on again, with a whole-day educational event specifically targeting new proposal professionals and those who could benefit from a refresher. The format has changed, however, with group-wide sessions (rather than multiple tracks) planned for the morning. They will set a big picture context for the role of proposals in the business development lifecycle. Keynote morning sessions will feature an overview of the Business Development Lifecycle by Steve Shipley from Shipley Associates; instructions on reading the RFP and identifying Federal Acquisition Regulations presented by Shlomo Katz from Brown Rudnick LLP and Judy Robinson; and an interactive session on creating graphics that will make it easier for evaluators to understand your proposal solution, presented by Mike Parkinson from 24 Hour Company.

In the afternoon, attendees will choose specific sessions tailored toward skills improvement in their

functional areas. Afternoon topics, organized into tracks, include training on effective proposal planning presented by Olessia Smotrova-Taylor from OST Global Solutions; the basics of proposal writing by Gary Everett from OCI; session on compliance by Harriet Rabenovets from Booz Allen Hamilton; introduction to proposal coordination by Joe Salgado from Red Team Consulting; and APMP Accreditation session by Brenda Crist from Lohfeld Consulting.

The day's events will conclude with a panel session on "25 Things I Wish I Had Known," providing an invaluable opportunity for attendees to hear candid stories from proposal veterans and to learn from the experts how to avoid rookie mistakes.

Ros Angus from Proposal Development Consultants (PDC), the Publicity Chair this year, said: "We look forward to presenting an event that will educate, entertain and empower those that attend. We want to make sure the attendees walk away with a strong foundation that can be applied right away."

Alex Brown is the Business Development Services Lead and Training Director for OST Global Solutions ([www.ostglobalsolutions.com](http://www.ostglobalsolutions.com)) —a Maryland business development solutions company specialized in helping businesses grow in the Federal market. He is also the Marketing and Web Chairperson of the APMP-NCA chapter. If you have any questions about Marketing or the [apmpnca.org](http://apmpnca.org) Website, contact Alex at [abrown@ostglobalsolutions.com](mailto:abrown@ostglobalsolutions.com) or call 301-356-2909.

**Build a solid foundation for success in one  
knowledge-packed day!**

## **Join us for APMP-NCA's Proposal Basics Boot Camp**

**April 11, 2011 — 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM**

### **A Generous Morning of Keynote Sessions**

- Business Development Lifecycle (Steve Shipley), an introduction
- How to Read an RFP (Shlomo Katz and Judy Robinson), with tips on identifying federal acquisitions regulations
- “Proposal Pictionary” (Mike Parkinson), an interactive session on creating graphics to make it easier for evaluators to understand your proposal solution

**Fairview Park Marriott,  
Falls Church, Virginia**

**APMP Members: \$175,  
Nonmembers: \$225**

If you're not an APMP member yet, now is the best time to join. With event discounts alone, you'll save more than enough money to pay for your annual dues.

### **An Afternoon of Electives with Your Choice of Tracks**

- Track one focuses on fundamentals
- Track two focuses compliance and accreditation

Hotel rooms are available at a special event rate through March 28, 2011. Please contact the Fairview Park Marriott directly and mention APMP Boot Camp.

#### **Registration Options and Policies**

Register online with a credit card by Monday April 4, or by mail with a check received by APMP-NCA by Thursday March 31. Registration confirmations will be issued only after receiving payment in advance by credit card or check. To pay the discounted member rate, please record your APMP member ID number on the online registration form. To look up your ID number, go to:

**<http://www.apmp.org/siteSpecific/customer/memberSearch.aspx>**

If you did not give APMP permission to display your member information, go to [www.apmp.org](http://www.apmp.org) and login as a member. Then click on “View Account Detail,” then “Edit Account Information.” Your ID number will show at the top of your account edit page. Cancellation requests must be made via email to [bootcamp@apmp-nca.org](mailto:bootcamp@apmp-nca.org) no later than 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday April 6 to receive a registration fee refund.







# Are Win Rates a Valuable Measure of Success?

by Chris Simmons

Win rates are an established best practice to measure business success. The escalating grade inflation of win rates, however (in many cases exceeding 90 percent), casts significant doubt on their usefulness as a meaningful measure.

**H**ow valuable is this measure of success and how do we bring the skyrocketing win rates back down to earth?

When someone wants to get an idea of how their business, division, proposal center, employee, or consultant is doing, they usually ask the simple question: “What’s your win rate?” The answer is often made up, fudged, or otherwise artificially inflated to impress the audience with our “winning” ways.

## How are win rates calculated?

Win rates are typically expressed as a percentage and are calculated in one of two ways:

### Number of wins

This method compares the number of proposal “wins” to the number of total proposals. For example, if a contractor submitted 10 proposals and won 3 proposals—**Win rate = 30% (3 wins/10 proposals x 100 percent)**

### Amount of win revenue

This method compares the amount of proposal revenue “won” to the total amount of proposal revenue bid. For example, if a contractor submitted

proposals valued at \$1,000,000 and won \$300,000 of new business—**Win rate = 30% (\$300,000 won/\$1,000,000 bid x 100 percent)**

## What’s a good win rate?

The answer to this question largely depends on the context of the question and who you ask. Win rates can be based on a number of different variables and are often calculated in self-serving ways to suit specific objectives. For this reason, “good” win rates can vary significantly.

Most companies don’t publish win rates for public consumption but generally achieve win rates between 10 and 75 percent with an industry average of 33 percent. Consulting companies are notorious for publishing high win rates as a potential discriminator. Most published win rates for these value-added service companies are between 60 and 95 percent.

Two of the largest and most recognized consulting companies in the proposal industry have win rates of 82 percent and 85 percent, respectively. A large Washington, D.C., company touts an ironically well-positioned win rate of 83 percent, while a small firm

in the area boasts an unbelievable 94 percent win rate. High-level research reveals that at least one of these companies hasn’t updated their published win rate for at least six years!

“Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.” —Albert Einstein

## The problem with win rates

Win rates used for marketing, sales or other external publicity are rarely audited and virtually impossible to verify. Human nature suggests that these win rates are largely inflated or at least “gamed” to put the best possible spin on the numbers. Consider what one local win rate authority and colleague had to say about win rates:

“Firms boasting a high win rate have long ago given up on trying to compute anything, and instead are just pulling a number out of the air. These companies have no fear that anyone would ever ask them to substantiate the number. If they did, the company would conveniently say they can’t disclose their clients. It is just a game of liar’s poker. The lesson learned

here is as a consumer, if you are naive enough to believe a high win rate, then you deserve to be conned —and you will.”

Here’s an extreme example of how the win rate game might be played.

Con-Sulting Company. A large consulting company is hired to provide capture and proposal management services for a well-known Fortune 500 firm. During a 12-month period Con-Sulting supports 10 proposals for this firm. Two of these proposals result in new business wins.

The 20 percent win rate (2 wins/10 proposals x 100%) drags down Con-Sulting Company’s overall win rate of 85 percent calculated across their other customers. So, Con-Sulting decides to not count the eight losses, and instead, calculates a 100 percent win rate (2 wins/2 proposals x 100%) using the following justification:

- Did not participate in pre-RFP capture activities (2 bids)
- Won the RFI down-select, but lost the subsequent RFP bid (1 bid)
- Recommended “no-bid” was rejected (3 bids)
- Was not involved in orals preparation and coaching after down-select (1 bid)
- Recommended price-to-win analysis was not conducted (1 bid)

If you’re not convinced that win rate calculations are suspect when used for marketing or other external purposes, think about this. Most proposal experts agree that approximately 80 percent of awards are made to the lowest price bidder. If Con-Sulting Company does not provide strategic pricing services for the bids they support, their “win rate” only really applies to the 20 percent of the bids that were awarded independent of price.

### How can I make win rates work for me?

Despite the apparent challenges and diminishing value of win rates as a marketing metric, a strong case can be made for using win rates for other purposes. The next article in this series discusses how to bring skyrocketing win rates back down to earth to provide a valuable measuring stick for growth, accountability, and business success.

Chris Simmons is the founder and principal member of Rainmakerz consulting—a business development solutions company specializing in all aspects of proposal development. He is also the Vice President of the local APMP chapter in the greater Washington, DC area. *Still confused or looking for more detailed suggestions?* Take time now to send feedback, comments, or questions about this or other challenging proposal issues to Chris at [chris@rainmakerz.biz](mailto:chris@rainmakerz.biz) or 202-255-2355. Visit [www.rainmakerz.biz](http://www.rainmakerz.biz).

"I count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who conquers his enemies; for the hardest victory is the victory over self." – Aristotle

## Fun Fact

Gustave Eiffel, the designer of the Eiffel Tower (the one in Paris, France), enjoyed a successful career as an architect despite having dyslexia and a paralyzing fear of heights.

Chances are your SMEs do not have dyslexia (or at least not a bad one), so do not be afraid to lean into them to get what you need to make your proposal shine. Consider this a public service so they don’t develop the fear of heights (as you won’t reach the boiling point and hang them off the side of the building upside down).



back row: David Shaw, Colleen Jolly, Nancy Kessler, Chris Simmons, Eric Schwarz, Briana Coleman, Ros Angus, Hélène Courard, Maryann Lesnick; middle row: Noelle Rzasa, Brenda Crist; front row: Michael Scruggs, Alex Brown, Olessia Smorrava-Taylor

## APMP-NCA Slate of Directors for 2011

by Alex Brown

**The votes have been counted and the results are in (no pollsters were threatened or harmed in the process). This year we have had a few changes in the APMP-NCA Board of Directors, with new members and members that have moved seats.**

The votes have been counted and the results are in (no pollsters were threatened or harmed in the process). This year we have had a few changes in the APMP-NCA Board of Directors, with new members and members that have moved seats.

This group is a strong representation of our member base. We have members from large companies and small businesses; members who produce proposals for their companies; and companies that support those who do with personnel, tools, and training.

This is an important year for the National Capital Area (NCA). We are again developing programs to help educate our member base, and are creating ways to do this in a streamlined process that will position NCA again as the leading chapter within the Association of Proposal Manager Professionals (APMP).

Following is a short bio for each of the board members. Make sure you say hello at an event or email us. We are working toward serving you and are always ready to answer questions, or talk with you about volunteer opportunities.

### Executive Board Biographies

#### President, Brenda Crist, PPM.APMP

Brenda Crist has 26 years of experience providing capture, proposal, and program management support for information technology companies serving the Federal market. She is currently the Managing Director, Strategic Solutions at the Lohfeld Consulting Group. Prior to becoming a full-time proposal professional, she served as a Group Manager for OAO Corporation and Project Manager for Harris Corporation. She has provided system, application, and network



management solutions for civilian and military clients. She is the President of the APMP National Capital Area Chapter and was a speaker at the APMP National Conference in June 2009. Brenda holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration from American University and is ITIL and PPM.APMP certified.



#### **Vice President, Chris Simmons**

Chris is the current NCA Vice President and has been on the NCA board since 2007 (previously serving as the Membership Committee Chair). He has been instrumental in helping to grow local chapter membership and support a wide variety of programs and initiatives across the chapter.

He is regular contributor to the NCA eZine, and a contributing author to the APMP Journal. Chris regularly presents at NCA events including Boot Camp, Roundtable, and the Annual Conference events. He also presented at the APMP International Conference (2009) and consistently scores in the top percentile of presenters at all of these events. He has 25 years' experience as a consultant and is the founder and principal member of Rainmakerz Consulting LLC – a business development services company specializing in all aspects of proposal development. He earned his MBA in Information Technology from the University of Massachusetts (Amherst) where he was elected MBA Program President. He also earned his BA from Boston College in Psychology.



