

# BQ

BIDDING QUARTERLY

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# THE CULTURE CLUB

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# FOREWORD

MARTIN SMITH

Culture is defined and interpreted in countless ways. It may be as simple as a preferred music genre or as complex as a total sense of personal identity. In the workplace, it may be a "Work Hard – Play Hard" sign above the entrance or an open plan office celebrating the approachability of management. Cultural influences can dominate people's entire lives. Some acknowledge or selectively embrace favoured elements. And others (rightly or wrongly) can find themselves fighting them.

With *The Culture Club*, I wanted to explore the geographical differences, local influences and workplace variations within the bidding profession. I was keen for our Experts to explore how a country's or region's unique culture creates different approaches to bidding and the related impacts on the bid team. Building strong relationships is a key theme throughout BQ12; in bidding, they are your best friend.

Covid has changed the way most of us manage bids. Prior to its emergence, international travel and meeting our peers face-to-face was often the preserve of senior members of the bid and sales team. Today, all levels of an organisation are interacting with their peers around the world via Zoom or Teams. There has never been a more important time to understand our own cultural preferences and their potential impact (positive and negative) on the motivation of the wider bid and sales team, and on our ability to win.

It's essential to get the basics right in the workplace, whatever your way of life. Do you have a 'Cultural Bid Calendar'? Do you plan for Chinese New Year, the Islamic New Year, Tamil New Year, and the Jewish New Year? India, Nepal and various other countries celebrate New Year on dates according to their own calendars – are these accounted for? There was a significant social media backlash recently against procurement professionals issuing tenders over Christmas but I haven't witnessed a similar furor when other cultural events are affected. Rita Mascia's brilliant article discusses the impact of such 'cultural myopia' and suggests strategies for managing a mix of cultures.

Larissa Cornelius talks about power outages as a key part of cultural life in South Africa and the need to plan for these in her bids. It's an alien concept to me in London, and a brilliant example of the need to understand the challenges our colleagues are facing.

We also mustn't forget the working week is not the same for everyone. Karen Croshaw shares her experience of working in the Middle East and the importance of aligning to the work patterns of those you are supporting.

I've been fortunate to travel extensively and work with bid teams across five continents. Yet as Jon Williams rightly points out in his article, holidaying somewhere doesn't make me an expert in local culture. I was starkly reminded of this recently when I failed to take account of Diwali in my bid plan on a major opportunity.

As a proud Yorkshireman, I'm very aware of my 'direct' communication style. It's a style that has previously got me fired but also helps me run Bid Solutions. I've learnt the hard way (and have by no means perfected) the importance of 'communication culture' – adapting my style to match the candidate, client, or supplier rather than expecting them to adapt to mine. Rick Harris highlights this in his excellent article.

Nigel Dennis takes this a step further. In his article, he introduces a brilliant new concept – International Bidding Culture (IBC) – focussed on professional behaviours and values such as respect, timeliness, quality, honesty and empathy.

I hope you take as much as I have from the 15 insightful articles in this issue of BQ. Regrettably, several people declined the opportunity to participate in BQ12 – not for lack of opinion or perspective but for fear of recrimination from cultural strongholds in various parts of the world.

Adopting a global perspective is vital for success. As Michael Brown alludes to in his article, now is the time to embrace cultural diversity if you really want to gain a competitive advantage. And if in doubt, you can always take Sarah Hinchliffe's advice – when in Rome, do as the Romans do.

# THE COMMUNITY OF TOGETHERNESS

**“IF YOU WANT TO GO QUICKLY, GO ALONE. IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR, GO TOGETHER.”**  
AN AFRICAN PROVERB

LARISSA CORNELIUS

South African culture at its best is collaborative, creative and charismatic. The rich culture and drive to build a better life sit at the heart of South Africans. South African culture is as diverse as our wildlife. With 11 official languages, we are not called the “Rainbow Nation” for nothing.

Most African cultures start with the ancestry of the place and people. South Africa’s ancestry includes the Khoi-San tribes, Bantu tribe settlers and European colonists. The result is a vibrant array of ideas, customs and belief systems often broken into ethnic and cultural groups.

When I think of African culture, the following images come to mind:

- A tribe comes together around the fire, where the elders share their stories and wisdom
- A group of friends sharing ideas around a braai (BBQ)
- The community coming together to help one another during tough times

Defining culture, especially in South Africa, often feels like a double-edged sword. We do live with a heightened sense of multicultural sensitivity, and with good reason. South African culture is deeply rooted in our past – as is overcoming it to build an equal society.

We are not without our challenges, such as high unemployment, ageing infrastructure and a strained economy. The political influence on South African culture is hard to ignore. In many ways, it is our socio-economic environment that drives an entrepreneurial spirit.

We are an accepting nation that prefers face-to-face engagement, direct communication, and physical contact regardless of culture. The key advantage of working with South Africans in a bid is that we are accepting, persistent and hardworking, and we know how to come together.

## SO HOW DOES THIS IMPACT HOW WE BID?

Culture and managing diversity are critical to success in any country. Some key aspects South African culture has on the bid process are:

### Planning

South African businesses need to plan daily activities and contingencies to remain sustainable. Examples include:

- We have a generator/alternative power sources to manage power outages
- Language is a vital consideration, especially if bidding out of the country. For example, if bidding to Mozambique, we may have to translate the bid into Portuguese.
- Access to technology, tools, and infrastructure is essential. Some South Africans do not have connectivity, space to work or access to a laptop.

### People

South African bid teams are often smaller than their UK and US counterparts. As such, individuals need to multitask. It is rare to find a company with a proposal manager and a proposal writer.

South Africans are used to working in diverse teams and providing different perspectives. Respectfully maintaining control while giving each member a voice is essential.

### Process

Companies need to comply with the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act to work in South Africa. The Act is in place to reduce the impact of historically disadvantaged individuals. To meet these requirements, businesses need to improve black ownership, employment equity, enterprise development and skills development.

In addition, larger companies often need to subcontract with black qualifying entities for 30%+ of the contract value.

Due to increased scrutiny around fraud and corruption, additional quality gates and governance processes must reduce risk. Extra checkpoints add time constraints and pressure on the bid function.

## A DIVERSE BID TEAM IN ACTION

Currently, I am part of a bid that contains five Joint Venture partners and over twenty subcontractors. The project combines teams from across South Africa and China and over fifty people to engage with. The aspect of cultural impact when working in a bid team is, therefore, top of mind.

Success depends on navigating the South African and Chinese cultural differences within the sub-cultures of each organisation. Educating our foreign partners on working in South Africa and understanding our procurement and bid processes is necessary.

Managing a team this size is easier said than done. I have had to consider:

- Technology access restrictions in each country
- Language and cultural barriers
- Additional time required for translation services (meetings and content)
- Time zone restrictions for meetings and deadlines
- Political happenings, influences and impact
- Regulatory, legal and procurement considerations
- Impact of Covid-19 on travel as well as work/life balance

Using a documented and structured bid process is non-negotiable but needs to allow room for flexibility. It helps to have a core team including an intermediary who understands both cultures and sets up smaller group sessions for updates.

A central data room and breaking the project into financial, technical, and commercial segments also make the process easier.

Making sure the team is on the same page is essential. Communication beyond virtual meetings and putting crucial aspects in writing is critical.

Getting all the content in English and making it into a cohesive story for the customer is vital. To achieve this, we prepare a strategy template with a content plan. Guiding the team to use one template makes it easier to consolidate into ‘one voice’.

No matter how diverse the bid team is, winning is possible when you work towards a common goal.

“ WE MIGHT HAVE OUR DIFFERENCES, BUT WE ARE ONE PEOPLE WITH A COMMON DESTINY IN OUR RICH VARIETY OF CULTURE, RACE AND TRADITION. ”

Nelson Mandela

# IN SEARCH OF BIDDING'S ESPERANTO

NIGEL DENNIS

**A COLLEAGUE RECENTLY REMINDED ME ABOUT ESPERANTO, A PLANNED UNIVERSAL BUT ARTIFICIAL LANGUAGE. POLISH OPHTHALMOLOGIST L.L. ZAMENHOF CREATED IT IN 1887 TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT LANGUAGES, COUNTRIES AND CULTURES IN THE ULTIMATE HOPE THAT IT WOULD BRING ABOUT WORLD PEACE.**

Sadly, with estimates of around 1,000 current native speakers and 30,000 to 180,000 second language speakers, it's clearly not going to be a global lingua franca any time soon.

The world and the workplace have changed markedly since Esperanto's inception. More than a century of international travel, immigration and the ever-creeping globalisation of business have blurred previously clear cultural delineations. As such, the world appears smaller with each passing day. What has this taught us? Perhaps there is no longer a cultural us and them, just differing versions of us.

## THE IMPACT OF A SMALLER WORLD

Australia and New Zealand are both island nations tucked away near the bottom of the world. Despite this, or maybe because of it, our people are known as great travellers. Many of us have been very fortunate to 'see the world,' often arriving home with new-found partners. I'm reminded of this daily at BidWrite.

A staff survey (admittedly somewhat unscientific) indicates we principally hold Australian or New Zealand passports but as a group can lay claim to 17 different cultural influences – either directly or through our nearest and dearest.

This number magnifies quickly when our team works on international bidding projects. By way of an example, we currently have staff working on a truly international bidding project spanning six countries, even more cities and a time zone spread of around 12 hours. As we look ahead to 2022, our bidding pipeline is highlighting even more of the same.

