



# TRACK CHANGES

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ISSUE 03

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APMP UK  
QUARTERLY REVIEW



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# APMP UK CEO FOREWORD

In this issue of Track Changes, we use the theme of reflection to showcase the many ways in which our members, volunteers, and your Chapter board have worked tirelessly to deliver a valuable programme of benefits throughout what has been a turbulent year for our community, our families, and our association.

In our 20th year, APMP UK continued to set new records for our association. In 2021, we grew Chapter membership by 15% to over 2600 members. New Foundation certifications are up by 40% on last year, while 75 members achieved Practitioner and two members achieved Professional.

Our webinar programme attracted over 1200 live attendees with a further 200+ views on-demand through the APMP UK member community.

After a break of 568 days, we reignited our flagship in-person events programming with BIDx Live – three one-day events in Birmingham, Glasgow and Reading – where 74 members from across the UK gathered for inspirational keynotes, insightful community speakers, and long overdue networking.

It has been a pleasure to lead our association's largest and most successful Chapter. Look out for more from me early in the new year with our 2021 Chapter members report. I look forward to serving you in 2022 as our association Chair, executing my mission of delivering a sustainable, premium membership experience worldwide.

Merry Christmas!



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**#ProudToBeAPMP**

# APMP UK BOARD 2022



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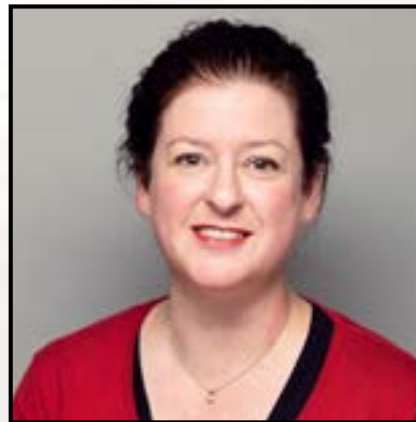
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*Steven Coles CPP.APMP  
Past Chief Executive Officer*



*Mel Kerrison CP.APMP  
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*Katherine Simons CF.APMP  
Chief People Officer*



*TBC  
Chief Career & Mentoring  
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# THE ART OF REFLECTION



As we come to the end of another somewhat roller coaster of a year, where personally, I've not stepped foot in an office for a full 12 months. I've been pregnant, moved house, decorated said house with a growing bump, had a baby and am on my final weeks of maternity leave before heading back to work in the new year. I'm sure I am not alone in the emotional roller coaster of highs and lows over the past 12 months and so, with this in mind, I have dedicated the

final issue of 2021 to the theme 'Reflection'.

I believe there is a lot of value in self-reflection, it lets us look at our strengths and weaknesses and helps us to pave a way forward. I have some questions I will be asking myself that I thought I would share. They will help me, and possibly you, to build a strong foundation for success in 2022.

When answering the questions, try to avoid being vague and aim to be as truthful as you can as it's only you that will see your answers!

So, get yourself ready perhaps with a mince pie and glass of something to warm the cockles and we shall begin...

## **What Career milestones do I want to achieve in 2022?**

Career milestones are achievements that mark a step up in your career development.

For kids, childhood development milestones are measured by their ability to crawl, walk, talk, etc. Proud moments for parents! Likewise, in our jobs, we can celebrate milestones that signify we're getting better at what we do.

## **What were the challenges I faced that stopped me from doing my job well in 2021 and how can I avoid them in the future?**

Challenges are part and parcel of our work and everyday lives. If they are not well-managed, they can create unnecessary worry and stress, impeding us from performing to the best of our ability.

Not giving 100% to our work can be caused by external factors beyond our control: family pressure, colleagues and our physical environment. They can also be caused by internal factors within our control, like our mental and physical health, distractions by entertainment or our finances, etc.

Once you've identified these challenges, make it a point to counter those so that you can perform better at work in the coming year. Be honest with yourself. Overcoming these challenges or seeking help will only help you better manage your day-to-day activities and help you become a stronger individual personally and professionally.