#### **Treasurer, Eric Schwarz**

Eric has more than 17 years' experience as an analyst, program manager, and business developer, with exposure to all aspects of proposal development and management. Since 2004, he has been working as the capture/proposal manager for Information Builders' Federal Systems Group. Prior to his business development career, he served for over 13 years in the U.S. Army. Eric currently serves as the finance committee chair of the Northern Virginia chapter of AFCEA with over 7,000 members. Eric holds BA and MBA degrees. He has been an active member of APMP since September 2007 and currently serves as a Director at Large of the NCA Board of Directors.



#### **Secretary, Colleen Jolly, PPF.APMP**

Colleen Jolly, an 11 year proposal veteran, manages a global professional proposal graphic company – 24 Hour Company. Colleen is very

active in the APMP including serving as Layout Editor for the APMP Journal and regularly contributing articles. She is a frequent worldwide speaker on creative and general business topics, and has spoken at many APMP conferences. Additionally, she manages the online SIG/COI on information graphics, a joint effort between NCA and UK chapters. She holds a BA from Georgetown University, and is active in leadership roles and Board positions in arts and women's non-profit organizations, including being a South East of England Woman's Enterprise Ambassador. Colleen is an award-winning artist and business professional—most recently as a finalist for the Stevie Awards Creative Professional of the Year, 2009. Her company won entry into Inc. 5,000's Fast Growing Companies in 2007, and she has been published three times in a women's entrepreneurial calendar.

### **At Large Director Biographies Alphabetical Order**

#### **Mid Atlantic Expo Conference Chairperson, Briana Coleman**

Briana provides proposal management service to clients. She is highly skilled in proposal strategy development, proposal coordination, writing, copy editing, desktop publishing, and project management. She holds a BA in Psychology and Criminology/Criminal Justice from the University of Maryland (Cum Laude), as well as a Master's Certificate in Project Management from the George Washington University. Briana is an active member of APMP, serving as a National Capital Area Chapter (NCA) Roundtable Committee Member and chairing two Roundtable Events. She also serves on NCA's Professional Day Committee and authored the Professional Day Event Planning Guide.



#### **Boot Camp Chairperson, Noelle Rzasa AM.APMP**

She serves as the Proposal Manager and Capture Manager for Base Technologies, Inc. in McLean, VA. Noelle has over 10 years of experience providing capture, proposal, and program management support for information technology companies serving the Federal market. Noelle has broad experience in business development, and specializes in managing all aspects of the proposal development process for companies providing IT infrastructure services to Federal and commercial clients.



She is instrumental in analyzing business opportunities, managing proposal development activities, and in ensuring quality, consistency, and compliance throughout the proposal process. Noelle has served on the Committee for the APMP-NCA Boot Camp the past two years, and was a subcommittee Chair of that Committee for 2010. Noelle has been a member of the APMP NCA since 2005. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology from the State University of New York, Brockport, and is AM.APMP certified.



### **Chief Technology Officer, Michael Scruggs, MS., PPM.APMP, ITIL**

Michael Scruggs has more than 20 years of capture and proposal experience in the public sector marketplace. He currently supports both large and small IT government contractors through his company, Blue Score, LLC.

He formerly worked for Microsoft, SAIC, and other IT firms in the greater Washington, DC area. He earned his Master's and Bachelor's degrees from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. For the past 12 years, Michael has actively participated with the APMP. He joined the NCA in 2003, first serving as the corporate sponsors' program chair. He later served two terms as the chapter's president. He currently serves at the chapter's CTO. In 2007, APMP leadership awarded Mr. Scruggs the Steven Shipley Award for Best Chapter Leadership.



### **Corporate Partner Chairperson, David Shaw**

David is a knowledge management professional with 15 years of IT development and management experience, including substantial work in the legal, healthcare, and marketing industries. David has a background in full life cycle project management and engagement

management of collaborative systems. Currently he is a Managing Director at Portal Solutions where his responsibilities include architecting and delivering capture and proposal management solutions on Microsoft SharePoint. Prior to joining Portal Solutions, David was Director of IT at OCM, where he acquired extensive experience translating business objectives into functional information systems. David holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Information Systems from American University.

### **Event Logistics Chairperson, Maryann Lesnick, APM.APMP, PMP**

Maryann Lesnick serves as Vice President of Proposals for Base Technologies, Inc., in McLean, Virginia. She has over 30 years of technical, managerial, and business development experience in a diverse range of information technology areas, for federal agencies, and the private sector (public utilities and telecommunications companies). She has prepared hundreds of proposals for contracts and task orders, both written and oral, and has delivered several oral proposals. Maryann has served on the Committee for the APMP-NCA Boot Camp the past three years, and was Chair of that Committee for 2010. She is a certified Practitioner Level APMP, and also a Program Management Professional (PMP).



### **eZine Chairperson, Olessia Smotrova-Taylor**

Olessia has 16 years of professional experience in a variety of industries, focused on proposal and capture management, marketing, and communications. Her company, OST Global Solutions, Inc., specializes in full lifecycle of business development, including capture and proposal management and training. Over the course of her career, Olessia led capture and proposal teams to winning more than \$17 billion. Olessia is a prolific speaker, writer, and trainer who has authored numerous manuals for capture and proposal development. She has served as the eZine Chair for the past four years, winning the 2010 APMP Communications Award. Prior to founding OST, Olessia worked as a business developer for Raytheon and Lockheed Martin and wrote for the Financial Times of London. She has a BA in International Affairs from the University of Colorado in Boulder.