So, although we may be isolated down under, we are not insulated from the rest of the world. As exciting as this is, this type of international bidding work comes with its challenges.

## YOUR CULTURE OR MINE?

Having spent three decades working in the proposal management profession, much of it teaching others, I've seen the strong bonds that exist between bidding professionals. Almost without exception, those who are 'in the trade' continue to amaze me. We implicitly understand each other, understand what's required and professionally go about getting the job done – irrespective of ethnic identity, location, tradition or belief. In that sense, bidding transcends the popular definition of culture.

As a collective of proposal professionals, we have the pleasure of working with like-minded colleagues from all over the world. Through these interactions it's become clear that most cultural challenges we face are not created by ethnic or geographical differences, but workplace or role-based ones. In my experience, these are the culprits more likely to shatter bidding world peace.

Where it often seems to come unstuck is when our bidding culture bumps into other types of workplace cultures – particularly those that are not well-attuned to the deadline-driven nature of our profession or the exacting standards that underpin sustained success.

As bidding professionals, it's also necessary for us to quickly form functional and productive relationships with others, each of whom have their own role-based cultures. Boards are busy governing, C-suites are busy managing, sales folk are busy chasing the next deal, and subject matter experts are busy applying their expertise. Each type has their own priorities and established culture, at least to some extent. When these differences are thrust into a bidding pressure cooker, it's little wonder that challenges sometimes arise here too.

So how do we practically overcome all these challenges in a professional way?

## REINFORCING A NEW TYPE OF GLOBAL CULTURE

In the genuine interests of client-centricity but at the risk of homogenising cultural heritage, I'd like to suggest a new concept – International Bidding Culture (IBC). It has nothing to do with attributes like geography or ethnicity, but everything to do with professional behaviours and values like respect, timeliness, quality, honesty and empathy.

Committed proposal professionals display these qualities in spades. It's our role to stay committed to reinforcing this culture for those who stand to benefit from it most – the companies we work for, the clients we serve, and of course our profession.

Many would argue we already do a great job of this as a profession. However, I believe the reality is a little murkier, despite best intentions. To a large degree, it's clients that drive proposal agendas. Accordingly, we often find ourselves having to align with their pace, practices and cultures. While this is necessary, we should never lose sight of our own.

By continually focussing on the specific bidding behaviours and the values that underpin our profession, we express our IBC and elevate our profession further.

The ranks of our profession are already swelling with our eventual replacements. This more universal IBC approach will resonate well with a generation that already takes differences in location, language, ethnic identity and traditions so easily within its stride.

## SO WHERE DOES THIS LEAVE US?

Unlike Esperanto, our profession's numbers are on the rise. As such, the continued push for the adoption of IBC practices may help create a common language for the many disparate workplace and role-based cultures we meet in bidding. If anyone is to be charged with that responsibility, surely it is us as proposal professionals.

Unfortunately, world peace seems no closer now than when Esperanto was invented. But with the wider adoption of a standardised IBC, bidding world peace might be.

“ UNFORTUNATELY, WORLD PEACE SEEMS NO CLOSER NOW THAN WHEN ESPERANTO WAS INVENTED. BUT WITH THE WIDER ADOPTION OF A STANDARDISED IBC, BIDDING WORLD PEACE MIGHT BE. ”

RITA MASCIA

# CULTURAL DIFFERENCES: AN ENRICHMENT OR A SOURCE OF FRUSTRATION?

“ IF YOU WORK IN MULTICULTURAL TEAMS, EMPATHY IS YOUR BEST FRIEND. YOU MAY COME ACROSS DIFFERENT BEHAVIOURS FROM YOUR MULTICULTURAL COLLEAGUES AND CLIENTS. NONE OF THEM ARE RIGHT OR WRONG, THEY'RE SIMPLY DIFFERENT. ”

## OUR BRAINS ARE WIRED TO RECOGNISE PATTERNS AND TO SPOT WHAT FEELS FAMILIAR. THAT'S WHY WE FEEL COMFORTABLE WHEN WE BELONG TO A GROUP AS WE KNOW THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT.

It's easy therefore to underestimate the value that cultural differences can bring to bid and client teams.

One reason businesses are so obsessed about having a great organisational culture is to increase collaboration. While culture can be a real asset to a business, often people don't know how to deal with cultural differences. Or worse, they don't pay attention to them, alienating colleagues and clients in the process.

## WHERE TO START THEN?

First the **language**. Using the simplest vocabulary is best whether writing a bid proposal or attending client meetings. While I am a huge fan of idiomatic expressions like “speaking of the devil”, they rarely translate well in other cultures and can often backfire.

Then **body language**. It is easier for non-native speakers to communicate in writing than on the phone. Alternatively, use Zoom as your colleagues will see your lips moving and they will understand better than on the phone (feedback from a Chinese colleague).

Next, **formality vs informality**. After 30 years living in the British Isles, I love the informality of first name calling. But I know from my native culture that Italians (and other European nationalities) are not so informal at work. Highly educated subject matter experts like to emphasise their honorifics as opposed to being addressed as just ‘John’ or ‘Emily’.

**Hierarchy** is also especially important in bid team dynamics where **individualistic** vs **collectivist** norms coexist. In more individualistic Western cultures, we expect people in meetings to contribute equally. In Eastern cultures, where respect for age and seniority is key, younger or less senior colleagues may refrain from contributing to a meeting for fear of being disrespectful. If you want everyone in your multicultural team to contribute to your bid strategy meeting, ask them explicitly!

You can also see examples of individualistic vs collectivist cultural differences in the **images** clients use in their branding. In collectivist cultures like India, a group photo in your bid proposal may resonate better with your Indian client than an image of a single individual. In the West, Nike is a good example of a company which focuses on the individual for their branding, where most pictures are of a single athlete. It matters if you want your bid to look like one your client would write.

Some cultures need more information than others. In Western cultures, when you answer a question, your response tends to expand on the question asked. In other cultures, colleagues may give you narrow answers. Don't assume that they are uncooperative; in fact, they are being extra polite. Tip: be unambiguous in your instructions.

Cultural differences even affect **remunerations**. Working in companies with multiple subsidiaries, compensation tends to vary across sites, influenced by business culture/trends in their local markets. In places where the collective is important, salaries tend to be equivalent or based on fixed reward. In more **individualistic** cultures like the

United States, for instance, they value individual performance more than group work. This often translates to small salaries but big bonuses or promotion opportunities for the best performers. Colleagues in sales who are more bonus-dependent tend to engage less with bid managers and their teams, particularly on longer bidding timescales, because their cooperation may not lead to any financial returns for a long time. While you may not have authority to change that, it's worth bearing in mind to avoid frustrations.

What about **religion**? Learning the religious affiliations of your team/clients means showing empathy and fostering inclusive bid/client teams. Having a ‘multicultural diversity calendar’ could help with bid scheduling and with celebrating religious cultural diversity.

Sometimes, **cultural myopia** occurs when two regionally different bid teams collaborate on a proposal. Both teams think their way is ‘the only way’, unable to notice other ways of working. The key for a bid leader is to embrace the best of both worlds, crediting each team for what they do well.

When working with clients from different cultures for whom ‘**losing face**’ is a no-no, you may not realise this until it is too late. The team are enthusiastic about the client meeting, only to find out later that no deal was agreed. They wonder why because the client team kept nodding and agreeing with them. What happened then? The customer team could not lose face in front of your team because in their culture it would have been considered rude to disagree.

I could go on with more examples but there too many to mention. Instead, I will finish with what worked for me. If you work in multicultural teams, empathy is your best friend. You may come across different behaviours from your multicultural colleagues and clients. None of them are right or wrong, they're simply different. Ask yourself every time, “Did they mean to be so direct, blunt, evasive, ambiguous, disrespectful, arrogant, passive, ‘replace with your favourite adjective here?’”

Instead, try being curious and fascinated. Ask questions (but not too directly), value your and their uniqueness, and consider yourself lucky to experience so much variety in your work.

So, back to my initial question: Are cultural differences an enrichment or a source of frustration? My answer is: It should be an enrichment, but the reality is often something in between. The cultural differences I have experienced enriched my personal and professional life even though, at times, I may have felt frustrated by them. They acted like a mirror held in front of me that made me uncertain of my own culture (native or acquired by residence). They made me question things I do and things I think, and I have felt enriched in the process.

Cultural diversity is not just about people, it's also about being able to embrace different ideas. The ‘Culture Club’ is good for everyone, is good for business and is good for the soul.

**THE BATTLE TO CONNECT MY LAPTOP TO THE ANTIQUATED PROJECTOR HAD FINALLY BEEN WON. THE TABLES HAD BEEN SET; HANDOUTS, BOOK, PEN, PAPER NEATLY WAITING FOR EACH PARTICIPANT. THE CLOCK TICKED SLOWLY TOWARDS THE 9AM START TIME. AND I SAT BACK AND WAITED FOR THE PARTICIPANTS TO ARRIVE.**

**AND WAITED. AND WAITED.**

By 9.20 I was panicking: I wandered to the reception desk in the client's training centre. Had I come on the wrong day? Misread the timings? Had the team been diverted at the last minute to attend some major corporate announcement?

They smiled at me. "Don't worry," they said. "They'll all be here soon."

When the first attendees drifted happily in shortly after 9.45, they were horrified to find I didn't have coffee. Off I was taken by my new-found friends, desperate to extend their hospitality.

