

BQ

BIDDING QUARTERLY

 Bid Solutions
Connecting Winners



**TAKING
POSITIVE
ACTION TO
ACHIEVE
GENDER
EQUALITY**

50:50

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wibap

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FOREWORD

by Charlotte Rees

Welcome to this special edition of Bidding Quarterly, curated by Women in Bids and Proposals.

For those of you who haven't heard of Women in Bids and Proposals (or WIBAP for short), we're all about driving gender equality and fairness within the bids and proposals profession. For the past three years, we've grown our membership and followers, run a vast array of events, and connected people from across the globe. We share the experiences and challenges all bid professionals encounter and, more specifically, those that women within our industry face on a daily basis. The aim of this edition is to continue highlighting the inequality within our profession and offer advice and guidance - from the fantastic panel of BQ Experts, the WIBAP team and a few of our Allies too.

We recognise things are changing for women in our profession, with positive momentum building over the past three years - but there's still a way to go. Our aim for this edition is to keep gender equality in bids and proposals on everyone's radar. The articles in this edition represent a range of opinions amongst our contributors, but with one purpose - achieving gender equality in our profession. While people have different views on how to achieve that equality, the main objective is that we get there.

ABOUT WIBAP

Women in Bids and Proposals (WIBAP) was founded in 2018 as a direct result of industry research highlighting gender inequality in our profession. WIBAP created a community of people - from a variety of roles and industries from all over the world - to support anyone working in the bidding profession to remove barriers preventing women from progressing in their careers.

We currently have over 2,000 members and Allies. Membership is free and we offer a friendly, down-to-earth approach. We aim to attract future generations of bidding professionals.

We facilitate networking opportunities to promote conversation and share knowledge and advice. We create toolkits to help individuals and organisations monitor and embrace diversity within their bid and proposal functions.



OUR VISION

To shape the future of our profession; creating a bidding world where gender inequality no longer exists.



OUR MISSION

To achieve gender equality in the bidding profession, by supporting individuals and organisations to take ownership of their responsibilities and make positive change.

We aim to accomplish this by strengthening our community, sparking real conversation, and taking purposeful action.



OUR VALUES



Community and Respect

Every member in our network is an Ally; their opinions reflect their experiences and we treat them with fairness and integrity.



Empower and Progress

Our success depends on our combined knowledge, experience and focus.



Honesty and Courage

We have real conversations, in plain language, to tackle real issues.

ABOUT THE WIBAP TEAM

wibap

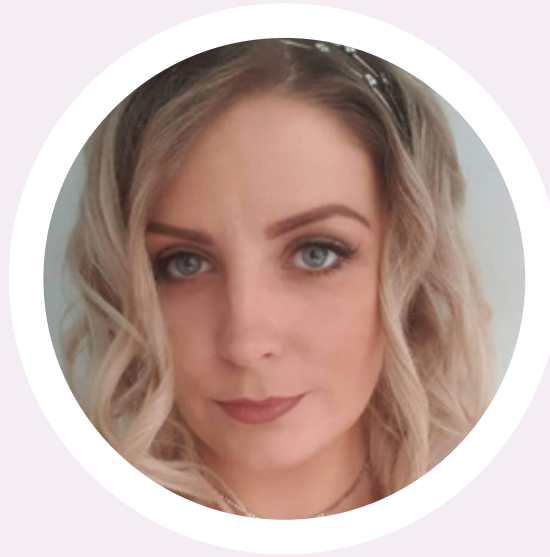


Charlotte Rees, Founding Director

My bidding journey started as a bid and proposals apprentice within a male-dominated industry. As a young woman who was new to the profession, I was lucky to have a number of strong female role models to look up to and provide guidance when challenging situations arose.

In 2018, I founded the WIBAP community in order to enable our members to share experiences, as well as help our industry to overcome challenges we all face on a regular basis.

I'm personally so excited to see what the future has in store for us and I'm honoured to have met such amazing and inspiring people through WIBAP.



Vicky Coleman, Strategic Lead

I've worked in proposals for eight years and being in a male-dominated industry means I've witnessed or experienced gender-related biases, in addition to those that women face every day. Challenging issues is never easy, so my main reason for being a part of the WIBAP team is to support my industry colleagues to improve gender equality in the workplace, particularly because this role is often seen as "admin" (ergo female).

Proposals is a specialism not many are aware of, so I'm also keen to raise the profile of the profession by building networks, sharing information, and offering guidance to those new to the world of bids.



Hannah McCarthy, Publication Lead

I started my first bid role in 2013 without really intending to, as I didn't really know what bidding was. All I knew was that it involved writing, something I've always enjoyed. Eight years in, I've realised I'm actually not that bad at it!

I've been lucky enough to be involved in WIBAP from the beginning, and now my focus is to ensure the content we produce aligns with our goals and conveys our message. What I love most about WIBAP is that, while it's a professional network, it feels more like a group of friendly, like-minded people getting together to support each through the ups and downs of bidding.

ABOUT THE WIBAP TEAM

wibap



Louise Dentice, Research and Resources Lead

I began my bids career as a co-ordinator following my move to London in 2010 from New Zealand, where I had worked in marketing roles for six years. I now hold the position of Head of Bids and Proposals.

It's a really exciting time to be a part of the profession, which is evolving at a fast pace and provides an incredibly diverse range of opportunities at all levels.

To me, WIBAP is about shaping the direction of the profession, as well as putting support networks in place to help each other succeed.



Sophie Goodeve, Branding and Communications

I started working in bidding two years ago in the construction industry, working on large projects predominantly in London.

As a bidding newbie, I wanted the ability to network with other like-minded people and hear about their experiences. After being invited to speak at one of the London WIBAP events, I joined the WIBAP team.

As a designer, I create content and graphics to ensure the WIBAP brand is consistent across our website, newsletters, social media posts, resource information and conference material.

I'm looking forward to the return of our in-person events to meet more members and Allies over the next year!



Emma Vaux, Branding and Communications

I have been in the construction bidding industry since 2019, and I'm currently based in Dubai.

After attending a number of WIBAP events in London, including the annual conference, I joined the WIBAP Branding and Communications team! As an experienced graphic designer my focus is on designing exciting content and graphics for all communications as well as social media posts. I hope our platform will be able connect and inspire more women within the profession.

by Louise Dentice

LET'S BE... ALLIES

ALLY. ALLIES. ALLIANCE.

In a way, these words sum up what WIBAP is. We are an Ally to women in bids and proposals, our members are united as Allies who support our objectives, and together, we are an Alliance - standing for gender equality in our profession.

As of June 2021, WIBAP has formally allied with another campaign, the REbuild project (more on this later). Before we committed, we asked ourselves what kind of Ally WIBAP should be. It made us reflect on the Allies we've had in our own careers, and those who have been an Ally to WIBAP. It also led us to ask, "What Allies do we need going forward?"

Official dictionary definitions of 'Ally' vary widely - this surprised me but shouldn't have. These words have taken on new meanings in the last couple of years in response to movements such as Me Too and Black Lives Matter. One of the definitions offered by Collins Dictionary is, "An Ally is someone who supports people who are in a minority group or who are discriminated against, even though they do not belong to that group themselves". The Oxford Languages dictionaries (Google result) state that to become an Ally is "to combine or unite a resource or commodity with (another) for mutual benefit".

WIBAP simultaneously has, needs, and is, both of these types of Allies.

“

WHAT WE REALLY NEED IS FOR EVERYONE TO BE AN ALLY. YES, EVERYONE. REGARDLESS OF GENDER, SECTOR, ROLE, POSITION OR LOCATION.

”

Without question, Allies have been instrumental in getting WIBAP to where we are today - a network of 2,000 in just three years. Our Allies have been individuals and organisations who recognised the need for WIBAP and wanted to support us by giving us a platform, an introduction, advice, their time (or an edition of BQ to edit!) to help us on our way - so they did just that.

The key word there is 'did'. This means they took action. For me, an Ally that takes action beyond words can really make a difference.