### **Marketing & Web Site Chairperson, Alex Brown**

Alex is a Business Development Services Lead and Training Director at OST Global Solutions, Inc, with 11 years of experience in the field of business development and project management. Because of OST's growth, Alex was brought on to develop new lines of business providing federal pipeline development and classroom and webinar proposal training programs ([www.ostglobalsolutions.com/training/schedule](http://www.ostglobalsolutions.com/training/schedule)). Alex's experience as a skilled relationship build-



er allows him to help clients succeed in the federal arena. Prior to the current NCA board position, he held the Corporate Partner and Networking chair positions. Prior to his work at OST, he supported Proposal Development Consultants as a Relationship Manager. At VediorNA and Ingenta, he was a Business Developer and an Information Architect/Project Manager, serving Fortune 500 clients in the Boston metro area.



**Membership Committee Chairperson, Nancy Kessler, PPF.APMP**

Nancy has 35 years of experience providing capture, proposal, and technical support for government contractors in the US and Australia. She is currently Vice President, Regional Sales Director for Shipley Associates in the Mid-Atlantic Region. Previously at Shipley she has managed the company's Process Consulting Practice and served as a process, training, and proposal consultant since July, 2000. Prior to joining Shipley, she was a business process consultant to NASA Headquarters for TRW, a proposal manager for TRW and BDM, and a database administrator, SW-CMM trainer, and help desk manager for BDM and Grumman Aerospace. She is a fellow of APMP, certified at the Professional level, has presented at numerous APMP International Conferences, and holds a M.S. in Technology Management from the University of Maryland.



**Networking Chairperson, Ros Angus**

Ros serves as Director of Business Development with Proposal Development Consultants, LLC. She has more than 12 years' combined executive search and contingent staffing and management

experience, advising Fortune 500 companies and federal government contractors to provide tailored human capital solutions. She is actively involved with APMP and served most recently as a member on the 2010 Boot Camp planning committee.

**Speaker Series Chairperson, H  l  ne Courard**

H  l  ne is the Managing Director of the Proposal Process and Infrastructure Solutions Division, H  l  ne works with clients to develop and implement defined, repeatable, managed, measured, and optimized proposal infrastructures and processes. H  l  ne brings over 11 years' experience in capture and proposal infrastructure and proposal operations to assist clients in raising their win probability and reducing effort required to create winning proposals. Prior to joining Lohfeld Consulting Group, H  l  ne spent over 8 years within CSC's Defense Group in various roles, including establishing and running two Proposal Operations teams—at the Division and Group levels—within the organization. H  l  ne is an active member of the APMP-NCA Chapter Roundtable Committee (2008-2010) and has attained her Foundational Accreditation with APMP. H  l  ne has a bachelor's degree from Saint Joseph's University and a law degree from Santa Clara University School of Law.



## Fun Facts

- The average American uses seven trees a year in paper, wood, and other products made from trees. This amounts to about 2,000,000,000 trees per year!
- Approximately 1 billion trees worth of paper are thrown away every year in the U.S.
- Americans use 85,000,000 tons of paper a year; about 680 pounds per person.

As proposal specialists, we should be aware of the negative impact on our environment when we print extraneous copies of proposals.

<http://www.recycling-revolution.com/recycling-facts.html>



by Olessia Smotrova-Taylor

## Proposal Lessons from an Aerial Forest Adventure Park

A week ago I invited a very fit and adventurous girlfriend of mine (whom my husband says reminds him of Angelina Jolie) to join me in climbing in the largest aerial forest adventure park in North America. If you are wondering what an Aerial Forest park is, it's a gigantic obstacle course in the tree tops consisting of platforms connected by bridges in various configurations of cable, wood, rope, and zip lines. You get to walk on tight ropes, beams, and other rickety contraptions several stories up in the air, climb up wiggly rope ladders, and swing between trees Tarzan style. It requires balance, strength, and guts to defy one's fear of heights. The kicker is, unlike my girlfriend, I am in what I call a "tip-top proposal shape" - other than a couple of hours a week at a gym, my only regular physical activity is typing.

So, one sun-dappled Sunday, we buckled ourselves into safety harnesses and set off to climb. I hung onto the cables for dear life as I was teetering at a three-story height. Mixed with fear was the awe at the surreal view of tall trees with golden

leaves, crawling with people, like fairies at the Fern Gully. Desperately balancing and trying not to fall (or worse yet, lose my glasses), I kept up with my better-fit girlfriend.

It was going on two hours when we picked an even more difficult course. It was no cakewalk with a ladder hanging four stories high with nothing underneath, and a four-foot distance between steps. The ropes made it twist and turn as I struggled to swing my legs high enough while my arms were getting weaker by the minute. But there was no quitting at that point. Upward and onward was the only way out. I scaled the ladder, but it brought me to an even trickier obstacle. It was a contraption with two horizontal cables adorned with more than a dozen vertical pairs of ropes. At the end of each of those ropes dangled wooden logs, with three-inch horizontal wood stumps at the bottom. To get to the next platform, in theory I had to pull myself up on my arms on the cables and then move forward while "resting" my feet on the tiny stumps. In reality, the contraption wiggled out of control as my legs were going into splits and my

arms were aching from the strain. I struggled and pushed myself forward anyway, past the point at which my whole body shook uncontrollably and cables cut into skin. I managed to force myself almost to the end of the bridge when my muscles simply gave out. I reached the limit of my physical capabilities. As if in slow motion, my arms released and I fell.

Half a second later, to my huge relief, I realized that the harness worked. The only problem was, I still had to get out of there. I had to push past exhaustion and get back up on the contraption, climb the last few feet, and struggle up the platform. Then, I had several more obstacles to tackle before being able to make it to the ground.