We started eventually. The group were brilliant. We covered all we needed to, and more. And I was left feeling ever so... British. And not necessarily in a good way.

I've worked face-to-face with bid and proposal teams in over 35 countries. So much of what we do as professionals is eminently transferable around the world, across different sectors: perhaps 80%? What fascinates me is the 20% that isn't. Clients' decision-making processes and the role of the proposal within the sales cycle. The tone and structure of your content. The way in which you engage your team – and the expectations you might have of them. Their expectations of you.

# UNCULTURED

JON WILLIAMS

**“ WHEN I LOOK BACK ON MY CAREER, AM I MORE LIKELY TO REMEMBER THOSE COLD, WET AFTERNOONS IN MANCHESTER – OR THOSE WORKSHOPS IN SHANGHAI? ”**

**“ JUST BECAUSE YOU'VE GONE ON HOLIDAY THERE ONCE, DOESN'T MEAN YOU KNOW THE CULTURE.” GETTING TO GRIPS WITH THIS REQUIRES HUMILITY, FLEXIBILITY AND HARD WORK. ”**

There's a quote I love from a *Management Today* article some years ago: "Just because you've gone on holiday there once, doesn't mean you know the culture." Getting to grips with this requires humility, flexibility and hard work.

So if you're thrown into the deep end of a bid, leading a team from a different culture, what might you do? Here's a quick plan – based on hard-earned experience, rather than any formal academic research:

1. Talk to colleagues who've worked in that country before: what worked well for them, what surprised them, and what cultural howlers did they make?
2. Talk to the members of the team you'll be working with: have an open, honest conversation about how people tend to operate, what works for them – and what might surprise you about one another. (Some self-deprecating humour might come in handy here).
3. Read! Aside from online resources about countries and cultures, I'd highly recommend Erin Meyer's quite brilliant book *The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business*.
4. Understand how decisions are taken. If you're used to collaboration and your team on the bid expects more authoritative leadership, that's a recipe for inaction.
5. Think individuals, not just the collective. Connect with people: what's happening in their world outside this bid?
6. Slow down. Communicate clearly and simply, and test understanding: ask team members to play things back to you, rather than assuming they're on board.
7. Check in regularly with the team. Seek feedback – while understanding that some cultures are more direct in sharing views than others. And encourage early escalation, especially with groups for which that might not come naturally.
8. Write appropriately for the client. More confident and assertive, or more humble? Use simpler terms and shorter sentences with more graphics if evaluators might be reading in their second (or third, or fourth!) language.
9. Where contributors aren't writing in their first language, use editors to take away the fear of crafting the words. And be careful of misplaced colloquialisms: use a local editor for at least the final review. (Hey, I don't even speak American!)
10. Thank people. (When did you last send a hand-written note, thanking contributors for their work on a proposal?)

And finally: enjoy! When I look back on my career, am I more likely to remember those cold, wet afternoons in Manchester – or those workshops in Shanghai? You can probably guess – with no offence to any Mancunians who might be reading! If you can engineer opportunities to broaden your perspectives, go for it! We're so very lucky to work in a profession where that's entirely possible.

# MY THREE GIFTS

KAREN CROSHAW

**CONSIDER THIS AS MY FAIRY GODMOTHER GIFT OF THREE THINGS I LEARNED THE HARD WAY AND WISH I KNEW BEFORE I STARTED WORKING ON AN OVERSEAS BID.**

The pandemic has taught us we can run successful bids with a geographically dispersed bid team. I have no doubt this trend will continue, with “You’re on mute, mate!” winning the award for “Most Frequently Used Phrase of 2022” as it has done for the previous two years.

Now that we’ve all embraced Teams, Zoom and Sharepoint as tools to help us collaborate, international bids will become a breeze, right? Wrong. Whilst we might assimilate technology quickly, the cultural aspects of international bidding don’t change that fast.

I’m sharing three things I learned the hard way and wish I’d known before I started working on an overseas bid.

## GIFT 1

### Relationships are everything.

Good business transactions are based on trust: we only want to do business with people we like and trust. Even before the tender was published, our local in-country business development teams had invested significant resources in building strong relationships with our overseas clients.

We also knew local suppliers and carried out our due diligence, because we were committed to working in that country. By the time the procurement was launched, the client was expecting our tender. From that point, the procurement became a competition on a level playing field because all bidders understood exactly what the client wanted to achieve, and the challenges involved.

In my first offshore bid I was 100% UK-based, unable to get a Saudi Arabian visa. I couldn’t build as good a relationship with my in-country bid team as I would have liked. In addition, the bandwidth was weak, video conferencing was prohibited, and the phone signal vanished in bad weather.

**So what?** If you haven’t invested resource in building a relationship with your client, contributed to the scope of the ITT or have anyone based in-country, then don’t bid. If you are the bid manager and this hasn’t formed part of your bid/no bid, then push back on the bid decision. If, on the other hand, you are a serious contender and you have an in-country team, then as bid manager try and meet them in person early to build relationships and trust.

## GIFT 2

### Baksheesh.

At the bid kick-off for my first Gulf tender, one of my Saudi-based colleagues asked me what my “Brown Envelope Budget” was. I was horrified, having understood it meant a budget for paying in-country bribes and backhanders to get our tender favourably reviewed. I explained our Anti-Bribery and Corruption (ABC) Policy and that we did not buy work. I could hear him laughing to himself as he said, “Well you won’t win the bid like that!” However, we stood by our ABC policy and won the tender openly and transparently. My client did ask me after contract award when his signing gift (a white Range Rover with personalised number plates) was arriving, and I laughed and gave him a branded pen instead. It was similar – it was white with a logo on the side.

Whilst baksheesh is a cultural norm with some overseas public sector organisations, it can land British companies in trouble with the Serious Fraud Office.

**So what?** Has the expectation to pay bribes formed part of your bid/no bid? If not, then push back on the decision to bid. If it’s been considered and agreed, then have a strong and clear ABC policy right from the start of the bid. Make sure your entire bid team is aware of it (including in-country teams) and stick by it. Does your ABC policy mean you are unlikely to be successful? Will it change your decision to bid? Can you win and deliver without paying bribes?

## GIFT 3

### “Don’t They Know It’s Friday?”

Time and weekend differences can massively affect your bid if not managed well. When I managed my first Middle East bid, weekends in Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the UK were all different. Time differences and daylight savings time meant that, at best, I had a maximum of 12 hours in a working week when I could get contributors all together on a conference call.

When Saudi changed the weekend to fit in with the rest of the Gulf, this made managing the dispersed team easier. To ensure we made sufficient bid progress, I adjusted my own working week to match the UAE week – starting work on Sundays 5am UK time, to maximise my contact with the Gulf team. However, the bid team was still expected to attend meetings and be available between 9 and 5 Monday to Friday. This expectation only changed once I based myself in the UAE for the next bid and experienced first-hand the local team’s frustration. I declined yet another Friday evening meeting request and suggested we reconvene at 7am UAE time on Sunday instead – which suited 80% of the bid team. I got an explosive call from the UK asking if I really meant a meeting at 3 o’clock on a Sunday morning – how ridiculous was that? I replied that it was as ridiculous as expecting people to attend a conference call at 10pm in the middle of their weekend.

**So what?** To get results, you’ll need to understand and respect the local day: the weekend, the dates of cultural and religious holidays, when your bid team starts and finishes work. Build the consideration of what the local day looks like into your bid planning and scheduling. For example, a Gulf team and public sector clients are likely to work shorter hours during Ramadan but with clever planning, the Gulf weekend is an opportunity to gain a 6-day working week for your bid team. I’ve found it essential to have an accountable in-country bid manager/coordinator for each location to manage local activity and local stakeholders, UK included.

## SUMMARY

I could go on forever, and I’m happy for you to contact me to discuss, but for your next offshore or geographically dispersed bid, my three gifts to you are:

1. BUILD LOCAL RELATIONSHIPS
2. BE CLEAR ON CORRUPTION
3. RESPECT THE LOCAL DAY

MIKE READER

# A TEAM WHO DELIVERS WHILST YOU SLEEP

**IN AN INDUSTRY WHERE TIME IS A SCARCE COMMODITY, THE IDEA OF ESTABLISHING A GLOBAL BID TEAM CAN BE VERY ATTRACTIVE TO A TIME-POOR BID LEADER. I'M SURE MANY OF YOU HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT 24 HOUR WORKING, WITH A CONNECTED AND COLLABORATIVE TEAM AROUND THE GLOBE. THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS THAT COULD BE GAINED FROM HAVING A TEAM WHO WORK WHILST YOU SLEEP, AND WHO SHARE WORKLOAD, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE ACROSS TIME ZONES, COULD WELL BE THE ULTIMATE PRODUCTIVITY HACK. WHAT COULD GO WRONG?**

At Mace, we are currently on a journey to build global bid capability and capacity while ensuring we can support proposals in our offices around the world. The dream of efficient 24 hour working and connectivity still feels a long way away for us. I have realised we've had to work harder than ever before to build the right team culture and break down barriers within our 40+ person team.

We've had to be consciously more inclusive. We've had to go above and beyond to ensure our team in London gets to know our colleagues in Mumbai, Mauritius, New York, Dubai, the Philippines and (often just as hard) other cities in the UK!