In my experience, it is often the small actions of allyship that have the most impact on personal outcomes and long-term organisational cultural change. Like the male colleague who notices when I am being talked over in a meeting and returns the floor back to me. Or the board director who seeks my opinion publicly, using his influence to position me as the expert in the room. Modelling like this creates awareness and gives everyone more confidence to address issues around inequality. And damn, it feels good to know people are standing with you. In fact, allyship or solidarity is the key reason our members join WIBAP (it's what they told us in our December 2020 membership survey).

What we really need is for everyone to be an Ally. Yes, everyone. Regardless of gender, sector, role, position or location. If we are to see the gender data gaps close, in our profession and all others, we need everyone to help us address the issues, top-down and bottom-up. We need to form alliances with organisations whose objectives align with our own, so that together we can make a difference - their success is ours.

That is why we became an Ally of the Rebuild project (www.therebuildproject.co.uk). The REbuild project is led by Anne McNamara, who was featured in the 'Spotlight' article in the last BQ edition. REbuild has made a bold challenge to the construction sector, calling for all companies who generate 50% or more of their revenue from the public sector to increase the percentage of women in executive positions - to 50% in entry level roles by 2025 and to 50% overall by 2030, while achieving a zero gender pay gap by 2035.

Anne was inspired by the quote, "I wondered why somebody didn't do something. Then I realised that I am somebody." The REbuild project was launched by a handful of people and now there is a groundswell of Allies joining. The initiative is built on the strength of Allies and is driven by the women and men who love the industry and what it achieves but know the way it operates needs to be improved. The project is gaining great traction and the impacts will filter to associated disciplines such as design and engineering, which will in turn demand the same of their supply chains. This will be good for all of us.

This sentiment echoes something Anne herself said in the above mentioned 'Spotlight' article. When asked what advice she would give to those new to the bid profession, Anne called on men to be a 'good Ally', explaining that this does not mean there will be less for men, only that "it means that the profession is being taken more seriously for you both". Similarly, we hope that through this alliance both WIBAP and REbuild's messages on gender equality are strengthened and amplified.

It now feels the right time for WIBAP to develop our own formal 'Ally' programme which we will launch later this year. We hope you will join us and be fantastic-ally and inspiration-ally allied.

INSPIRATION ALLY INTENTION ALLY FANTASTIC ALLY
INFLUENTI ALLY POTENTI ALLY ENTHUSIASTIC ALLY





ALLIES IN ACTION

**WE ASKED SOME OF OUR FRIENDS TO
TELL US THEIR EXPERIENCES OF BEING
ALLIES IN THE WORKPLACE.
HERE'S WHAT THEY SAID.**



JONATHAN DAY-MILLER - ENTERPRISE CONSULTING DIRECTOR

Tell us a little bit about yourself and your role

Hi, my name is Jonathan Day-Miller. I'm a 47 year old cis-gender gay man. Married, no kids or pets, lots of plants. I work for an HR technology business, Darwin, within the Commercial/Innovation function. I provide technical support and guidance to large multinational organisations and develop new propositions to meet ever-changing market needs. As part of this role, I partner regularly with bid teams in the sales pursuit stage of complex deals. I rely heavily on the bid team's extensive knowledge of our business to shape my own consultancy experience. I also try to learn from the seemingly unlimited ability of bid writers to absorb information within intense working periods and often timescales that are too tight! Outside of my day-to-day role, I also have the immense privilege to support and be a part of our company's Inclusion and Diversity initiatives.

Why is gender equality important to you?

I am a feminist. And as a gay man it's my responsibility to support gender equality as I cannot ask or expect equality for myself at the expense of any other group. As a white gay man I understand that my privilege far outweighs most other demographics (including women and most in the LGBTQ+ community) but I have been lucky to be supported by role models and Allies throughout my life - most of whom have been women. It is therefore my responsibility to do all that I can to support, champion and amplify others as well as use any position and opportunity that I have to push for change.

What can Allies do to support and encourage gender equality in the workplace?

As an Ally in training, I would suggest people start with listening and learning. I have had to suspend my disbelief sometimes when listening to stories from female colleagues - and I have also had to accept that at times in my career, I have probably been part of the problem.

The more you learn, the more you will notice and see for yourself without someone pointing it out. Have conversations with people, ask opinions, promote ideas, give credit to those that did the work, celebrate them, and put them forward for roles and opportunities - all the things we should be doing anyway, but which we may need to actively think about and do. It may even be that we act in a way which seems (to us) biased towards under-represented or marginalised groups, if only to counter the unconscious bias we all have.

When you are ready to step in and be an Ally, you might find yourself taking action without needing to be prompted by those you want to support. I am not sure I am fully there yet, but I try to be a consistent voice. In areas where I'm more confident I just get on with it. Also if you can find opportunities to place yourself in an environment as 'the only one' in the room, it's a really powerful learning experience. As a middle-aged white male in a professional situation, it can often be hard to achieve this, but it will completely change your perspective and behaviour. This goes for gender, race, ethnicity, faith, neurodiversity - challenge yourself to be in situations that make you uncomfortable. And remember we all need Allies, no matter who we are, so be the Ally that you may have wanted or needed.



SCOTT BAKER - OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

Tell us a bit about yourself

I'm Scott, an Operations Director at Mace Group. I'm currently part of the Senior Leadership Team working on the regeneration project for Battersea Power Station Phase 2. I've been working in the construction industry for more than 20 years, and have had a number of roles across design, business development and operations. I've worked closely with bid teams in all of those roles, on both sides of the fence!

What's your experience working with bid teams?

I've been in many bidding war rooms over the years, and I love getting a team together working towards a deadline to produce a winning bid. I get inspired by the creativity of bidding, especially the more off-the-wall executive summaries!

In my current role, I'm on the other side of the procurement process, and have reviewed lots of bid submissions. I enjoy engaging with suppliers throughout the process and seeing the eventual delivery of the work the winning bidder has produced, knowing how important the bid team's role was in the creation of that solution.

As someone who evaluates bids, have you got any tips for bid teams?

I've been on a bidding journey throughout my career. In the early days, I thought it was just a 'tick box' exercise, a necessary evil of the procurement process. But I've learned to understand the professionalism and expertise of the bid teams I've worked with, and how it truly can set you apart from your competitors. As a buyer, I can tell when a bid team has put the effort in - it really does make a difference! I am sometimes still shocked at the low quality of some of the bids I receive. It's hard for bid teams as you don't always get to see the bids your competitors produce, so the best advice I can give is to know your audience, always put your best foot forward and take pride in your work. Be the people that raise the bar for your competitors, something I know my bid team did in my previous company.

Why is gender equality important to you?

I've been lucky enough to work with some amazing female bid professionals over the years. I have to say, early in my career I didn't realise just how much gender equality mattered to my female colleagues and friends. Part of my growth and maturity as an Ally has seen me listen and learn more about the challenges women face at all levels of business.

I want to continue learning so that I can use my position to change the working world my young daughters will enter - but not just for them. I don't want anyone - regardless of their race, gender, religious beliefs or ability - to feel as uncomfortable as I know some of my female colleagues have at times. That's why I got involved in WIBAP and was proud to be the compere at the first two WIBAP conferences.

I continue to have those conversations, and I now work in a more diverse and inclusive company. Mace isn't just saying the right things, they're taking action. Project teams are more diverse across nationalities, gender, race, etc. Unfortunately, I also talk to suppliers and other trades where they're not as diverse or inclusive. The language sometimes used tells me we still have a long way to go, so I'm trying to make a difference where I can.

I'm also working with several female graduates, having conversations about what's important to them and what we can do better. But I also understand that everyone is different. For example, while involved in our mentoring programme and trying to get more of our senior women to be mentors, I learnt that our female graduates don't always want a female mentor. So long as they have someone who understands them, and understands why gender equality is important, then they feel supported.

What advice would you give to those wanting to become Allies?

Ask questions, encourage open conversation and support organisations that are fighting for gender equality. Listen to people so you can understand how they feel. If you are a line manager, you have to understand what makes people tick, whatever their gender. Ensure people feel part of the team and that they're not excluded because of characteristics that are out of their control. Educate yourself and acknowledge that we all continue to learn. Allies play a massive role because they can sometimes bridge the gap between those people who feel excluded and the places that are excluding them. I feel a lot more educated and passionate about trying to do the right thing and making a difference. Being an Ally shouldn't be performative - don't do it to make yourself look good, do it to affect real change.