The next day I felt as if a truck had run me over. My body hurt and my arms had ghastly looking cuts and bruises. Yet, I felt happy. Only Marines, Special Forces, avid athletes, and outright masochists would relate to the level of exhilaration I felt despite my injuries. I had outdone myself, and felt proud.

My adventures weren't over. The next weekend my girlfriend invited me





to do it again. I jumped at the opportunity. To my huge surprise, this time it was a different experience. I balanced easily on the beams, and even got fancy letting my arms go and walking without any assistance. I only had a couple of scary moments. And the next day, my body didn't hurt nearly as much as the first time.

As I was enjoying myself, it struck me that my experience with this aerial forest is similar to one's professional development in the proposal arena. Here are five parallels that I found:

### **1. Challenge yourself and push yourself harder to sharpen your proposal skills.**

Just like me inviting the fittest of my girlfriends to come along, have someone stronger than you set the “bar” higher and light some fire under you. Watch and make notes of how a much-respected capture or proposal manager does their work, or ask someone you respect to mentor you. Put yourself in a challenging situation by inviting upper management to your reviews, or by bringing in a powerful teammate. Do it the way it should be done and not the way you may have done it in the past. Impress everyone with your professionalism and build self-confidence by stretching yourself.

### **2. Don't stop when it gets tough – keep going.**

Do whatever you have to. The platform, or a place you can rest at, is not as far as it seems. Sometimes in developing winning proposals things get excruciatingly hard, but don't despair. Often the goal seems farther away than it actually is. You

will get that proposal done on time no matter what. Staying with it while others quit will help you prevail.

### **3. Know what's the worst that could happen, and deal with your fear.**

I was very afraid in the beginning, because I was scared to fall. After I actually fell and knew that the harness would catch me, I had less fear. I lived through my fear and I was OK at the end. In proposals, you can do all kinds of things that could be an equivalent of falling - submitting a proposal late; making a crucial compliance mistake; not doing a good enough job and losing; and so on. This is why you build some contingency into your schedule no matter how tight it may be, and don't skip the reviews where others triple-check your work - it's an equivalent of a harness. Regardless, falling may feel awful while it happens, but the truth is - once it happens to you and you survive - you actually get tougher, more dangerous, more competitive. It liberates you to play harder and take the precautions better than anyone who has never experienced it first hand - even the people who have been wildly successful.

### **4. It gets easier the more you do it.**

The first time I went climbing, I was awkward, working way harder than I had to. The second time I was shocked at how much easier it got, mentally and physically. The obstacles were familiar, and I already had the faith that I could get through them. Suddenly I had better balance and greater strength. I also learned strategies and shortcuts on how to get things done, and got more efficient.



It's the same with proposals - not knowing what's ahead is harder whenever you are doing something for the first time: putting together a technical solution while you have a shortage of subject matter experts, or going after a "must-win" opportunity that's a "make or break" of your company; or just trying to finish a short-fuse proposal. Now that you know, and you have the confidence that you can deal with whatever comes up, it gets much easier.

### 5. Don't skip instruction, no matter how much you believe you know.

The first time I was there, I went through a safety brief, so I thought I didn't need to pay attention in the safety brief the second time. I

kept half an ear open anyway, and to my surprise, I learned something completely new from a different instructor. As a result, I became more efficient at working with my safety gear, and learned a few more tricks that gave me greater confidence. Same with capture and proposal development - keep up your professional training. Even if you have 20 years of experience, there are always tricks that you can pick up that will make you better and faster. Remember that the technology continues to change, and so do your customers. You need to keep up with these trends and changes or risk getting "out of proposal shape." Just like remaining physically fit, staying on top of your game requires more than a few hours a week of exercising your fingers.

#### Note From the Editor:

Please take a few minutes and let me know:

What keeps you up at night as a proposal professional?

What articles and tips would you like to see in this Executive Summary?

Our Executive Summary team will be happy to get your feedback. I can be reached at [Olessia@apmpnca.org](mailto:Olessia@apmpnca.org) or at 240.246.5305.

Olessia Smotrova-Taylor  
President/CEO, OST Global Solutions, Inc.  
Executive Summary eZine Chair and Editor



Olessia Smotrova-Taylor heads OST Global Solutions, Inc. ([www.ostglobal-solutions.com](http://www.ostglobal-solutions.com)), a business development and training company that helps businesses grow by winning government contracts. She is an author of multiple training courses and manuals, including Executive Summary Secrets, a self-study course on how to write high-impact executive summaries. You can find a full list of training courses OST offers at <http://www.ostglobalsolutions.com/training/schedule>. Olessia can be reached at 301.384.3350 or via email at [otaylor@ostglobalsolutions.com](mailto:otaylor@ostglobalsolutions.com).



## How Proposal Evaluation Is and Is Not Like Grading a College Essay

by Shlomo D. Katz

**M**y wife has a close friend who is a contracting officer. Recently, this contracting officer took serious umbrage when she heard me say that proposal evaluation is like grading an essay; your grade is based less on the content of your essay than on whether you addressed each of the items on the grader's checklist.

Okay, I admit that I exaggerated. In a best value solicitation, proposal evaluators do look at the strengths and weaknesses of proposals and identify beneficial features of a proposal that may justify paying a price premium. Even so, the concept of "compliance" with an RFP - making sure you address each of the items on the evaluator's checklist - is crucial for a number of reasons.

The Federal Acquisition Regulation ("FAR") describes "proposal evaluation" as "an assessment of the proposal and the offeror's ability to perform the prospective contract successfully." In a properly conducted procurement, somebody has put together a source selection plan which sets out the Government's needs and how the Government will acquire them. The plan includes the information proposal evaluators will use to determine whether an offeror is able to perform the prospective contract successfully. In a properly conducted procurement, that is the information that the Government will request, primarily via the proposal preparation instructions in Section L and the evaluation criteria in Section M. (But, don't forget to read and take into account the other sections of the RFP, as well.) And, very likely, proposal evaluators will use some kind of checklist to ensure that offerors have satisfactorily addressed all of the Government's needs.