Zoom and MS Teams becoming mainstream business tools has certainly helped - but I can share other experiences I hope will help you in your pursuit of the ultimate global bid team.



**“ ADAPTING OUR STYLE TO SUIT OTHERS, FOCUSING ON CLEAR COMMUNICATION AND ANCHORING OUR METHOD OF OPERATION ON A STRONG BUT ADAPTABLE BID PROCESS - SET US IN GOOD STEAD FOR THE FUTURE. ”**

## **1. NOT EVERYONE WORKS THE SAME AND WE MUST ADAPT TO THEIR WORK STYLE, NOT EXPECT THEM TO WORK TO OURS.**

It feels obvious when you see it in print, but not everyone is the same. And culturally, different countries have different working practices, priorities and work styles. A key consideration for us when seeking to bridge cultural differences is understanding what makes each individual tick.

Some of my team need help switching off. For colleagues in India and central Asia, it is not normal to say “no” or that they have too much work on. We have to carefully monitor the demands we put on them, and also the demands they receive from their colleagues in the office. If we didn't put in safeguards and clear reporting on activities and time on the job, it's quite conceivable colleagues would be working through the night on a regular basis.

In other areas, work/life balance is much more defined. A clear start and end date, at least an hour for lunch away from desks and plenty of quiet time to work on individual tasks has been typical of colleagues in mainland Europe. Here, respecting these boundaries and being honest with what's achievable in the workday helps everyone to understand what's going to be delivered, when, and to what quality.

## **2. COMMUNICATION MATTERS AND IT TAKES TIME TO GET RIGHT.**

Perhaps it's another obvious statement, but language barriers are a genuine challenge - particularly when communicating tasks, reporting progress updates and seeking feedback.

Our business's primary language is English and it's easy to forget that for some of the team, it's not their first, second or even third language. Written communication has often proved more effective when communicating tasks, deliverables and actions, but even this can sometimes fall foul of some nuances in language. Repetition has been our friend when communicating across borders, both when seeking feedback (so we understand what our colleagues are telling us) and also when we're asking for support or communicating a task or deliverable.

But nothing beats face to face interaction. With the lifting of flight restrictions, I've been fortunate to visit members of my team outside the UK. I've found there is no substitute for spending time with them, coffee in hand, just finding out more about who they are. This has helped us build closer relationships and, ultimately, understand our communication styles and drivers better. (All my flights are offset as part of Mace's commitment to being a net carbon zero business.)

## **3. A STRONG BID PROCESS IS CRITICAL AND CREATES A COMMON BID LANGUAGE ACROSS OUR TEAM.**

Anchoring clear communication is part of our strong, logical and sometimes overly detailed bid process. My team has done amazing work in codifying the way we work and capturing that within 31 activity guides, countless standard templates, and training and support to help translate the approach to different types of bids.

Having a clear process means we have a clear bid language in our team. Everyone understands what's expected of a pink review, or what will be provided to writers when they're engaged, or how to navigate our sometimes complex approval and sign-off processes.

It's made us stronger to work in one unified way. It's also meant that as our team has expanded globally, those joining us have a solid foundation from which they can build quickly and speed up onboarding (which can be more challenging across time zones).

These three learnings - adapting our style to suit others, focusing on clear communication and anchoring our method of operation on a strong but adaptable bid process - set us in good stead for the future. Whether you're starting out with your first international hire or if (like us) you're seeking to grow and expand an existing team, I strongly recommend these three elements as a solid foundation for you.

## **WHERE DO WE GO NEXT?**

Mace is targeting growth of 20% each year up to 2026, from a £2 billion turnover in 2020. A large part of that growth will come from outside the UK. This means my team will continue to grow, develop and respond to the entrepreneurial drive which has presented opportunities as varied as delivering new schools in Peru, metro lines in Canada and new cities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The world will continue to be more connected. Professionalism and competency in our industry will continue to grow globally as we move through the 2020s. Global teams working together will become more and more common in our profession. We need to embrace our differences in order to make sure we act and work as one joined-up, work-winning team.



SARAH HINCHLIFFE

# UNA FACCIA, UNA RAZZA

**WHEN MARTIN FIRST ANNOUNCED THE CULTURE CLUB TITLE, I THOUGHT, "OH NO, WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT THAT!" THEN I THOUGHT AGAIN, AND A TERM FROM A RECENT ITALIAN MOVIE CAME TO MIND: "UNA FACCIA, UNA RAZZA" – ONE FACE, ONE RACE. IT GOT ME THINKING.**

After a sheltered UK-based time in the 1980s, I have spent 30 years working with sales and bid people from many countries. The 1990s involved US, Belgian and Dutch colleagues; the 2000s took me (virtually if not always physically) across east and west Europe, Australasia, Africa, the US and Canada; and in the last decade, I have trained people from across the globe. And here's the thing...selling and bidding is selling and bidding the world over. We talk the same language, experience the same frustrations, share the same sadness when we lose and joy when we win. We are a global tribe.

Of course, within any group of people, there are differences. In every country, culture and profession there are different personalities; each of us has our own unique mix of characteristics. But, as sales and bid people, we share a common goal – to win business. We form permanent and temporary teams to do exactly that. Looking back, I have always just turned up, wherever, whenever, to form or join a team with winning in mind.

**“ WHEN IN ROME, DO AS THE ROMANS DO. WHETHER YOU ARE LEADING OR WORKING IN A NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL BID TEAM, HARNESS LOCAL KNOWLEDGE, RESPECT LOCAL CULTURE AND EMBRACE YOUR COLLEAGUES. ”**

So, let me share some of my favourite Culture Club highlights, admittedly with some sweeping generalisations for which I request forgiveness and blame artistic licence.

My best multinational bid experience was running a team in a supply chain supporting a major system integrator (SI) on a big defence deal. The fabulous Welshman running the SI bid was smart and savvy, and he had a vision. He also had spadefuls of humility and inclusivity. He managed a complex cross-European team with a clarity of decision and communication that was a joy to behold. He had a lot to do with me eventually joining the tribe.

And how can I forget bidding defence deals in former Eastern Bloc countries? Always an interesting cultural experience. We invariably had a local partner who understood the ropes and led the proceedings, but we had to protect our position, our reputation and our margins. This usually involved intense after-dinner, eyeball-to-eyeball strategising with the head honcho – on one occasion in a mock wartime cabaret-style restaurant drinking strong spirit of dubious origin poured from smuggled-in plastic Pepsi-Cola bottles. Our shared purpose kept me going!

Top of my list of cultural training experiences has to be the class of 25 Portuguese folk. They had been told the limit was 16, but they just kept turning up. Trying to get them to turn off phones and close laptops was pointless, and the breaks and lunches were interminable as the chatter and cigarettes ate into the time. But their passion for the subject and willingness to stay after class to make up lost hours were such that I could forgive the blatant disregard for protocol. We had a ball. They lapped up the training because the bottom line was we were all part of the business-winning tribe.

The converse of the irreverent Portuguese behaviour was the wonderful Indian team I trained one December after an urgent phone call asking if I could fly to Dallas for a two-day workshop "next week". Yes, that's right, an Indian team in Dallas. It was worth the long haul – they were well-behaved, appreciative and inclusive. And, I had the best Indian meal ever. Yes, that's right again, a full Indian cultural and culinary experience in an out-of-town shopping mall. We spent the whole evening chatting enthusiastically about winning business round the world.

I could go on. I usually do. But this time I'll swing full circle back to my Italian passion with the phrase, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." Whether you are leading or working in a national or international bid team, harness local knowledge, respect local culture and embrace your colleagues. Whatever beautiful, unique country we are working in, people are people and there will always be challenges within a group. But, at the end of the day, we are all part of a global business-winning tribe – **una faccia, una razza.**

# “THERE IS NO SPOON”

NIGEL HUDSON

## CULTURE (N.)

FROM LATIN ‘CULTURA’ MEANING ‘TO PREPARE THE GROUND FOR GROWTH’

## CLUB (N.)

FROM OLD NORSE ‘KLUBBA’ MEANING ‘BIG STICK USED TO HIT PEOPLE’

During the past 15 years I have worked in 42 countries across five continents. I’ve trained, coached or provided live deal support to more than 5,000 people. That’s a lot of individuals, teams, air miles and preaching of the bidders’ gospel. Does this make me an expert in international bidding culture? Hardly. Only once have I attempted to speak the local language, asking a waitress at a Hungarian restaurant for *kis somló galuska* (the bill). Rather embarrassingly, I was told by my hosts (an amazing bid team in Budapest) that I had asked the young lady if she knew where I could get my hands on some small creamy dumplings. Euphemisms and unfortunate new reputation intact, the Budapest team has never allowed me to forget the experience.

Whilst our friendship became much stronger as a result, I wish I’d persevered with learning other languages. It’s probably the best way to acknowledge international cultures. And although culture is created by a multitude of things, I’ve found that bidding is not hugely different from country to country - but the subtle differences are hugely important. Here are my four main observations:

REMEMBER WHAT MAHATMA GANDHI SAID? “A NATION’S CULTURE RESIDES IN THE HEARTS AND IN THE SOUL OF ITS PEOPLE.” MAKE TIME TO GET TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND YOUR COLLEAGUES, WHEREVER THEY ARE. RELATIONSHIPS ARE POSSIBLY THE SINGLE BIGGEST FACTOR FOR BIDDING SUCCESS.