“ PART OF MY GROWTH AND MATURITY AS AN ALLY HAS SEEN ME LISTEN AND LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CHALLENGES WOMEN FACE AT ALL LEVELS OF BUSINESS ”

THE UNWELCOME SQUEEZE

by Nigel Hudson

RED-BLOODED MALE SEEKS PASSIONATE, FLEXIBLE, EXPERIENCED AND UNIQUELY SKILLED PROFESSIONAL FOR HIGH INTENSITY RELATIONSHIP. MUST HAVE STAMINA, A STRONG DESIRE TO PLEASE AND A WILLINGNESS TO WORK NIGHTS. FEMALE PREFERRED...

Gentlemen: grab your dangly bits and cower in a corner. Ladies: grab anything sharp, heavy and likely to inflict pain. Let's talk about some of the shamefully sexist things that used to happen in bidding. (And when we're done, let's talk about another unacceptable culture that shouldn't exist in our profession.)

Back in 2003, I was sitting in a smoke-filled bid room with eleven hairy, sweaty men. At the head of the table was the company's managing director who, on this occasion, decided to begin the meeting with a statement. He sat forward and tilted his head towards the open door, through which could be seen a typing pool of female secretaries and telesales 'girls'. The MD licked a gob of yellow, cigarette-stained phlegm from his lips and said, gruffly, "Tits'n'ass, they're good to have around the office. Gives us blokes something to look at though they're only for decoration. You wouldn't trust 'em with real work." The room erupted with laughter. Then, speaking loudly so that those outside could hear, the MD said, "Still, we'll let 'em in here when we're done, won't we lads, to empty the ashtrays; it wouldn't be right for a fella to clean up after himself once he's finished his business...". The comment was met with jeers and wolf whistles from within the room, except from me who – as the new boy, the non-smoker, and the recently-engaged romantic – found the whole experience to be stomach-churningly appalling.



The experience haunts me still, not least because the MD was a bully who singlehandedly set the company's culture. To him, women were second-rate citizens; disposable objects with an "it" pronoun, brought in to be gawped at and do menial work that was only appropriate for the 'lesser' sex. I worked for him for three months before quitting on the spot after he spat in my face for "lacking balls". So maybe I'm more feminine than my trouser suit would imply?

Fact is, I'm a bloke and carry the shame of condoning unacceptable behaviour towards women. I didn't speak out. I dislike confrontation and so it took me a long time to challenge the status quo.

The trigger point for me came a few years later when I was telephoned by a female colleague working on my bid. Her voice was trembling as she spoke: "I'm so, so sorry," she said, "I've been put on gardening leave and won't be able to help you with the submission." "Why, what on earth's happened?" I replied. She then told me how she'd been summoned to her manager's office, asked to remain standing, and then told that she was being made redundant. "Why?" she'd asked. Her manager stood up and replied, "Well, it has come to my attention that you are trying for a baby. You know how busy we're going to be and yet you're planning to be absent when we need you. So you might as well leave now." Shocked by the news, I confronted her manager. His answer? "F*ckin' women, fannying about trying to compete in a man's world. Just ignore her. Time of the month, mate. She'll get over it. Anyway, she's not pregnant yet; so I'm free from all that HR bullsh*t." I'm ashamed to say that I didn't report him for his comments, but I did encourage my female colleague to pursue legal action.

This sense of 'jobs for the boys' or 'it's a man's world' shouldn't exist in bidding. After all, bidding is office

work. It doesn't require the physical strengths that have been the excuse for male-dominated professions in the past. But there's an underlying machoism within bidding, perhaps linked to aggressive sales targets or customer demands, that encourages unacceptable behaviour even to this day. I'm referring to a culture that expects us to get tough, make sacrifices and do whatever's needed to get the job done. It's what I call the unwelcome squeeze.

We've all got soft bits, by which I mean our good natures and desire to please. (They're our best assets.) We accommodate the demands and timelines of the bid, the behaviours and peculiarities of those with whom we work, even the occasionally rude or offensive comments of customers, suppliers and colleagues. We're 'compliant' to the rules of the game and 'submit' to the pressures placed upon us. It pleases others, even if we're left feeling exploited.

This 'submission' culture, to me at least, creates a sense of injustice akin to the sexism that exists within our profession. It's not right to 'shut up and put up' with a culture where we're expected to sacrifice so much of our home lives to meet the demands of the bid. Being made redundant for wanting a baby? Criticised for not sacrificing holidays or weekends? Overlooked for promotion because we're a 'nine-to-fiver'? Not quite 'giving our all' when it comes to our end of year review? Perhaps 'too distracted' by non-work interests, studies or commitments? Does any of this sound familiar? Perhaps it's time for a new organisation that stands up for 'People with Lives in Bids and Proposals'?

Ooh, we're in dodgy territory here. Aren't we supposed to 'man up' and do whatever's needed? 'Man up'? Pah. Knickers to that. You don't need balls to play this game.



NO ENTRY

“ I’M REFERRING TO A CULTURE THAT EXPECTS US TO GET TOUGH, MAKE SACRIFICES AND DO WHATEVER’S NEEDED TO GET THE JOB DONE. IT’S WHAT I CALL THE UNWELCOME SQUEEZE. ”

GENDER INEQUALITY – THE FACTS

RECENT SURVEYS AND REPORTS CONFIRM THE IMPACT OF GENDER INEQUALITY ACROSS A RANGE OF BUSINESS SECTORS

THE DATA DOESN'T LIE.

Collated by WIBAP

THE TRUTH

LIES

DECEPTION

FICTION

FALSE

Bids and Proposals Profession Statistics

Bid Solutions Salary Survey [1]

“Gender inequality across our profession cannot be disputed. It is evident in every role, industry, geography, and employment type.”

The latest Bid Solutions UK Bid and Proposal Salary Survey found:

- The average gender pay gap is 21.5% across all roles within the profession (with men earning more than women).
- There is a gender imbalance within the senior positions, i.e. ‘Head of’ roles are dominated by men. Junior roles such as Bid & Proposal Coordinator, Knowledgebase Manager are dominated by females.
- There are huge discrepancies in salaries across all regions and roles. For instance, men now earn more than women across all regions (a shocking 41% more in Yorkshire).

In APMP’s 2018 - 2019 Ethics Survey [2]

44% of respondents believed there was an issue of “fewer promotions and lower pay based on gender”. Respondents also raised the following as major concerns facing the profession, demonstrating the need for equal working environments with good life balance:

- Overwork and burnout (82% of respondents)
- Emotional exhaustion (72% of respondents)
- Verbal abuse or other intimidating behaviour (38% of respondents)
- Demoralising treatment by a supervisor (38% of respondents)
- Hostile work environment (36% of respondents)

Gender Pay Gap

According to the ONS (Office for National Statistics), the gender pay gap in the UK among all employees was 15.5% in 2020. Important to note - this is a measure across all jobs in the UK, not of the difference in pay between men and women for doing the same job. [3]

Financial Times’ 2020 Article: Gender pay gap: how women are short-changed in the UK [4]

“More than three out of four UK companies pay their male staff more than their female staff, and in nine out of 17 sectors in the economy, men earn 10% or more on average than women.”

Fawcett Society: Gender Pay Gap Reporting: A Comparative Analysis [5]

Currently only companies with more than 250 employees have to provide gender pay gap data. The Fawcett Society, together with the Global Institute for Women’s Leadership at King’s College London, recommends the threshold is brought down to 50 employees in line with other countries.

Senior Positions

Fawcett Society - Sex and Power Report 2020 [6]

- Women make up just over one in 20 CEOs (6%) of FTSE (Financial Times Stock Exchange) 100 companies. None of these CEOs are women of colour.
- Women now make up 34% of MPs and 30% of Cabinet Ministers - but progress is too slow.
- Media and arts: Women are a clear minority across almost all areas of the media and arts. Women make up only 21% of national newspaper editors - with just four women in the top jobs.