## How Proposal Evaluation Is and Is Not Like Grading a College Essay

Some offerors assume that the potential customer already knows what they have to offer and therefore fail to explain their proposal clearly. Incumbents, especially, fall into this trap. As in that college essay, assuming that the grader knows what you are trying to say is a bad idea. The Government Accountability Office (GAO), one of the tribunals that hear bid protests, has explained: “It is an offeror's responsibility to submit a well-written proposal, with adequately detailed information that clearly demonstrates compliance with the solicitation and allows a meaningful review by the procuring agency.” Even if the agency wants to award a contract to you, it will be hard-pressed to do so if your proposal did not answer the right questions. And, if the agency does award the contract to the non-compliant offeror, don't be surprised if the award is overturned through a protest.

But there is another reason for submitting a compliant proposal. Let's say that the RFP asks offerors to commit to meeting certain performance metrics, but your proposal is silent or ambiguous on this point. How should the evaluators evaluate this? Should they assume that you intend to comply? In fact, if the Government awarded you a contract, you would not be legally bound to meet those metrics because they were not in your offer. This is clearly unfair to other offerors who might have lowered their prices if they had known that they could get away without meeting those metrics. On a practical level, since the performance metrics are not part of the contract, the Government would have no way to ensure that it gets the performance it wants. What the evaluators should do, therefore, is find your proposal non-compliant.

In this scenario, the Government might give you a second chance. But don't count on it, as generally the Government has no obligation to hold discussions or seek clarifications.

As noted above, submitting a clear and well-written proposal is the offeror's job.

Nor is it necessarily in your company's interest to win a contract based on an ambiguous or incomplete proposal, since that is a recipe for disputes during contract performance. That, in turn, means two nasty consequences: –first, your company will spend its hard-earned profits preparing claims and litigating disputes instead of returning them to the shareholders (or to you, in the form of a bonus) and, second, you will be fighting with your customer, which is –never the ideal situation. Therefore, be clear about what you are offering. In particular, be compliant with the RFP. If you are using any words that could be ambiguous in the context of your proposal or your industry, make sure you define them.

Should proposals contain creative solutions to the Government's problems? Of course! But should you demonstrate all of your creative writing skills when putting together your proposal? Not if it competes for valuable pages when providing the Government with the information requested in the RFP.

\* \* \* \* \*

1 FAR § 15.305(a).

2 Matter of: T-C Transcription, Inc., B-401470.2, 2010 CPD ¶ 50.

3 See FAR § 2.101; Restatement (Second) of Contracts § (1981).

4 See, e.g., SETA Support Services Alliance, B-401754.4, 2010 CPD ¶ 10.

Shlomo D. Katz is Counsel in the Washington, DC office of the international law firm of Brown Rudnick LLP, a Corporate Sponsor of APMP-NCA, specializing in all aspects of Government contracting. If you have any questions about these or other proposal or contracting issues, please contact Shlomo at 202.536.1753 or [skatz@brownrudnick.com](mailto:skatz@brownrudnick.com).



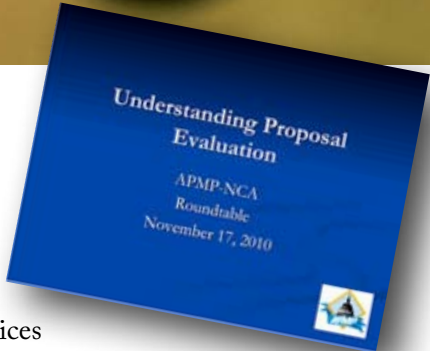
## APMP – NCA Presentation Using Price-to-Win Strategies to Grow Your Business September 15, 2010

**B**ob Weissman chaired the informative Price-to-Win (PTW) roundtable that included two speakers: Dennis Nellany, ASRC VP for Proposal Development and John Boyle, Unisys VP for Strategic Positioning.

Dennis described PTW best practices and PTW in the Opportunity Assessment phase. He started by defining PTW and PTW organizational models. He discussed when to determine PTW during the proposal phases and focused on the Opportunity Assessment phase. During that phase, PTW is really “Price-to-Compete” (PTC), providing early

benchmarks to determine if you can be price competitive. This supports weeding out of the opportunities for which you cannot compete, thereby saving you money and resources. He discussed the sources of data available and the methodology to determine the PTC.

John described PTW best practices for the cost proposal strategy and stressed the tactical and strategic aspects of PTW. The steps to generate cost proposals include Bid/No Bid review, Black Hat review, pricing questions, Price-to-Win calculator and whether to use internal or external PTW support. He discussed best



practices including starting early, eliminating cost volume assumptions, knowing your BAFO strategy, managing delivery and execution, and avoiding pitfalls like bidding jobs you cannot price to win.

To download the slides from this event go to our APMP-NCA Knowledge Base (you have to be a member to login): [www.apmpnca.org](http://www.apmpnca.org).

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"How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives." – Annie Dillard

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Winning Government Proposals: How to Write Less and Win More  
*February 24-25, 2011*

Free Webinar: Top 10 Proposal Mistakes  
*March 10, 2011*

Preparing Winning Multiple Award and Task Order Proposals  
*March 21-22, 2011*



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## APMP – NCA Presentation Using Price-to-Win Strategies to Grow Your Business

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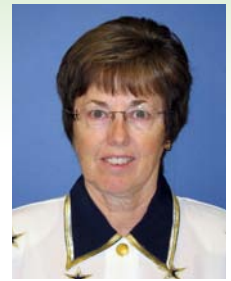
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# Recap of the Mid-Atlantic Proposal Conference & Expo

(formerly known as Professional Day)

by Betty (BJ) Couto



On October 12th, the National Capital Area chapter held our annual conference—the Mid-Atlantic Proposal Conference & Expo (formerly known as Professional Day)—at the Fairview Park Marriott in Falls Church, Virginia. APMP provided a full day of learning and networking to the 350 attendees.