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE →**

## How has the pandemic changed the way I view my line of work?

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us many lessons about the value of work this year:

- To be grateful for the job we have
- Prioritise our mental health in times of stress
- Be adaptable to huge changes

During the pandemic, the importance in all industries on humanity has been magnified, whether it be taking a fast-food order or running a million-pound business, we realised how volatile jobs are. In your reflection, compare your mindset and perception of your work before and after the pandemic.

## Who can I rely on to keep me accountable in 2022?

Who are you grateful to this year? Think about the people who supported you or inspired you. Perhaps you were mentored by a colleague, or a neighbour offered to watch your children over the weekend. Whoever it may be, they'll be happy to know that they are appreciated even for the small things. After you have reflected on how that person helped, send them a simple thank you message.

## Which areas of my work can I do better in 2022?

Nobody is perfect at their job. In a day's worth of work, you make hundreds of decisions. Some decisions would be second nature to you, whereas some decisions need a little procrastination first. Reflect on some of the areas of work which were a little bumpy for you this year and have room for improvement in 2022. This reflection will help you make a game plan to develop your areas of weakness.

Being aware of your weaknesses will put you in a better position for professional growth in the coming year.

## What career goals do I want to set for 2022?

Before you enter 2022, have a brief idea of which direction you want your career to go. Make small and short-term career goals that can be achieved within a year that will then help you build into your long-term goals.

Review your long-term career plan and create a to-do list of actions for 2022 to help you build towards that long-term goal.

## What negative habits should I quit in 2022?

Habits are more fatal than we think: they can severely impact how we work, interact with others, and are perceived by others. Dangerously, our habits are such a natural part of ourselves that they become almost unnoticeable. Bad habits can have undesirable consequences, so it's important to catch them early and try to quit them!

Our career can be affected by our tendencies to be late for appointments, sleep late, scroll endlessly, interrupt, say yes too easily, gossip, complain excessively... the list goes on.

It isn't easy to catch them since humans tend to be rosy-eyed with ourselves, so be honest with yourself if your habits are impacting you negatively and think about why they are doing so.

## What positive habits should I adopt in 2022?

Don't just point out your mistakes and weaknesses. To be a better version of yourself in 2022, write down and commit to ways to replace those bad habits with good ones.

Baby steps, though – habits aren't corrected overnight! Plan to form a good habit and stick to a timeline. 2022 is going to be a year of good habits... or working on overcoming bad ones. Strive for progress, not perfection.

## Final Thoughts

Planning for the year ahead can sometimes flop and disappoint, as we've seen in 2021. However, there is no harm preparing yourself to smash those goals, come what may.

From the cosy comfort of my sofa, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year!

## Mel Smith, CAP CPP.APMP

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# REFLECTION

It occurred to me that in order to have a reflection on a surface - mirror, glass, water, etc. - then you need to have light. Yet often, when we reflect back on our actions, our feelings, our behaviour and things like that, we are unnecessarily harsh on ourselves - dark if you will.

I was chatting to a friend recently about a book by Matt Haig – “The Midnight Library” - one of the quarterly book giveaways by Strategic Proposals to its lovely alumni. We were talking about how when you think of yourself having taken another path in life, you often assume it would be better than the one that you’re in.

Gratefulness diaries, thankful thoughts, mindfulness are all fairly new concepts, but really do help you to appreciate what you’ve got. The grass isn’t always greener! This is one of the main concepts of the book. Ultimately, it seems, you’re in charge of your own destiny. Only you can reflect on events in your own life in a positive way. Try really hard to be grateful, to see a silver lining.

Be positive. Reflect light.



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# FINDING BALANCE



It's nearing the end of the year and it always puts me in a reflective frame of mind. How did the year go? What should I focus on next year? What have I enjoyed and been grateful for? What am I happy to let go of and not have to look at again? This time last year I wrote an article reflecting on 2021 and the things I was grateful for in a period of time when we were all in the grips of another wave of Covid and living through another lockdown.