Women of Colour

The data also shows that women of colour are missing from across the range of public and private sectors:

- There are no women of colour represented within the highest levels of the civil service
- Since its formation in 2009, there has never been a person of colour appointed as a Supreme Court judge
- There are no women of colour among the CEOs of the FTSE 100 (as noted above)
- Women of colour make up just 1% of university vice-chancellors

Between Q3 2019 and Q3 2020, the number of BAME women workers had fallen by 17%, compared to 1% for white women.

Sexual Harassment

Report: Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, 2019 TUC - The Trades Union Congress (TUC) UK [7]

TUC research has revealed the persistent and widespread scale of workplace sexual harassment. More than 50% of women and nearly 70% of LGBT workers are sexually harassed in the workplace. Half of those women who had experienced sexual harassment said that they had been subjected to unwelcome sexual jokes in the workplace more than six times in their lives.

32% of women have been subject to unwelcome jokes of a sexual nature and more than 10% of women reported experiencing unwanted sexual touching or attempts to kiss them in the workplace. 12.5% of LGBT women reported being seriously sexually assaulted or raped at work.

Nearly 20% of women reported that their harasser was either a direct manager or someone else with direct authority over them.

Covid-19

Covid-19: Empowering women in the recovery from the impact of the pandemic. Published Monday, 08 March 2021 [8]

- Overall, more women than men have been furloughed across the UK, and young women have been particularly impacted
- 70% of women with caring responsibilities who requested furlough following school closures in 2021 had their request denied
- 46% of mothers that have been made redundant during the pandemic cite lack of adequate childcare as the cause

Click the links below for more information

- [1] https://bidsolutions.co.uk/wp-content/themes/bidsolutions/assets/salary-surveys/2018_salary_survey.pdf
- [2] <https://www.apmp.org/store/ViewProduct.aspx?id=12048759>
- [3] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/genderpaygapintheuk/2020#the-gender-pay-gap>
- [4] <https://ig.ft.com/gender-pay-gap-UK/>
- [5] <https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/gender-pay-gap-reporting-a-comparative-analysis-full-report>
- [6] <https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=bdb30c2d-7b79-4b02-af09-72d0e25545b5>
- [7] https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-09/SHConsultation_TUCReponse.pdf
- [8] <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/covid-19-empowering-women-in-the-recovery-from-the-impact-of-the-pandemic/>

SAME PAY, NOW

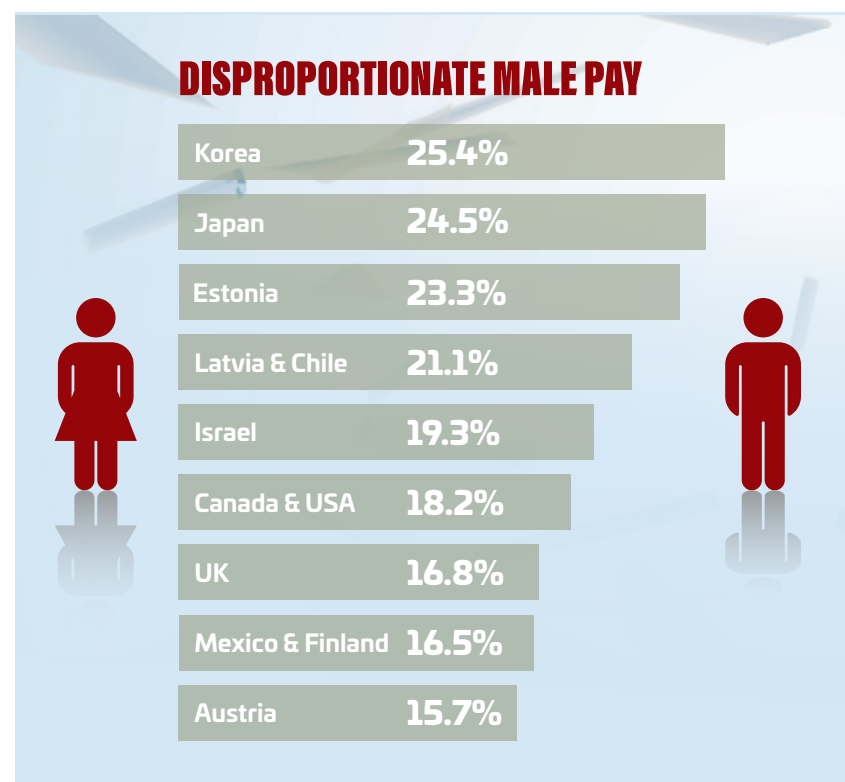
by Rick Harris

A PHENOMENALLY SIMPLE STRATEGY

THE GENDER PAY GAP IS A REALITY - ALTHOUGH IT SHOULDN'T BE. BUT LIKE OTHER ANTIQUATED SOCIAL CONSTRUCTS - IT EXISTS. WE ALL KNOW IT. MOST OF US ARE EMBARRASSED BY IT, AND SADLY, WE AREN'T DOING ENOUGH TO END IT.

According to the Institut National d'Etudes Demographiques (INED) in France, the number of men and women globally is roughly equal. They say that out of every 1,000 people, 504 are men (50.4%) and 496 are women (49.6%).

It's hard to find a stat that gets any more even than that. But still, there is a decided gender gap throughout the world - and we all know it. For those who like to measure with numbers, the difference is dumbfounding. In 2018, Business Insider gave us a list of the top 12 countries with gender pay disparity, and the numbers are disturbing.



“ **THE NUMBERS ARE DISTURBING** ”

On the positive side, countries like Iceland, Denmark and Sweden have emerged as leading nations by passing laws to ensure income equality.

Take a look at the divide and ask yourself if you are comfortable. I am not.

A single mom raised me in a house with three sisters. I have a partner who has a career. I have a daughter who is now working. I have aunts and nieces who've all worked hard all of their lives. That is why I am not comfortable. They share my skill level, work ethic and success. We are all educated and gainfully employed and we all get things done. So why should I have been paid more simply because I am a man?

My 'aha' moment - when I knew things were off the rails with the whole gender pay difference - happened after the birth of my daughter. I was called into my boss's office. He told me how much he admired my hard work and dedication to the job. He was impressed that I only missed two days when my daughter was born, and he understood I was going to be coming into work tired a lot over the next couple of months.

And he proceeded to give me a promotion, a raise, and a bonus "...because you are a family man now".

I still remember how pleased he looked and how mortified I felt. I wasn't sure if the promotion, raise and bonus were for my work, or because I became a dad for the first time, or a combination of the two. Nevertheless I took it, all of it, and felt like I was walking outside of an episode of the television series *Mad Men*.

THE PHENOMENALLY SIMPLE EQUAL PAY STRATEGY

Years later, I had my first opportunity to do something about equal pay. I was in a position to hire. The idea was so simple and made so much sense.

When I hired a staff person, I published what the job was worth to the organisation and paid the best candidate. I didn't care if they were a man or a woman. Twenty years later, I am doing the same thing. If you are the best candidate, you receive the salary for what the job is worth to the organisation, and you are compensated in future years by your talent.

If you are in a hiring position - stop thinking about gender and pay. Stop thinking about when women might leave the workforce because of pregnancy or other stereotypical nonsense. Pay the same for a job, and none of the other stuff matters. Everyone will want to work with you. People are attracted to fairness. Fairness is catnip for the human soul.

When people ask me how we retain our employees, I tell them my hiring strategy and encourage them to try it. But, of course, some do and some don't.

I always will, and so should you. So pay what the job is worth, let the best candidate emerge because they always do, and you'll make a difference.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF #TEAM PIPSTER

#TeamPipster is, quite by chance, an all-woman team. We are all at different stages in our lives, with various needs and demands on our time. Our success grows and our clients flourish, in spite of, or most likely because of, the way we work. Flexible working and a focus on wellbeing is encouraged through a caring and supporting culture. This allows us to get our work done in a way that suits us, our families and our lives. Here is a fairly typical day...