The day started with attendees networking while enjoying a wonderful continental breakfast in the exhibit hall. 22 exhibitors/corporate sponsors provided advice, consulting support, and the always anticipated door prizes throughout the day.

The Welcome and Keynote session was an informative address on *Connecting the Dots: How Orals Coaching Benefits Everyday Communications* by Ben Rowland. This presentation taught us 10 tips for creating winning orals presentations, and how we could use those tips in our everyday lives. Ben received comments such as “Presenter was interacting. Good recap of techniques and points.” His overall rating was 4.30 (Evaluated on a scale of 1.0–5.0).

Over lunch, Beth Wingate—APMP’s Director of Education—gave the participants an overview of *The APMP Accreditation Program: Professional Growth & Recognition*. Also during lunch, we heard from Dr. Liz Davis and Dr. Kathy Newcomer on their *APMP Research Grant: Mutual Organizational Sustainability in the New Public Service*.

This year, we also significantly expanded the event to accommodate a multi-track format and a growing local chapter that currently exceeds 1,000 affiliated members. Four presentation tracks included:

- **Master’s Track**—aimed at meeting the needs of senior marketing executives, it provided insight into high performing organizations, best practices in social media and market intelligence, how to sell to the Federal marketplace, and setting the stage for APMP Accreditation standards.
- **Best Practices in Business Development Lifecycle**

**Track**—this track discussed the various lessons learned in the business development lifecycle from past performance ratings to managing your company investment capital. Discussions from “no go” decisions to creating killer themes and rapid team development through communications all kept the audience interested in this track.

- **Financial/Pricing Track**—this track was all about the right data to improve your win rates. Price is one of the most important elements of winning proposals and this track covered all of the price considerations to be made in winning proposals. The speakers in this track covered price to win techniques, unraveled the price mystery for proposal managers, discussed cost savings and smart spending tactics, and defined “best value.”
- **Small Business Track**—this track was all about how to succeed in the marketplace as effectively as the big guys by making the Small Business rules work for you. Two legal experts discussed recent trends in the market and regulations that affect small businesses, while a panel of consultants discussed ways to respond to more bids without increasing your headcount. This track ended with a panel discussion from a current SBA Assistant General Counsel for Procurement and a retired Small Business Director for Interior.

In addition to the track presentations, participants enjoyed a book store with nearly 30 titles on specialized business development topics on sale throughout the day.

In all there were 23 sessions across the four presentation tracks which made it hard, if not impossible, to choose which one to attend. However, APMP maintains a library of past presentations on their website (<http://www.apmpnca.org>). If you are a member of



APMP NCA chapter, you can access any missed presentation on the site’s Body of Knowledge. Below is a recap of the day’s top six presentations (Evaluated on a scale of 1.0–5.0):

- *Creating Killer Themes to Tell a Compelling Story*—Chris Simmons, Rainmakerz Consulting  
**(4.81)** “A++. Great organization, content, and presentation.” (*Best Practices in Business Development Lifecycle Track*)
- *Benefits of Using Contractors and Consultants*—Tammy Barclay, Proposal Development Consultants  
**(4.80)** (*Small Business Track*)
- *Getting Connected: Rapid Team Development Through Communications*—B.J. Lownie, Strategic Proposals LLC  
**(4.73)** “Helpful slides. Interesting presentation/graphics. Great Energy.” (*Best Practices in Business Development Lifecycle Track*)
- *Spending Smart: Making the Most of Your B&P Dollars*—Wendy Frieman, Lohfeld Consulting  
**(4.70)** “Fantastic presentation! Not just interactive, interesting, and entertaining, but it was very informative and helpful.” (*Financial Track*)
- *Identifying, Collecting, and Analyzing the Right Data to Improve Your Pwin*—Randy Richter, Richter & Company  
**(4.58)** “Awesome. Learned the most in this session.” (*Financial Track*)
- *Creating High Performance Proposal Organizations*—Bob Lohfeld, Lohfeld Consulting  
**(4.58)** “Very useful and meaningful.” (*Master’s Track*)

By all measures the annual conference was a resounding success. 100% of the attendees who completed conference evaluations (120 in total) would “recommend the conference to a friend or colleague next year.”

We would like to thank this year’s committee, who did a fantastic job in organizing this event (receiving a 4.65 out of 5 for conference organization). This year’s format was a complete rewrite of previous years and from the comments below, it was a great success.

- “I thought this event was tremendously beneficial and will return every year”
- “Very well executed. Good range of topics and speakers. Good to see many local speakers”.
- “Very good seminars. Venue and food was great for a very low price!”

Now save the date and register early for our conference next year!

Based on the overwhelming response and our growing membership, we expect a sellout next year and we hope to see you there! We are targeting October 11, 2011 for next year—please attend or volunteer for the planning committee and be a part of making next year’s event even bigger!

Betty Jo (BJ) Couto has written, edited, and coordinated the production of government proposals for 20 years. BJ served as the Small Business Track Mentor for the 2010 Annual Conference, spending many hours coordinating with the track’s speakers and panelists to ensure a successful program. Currently, she is a Senior Writer with CDM, a large government contractor. BJ writes, edits, and manages production of proposals and related documents, such as GSA Standard Form 330 for U.S. federal government agencies.