## 1. NORMAL IS NOT NORMAL

It would be easy to cite examples of stereotypical differences in cultures, such as the French bid manager who was appalled when she saw people eating lunch at their desks in the UK, or the German bid manager who wrote an agenda on a whiteboard for a ten-minute coffee chat, but all would fall into the trap of comparing them to what we know as normal. Why? Because what is familiar to one person might be alien to another. When considering different cultures, first put aside any preconceptions we may have. Rather like in the film *The Matrix*, the advice is: “Do not try and bend the spoon, that’s impossible. Instead, only try to realise the truth: there is no spoon. Then you will see it is not the spoon that bends, it is only yourself.” If you can learn to see, accept and embrace diversity and cultural peculiarities, then new perspectives may well present better ways of doing things.

## 2. THE CUSTOMER DRIVES THE CULTURE (BUT VENDORS DETERMINE IT)

The closer you are to a commodity buyer, the tougher things will be. You’ll have shorter timelines, harsher negotiations and more trying relationships. This is evident in telecoms within the UK and pharmaceuticals in Switzerland. It leads to more commercially focused bidding with less emphasis on the value proposition. The most extreme example I know is in Qatar where, when bidding into the construction industry, ‘bid bonds’ are commonplace. They are a piece of paper stuck to the outside of a sealed bid response that says: “We commit to delivering all of your requirements, and here is the price”. The actual bid response is only opened and read in the case of a breach of contract further down the line.

Bidders will inherently seek to delight a customer, so it’s easy to see how buyers can manipulate the culture. However, it is the sales culture within and between bidders that determines the behaviours. Some say yes to unreasonable demands, others say no. This is consistent everywhere I’ve worked. I remember submitting a proactive proposal to a Japanese car manufacturer who then requested and set progressively tighter turnaround times for improved offers. Eventually they gave eight-hour submission deadlines and still the bidder’s management agreed. When the P&L could not stand further erosion and the final BAFO request was refused, the company did not win. During the debrief, the customer said, “It is not in our culture to say no, so we kept pushing until you said no.”

## 3. IT’S A PEOPLE THING

Remember what Mahatma Gandhi said? “A nation’s culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people.” Make time to get to know and understand your colleagues, wherever they are. Relationships are possibly the single biggest factor for bidding success. Proper close working relationships are where favours can be asked, and people respect and help each other. It requires a time investment to build trust, and the correct starting point for the relationship. In Asia, for example, seniority is really important; people need to understand where you sit in an organisation. Similarly in Defence across the world, rank commands respect and so is one of the first things asked.

## 4. VIRTUAL WORKING IS THE FUTURE

I live in a remote north Wales village, yet I work for a very successful Danish financial services company. Nearly all of my colleagues live and work in the Nordics, but I’ve had no need to travel from my home office in 12 months. (My previous job required me to drive 900 miles per week for meetings across the UK.) All my meetings now are virtual. Because of this, my employer gets the best talent irrespective of where they live, and employees have a much better lifestyle free of daily commuting or time away from family. My virtual bid teams consist of people from across Europe. This brings cultural sensitivities and considerations to bear - notably language, time zones and working hours; but rather wonderfully it has highlighted the impressive focus that Nordic people give to work/life balance. There’s a lot to be learned from this: focus on output, efficiency, quality of work and flexibility. And be visible. It’s important to be there for one another.

We bidders - wherever we may be - are a family, bonded by a desire to do a good job and please others. We’re genuinely caring and supportive; we want to win; we face challenges from customers and competitors, and we know the all-too-familiar tension with Sales and their ‘strategic’ opportunities. Yet we remain the growth agents and do what’s needed to motivate those around us. We are, as the words say, a ‘culture club’.

# “CULTURE EATS STRATEGY FOR BREAKFAST”

CERI MESCALL

“CULTURE EATS STRATEGY FOR BREAKFAST” IS WIDELY ATTRIBUTED TO PETER DRUCKER, THE AUSTRIAN-AMERICAN CONSULTANT, TEACHER AND WRITER<sup>1</sup>. YOU MAY BE THINKING, WHAT’S THE RELEVANCE TO BID PROFESSIONALS? TRENDS SUCH AS MULTINATIONAL AND MULTIVENDOR BID TEAMS, FLEXIBLE WORKING AND “THE GREAT RESIGNATION” MEAN THAT CULTURE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER.

A healthy culture can enable you to recruit and retain the best people, and function as a high-performing team. How does your team’s culture compare to that of other departments within your organisation, or with your competitors and clients? This article describes the actions you can take to define the need for culture change, then implement and sustain it.

## Work up an appetite: define the need for culture change

You can define the need for culture change by categorising behaviours and understanding your “why” and “why now”.

### 1. Categorise behaviours

Consider the current culture at organisation (macro) and team (micro) levels. Conduct a “pulse check” by discussing the behaviours your team wants to stop, start, and continue. Examples include:

- **Stop:** “We’ll limit sending emails outside of our working hours (and those of our team members in other time zones) or add a note that we don’t expect an immediate response”. Or “We’ll avoid using jargon, slang and idioms as it could exclude those with different personal and professional backgrounds.”
- **Start:** “When providing feedback, we’ll use Radical Candor™<sup>2</sup> by caring personally and challenging directly”. Or “We’ll ask how to pronounce someone’s name and take the time to remember the correct pronunciation.”
- **Continue:** “On bid calls, we’ll encourage everyone to share their opinion (rather than only the most senior or vocal colleagues).” Or “We’ll arrange meetings at a time that works for most time zones and understand that there will always be an element of compromise needed.”

### 2. Why?

If you’ve deemed a culture change is necessary, determine your motivation. Is it a ‘push’ away from attitudes and behaviours that no longer serve you and your team, a ‘pull’ towards your aspirations, or a mixture of the two?

### 3. Why now?

Perhaps you have several new hires across different countries. You may be preparing for a multivendor bid. Different team members may be returning to the office, continuing to work remotely, or adopting a hybrid working arrangement. Colleagues may be returning from a leave of absence (e.g., parental leave, the UK’s Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, etc).

## Create a recipe for success: implement the culture change

You can implement the culture change by creating a team charter, building the infrastructure, and gaining sponsorship.

### 1. Create a team charter

Team charters generally include a shared vision and purpose, guiding principles and desired behaviours. Executed successfully, they can be far more personal and engaging than organisational-level mission and value statements and strategic plans.

The most effective charters are those that everyone has contributed to, rather than ones pre-baked by leadership for others to review. In his article **Using Team Charters to Unify Your Team**<sup>3</sup>, Jon Darby goes one step further, suggesting the use of an independent facilitator to direct the discussion and let everyone participate in the development of the charter. Begin the session by recapping and prioritising your “start, stop, continue” behaviours.

### 2. Build (or re-build) the infrastructure

Make sure your culture is embedded in your:

- **Organisational structure:** If your team prides itself on being entrepreneurial, a traditional hierarchy (based on

each person’s years of experience/years of service with your organisation) is unlikely to work. Make job titles for the same role consistent across geographies. Provide pay equity and transparency.

- **Processes:** Minimise unconscious bias in your hiring and promotion processes. Incorporate your team’s desired behaviours into interview questions and promotion criteria. Make sure your onboarding and training sessions enable team members to understand and meet cultural expectations.

- **Technology:** Use video calls as appropriate to minimise the likelihood of misunderstanding. Tone is not always apparent in email. Eye contact, facial expressions and body language are not visible on voice calls. Use collaborative tools to enable asynchronous communication in multinational bid teams that work across time zones.

### 3. Gain sponsorship

While bid teams have a certain level of autonomy, some changes will likely require approval from senior leadership. Gain sponsorship from the outset by building a business case for culture change that includes tangible proof points. Examples include reduced hiring costs due to minimised churn; higher revenue/improved win rates on high value bids through cultural integration with subcontractors; and increased productivity (person hours) through improved employee engagement.

## Avoid heartburn: sustain the culture change

You can sustain the culture change by driving accountability, evolving, and seeking inspiration.

### 1. Drive accountability

Reward and recognise those team members whose behaviours demonstrate your culture and challenge those behaviours that do not. Consider aligning your individual and team performance metrics with your vision, guiding principles and desired behaviours.



### 2. Evolve

You can expect your team culture to evolve due to a variety of internal and external factors. Make sure you seek regular informal and formal feedback from your team members. It’s advisable to review your team charter and infrastructure at least annually.

### 3. Seek inspiration

Look outside your organisation for ideas that you can scale, adapt and trial. For example, **Vested**<sup>4</sup> is “a business model, methodology, mindset and movement for creating outcome-based contracts that enable win-win partnerships in which both parties are equally committed to each other’s success.” I have first-hand experience of Vested within a bid process (bidder/buyer), and it’s also used for labour union contracts, governmental Non-Government Organisation (NGO) partnerships, and joint ventures.

In my opinion, culture eats strategy for breakfast... and for lunch...and for dinner. It goes far deeper than the veneer of “Best Companies to Work For” lists and carefully curated press releases. It is far broader than the anonymous snapshots in Glassdoor reviews and Fishbowl discussions. Bid teams (and the organisations they are part of) must embrace culture now or risk being left behind.