	Pippa	Jo	Katie	Hannah
Age	46	41	25	36
Job	Company Director, Bid Consultant, Manager and Writer	Bid Coordinator	Bid Writer and Apprentice	Bid Writer
Lives With	Partner and teenage daughter	Husband and middle school-aged daughter	Two professional house mates	Husband and two primary-aged children.
Works	Dedicated and separate office in house	Office area in the middle of the house	Sharing three working areas with housemates. Plus Mum's house and Grandma's house!	Garden office
Pets	Two kittens	One dog	None	Cats and Guinea pigs
Relaxes	Walking, OCR, SUPing, reading	Dog walks, gardening, drinking coffee, shopping	Run, walk Grandma's dog, drinks with friends	Run, exercise class, cooking, drinks with friends
Morning	Up at 6.30, do chores or go to gym and be at desk between 7 and 8.30	Up at 7, school run and desk for 9.30	Up at 8 and to work for 9	Up at 7 and get kids up. Bit of work before school run and back at desk for 9.30.
Lunch	Grab sandwich at desk at 12.30ish	Lunch and a dog walk. Meet friend in park at 12.30.	Eat and a walk to local park at 1	Eat and a walk along river at 1
Afternoon	Catch up with daughter when she gets home at 4. Log off at 5 to cook tea and walk after.	School run at 3. Log off at 5.30.	Log off at 6 and walk to the shops to get dinner	School run at 3. Log off at 5.
Evening	Back at desk at 7 to catch up on company management. Log off at 9 to watch film. Bed at 10.	Workout, eat tea, put daughter to bed and watch TV. Bed at 10.	Late meal with flatmates and quality TV time. Bed at 11.	Put kids to bed, chill out in hot bath. Bed at 11.

PIPPA'S TIPS FOR ENABLING FLEXIBLE WORKING INCLUDE:



ENABLE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

This is as important as trust. Effective two-way communication channels – formal and informal – are so important in encouraging a culture of openness and honesty. We have a #TeamPipster WhatsApp group for quick queries and gifs (we love a gif!). The team have a separate WhatsApp group without me in it. Regular formal touch points are on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays via Teams, as well as monthly team days in person. This may sound like a lot, but it is all absolutely necessary to ensure supportive and active engagement.



PROVIDE A FOCUS ON WELLBEING

Wellbeing underpins our business - healthy, happy people = superb work quality. I encourage lunch breaks, getting out in the fresh air and taking well deserved 'me-time'. We have monthly wellbeing Wednesdays which are 15 minute chats with me to talk about how they are in general. Our annual Wellbeing Wednesday Day basically involves a spa day! All staff are enrolled into Perkbox, which provides them with free confidential counselling and money off healthy pursuits and products.



GUARANTEE A SUITABLE WORKSPACE WITH THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT

Thorough risk assessments ensure each workspace is suitable and allows for effective and comfortable working. Providing the right equipment to do the job is also essential, including a separate mobile for work that is switched off at the end of each shift.



ALLOW TIME FLEXIBILITY

Our core hours are 9.30 to 2.30 with flexibility around the rest, and total relaxation if important things come up within core hours. All staff are in charge of their own hours and keep their own time logs - if they have to go above their allotted hours (as sometimes happens at the end of a bid), they claim the time back in lieu.

“ As a mum of two children, flexible working enables me to have the best of both worlds - having a career whilst being present when the children get home from school. No two days are the same for me. One day I might start work at 7am, the next I might start later after walking the children into school. ”

Hannah Thorne

“ As someone who moves around a lot to visit my partner, my Mum, and my Grandma, having the freedom to work flexibly is vital to me. Knowing Pippa trusts me to work in different locations allows me to live in London while still seeing the people closest to me – no matter how far away they now live. ”

Katie Dongworth

“ Pippa has given me the time, space and freedom to adapt after my last role, where I was not cared for. She provides flexibility in our hours, trusting us to manage our working patterns, while we ensure we are there for those crucial projects. I love this flexibility – it allows me to give quality time to my family. They have even commented about the positive difference in me, and I am loving my work again. ”

Jo Brassington

GETTING YOURSELF IN THE ROOM

by Alison Gurd

IT FEELS AS THOUGH GENDER EQUALITY HAS RECENTLY RECEIVED A RENEWED FOCUS FROM EMPLOYERS IN THE UK. THIS HAS POSSIBLY BEEN DRIVEN BY THE UK GOVERNMENT'S GENDER PAY GAP REPORTING, WHERE ORGANISATIONS WITH 250 PLUS EMPLOYEES MUST REPORT ANNUALLY ON THEIR GENDER PAY FIGURES. THIS MAY BE CONSIDERED A CYNICAL VIEW, BUT NO BOARDROOM WANTS TO BE IN THE PRESS FOR HAVING INEQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE - AND AS LONG AS WE ARE DRIVING CHANGE, PERHAPS THE STICK IS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN THE CARROT.

What I am seeing after a couple of years of reporting is the recognition that to create equality and resolve the pay gap, we need to look across all aspects of recruitment and retention.

I was fascinated to learn my organisation uses coding to ensure gender neutral job descriptions. This goes beyond removing the obvious he/she that can unintentionally slip in, ensuring the language attracts both women and men to apply for roles within in our organisation (for example, we avoid using the word "dynamic" which does not appeal to female applicants). This, along with expecting agencies to provide an equal balance of male and female applicants for consideration, goes a long way into improving our recruitment stats.



Of course, recruitment is only the tip of the iceberg. Once we have successfully recruited female applicants, we need to ensure we provide development opportunities to recognise and retain their talent. It's well documented that women are much more risk-averse in applying for senior positions, so we offer bespoke mentoring programmes aimed at helping our female employees realise their full potential. We also take a positive view of flexible working, acknowledging that women are still the main contributors to family and home activities such as caring for young or ageing relatives. One thing that the pandemic has taught us is we can achieve the same results with a flexible workforce; it is important we don't lose this lesson in a desire to return to 'normal'. I know this is harder to fulfil in other industries and smaller businesses; however I feel strongly that if the work/home life balance is taken seriously, the commitment and longevity with an employer is increased exponentially.

We must also consider how much of the responsibility for promotion of female employees sits with an employer and how much sits with the individual. I hear repeatedly from my female colleagues that they want to get promoted based on their merit, not as a quota. Although I wholeheartedly agree with this, I do feel (perhaps controversially) that female employees' behaviour needs to change as much as employers need to recognise the need for more females in their workforce.

I have worked in financial services for my whole career and have never felt that my gender has slowed or stopped me. But as I mentor those starting out in our sector, it has become more and more obvious I have stopped myself from progressing to the highest heights. The risk-averse quality I confidently state on my CV has a downside; I have prevented myself being promoted because I believed the risk of not knowing the subject well enough would lead to failure. I am part of the statistic that women do not apply for jobs if they do not meet at least 60% of the skills expected in a job description (compared to only 30% for men). I am also in the group of women who turn down headhunters on the first call, whereas my male colleagues will go for a chat and find out more. How can these female traits be overcome?

“

FOCUS ON HOW YOU'LL BE BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS, PROMOTING EQUALITY AND MAKING IT MUCH EASIER FOR THE NEXT GENERATION - ALL IN A DAY'S WORK. SURELY THIS IS A WIN/WIN?

”

The obvious answer is to surround yourself with other successful women. The Women in Bids and Proposals (WIBAP) network is a good example of this – you get sound advice from people within a diverse range of industries but with a common agenda of being in the bid arena. On a more personal note, I have learnt to have trusted partners - male and female colleagues within my industry - who are different from me, who I trust 100%, who know how to be direct and who push me in the direction I am capable of reaching.

This is a much more personal and focused approach to looking after your own career and goes beyond an annual review with your direct manager. It allows for very open and honest conversations that take your current situation and your aspirations into consideration. My advice is to never be afraid to approach someone to ask for their guidance. It is a huge compliment when someone asks me for career advice as it means in their eyes, I am doing something right!

One final thought for those formidable females that don't want to be part of a quota. Maybe look at being placed in a role “just because I am female” differently - you want the job and know you will be a success, so does it really matter if you are fulfilling a quota? Focus on how you'll be breaking down barriers, promoting equality and making it much easier for the next generation - all in a day's work. Surely this is a win/win?



