

## TIME IS THE BUGBEAR

Every Bid and Proposal professional is likely to complain about lack of time for every Bid. So what is new ? Nothing really. I have always wondered whether this is an unsolvable problem or as Bid and Proposal professional are we just trying to demonstrate to our organization as to how valuable we are by working late nights, weekends, pizza dinners etc.

Having worked on many bids (150+ and counting), the onus is on us as the Professional to solve the time conundrum.

We also recognize that the lack of time has a direct correlation to the quality of Proposal and therefore the winnability of the Proposal.

## ONUS IS ON WHO ?

While the need for time is going to be a never ending chase the question to ask is who has the onus to resolve this issue ?

Surely not the client, not even Sales and of course Management may see this as par for the course. Given this the onus is on the Bid and Proposal professional to get more time during the Bid cycle.

The question is how ?

## IT IS WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN BIDS...

Fighting for time during the Bid cycle is a futile exercise as the focus is on strategizing to win or else responding to the various needs of the RFP.

The only choice therefore is to build efficiencies outside of the Bid cycle.

### Quick Read :

The fight for time during the Bid cycle is a perpetual challenge for every Bid and Proposal professional. While complaints will not get you anywhere the onus is on every Professional to ensure that what happens between Bids, helps deliver more time during the Bid Cycle.

There are a number of ways by which Bid and Proposal professionals can do outside the Bid cycle that will help them get more time to deal with the exigencies during the Bid cycle

### Content Management

The adage of the more boilerplate content you have the better it applies well to Bid Management. A rule of thumb is to have at least 30% boilerplate content going sometimes upto 70%. Boilerplate content gives you the advantage of speed and accuracy. Boilerplate content can be easily contextualised to the Bid on hand without looking and sounding like a cut and paste from a 'brochure'.

You could look at the past 1 year's proposals and look for content which should have been ideally part of the boilerplate repository. Move them into the repository with the appropriate transformation and graphics & visual design.

### Automate repetitive tasks

If you examine closely, chances are high that many tasks are getting repeated across proposals. For e.g. having a pricing template in an Excel spreadsheet would be one of the easiest way to manage even the simplest of pricing schemes.



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### **Proposal Template**

I would imagine that most of you use MS Word for Proposal development. Word comes with lots of styles and other tools that you can use to standardize the proposal production. This will also make the task easier when you have to integrate content from other stakeholders in the organization.

Use a good Graphics & Visual designer to help you design these templates or even outsource these tasks.

### **Delegation**

Delegation is a touchy subject for a lot of people. The common tendency is to think that by delegating you will end up with more work in reviewing, correcting etc.

Delegation while it requires investment in time upfront, it pays off in multiples if done the right way. Delegation can be done of simple tasks to freshers and interns who are keen to prove themselves.

### **Self Study/Learning**

A highly underrated area. As the Bid and Proposal profession gets increasingly strategic it is expected that you will contribute significantly towards wins and not just submit a response. Time spent on learning new tips and techniques (and mind you these can be quite simple things) will go a long way in improving your efficiency and productivity. This lead to a stress free Bid cycle.

Associate yourself with professional bodies like

the Association of Proposal Management professionals ([www.apmp.org](http://www.apmp.org)) by going in for Certification, participating in Chapter activities and networking with fellow professionals.

### **Internal Relationship Building**

If during the last Bid cycle, some functions or stakeholders gave you a hard time, this is the time to build bridges and have a frank conversation with them. Listening as well as putting forth your point of view are both important to ensure that these functions and stakeholders will support you in the next Bid cycle.

### **Housekeeping**

Aha ! something that is considered a chore. As much as our homes require regular cleaning for our enjoyment so does the Proposal function require regular housekeeping. Archiving, organizing content, important emails, filing of papers (if in hard copy form) all require some attention and time. You will feel good when you do this. Lots of tips available on doing this on the Internet.

# WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN BIDS DETERMINES YOUR SUCCESS

MARCH 2018



## IN CONCLUSION

The challenge for the Bid and Proposal professional therefore is are you directly contributing to your organization's win or just creating a response. Every time you contribute towards Wins your ability to influence across the organization will increase. This should also enable you to focus on the 'right things' as opposed to following directions and instructions. You can have your sleep peacefully and yet win for the organization.

The choice is in your hands. Are you game ?

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## About MindIT :

MindIT provides end-to-end Bid Solutions for companies who are in complex B2B engagements. MindIT collaborates with your organization to provide Process solutions, People capability building and Content transformation. In the past, MindIT has been engaged by clients like Capgemini, Tech Mahindra, Hexaware, Zensar and more.