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# SIMPLE MATH: TECHNOLOGY + BUSINESS + COMMUNICATION = MORE BUSINESS

**WE ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF SOMETHING THAT WILL BE WRITTEN ABOUT DECADES FROM NOW. OUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN WILL BE TELLING THEIR GRANDCHILDREN ABOUT IT. WHILE SOME VIEW IT AS THE SCOURGE OF MODERN MAN, THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION IS GREAT FOR BUSINESS. INDUSTRIES GLOBALLY ARE ACCELERATING, INCLUDING OUR ABILITY TO PRODUCE HIGH-QUALITY BIDS AND PROPOSALS TO WIN AND RETAIN NEW BUSINESS.**

The Industrial Revolution of the 1920s was the last time we credited and celebrated our ability to do more business quickly and efficiently. We've replaced the smokestacks and cotton gins of the Industrial Revolution with the silicon chips and massive computing power of the Digital Revolution. Most social scientists say the Digital Revolution started in the early 1980s but agree we are in the middle of its sweet spot right now - at least for the moment.



**“ COMMUNICATION IS THE SWEET SPOT OF ANY REVOLUTION, EVEN (ESPECIALLY?) THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION WE'RE EXPERIENCING RIGHT NOW. ”**



We've gone from the first wave of the internet (thank you Sir Tim Berners-Lee) in 1989 to our current thoroughbred version. We've watched the rise of smartphones (thank you Steve Jobs), portable devices, and digital television grow and go since 2005. Cloud computing got its start in 2010 and is ubiquitous now. By 2012 over two billion people were on the internet, twice the number than in 2007. In 2021, it more than doubled again, with approximately 4.66 billion regular internet users, according to Statista, a company that tracks such things.

Over the last 20 years, the tech boom has matured the bid and proposals industry, becoming a lethal force in winning and retaining business. Never in the collective global citizenry have we had so much computing, research, and business development power at our fingertips. Think about it - in just a little over 13 years, and we've gone from a tech bust (2008) back to a tech boom and a rocket ride into the future.

APMP member companies have taken note and have combined tech tools and collaboration with improving efficiencies.

For example, one APMP member company has mobilised its global departments for a "Follow the Sun" bid and proposal strategy. Its team in Australia has responsibility for starting the day and moving the bid and its related projects to team members in Eastern Europe who wake up to their parts. They pass the work to teams in Western Europe, and then the last leg is handed off to their American counterparts. Finally, it rinses and repeats until the bid is complete.

Although not without its hiccups, the company reports collaboration and productivity are up, with a 30% saving on turnaround time. They are building a collaborative culture and know it contributes to their goal of winning more business.

Tech has also fuelled a complete change on APMP's show floor at Bid and Proposal Con (BPC). Once dominated by consultants who would sell their services and offer training, the Digital Revolution has cleared the way for software companies to rule the show floor, most touting some form of built-in AI. As a result, software exhibitor participation has exploded at BPC, marking a 75 percent increase since 2011.

The Digital Revolution isn't without its challenges. At work, too, are inherent cultural differences when collaborating across the globe. The obvious hurdles are language and time zone differences but there are apps and tech workarounds to address these.

What's more challenging is the way we communicate with each other. For example, Americans (I freely admit to this because I am one) share much more directly and matter-of-factly. Unfortunately, this communication style can be viewed as abrupt and "telling us what to do." I know this. I have heard it from some of our chapter leaders in my nearly 11 years at APMP.

I have learned, and am still learning, how to communicate globally. We are different people with a wide array of communications styles across the globe. As an American, I've understood time must be invested in learning the "communication culture" of the professional you're working/partnering with in another part of the world. Learn their culture and communicate that way to them.

For example, how I communicate with someone from the UK is completely different from how I share with someone from India or Japan. In all cases, for the best collaborative outcome, it is best to conform to their country's or region's communication style. It took a while to learn this, but the results are better.

Communication is the sweet spot of any revolution, even (especially?) the Digital Revolution we're experiencing right now.

# NAVIGATING DATA PRIVACY RULES ACROSS BORDERS

OLIVIA HARDY

“ IN THE ERA OF REMOTE WORKING, IT FEELS LIKE THE WORLD HAS BECOME SOMEWHAT SMALLER. WE’RE ALL MORE CONNECTED NOW THAN EVER BEFORE, JUST A CHAT MESSAGE OR VIDEO CALL AWAY. ”



## Background

When the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) first came into force in May 2018, it sent shockwaves across the web that is our digitally connected, globalised economy.

It's not that GDPR came as a surprise. In fact, it had been in the works for some time and was adopted by the EU in 2016, giving organisations a whole two years to prepare.

But it's not often the ripple effects of new regulations in one part of the world have such far-reaching implications for business operations in so many other parts of the world - where failure to comply comes with hefty penalties and fines of up to €20 million or 4% of global revenue (whichever is greater).

As of May 2021, EY Global reported over 500 actions had been taken against non-compliant companies and over €260 million in fines had been levied.

In the wake of the trail blazed by GDPR, many countries, states and regions around the world have implemented or updated their own data privacy and protection laws. More than just 'the right thing to do', it was either that or lose out on business from some of the world's most affluent economies if they didn't offer a legal framework providing a similar level of protection.

The protection offered by GDPR travels with the data, regardless of where the data lands. That means there needs to be a way to enforce the rules as data is transferred across borders. In practice, there are now hundreds of localised versions of GDPR to contend with for companies that do business globally, making for a complicated legal landscape to navigate.

## So what does this mean for global bid teams and your cloud-based productivity and proposal software?

In the era of remote working, it feels like the world has become somewhat smaller. We're all more connected now than ever before, just a chat message or video call away.

**What you might not realise is that you're probably entrusting personal information to cloud-based software providers when you're collaborating on proposals across borders** - even if the extent of that information is just a name, email address, phone number, and a place of work. All this information together would be considered personal data because it's enough to identify an individual person.

With the cloud, it can be a bit blurry and unclear where this personal data is being transferred to and how it is being stored. It could be on any number of different servers in different parts of the world. The data could also be subject to GDPR and/or fall under other jurisdiction-specific data protection laws.

## How can technology help with compliance?

All this would be a lot simpler if only there were a way to keep protected data from being transferred across borders in the first place. Achieving that with current technology would probably break the internet as we know it.

However, Microsoft and other vendors are creating innovative solutions allowing global organisations to store data at rest within the geo locations where they must meet data residency requirements. You can read more on Microsoft 365 Multi-Geo solution here.

Microsoft has furthermore pledged to create an EU data boundary for the Microsoft Cloud, where EU data only gets processed and stored in the EU - partly to help their EU clients operate more easily in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Other vendors such as InCountry anonymise regulated data stored and processed in the cloud. This offers multinational companies a way to store regulated data in a separate database within the borders of the countries where they need to meet data sovereignty requirements.

Although you might not be employing Cloud Service Providers (CSPs) directly, many of the SaaS (Software as a Service) apps you use today are hosted on third-party CSP infrastructure (e.g. Microsoft Azure, Amazon Web Services (AWS) or Google Cloud Platform (GCP)).

Amazon now provides an AI service called Amazon Macie that uses machine learning and pattern matching to discover and protect sensitive data in AWS. Google on the other hand allows their GCP customers to manage their own encryption keys, preventing Google from decrypting and reading their data for any reason.

## Conclusion

The technology space around compliance is continuously evolving, as cloud providers and software vendors are incentivised to make it easy for you and for them to stay on the right side of the law. It's important to note that simply buying software does not make you compliant, nor is compliance a one-off activity. It's a joint responsibility and commitment between your organisation and your chosen software vendor.

It's worth asking the tough data protection questions early on if you're thinking of going to market to select a new proposal software vendor. This way you don't waste time with vendors who might not be equipped to cater for your organisation's specific circumstances. It's not 'one size fits all'.

Chances are that vendor compliance management is already standard practice for your procurement process, which probably includes a questionnaire or a review from your IT Security / Data Protection team to vet new vendors. If not, then it most definitely should be!

BJ LOWNIE

# LIFE AND WORK: GETTING THE BALANCE RIGHT

**I HAVE SAT IN NUMEROUS PRESENTATIONS AT APMP CONFERENCES WHERE THE PRESENTER, IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER, STATES THAT WORKING ON PROPOSALS WILL ALWAYS REQUIRE THOSE INVOLVED TO WORK EXTENSIVE OVERTIME, GIVE UP THEIR WEEKENDS AND HOLIDAYS, CANCEL VACATION PLANS, AND REACT TO WHATEVER DEMANDS SALES PUTS UPON THEM.**



When I'm in the audience for such presentations, I usually hold my tongue as long as I possibly can, but I inevitably end up taking the floor and stating that professionals work a reasonable number of hours per week, take weekends off and go on vacations as planned. They don't work whatever hours are necessary just because the requestor of the services gave them little to no notice or they weren't given a reasonable amount of time to develop a high-quality, high-impact response.

I've spent the better part of 30 years promoting proposal development as a profession and helping clients develop professional proposal support capabilities.

Early in my career, like many others in proposal support, I saw it as a 'badge of honour' to work long hours - often 20+ hour days and working 10+ days without a day off. As I learned what it meant to be a proposal professional, I realised this: when the proposal support function (PSF) is treated as an equal partner to sales and the individuals within the PSF act like professionals, they work a reasonable number of hours and have a work/life balance.