BIDS - THE NEXT GENERATION

Working full-time in bids isn't normally the direction young people are given by the school careers advisers. Being a Bid Coordinator isn't normally part of the dream when graduates are considering their future. However, for Fiona Cooper and Isobel Clarke, starting and building a postgraduate career in bids/pitches has been extremely rewarding for themselves and for Crawford & Company – the NYSE-listed global insurance claims management specialist where they are making a fantastic impact. In this Q&A, Fiona and Isobel share their thoughts and explain why they would encourage young people and employers to invest in developing careers in this area.

FIONA COOPER



ISOBEL CLARKE



What was the career journey that led to you working in bids at Crawford? What are key parts of your role?

Isobel: I studied marketing and always wanted to work in a creative industry. Working in bids provides a great balance of project management and creativity. It's great to be involved with all areas of our business. Being a part of the business development team has given me a great insight into how instrumental the bid team is to our success at winning and retaining business.

Fiona: I previously worked in another bid coordination role before working at Crawford. I spotted an opportunity to join Crawford and was intrigued about working in a new industry (claims management) I knew nothing about. Having worked at Crawford for 18 months, I have learnt that working in bids is very much about people rather than the industry itself.

What are the areas where you feel you add most value and are most rewarding to you?

Isobel: The role is really varied. At Crawford I'm given the opportunity to flourish in areas where my strengths lie. For me I really enjoy creating projects from the ground up, developing creative content based on individual requirements and our business's core values. Navigating people through this process and managing the project from beginning to end is really rewarding.

Fiona: I also enjoy the variation of work and the broad range of people and departments we work with daily. I particularly feel I add most value through my project management and analytical skills, which allow us to continuously improve our process each time around. I find the insights from external and internal feedback very enlightening.

“IT IS GREAT TO SEE A WOMAN IN A SENIOR ROLE IN THIS INDUSTRY AND TO SEE FIRST-HAND THAT THESE ROLES ARE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL.”

How have you grown over the past 12 months?

Isobel: My knowledge of the insurance industry and the principles of bidding best practice have grown significantly over the past 12 months. I previously had no experience of either and one year on I feel very comfortable in my role. I have grown in confidence and I am now able to challenge and offer input and guidance to client directors and other senior colleagues, which I know they value.

Fiona: Within the past 12 months I have really begun to understand the importance of establishing a relationship with potential clients and customer fit. This has become a priority particularly during the pandemic when face-to-face meetings haven't been possible. It's been more important than ever to create foundations for growing relationships - both with clients and across our own business.

What makes a productive bid environment for you and others involved in bids?

Isobel: A productive bid environment begins with an established bid lead who has a strong understanding of the client. It is our duty as the bid team to guide this person and the wider team through the process. In order to do so effectively, we must prioritise the wellbeing of the team. Bidding can be an intense and stressful time so we try to reduce this by following an agreed process and ensuring no individual is overwhelmed.

Fiona: We establish an open and honest environment with our colleagues to ensure we continuously improve. The environment is based on trust and constructive feedback, allowing us to collaborate more effectively on the next bid.

How important are female role models to you?

Isobel: We are really fortunate to have a very inspirational President, Lisa Bartlett. Inclusion and investment in people is firmly on her agenda. It is great to see a woman in a senior role in this industry and to see first-hand that these roles are accessible to all.

Fiona: It is very important to see the topic of gender equality prioritised and discussed within the work environment. It is equally important to work in a business where a male member of our own leadership team has been recognised externally for his support towards women within the industry.

After my business degree, I joined British Aerospace. Along with another new starter and an existing buyer, we totalled three women in a procurement team of approximately 45. It never really registered with me at the time that we were any different. But pretty early into the role, the buyer used words to the effect of “Don’t let the side down. I’ve worked hard to get us accepted.” to us newbies. To be honest, I thought nothing more of it at the time other than thinking that it was a strange thing to have to say. Maybe I had to flex into being more like ‘one of the lads’ to fit in, but surely that was the right thing to do, wasn’t it?

Move on in time in my career, through promotions and different sectors. The next time something felt obviously out of kilter to me was when I finally got the top job at Royal and Sun Alliance and my small central team was temporarily and coincidentally all women. Now, in this BQ publication all about gender diversity, you’d think I’d be here shouting from the roof tops that this was a great achievement - but instead it felt wrong. We all acknowledged in a meeting that the dynamics were not right and indeed the informal chit chat at the beginning of the meeting was of a topic which we’d never have aired in a more diverse group (it was about tights...I kid you not).

Also at that time, and now as a senior woman in procurement (in job seniority as opposed to age!), I was lucky enough to be an early supporter of a newly created group called the Blueprint Club. The club was set up by a small number of like-minded women in our profession who thought we should stick together a bit more, as there were so few of us in senior roles. The first full session was a breakfast at the top of the BT Tower in London when between 20 and 30 of us got together - along with a small group of hand-picked and supportive men. There, we heard loud and clear from the London Business School presenter that while studies show forming single sex groups can actively support and promote their chosen cause, the benefits of a mixed interest group or club (and in the business context: team, function, board or even company) versus that of a single sex group are far greater and far outweigh any from being a ‘closed shop’.

To be honest, that was a massive lightbulb moment for me.

More recently, I was fortunate enough to spend four years supporting the Women in Rail (WiR) networking group leaders and then becoming a founding Trustee as we moved to a charity (after the group’s unmitigated success across the whole sector). At one of our early conferences, we had approximately 95% women and 5% men attending. One male speaker was brave enough to call this out. He also strongly recommended we should have some non-female advocates to create waves and change perception, as well as actually resetting the balance in the medium to long term. [At the time of the conference and based on a WiR survey, only 16% of the rail sector was female (often working in more traditional gender roles such as cleaning or retail), with only 7% in STEM professions]. The LGBTQ+ community had already picked up on this long before with straight Allies, so why not have Allies or advocates who will hold their hands up and actively support their female colleagues?

We don’t necessarily need studies to tell us that diversity brings a wealth of experience and views that single-sex, closed groups don’t. However, the fact that we still have to instruct such research and actively use the data shows we are a long way from this being accepted as fact. [The studies also say that companies embracing diversity and inclusion are more likely to be more successful in the long run.]

Change is about bringing everyone into the fold. When businesses run change programmes, they seek change champions – those outside of the programme who will speak up for it when it might be getting a bad rep. Why shouldn’t we have advocates supporting our gender equality agenda? Let’s focus not only on promoting gender diversity but also on how we can get our other colleagues to help us achieve this.

So, who is up for the challenge?



Anonymous
comments shared
with the WIBAP team

DID THEY REALLY SAY THAT?

THE TRUTH BEHIND INEQUALITY WITHIN THE BIDDING WORLD...

THAT TIME WHEN...

- Finding out a male colleague in the exact same position (you have the same level of education, roughly the same years' experience and arguably you are working on more 'must win' bids) is earning £20k more than you
- Finding that male stakeholders and male colleagues are going to the pub after work to watch footy and haven't invited you
- When being assertive within the room to ensure you're having the right conversations around bid strategy, and you're called bossy
- A male colleague who started on the same day, in the same role, is promoted above you and within two years is your line manager - without any of those positions being advertised (he was related to someone in senior management and did all the social stuff)
- Being the only woman on the executive board and being asked to make tea and coffee for everyone in the room
- With only a few women within a large group of men, you're always asked to come to the front of the group when marketing pictures are taken
- When you attend a sales training course and get asked if you're going to be able keep your attention in the room when you can see the shops from the window
- Having your outfit commented on every morning you walk into the war room. This goes on for weeks throughout the proposal lifecycle but none of the men receive the same comments.
- When a senior male colleague asks another male colleague, "How did he score that?" following a professional conversation with a female bid manager
- When a male colleague walks past 10 other people to ask you, the only woman, if you knew where the stapler was in the office

WOULD YOU SAY IT TO A MALE?

