



Really? You're in proposal management? But what do you DO?

PROPOSAL MANAGEMENT? WHAT IS IT YOU DO?

Proposal management professionals – this one's for you.

It's happened to all of us. At a business meeting, a social gathering, even at a family dinner. The askers seem quite pleased with themselves – warm with hospitality and interest, they ask that dreaded question. As proposal management professionals, we know quite well what we DO. Still, we stumble trying to explain it so normal human beings can understand.

IS IT THAT WHAT WE DO ISN'T NORMAL?

Well, try explaining it to yourself and see what you think:

"I'm a proposal professional. I spend most of my time putting together documents based on things that people tell me that other people read and evaluate, no wait, sometimes they don't actually read the document but they evaluate it anyway. The deadlines are really tight, and stuff doesn't always come together, so often I'm working by myself late at night. And weekends. Oh yeah, and holidays. We put it in a binder and send to a client, or maybe email or upload. And after we win or lose, almost nobody looks at it again.

Ever.

And then I start it all over."



Does this seem normal to you? I mean, I'm reading it now while I'm writing it, and it seems crazy! But that's not all we do, is it? There's a lot more, and it's fun, and yes, it's crazy, but we love it.

PROPOSAL MANAGEMENT: MYSTERIES, PUZZLES, AND STORIES

Businesses and governments have to buy things to operate. Often, those purchases are competitive. That is, more than one company has a chance to provide the materials, services, or products. Buyers define their requirements as a request. In response, bidders propose their services; capabilities and experience; and pricing. Usually, only one company wins the business. Proposal management is the process of responding to client requests. Sounds easy! But, exactly what is it?



IT'S A MYSTERY

Do these prospective clients really know what they want? Sometimes yes, often no. Consequently, proposal management requires research, analysis, and intuition to figure out real client needs. And of course, there are often problems beneath the surface. Thus, the proposal manager has to be curious and persistent in finding clues to client needs.

Certainly, searching for clues about needs, desires, "pain points" – that requires ingenuity, patience, and knowledge.

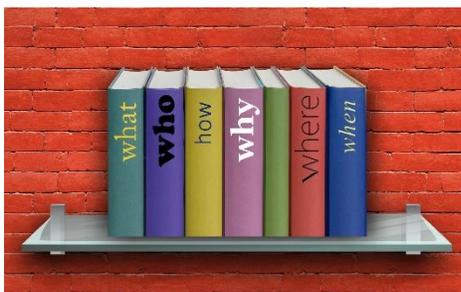
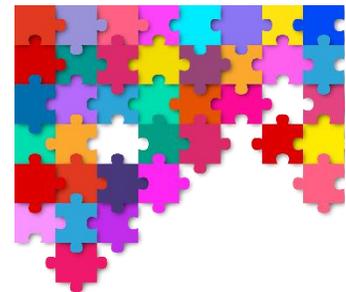
Unlocking the mystery of the opportunity – that's exciting!

IT'S A PUZZLE

Are clients really asking for a collection of unrelated and inconsistent services and resources? Of course not, but that is often how it seems to groups trying to respond to client requirements.

As well as organizing details and fitting pieces together, proposals require careful study, discerning insight, and flexibility.

Solving the puzzle with a compelling solution – that's rewarding!



IT'S A STORY

Why should a business or government agency choose your proposal? Second, what's in it for them? And: are you better than your competitors? Finally, is your solution really what they need? Answering these questions requires understanding, skill, and technique.

Delivering a well-organized, clear, and coherent narrative – that's fulfilling!



Without an insightful and compelling solution and a well-written proposal, companies struggle to win new business or renew their existing contracts.

Without winning business, companies stop being companies. Employees stop being employees.

SO, WHAT I DO AT WORK IS: I HELP THEM...

- Illustrate their strengths, abilities, and people, too.
- Succeed by telling their stories to prospective clients.
- Grow their bottom line, keep their jobs, take care of their families.

I help them win.

We present their people and products as part of a compelling solution. Their proposals show they are the best choice through capabilities, results, and testimonials. Working together, we develop a clear, logical, narrative that is compliant and complete. The result: the narrative supports pricing by defining the solution. Lastly, it delivers proven advantages and benefits to proposal reviewers.

And it's a great job.

IS IT FOR YOU?

Do you like challenges? Working with different people, doing different jobs, being agile, learning new things? Equally important, can you work by yourself AND with a team? Do you like to dig into a problem and figure it out? Can you write clear narrative sentences? [Seriously.]

Even better, are you looking for an industry with opportunity, and a job that enables you to grow and succeed as a professional? If the answer is "Yes," it's time to take a look at proposal management.

Proposal management is the industry that supports all industries. It is competitive and offers many opportunities in the US and worldwide. Additionally, it is good for both entry level job seekers and for seasoned professionals. People who like to be employed make great proposal managers, and people who like to work for themselves do, too. Is it good for everyone? No – often it requires long hours. Patience is a supreme skill. Above all, resilience is a must when you don't win.

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT IT?



The Association of Proposal Management Professionals (APMP) is the place to start. Visit APMP here: <https://www.apmp.org/page/AboutAPMP>

Got a question? Contact me at cweinmann@strategyhorizon.com

I've got a great story for you!