I recall doing an assessment for a large company some years ago. The assessment required me to interview the heads of the PSF in several countries where this corporation had operations. One country was Belgium, where I found a proposal group that did "anything and everything" they were asked to do, no matter how little notice they received. They consistently worked a great deal of overtime, worked on weekends and holidays, and gave up their vacations. When I investigated this a bit, not surprisingly, I met a Sales Director who clearly thought of and described the PSF as "glorified administrators" and saw no reason why they shouldn't work whatever hours were needed to "get something out the door." Also not surprising, the responses going out the door were much less than high-impact and high-quality.

For this same corporation, I interviewed the head of the PSF in the Netherlands. When I asked this individual how much overtime the group worked and how often they had to give up a weekend or a vacation, she informed me they never worked overtime, never worked a weekend, and certainly wouldn't ever dream of cancelling vacation plans. I asked her what would happen if sales came to her with a last-minute need.

She explained that person would have to explain to the company President why they hadn't provided sufficient notice - which, needless to say, they quickly learned to provide.

I have assessed and worked with hundreds of PSFs, in a variety of companies and across various industries. My experience with the assessment described above has led me to know the difference in how a proposal support function is viewed and treated comes down to 'Enlightened Leadership' within senior management. Those leaders who 'get it' when it comes to proposal development will ensure the proposal support function is viewed and treated as a respected and equal partner to sales and the other functions involved in the process. And when the individuals within the PSF are treated as and operate like professionals, all the tenets of the Proposal Professional's Bill of Rights apply, including the right to reasonable work/life balance.

## THE PROPOSAL PROFESSIONAL'S BILL OF RIGHTS

A Proposal Professional has the right:

1. ... to be treated as a professional.
2. ... to be involved in the qualification of opportunities.
3. ... to receive a reasonable amount of notice.
4. ... to an appropriate and realistic lead time.
5. ... to have the necessary resources available.
6. ... to expect others to meet their commitments and adhere to deadlines.
7. ... to a predictable and realistic workload and associated work/life balance.
8. ... to be trained in the skills required to do their job well.
9. ... to take the time necessary to improve processes and tools, as well as their skills and knowledge.
10. ... to be measured on (and rewarded for) achieving objectives within their control.

CHRIS KÄLIN

# CULTURE TRUMPS PROCESS

**IN MY CAREER AS A BID AND PROPOSAL CONSULTANT AND TRAINER, I HAVE BEEN IN AN EXTREMELY PRIVILEGED POSITION TO HELP ALL SORTS OF CUSTOMERS. AND WHEN I SAY 'ALL SORTS,' I MEAN ALL SORTS OF SHAPES, SIZES, NATIONALITIES, INDUSTRIES AND LANGUAGES.**

I have seen bidding from many different angles. There were many 'standard' proposals such as bidding for IT projects, consulting assignments, or infrastructure projects. But I have also helped to sell fighter jets, bid for a telecom licence (for a mobile operator on the Solomon Islands!), sell production facilities for the semiconductor industry (worth billions of dollars) and produce a winning bid for a company securing their national lottery licence. (That actually turned out to be one of the most fascinating projects I have ever conducted! Before, I had been under the false impression the lottery business was boring).

As you would expect, every industry and corporate organisation has developed their own distinct culture. Yes, the defence industry is indeed very different from the gambling industry. And yes, German engineers do have their own style! Of course, the auditing

and consulting industries ('people' businesses) are (generally speaking) a bit more advanced when it comes to selling people – in other words: presenting their teams. And I can confirm the US and the UK are divided by a common language - for instance, Americans tend to use the words 'awesome', 'great' and 'fantastic' a bit more often!

You might ask which industry, culture or setup breeds the best bidders? And what can we learn from them? I have asked myself this very question many times and I have always come to the same conclusion: there is no ideal environment for bidders. Despite huge differences in products or services, and differences in the cultural or ethnic background of the bidding teams, I have not been able to identify a single industry or region that masters the art of bidding better than any others. No.



But there are stunning differences between bidders. I tried to make a simple list of the most successful organisations within our network in terms of achieving outstanding win or capture rates and generating large amounts of new business over a longer period of time. I ended up with a list of eight bid teams.

So what makes them special? Do they have a better, more sophisticated bid process? No. Do they have the latest and greatest tech? Some of them. Do their org charts look different from other organisations? No. Do they get paid more? Some of them.

However, they all have things in common. While this is not the result of a scientifically thorough analysis, I am highly convinced we have identified the main differentiators of high-performance bid organisations.

## FIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH-PERFORMANCE BID ORGANISATIONS

**They all share the following five characteristics:**

10  
♠  
**THEY LOVE THEIR JOB, AND THEY HAVE FUN.**  
♥  
10

J  
♠  
**THEY PERMANENTLY MEASURE THEIR PERFORMANCE IN MANY DIMENSIONS.**  
♥  
J

Q  
♠  
**THEY CONSTANTLY WORK ON IMPROVING THEIR PERFORMANCE.**  
♥  
Q

K  
♠  
**THEY HAVE A STRONG DISLIKE FOR 'COMMON PRACTICE' AND A STRONG PASSION FOR 'BEST PRACTICE.'**  
♥  
K

A  
♠  
**THEY HAVE A STRONG INTERNAL STANDING (AND ARE NOT PERCEIVED AS SALES SUPPORT).**  
♥  
A

“ **MANY BID TEAMS COULD DRASTICALLY IMPROVE IF THEY UNDERSTOOD THAT SUCCESSFUL BIDDING IS MUCH MORE ABOUT A POSITIVE TEAM CULTURE THAN FOLLOWING A CORPORATE PROCESS.** ”

MICHAEL BROWN

# CULTURE WARS - THE CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS OF CULTURALLY DIVERSE BIDDING

**THE MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY DEFINES CULTURE AS “THE BELIEFS, CUSTOMS, ARTS, ETC, OF A PARTICULAR SOCIETY, GROUP, PLACE, OR TIME”. WHAT THEN IS THE BEST METAPHOR TO USE WHEN DISCUSSING THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT CULTURES WORKING ON THE SAME PROPOSAL OR PROJECT? THE MELTING POT? THE SALAD BOWL? THE STEW WHERE IT ALL MIXES UP AND BLENDS INTO ONE DELICIOUS FUSION DISH?**

The impact of culture in the workplace is a complicated, sensitive, yet fascinating subject - particularly so in the world of bidding and proposals. This is because it has ramifications for both the teams doing the bidding and the clients procuring the services. This article touches on these two categories from the bidders' and the clients' points of view.



## THE INTERNATIONALIST

While I am not an expert in the study of culture, I understand this sits across a variety of academic disciplines such as anthropology and other social sciences. I do think I have a good starting point from my personal and professional background. Having been born in Zambia, grown up in Singapore and lived in nine countries, I consider myself an internationalist at heart.

On a professional level I have bid and won numerous projects in Europe, the Middle East, APAC and North America. I currently live in Singapore and have a global proposal role which ensures I am constantly grappling with the differing styles, behaviours and inclinations of bid teams and clients procuring our services. This constant need to adapt to the various teams' styles keeps me on my toes, as well as constantly checking the local time in the places I need to arrange meetings in!

## DIVERSITY THEORY

The key takeaway point from all these international bidding experiences is a simple one that has its origins in diversity theory. The point being made, which I have experienced in numerous real situations, is that a diverse team is better at producing a myriad of responses and perspectives and adapting to the needs of diverse clients - but only if the leadership of a company or team can adapt to and be flexible with the variety of styles and cultures in the team.

## MIRRORING YOUR CLIENT

The reason why this works is fairly clear and obvious. You gain the best from multicultural teams operating across different geographies if you encourage flexibility and creativity. This is due to their ability to plug into their clients' needs through empathy and understanding cultural norms. In short, culturally diverse bid teams mirror their culturally diverse multinational clients better than homogenous teams.

## DIVERSE TEAMS ARE NOT ALWAYS EASY

That said, flexibility and creativity can only go so far in the needs of an organisation with fixed internal processes and procedures. In the context of internal governance for example, what some think is a thorough explanation of a proposal may come across as either far too detailed or too vague to another team.

Are homogenous teams less likely to face such issues? Are expectations clearer from within the organisation with regards to levels of detail? This may indeed be the case especially in traditional industries such as construction and design; however, issues like these can be ironed out through setting clear expectations and providing templates, role descriptions, meeting agendas and minute clarity on the expectations of internal reviews.

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY IS HERE TO STAY - FOR GOOD

Evidence from a range of studies shows increasing the diversity of leadership teams leads to more and better innovation and improved financial performance . This is more important than any frustration around unwritten expectations or differing styles of work. I am a strong proponent for bid teams focusing on understanding their clients' needs to understand the macroeconomic, social and political drivers for project procurement.

Diverse bid teams are far more likely to understand the nuances of client drivers than homogenous teams because they can empathise and innovate, just like their clients do. Understanding the clients' touch points gives a bid team the ability to distinguish themselves from their competition.

Take the example of a highway construction project where a homogenous team made up of similar engineers are often fixated on the materials and specifications of the project. A diverse team is more likely to understand and communicate back to the client their understanding that the project is a vehicle to deliver a need (for example, to enable transportation of raw materials and connect previously cut off communities to the capital). Diverse teams are more likely to focus on demographics, culture, macroeconomics and more. Ultimate decision makers are less interested in minute specifics and more about whether the bidder understands the project needs and if they can work with the bidder for months or years.