- *"Can you type this?"* (When the male bid manager who is actually working with that stakeholder is sitting right there)
- In an elevator, alone, with a stakeholder you work with often, and after saying hello, their response: *"Oh I didn't recognise you there, you look like one of the cleaners."*
- *"What's wrong with you, you seem grumpy?"*
- Run into a 7am meeting with a C-suite executive five minutes late (clearly flustered and apologetic due to trains being cancelled). C-suite executive comments, *"Oh she's here now, she was just doing her hair."*
- *"We need this printed for our meeting, can you do it?"* (To the female bid manager as opposed to the male bid manager or male bid coordinator who are also involved in the meeting)
- *"I guess we should also try to find a girl to sit in the meeting too, to show the client we're diverse."*
- *"I heard you were working from home yesterday. I bet you were actually getting your tan done and going to the shops."*
- *"I hope you're not using the printer to print explicit photos."* Said by a man you've never spoken to before.
- *"Oh you're wearing a dress today, who are you trying to pull?"*
- *"Can you take the minutes? It's just because you have better handwriting."*



EARLIER THIS YEAR, I WAS ASKED TO DIG OUT ANY OLD PHOTOS RELATING TO THE EARLY DAYS OF APMP UK AS IT CELEBRATED ITS 20TH BIRTHDAY. THERE WAS THE SNAP OF THE CHAPTER CHAIR'S "GAVEL OF OFFICE" BEING PRESENTED TO ME AT A CONFERENCE IN THE STATES. THERE WAS THE PICTURE FROM THE FIRST CONFERENCE, IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

GUESS THE MAKE UP OF THE FOLKS IN THE PHOTOS? RIGHT: WE COULD HAVE BEEN A STUFFY OLD MAYFAIR CLUB THAT ONLY ADMITTED MEN.

A LONG JOURNEY THAT'S BARELY BEGUN

by Jon Williams



I founded Strategic Proposals' UK business not long after. Our first four team members, who formed our board? All male. Our next two recruits? Yeah, guess.

Today? I'm thankful that we have a truly diverse business, across the thirty people I'm proud to call colleagues. And I know that we thrive as a result. Not just in terms of the SP 'family' being a wonderful community in which to work. But in terms of the mix of talents and perspectives that contribute to the work we do. And that all came from us recognising the issue, from others challenging us, and us challenging ourselves - hard.

Were we recruiting in our own image? Yes. Was the lifestyle associated with a training and consulting business - and the travel we were all doing - inherently discriminatory? Almost certainly so. Was our focus on only bringing in staff who'd already run bid/proposal teams leading us to subconscious age discrimination? Yes, to an extent.

Our business had to change. And I'm so glad it did.

It's also given a platform for us to talk about diversity issues. Carrying out the research into gender issues in the profession, a few years ago, that led directly to the formation of the working party from which WIBAP evolved. Setting up the process that led to the bid and proposal apprenticeship programme, to create opportunities for people to enter our profession by different routes.

And yet I feel there's still a long way to go. WIBAP does a wonderful job at providing opportunities for women to network and develop and has been welcoming to Allies from the outset. But, as a profession, are we talking about inclusivity and accessibility more broadly?

Are we really confident that the level of diversity at "director" or "head of" level is the same as it is for, say, "bid co-ordinators"? I guess not. And I suspect we all know which way it's skewed.

Is the intake into our profession sufficiently inclusive, despite the good work of the apprenticeship scheme?

“ **ARE WE REALLY CONFIDENT THAT THE LEVEL OF DIVERSITY AT “DIRECTOR” OR “HEAD OF” LEVEL IS THE SAME AS IT IS FOR, SAY, “BID CO-ORDINATORS”? I GUESS NOT.** ”

Do the inherent pressures of late night, last minute bid work make it harder for women - in a world where parenting responsibilities tend to fall more heavily on them, and the resourcing models for so many bid and proposal functions assumes that that's OK - and even praises people for working late, working weekends?

And I say this as father of a two-year-old. But as the world unlocks, I'm starting to travel more again - and guess who's the one left holding the baby? (Well, toddler! Erin's offended if you call her a baby these days.) Despite the steps I've taken - a four day week, not working Fridays and never travelling on Thursdays - it's a continuing challenge.

And we've all heard and read appalling stories of professional colleagues with disabilities whose organisations haven't supported them.

This is not a conversation that's happened in our profession - as in: past tense, done. It's a real challenge, here and now. Do we need better guidance and education for those in leadership roles to assess, honestly and non-critically, where their teams are now - and how they can deliver real business benefits from delivering real change where it's necessary? Should our industry's award and certification schemes specifically address these challenges - a mandatory section at APMP Professional on this topic, for example? What else should we be doing?

Should people like me even be taking up pages in publications like this? Well, actually, I hope so. I'm so delighted that Martin and the Bid Solutions team have invited Charlotte and WIBAP to take over as guest editors. And I'm delighted that they've invited people who strive to be Allies to contribute. But I know I have so much to learn.



THE WISE OLD BIRD ^[1]

by Sarah Hinchliffe

A LONG TIME AGO IN A NEST FAR, FAR AWAY... WHOOPS, THAT'S THE STORYTELLER IN ME GETTING CARRIED AWAY. BUT MY SALES AND BID CAREER DID BEGIN IN THE EARLY 1980S, WHICH IS QUITE A LONG TIME AGO. THROUGHOUT, I CAN HONESTLY SAY I HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE. YES, THERE HAVE BEEN BUMPS IN THE ROAD - A SPRINKLE OF REDUNDANCIES, FLASHES OF FRUSTRATION, SPLASHES OF TEARS, LASHINGS OF ANXIETY - BUT OVERALL IT'S BEEN A POSITIVE JOURNEY, A PROVERBIAL RICH TAPESTRY. AS I NOW HAPPILY TYPE MY WAY TOWARDS RETIREMENT, MY MISSION IS QUITE SIMPLY TO EARN A FAIR LIVING AND GIVE BACK WHAT I CAN. SO, FOR THIS BQ EDITION, I'M SHARING MY TOP FIVE LESSONS - MY GOLDEN EGGS - FROM FIVE DECADES.

Lesson 1: "A problem shared is a problem halved."

Life at my all-girls secondary school was far from happy - I wasn't physically bullied, but I had five years of relentless classroom taunting about the things I did or didn't do, the clothes I wore, my studious nature and so on. It was a horrible experience, but I told no-one. In year five, my parents cottoned on. We talked. They suggested I change school. I thought about it and refused. I didn't want to 'run away' and I knew my tormentors would be leaving as soon as they could. And the fact that my parents knew helped - my first experience of a problem shared is a problem halved, not a sign of weakness.

Since then, if the going gets tough, I talk to family, friends or colleagues and, at times, a counsellor. When I fell victim to a short bout of cyber-bullying a couple of years ago, I ignored what was being said and spoke to trusted colleagues who reassured me and helped me through it. Our chosen world of bidding is generally a friendly one - if you're facing a problem, there are many of us who will happily listen.

Lesson 2: "Never regard yourself as inferior."

In 1982, fresh off my graduate training, I joined the Royal Air Force sales team in ICL (now Fujitsu). My boss was a feisty lady. Although we were heavily outnumbered by our macho colleagues, she clearly had the respect of all around. She told me on day one, "Everyone round here is equal". So, I followed her lead - worked hard, participated and made myself valuable. Not once did I consider myself to be inferior.

I carried this with me into every conversation, every meeting and onwards into future jobs. I never looked at anyone else and thought they were better than me. And here's an extra tip from a cold-calling course I went on - if you find yourself thinking someone might be superior in some way, conjure up an 'equalising image' - I'll leave that to your imagination!

[1] The Wise Old Bird - a Panchatantra children's story - <https://www.bedtimeshortstories.com/the-wise-old-bird>



Lesson 3: "Your best is always good enough."

In the second decade of my sales career, a wise boss told me, "If you can look in the mirror every night and tell yourself you did the best you could, then you couldn't have done any better." As a perfectionist, I tend to be terrified of making the smallest of errors. I go over and over copy, emails, even texts, making sure the spelling and grammar are correct. The smallest criticism plays out in my mind a million times. If I miss or forget something, I am outraged at myself. The 'mirror' lesson is a trusty friend and always sees me through. If I find myself getting into a deepening spiral of over-analysis, I say to myself, "Oh come on Sarah, you did your best, and your best is always good enough."