November 17th, Round Table Speakers: girl name, boy name , other boy name, boy name

## Record Attendance at the November 17th, 2010 Round Table! Understanding Government Proposal Evaluation

by Cam Middleton

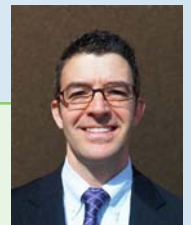
The November 17th Round Table Event, Understanding Government Proposal Evaluation, was an enormous success – with another record-setting attendance topping more than 240 people! The presentations, offering insight into what the Government is looking for when evaluating proposals, had everyone in attendance hanging on every word.

Round Table Committee member Cam Middleton of OCI chaired the Round Table. Jim Hiles of Morgan Franklin moderated it skillfully, with humorous and insightful guidance. Our panelists each brought a broad range of procurement experience on both the government and contractor sides of the industry. Kevin Pirko is the president of Competitive Acquisitions Consulting. He participated in source selections as an Air Force officer and now serves as a capture manager for such companies as ACS, IBM, and BearingPoint. Shaun Saad is the contracting officer for the Department of Homeland Security overseeing competitive procurements for DHS. Carol Tisone is the faculty member and instructor for the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) and the Division

Head and supervisor for the Multi-Mission Aircraft programs contracting division.

Drawing from their extensive experience, the panelists shared insights on specifics of what they look when evaluating government proposals for award. The Q&A session helped provide valuable insight to what the Government evaluators are thinking during source selection. All in all, the event was a huge hit!

The Round Table Committee would like to thank all that were involved to make this event a success. This was the last Round Table event of the year, with the Speaker Series kicking off in 2011.



Cam Middleton has served as the lead in business development at OCI for 7 years and currently is the VP of Business Development. He has +15 Years of professional experience and proposal staffing support—staffing more than 1,000 proposals valued over \$300B. He is an active member of APMP, serving on the Speaker Series Committee and as an Event Chairperson. Prior to joining OCI in 2004, he held various sales and executive management positions in IT, healthcare and executive search firms. Cam grew up in Atlanta and received both his undergraduate and Masters from The University of Georgia.





## Recap: January Speaker Series

by Pat Bosey

Roger Waldron, President of the Coalition for Government Procurement (CGP), provided insights into policy issues that will affect government procurements in 2011. Mr. Waldron has more than 20 years of experience in GSA and several years at Mayer Brown LLP specializing in acquisition management and law. Mr. Waldron discussed historical procurement policies, including commercial item preference, performance based contracting, the Recovery Act reporting requirements, and most recently, the Obama executive order to review all federal regulations and eliminate regulations that are not cost-effective. He also discussed trends in government procurement including increased government oversight, ongoing obligations to update company information, increased opportunities to compete, price reduction clause, and changes to RFP evaluation criteria.



Three quarters of all federal dollars spent are expended on services, a sharp contrast to the 1990s and last decade. Looking forward, Mr. Waldron does not see a shift from services procurements but does see:

- Less T&M contracts
- More FFP/FFIP contracts
- RFP cost evaluation criteria being at least as important as technical and management criteria
- Increased emphasis on subcontractor management to reduce costs
- Better training for government contracting staff.

He'd like to see more communications between industry and procurement organizations, award on initial proposals, less adversarial relationships, and streamlined acquisition processes.

"Stress is an ignorant state. It believes that everything is an emergency. Nothing is that important." – Natalie Goldberg

# Upcoming Events

## February 2011

16th Webinar Series kickoff with: 24hr Company. *“Top 10 Websites for Low-Cost Proposal Graphics”* Mike Parkinson and Colleen Jolly will present their picks for the 10 best low-cost (and free) websites to get proposal graphics, icons, photographs, and logos. Instructions for joining will be posted here and sent out via email from the NCA before the event.

## March 2011

16th NCA Speaker Series returns! Theodore A. Holloman, Deputy District Director for SBA’s Washington Metropolitan Area District Office will speak, his topic will be; *“Partnering With Small Business for Mutual Success: SBA’s Perspective”*

## April 2011

11th *Proposal Basics Boot Camp*. Quite simply, this is the event you want to go to become reacquainted with your inner coordinator, editor, writer, desktop publisher or graphic artist. You or someone you know that could use the skills to make your proposals better.

26th *Release of the Executive Summary: Spring Edition*

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## Support Research in Our Field!

The APMP and APMP-NCA have awarded George Washington University a grant to study industry Government business relationships. A key component of the study involves conducting 60 minute interviews with industry leaders and their Federal Government counterparts.

Want to help with the study? Here is how you can add value to the research:

E-mail or call Dr. Elizabeth B. Davis, the principal investigator, with your interest to participate at [ebdavis@gwu.edu](mailto:ebdavis@gwu.edu) or 202.994.1870.

Remember to include **your name and contact information** and **the name and contact information of your Federal counterpart**. *(Please be sure to check with your Federal counterpart about their willingness to participate beforehand.)*



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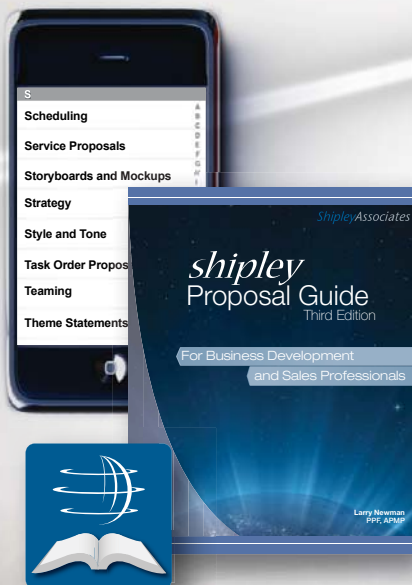
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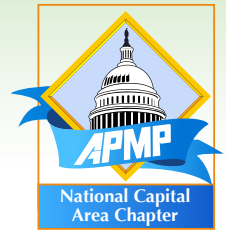
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## **APMP-NCA Board of Directors Meetings are Open to Members**

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

### *Special thanks too ...*

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