## MOVING AWAY FROM YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Human nature gravitates towards the familiar. It is only natural for individual and team comfort zones to be what they are used to, whether this is in familiar cultures and norms or procedures. But a comfort zone does not lead to a winning mindset or attitude. By mirroring the increasing diversity of clients and their companies, bid teams must break out of the mould of regurgitating the same old solutions to clients. In doing so they are able to think outside the box and to think holistically about the impact of their solutions.

The increasingly competitive landscape of bidding can go one of two ways; a race to the bottom for price or distinguishing yourself from your competition through a high-level understanding of your client and tailoring the solution to that holistic understanding.

Aside from winning more, culturally diverse teams are also far more interesting to work with and for!

1. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture>

2. Cognitive Diversity among Upper-Echelon Executives: Implications for Strategic Decision Processes  
C. Chet Miller, Linda M. Burke and William H. Glick

3. <https://www.bcg.com/en-us/publications/2018/how-diverse-leadership-teams-boost-innovation>



# LEARNING, LEVERAGING AND LEADING BY EXAMPLE

PETER MCPARTLAND

AS NATIONAL BIDS AND PRESENTATIONS MANAGER FOR THE UK OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS, OUR TEAM HAS LED ON BIDS WHICH GO BEYOND THE UK TO SUPPORT THE INTERNATIONAL FOOTPRINT OF OUR CLIENTS. THE OPPORTUNITY TO COLLABORATE WITH BID PROFESSIONALS FROM AROUND THE WORLD HAS BECOME MUCH MORE FREQUENT. THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ACCELERATED THE ADOPTION OF TOOLS FOR WORKING CLOSELY WITH PEOPLE ACROSS THE WORLD WITHOUT THE NEED FOR TRAVEL.

My employer, Crawford & Company®, truly is global. It is the world's largest publicly listed, independent provider of claims management solutions, with 9,000 employees, \$1 billion in annual turnover and clients in more than 70 countries.

Working together with other bid professionals from around the world is wonderfully rewarding. At the heart of that rewarding experience is an understanding that our leadership style is key if we are to create an environment which stimulates cohesion and confidence amongst all.

It is our duty to lead by example to ensure all can comfortably learn from each other and bid professionals on the same team can leverage the wider strengths and talents on offer.

Building trust is fundamental. As leaders of bid teams which include other bid professionals, we must see leadership as an activity that creates conditions where everyone involved in the bid can do their most courageous and inspired thinking - together.

“PEOPLE, NOT PLACES ARE AT THE HEART OF SUCCESSFUL BIDDING... I’VE CONCLUDED APPROACHES TO BIDDING AND PITCHING AREN’T REALLY THAT LOCATION DEPENDENT.”

## IS LESS - MORE?

One difference I have seen is the confidence other markets (e.g. North America, Asia, Australia) have in communicating their RFI responses in a very high level, focussed and concise way. It seems we feel the need to write a lot more in the UK. Interestingly though, the feedback from colleagues in the USA is that they like the increased level of detail that appears to come with our UK RFI responses. Go figure!

Outside the UK there appears to be an acceptance (which I like) that the documents are being read by evaluators who are familiar with the capabilities and credibility of the bidder. The responses are viewed as a platform from which to base requirements for more detail at the face-to-face/dialogue elements of the process. However, my experience of working on global/international bids has shown the client-led, post-submission clarification process is much lengthier than we experience in the UK.

I’ve written in other articles/posts about my concern that overly worded bids demand too much of a decision evaluator’s time, despite how well our content is articulated. Adopting more from our international approach to RFI responses is a key area for me to progress here in the UK in 2022.

## PEOPLE, NOT PLACES ARE AT THE HEART OF SUCCESSFUL BIDDING

I spent time talking through the editor’s brief for this edition of BQ with my UK team and with colleagues in other parts of world. I’ve concluded approaches to bidding and pitching aren’t really that location dependent.

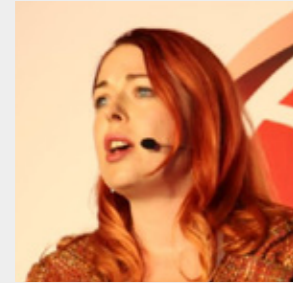
Evaluators are people and our bid teams are a collection of people, irrespective of their location around the world. While our international bidding experts bring with them varying personalities, strengths and talents, their commitment to bid capture, positively challenging members of the wider bid team, agreeing win strategies, owning the process and honing the response remains constant for us around the globe.

# ABOUT OUR EXPERTS



**Martin Smith**

Martin is passionate about helping clients win new business. With increasingly savvy procurement professionals, more competition and new technology changing the way we bid, it is his job as Managing Director to ensure Bid Solutions provides market leading people, tools, training and solutions to help you win more.



**Larissa Cornelius**

With over 12 years in business development and proposal consultancy, Larissa offers bid expertise across various industries. She has trained thousands of people and worked with over 260 companies on strategic bid work. She has a further seven years of operational management expertise and actively promotes the proposal profession by combining proposal best practices with her operational and sales background, helping businesses win more.



**Nigel Dennis**

Nigel has been called a proposal pioneer in Australia for his work in shaping the professional bidding landscape in the region. He has three decades of proposal consulting experience and has trained thousands of people. Nigel started the APMP Australia New Zealand Chapter, runs Australia's largest specialist bid consultancy, and is a strong advocate for development of the profession.



**Rita Mascia**

Rita's journey into the world of bids and proposal started while working for an award-winning language and culture business organisation. Rita is a bid professional with 21 years of experience in the public, private and not for profit sectors. Her expertise in the bid cycle includes business development, capture, bid management, bid writing, and contract negotiations. Her passion lies in leading teams to win business by producing persuasive proposals that deliver what they promise.



**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 35 countries; and trained many thousands of course participants.



**Karen Croshaw**

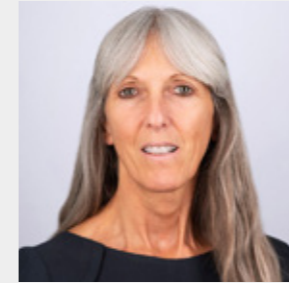
Karen has been involved in bidding and tendering for nearly 25 years, firstly with universities and training providers, then in large private sector organisations. She now runs her own successful freelance bid consultancy. Her consulting career spans public and private sector bids including government frameworks, nuclear, rail, road, construction, digital, defence, healthcare and skills. She has strong Middle East bid/project delivery experience gained by living and working in the UEA, Saudi Arabia and Oman, where she also trained and qualified as a scuba instructor.

# ABOUT OUR EXPERTS



**Mike Reader**

Mike Reader is one of the UK's leading work winning professionals, helping senior leaders navigate the bidding and sales world. He leads a specialist team at Mace who work across all continents pursuing mega built environment and infrastructure projects. He also loves cold water swimming, politics and good food.



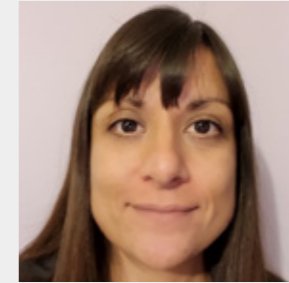
**Sarah Hinchliffe**

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.



**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.



**Ceri Mescall**

Ceri has 15 years of progressive experience in bids and proposals in the UK and Canada. She holds APMP Professional level certification (2019), is an APMP 40 Under 40 Award recipient (2019) and an APMP Fellows recipient (2020).

Ceri has worked as part of bid and proposal teams in the UK and Canada; with teaming partners in the UK, Canada, the US, Australia and across Europe; and collaborated with colleagues in India and the Philippines.



**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.



**Olivia Hardy**

Olivia is an experienced content creator and proposal writer, with a background in Pre-sales, Sales, and Customer Success.

In addition to managing strategic bids and writing proposals herself, she has also managed dozens of successful content management, proposal automation, and sales enablement software projects, giving her a unique perspective, both as a user and as a consultant, on how technology can enable the proposal process. Olivia is a consultant for QorusDocs.

# ABOUT OUR EXPERTS



## BJ Lownie

BJ Lownie is the founder and a principal consultant of Strategic Proposals and a founding member of the Association of Proposal Management Professionals (APMP). He has been working on proposals since 1982.

He is an APMP Certified Proposal Professional and elected Fellow. BJ is recognised as a thought leader on proposal development and is credited with establishing many of the currently accepted proposal development best practices. He is the co-author, with Jon Williams, of the best-selling book *Proposal Essentials: Win More, Win More Easily*.



## Chris Kälin

Chris is a global authority on bid and proposal management. He was co-founder and chairman of the German-speaking APMP chapter and regional director for Europe/Africa. He is APMP-certified at Professional Level (CPP APMP) and is an APMP Approved Trainer. In 2013, he received the prestigious Fellows Award.



## Michael Brown

Michael Brown is a seasoned bid professional having won multiple projects across the built environment throughout Europe, the Middle East, APAC and North America. He is passionate about leading global teams to deliver top quality proposals and pitches to multinational clients.



## 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.



# WIN IN 60 SECONDS



## Do you have cultural experience you would like to share with our audience?

Perhaps you have successfully managed a diverse set of cultures and built a winning team? Or, you may have worked within cultures that have different views on working hours, pay, equality, or even human rights?

Submit your 'Win in 60 Seconds' video and share your knowledge and experience with our global audience.

For more details, please email [martin\\_smith@bidsolutions.co.uk](mailto:martin_smith@bidsolutions.co.uk)

# BQ

BIDDING QUARTERLY



# THE CULTURE CLUB

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AND ADVICE FROM OUR EXPERTS**

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