There have been times when my best hasn't been good enough for someone else and it became a problem. And I knew what to do with a problem!

Lesson 4: "Never let your values drop."

In my first sales director role, I faced a difficult decision. One of my salespeople was persistently under-performing. I was sure I'd done everything to support him fairly and squarely and we'd reached the end of the line, but I was dithering. My boss was a wise Dutchman - he ran the company based on good aptitude and good attitude. We sat down and he got me to weigh up my decision, this way and that. In the end, he said "Sarah, never let your values drop - your values are our values. I have listened, you have been fair, and you have made the right decision."

Sadly, the lovely Dutchman is no longer with us, but he will always be there with me, reminding me that my values are sound and should guide me. So, make friends with your values, trust them and let them guide you.

Lesson 5: "Don't make the pig fly, buy a canary."

The last boss I worked for as a sales and marketing director before I went freelance played a huge part in giving me the confidence to finally break out on my own. On his office wall was a picture of a pig with wings and a canary. The slogan was "Don't make the pig fly, buy a canary." It symbolised the importance of playing to strengths and not trying to make people do things they were never cut out to do. I learnt to apply this fabulous advice with my team and myself.

By the time I went freelance, I had a crystal-clear picture of my strengths and a laser-sharp vision of how I wanted my new venture to shape up. I found the courage to stick to my guns, share my dream and never compromise about the type of work I wanted to do. It paid off.

So, from a wise old bird to her fledgling (and mature) bidding colleagues, those are my golden eggs. Feel free to crack them open, savour them and see if they work for you.

“ IF YOU CAN LOOK IN THE MIRROR EVERY NIGHT AND TELL YOURSELF YOU DID THE BEST YOU COULD, THEN YOU COULDN'T HAVE DONE ANY BETTER. ”



ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS



Nigel Hudson

Nigel is passionate about professional development. He designed and delivered the APMP award-winning Bid Academy for Vodafone and co-authored Europe's leading proposal syllabus with Strategic Proposals. He's trained more than 4,000 people worldwide.



Rick Harris

Rick has 32 years of association management experience, with the last ten years spent as the CEO of APMP. He is committed to the bid and proposal industry and has guided the association to a 100% growth in membership (now at 10,500+ members) over that time. With the help of APMP's Board of Directors, Rick created Bid & Proposal Con Europe™ and Bid & Proposal Con Asia™ to promote professionalism in the bid and proposal industry worldwide. He is APMP Practitioner certified and encourages all bid and proposal professionals to join APMP.



Pippa Birch

Pippa has been a Bid Writer for 20 years, working as an employee for major companies within the Highways and Civil Engineering Sector before going freelance in 2012. Pippa and her team write for companies across a variety of sectors (construction, facilities management, custody and forensics) although core clients are from highways and civil engineering. Pipster Solutions has become a successful, sustainable business with over 40 clients.



Alison Gurd

Alison is Global Head of the Proposal Management at BNP Paribas (Securities Services) based in London. The Proposal Team is responsible for managing global RFPs, partnering with their sales teams in 34 locations. Alison also ensures global best practice for local offices that are completing bids in local languages.

Alison has extensive experience in deal management, having undertaken sales, relationship management and proposal management roles during her career in the securities industry that spans 30 years.

Alison joined BNP Paribas in 2014; prior to this she worked for JP Morgan, covering a variety of client facing roles.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS



Peter McPartland

Peter is recognised for his strengths in bid team leadership, innovation and performance improvement. One of the first law firm employees to achieve the APMP Certified Professional qualification, Peter is also a winner of an APMP UK national award for Innovation.



Beth Wallace

Beth has worked in a number of sectors, starting out in aerospace manufacturing but also working in financial services, media, hospitality and legal to name a few.

Her career has spanned both negotiating deals as well as managing supplier relationships, from simple projects to complex outsourcing.



Jon Williams

Jon and his team work with clients worldwide to help them establish winning proposal capabilities and to capture major deals. He has built and led numerous bid and proposal centres; managed, reviewed and benchmarked countless proposals; worked in over thirty countries; and trained many thousands of course participants.



Sarah Hinchliffe

Sarah has over 35 years' selling and bidding experience, which she loves to share through her freelance work, articles and presentations. A constant champion of creative storytelling and professional rigour, she never tires of encouraging sales and bid teams to join up, work as a team and win more business together.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED WITH WIBAP?

wibap

IN-PERSON EVENTS

It seems like forever since we were able to host an in-person event! We held our last annual conference back in March 2020 before lockdown. Over 70 bid and proposal professionals came together to talk about best practice, presenting, getting feedback from clients, tackling bid libraries and taking charge of their career development. On top of these great sessions, an incredible commitment to networking and sharing stories meant new connections (as well as new friends) were made. We're really excited to be bringing back our usual annual conference in Spring 2022. We think it's going to be the best one so far!

As well as our conference, we usually hold quarterly networking events in a variety of locations across the UK - we're hoping to expand our reach in the near future! These events predominantly consist of a smaller group getting together to network, listen to mini-presentations and meet some incredible role models within our industry. Oh and of course the occasional drink too! Keep an eye out for our upcoming social events on our website.

VIRTUAL EVENTS

The past year has been a great way for us to reach out to new members, in particular those outside of the UK. We now host online events every few months, where everyone can join the session from the comfort of their own home.

One thing we're really keen on is making sure our events work for our attendees. If you want to have your camera on and get involved in the interactive bits, then that's fantastic! But if you have a bid deadline you're working to, or maybe just prefer to observe and hear what everyone else is sharing - then that's okay too. No matter how you'd like to get involved, you can make it work for you.

ONLINE DISCUSSIONS AND BLOGS

If you're already a member, then you'll know we often share questions and discussions on our LinkedIn page and Group. We love to hear your stories and advice! We're also growing our Active Membership on our website where we host a number of forums and blog posts for our members to get involved in. We want to be able to use this platform to share all of your useful tips and experiences. Our members often say how comforting it is to know we bid people are not alone in the problems we face, and to hear the different techniques we can consider using to overcome them.

In the next year we have so many other exciting things planned for our WIBAP members and for the profession... so stay tuned!

HOW CAN YOU FIND OUT MORE?

Follow our LinkedIn Page, join our LinkedIn Group or sign up to become an Active Member on our website. We share updates on all upcoming events and how you can register for tickets.

If you'd like to get involved with any events, sponsorship, writing, or even just want to speak to one of our team, please get in touch at charlotte@wibap.org



- ✉ info@wibap.org
- 🌐 www.wibap.org
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- 📄 For more BQ content visit www.bidsolutions.co.uk/bidding-quarterly/



A HUGE THANK YOU

by Charlotte Rees

I just wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you to everyone who has been on this WIBAP journey with us over the past three years, in particular, Martin Smith and Jon Williams. We wouldn't be where we are without all of your support and guidance.

As our Allies from day one, your support for WIBAP and our initiatives has been completely invaluable, and we are very grateful.

Furthermore, I need to say the biggest thank you to the WIBAP team for all of their hard work, in particular over this past year.

Every person at WIBAP HQ has a full time job in bidding, and as most of the readers of BQ probably know, bids and proposals really do take up much of

our daily lives! Volunteering for WIBAP is not easy and requires a lot of time and effort that happens throughout evenings and weekends. My team are committed, motivated and inspiring, and I am so proud and lucky to have every single one of you on board.

Finally, a thank you to all of our members, followers and Allies. We wouldn't be here if it wasn't for you and every comment made, post shared and event you get involved in means so much! Thank you for joining us on this journey - we can't wait to see what the future has in store!

And a final surprise for Charlotte! WIBAP wouldn't have become what is it today without Charlotte's drive, determination and belief in our mission. We couldn't have a better Director to keep us going, make us laugh, and continually push us to find new ways to engage our members. Thank you Charlotte for everything you do!

The WIBAP Team

BQ

BIDDING QUARTERLY

NEED HELP OR ADVICE?

ASK ONE OF OUR EXPERTS AT
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