It talked about babies, travelling

and the security of home, less so about work, but as you'll see when you read on, that's because I didn't do very much of that! This year, in talking about this to a fellow business owner, I realised that I have been self-employed for three years. Three years! Where did that time go? I also realised that each of those three years has been massively different to the one before. So 2021's reflections are a high speed review of the last three years and what I have learnt from them.

## **2019: the year of Superwoman!**

In 2019, on the 3rd January, I started working as a self-employed freelance bid management consultant, working with a company I had spent many years with as an employee. It was the pain-free seamless move into self employment that I had been waiting for. I was making more money than I had ever seen, which, at that point, was the whole point of becoming self-employed. It was all working just as I had hoped it would! The thing was I worked flat out through 2019, only taking three weeks off in the whole year whilst travelling backwards and forwards each week between the UK and France. Unsurprisingly,

my health was starting to suffer and I was exhausted. It was on a manic afternoon on a blistering hot September afternoon in the south of France that I stopped and said to myself 'What am I doing? I don't want to be here! I love bidding, but there has to be another way to do this!' I saw out the rest of the year and then called time. I needed to explore the answer to the question, is there another way to do this?

## **2020: the year of the slow woman!**

Now its 2020, I am so excited because for the first time in my working life, I can afford to not work for a while! I decided to step back from work and focus on me. Reset, replenish and reassess were the buzz words for this period of down time. Plus it was on my terms, so the control freak in me was happy too! The plan was, step back for January and February, then work up to July. Take July off, then go back to work in August, September if there isn't much going on and full pelt to the end of the year and then a nice break at Christmas. Of course, unless you have been living off planet for the last two years, we all know what then arrived to throw everyone off track, which for me meant not working again that year after July. I threw myself into projects at home, I worked on developing my business ideas and plans, because yes, there is another way of doing this bidding work we all love! Most rewarding of all I became a mentor on the APMP Rapport Mentoring Programme. I learnt though, that whilst I like the idea of not having a lot to do, the reality is I need to be doing more and I was more fulfilled when I was helping others.

So in two years I've gone from crazy working superwoman to bored uninspired slow woman, the contract was stark and something I had not experienced before. So I decided that in 2021, I would get back up to speed.



## 2021: the year of the DOG!!

I was very fortunate to start the year with a lot of work offers and the nice position of getting to choose which ones I did. I had learnt in my downtime that I should be working to some principles: work with people I like and have values and interests in common with, take the work that interests and inspires me and work on my terms. I learnt that I set the terms of my business and of my personal life so that the two balance and compliment each other. I was introduced to the concept of GOD and DOG businesses. GOD being Growth over Delivery and DOG being Delivery over Growth. In other words, did I want to be a GOD and make lots of money and grow my business doing whatever it takes to do that? Or did I want to be a DOG and focus on what I do, who I do it with and when and focus less on growth and making lots of money? So I chose DOG because for me this gives me balance:

- working with good people,
- adding value to my clients and mentees,
- working four (and later three) days a week
- making enough money to keep my business healthy and be able to earn enough for myself.

If I drew the last three years on a line graph of productivity through time, it would be a line that looked something like this:

I'd experienced extremes and found something in the middle that works for me. Now next year I have plans to work on and I am ready to up the productivity levels a bit. Looking back though on the last three years, I have learnt:

1. Self-employment isn't about making lots of money, it's about working to my principles and boundaries, with money being the bonus.
2. It feels great to make lots of money, but have purpose behind it and make sure you benefit from it, otherwise what's the point?
3. Being self-employed brings many non-money advantages, not least of all the only person I have to answer to is me. So if you want to do something, then do it.
4. Done is better than perfect! As a recovering perfectionist, I have to

say this to myself most days!

5. Trust your gut, if it doesn't feel right to put something into action yet then don't. Do it when the time is right because plans are more likely to succeed when you aren't forcing them into reality.
6. If it doesn't work, don't wallow and beat yourself up. Change it and try again.
7. It's still important to have a bit of structure and routine, but that doesn't have to be the conventional 9 to 5. If you work better from 10 to 6, then do that. It's not when you work that's the measure of your effectiveness.
8. Don't be afraid to be seen. Put your work out into the world because it will help someone, but accept it doesn't have to, and won't, work for everyone.
9. Take time to reflect and think about what you are grateful for, what you want to let go of and what you want to invite in for the future. Be specific though and get real clarity on these things because you find some really enlightening nuggets of gold that can help you.
10. Value yourself and don't underestimate the value you can bring to others.

I'd like to thank the amazing group of women who I work with through the Actually JFDI Club (Google it!) for inspiring me and helping me to come to these realisations and learnings. I'd also like to acknowledge the role of APMP during the last three years and the opportunities that I have had through them to be involved in the mentoring programme, volunteering on the Marcomms team and delivering my first ever webinar! So if I'm reflecting on the last year or so in particular, it's been the things I have done outside the paid work that have bought me the most learning and rewards.

I'm looking forward to continuing to work like a DOG for a bit longer to maintain the balance into 2022, and this time next year, see what reflections I can make then....maybe I'll be a GOD by then!!

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# APMP UK EVENTS 2021

## OUTGOING EVENTS OFFICER, KAY, REVIEWS 2021 EVENTS

As we approach the end of 2021, the moment of reflection from the Events team is a great activity as we can celebrate our successes and also learn how to deliver even better events going forward.

After another difficult year, most of the events were restricted to being online which inhibited human connection a little. Not to be hampered by that we did try some new webinar subjects and the feedback forms were incredibly useful to gauge how well new subjects were received.

At the start of the year, we were still all talking about Brexit. My, that seems such a long time ago! We also covered webinars on Social Value which is growing in importance in many of the bid responses. The technical webinars on making virtual presentations more persuasive was very well received and we will look to cover more technical subjects such as these in future.



In our journey to provide information to our members, we are launching Sponsored Events for 2022.

We are excited to have an in-person live event in the pipeline, that we will launch as soon as it is safe for everyone to be back together face to face.

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*BIDx Roadshow: Birmingham*



*BIDx Roadshow: Reading*

# TURN THE LIGHT ON 2021

## INCOMING EVENTS OFFICER, MEL KERRISON, REVIEWS 2021

Here we are coming to the end of 2021, so much has changed but so much feels the same too. The pandemic continues to have a large impact on our daily lives both personally and at work. And although the vaccine programme felt like we were making progress, just like an unwanted bid deadline extension, there's the feeling as we enter into 2022 another push of effort is required. But there are always glimmers where if we reach to find the light, we find happiness along the way.

It can feel as if the land of bidding, particularly in the public sector hasn't really changed. Trying to predict exactly when the ITT will be released is a dark art and often delayed many times. And some procurement teams have still decided to keep bidders busy over Christmas. Maybe one year our holiday time will be safe. However, there are some positive moves. We have seen Social Value become the phrase of the year as both procurement teams and bidders try to understand what it means to them. An encouraging step in ensuring government contracts deliver benefits to our local communities. We've also seen a marked move away from needing five hard copies of every bid and portal submissions being the way forward. I personally don't miss staring at a printer on my fifth cup of coffee hoping the ink doesn't need changing. Looking forward, leaving the EU sees an opportunity for procurement teams to experiment with their evaluation, so we'll see in the next few years how that changes our bidding approach. As technology changes, maybe one day we'll be bidding in the metaverse. If Facebook can do it then who knows!

For me, 2021 has been a year of change. I managed to buy a house earlier in the year, I've booked my wedding for 2023, I've changed jobs, and more recently I've gained the position of Chief Events Officer on the APMP UK Board. When I think about it, a lot has happened in quite a short space of time. And I've learned a few things too:

1. Christmas day without your family sucks. Last year having just recovered from COVID-19, Boris decided to put Berkshire into Tier 4. So, with no sense of taste, it was just the two of us (plus Buddy the sausage dog and Smudge the cat) with a whole turkey. I value my family ties even more now and I hope that this year we get the opportunity to celebrate with our loved ones.
2. The importance of psychological safety. Whilst I had heard of the concept previously, I really became aware of psychological safety this year. Particularly in bidding, but in work life in general, we need safe spaces where we can share our opinions without fear. I am now a strong advocate for creating those safe spaces and sharing tips on how to engender psychological safety including at the Birmingham BIDx Roadshow and in [WinningtheBusiness.com](http://WinningtheBusiness.com).
3. In the words of Albus Dumbledore (yes, it's a Harry Potter quote) "happiness can be found even in the darkest of times if one only remembers to turn on the light." When leading a bid, particularly remotely, it can be really easy to focus on the end goal of submitting a winning bid and forget about the importance of the journey along the way. With less opportunity to take your bid team to the pub and get to know each other personally, fun had to come in different forms. Creating time to do a quiz, or play Taskmaster became pivotal in breaking the eat, sleep, work, repeat cycle. It's also harder to detect if your colleagues are struggling when working remotely, so creating that space is an effective morale boost.

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4. Me time is a necessity not a guilty pleasure. I see myself as a do-er and I don't do boredom particularly well. But this year I've also focused on my physical health, making the time to go to the gym and burn off some calories. And not only is my body thanking me for it, but also I feel more energised and focused. Sometimes you have to break away from what you are doing to be more productive. This has been a new concept for me as I would previously be determined to finish something come what may.

And so, as 2021 draws to a close I'd like to wish you all a safe and merry Christmas. Whilst we once again face uncertainty on how we go about our daily lives, I hope that we are able to connect in the New Year, particularly with some face-to-face events to find those moments of light.



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## NEW FOR 2022

### SPONSOR AN APMP UK EVENT\*

Is yours an essential product for a Bid Managers toolkit?

Do you believe your service will make the world of difference to a Bid Managers ability?

If so, then APMP UK can offer you the opportunity to sponsor an event. Outlining the benefits of your product or service to an audience of Bid and Proposal professionals could be an amazing opportunity.

To make the most of this opportunity, see our website for further details and application form.

\*Terms and conditions apply

APPLY NOW



# BIDx LIVE - A REFLECTION

2021 provided us with a dilemma. How would Covid play out this year, and what would that mean for the annual APMP UK Conference? It was so hard for us to pre-plan when Covid kept changing the game, so we came up with the idea of taking a “mini conference” on the road. A BIDx roadshow so you wouldn’t have to travel far to attend, smaller numbers so it would be safer for you, and the same kind of format as conference: a keynote speaker, four community speakers, a Sponsor session, networking opportunities, and food!

Our first stop was Birmingham at The Studio on 8th September, and it was so good to see people face-to-face again! Our numbers were kept low so that everyone felt comfortable and safe. Naomi Sesay was our keynote speaker, and she shared her insights and expertise on connecting, resonating with and leading a diverse team. She helped us to examine our emotional and cultural attendance to reach this goal. We received great feedback on her session, it was interesting and uncomfortable at the same time, as she made us look at our subconscious reactions that we may not have been aware of. We also had sessions on Social Value, Psychological Safety and Competency Frameworks. It was a great day, reconnecting, sharing lockdown stories, getting used to being around people again, while learning from the sessions. Big thanks to Naomi, Anna Inman, Mel Kerrison, Eve Upton for presenting, and to BidCraft who sponsored the event.

Next stop, on 22nd September, was my home country, Scotland! I wasn’t going to miss that...and we held it in a brewery... another reason not to miss it! We had the extremely interesting Petra Wetzel as keynote. She was the founder of WEST Brewery, where we held the event. She led her

session without slides and let our questions direct the subjects she talked us through. She had such an interesting story, setting up a brewery so her dad could drink decent beer when he visited from Germany, to running a successful distribution operation with over 1,000 venues in the UK stocking her beers. We also had sessions on bid qualification, how to write to win, what sales people really think of bidders and competency frameworks. It was a great day at a great venue, and the beer was good too! Big thanks to Petra, John Usher, Anya Zhuravkina, Neil Harding and Eve Upton for presenting, and AM Bid who sponsored the event.

Our last stop was Reading, at the Madejski Stadium on 5th October. I loved everything about this event, the event room overlooked the pitch, we had a great keynote speaker in Alan Chambers MBE, and great community sessions. Having led the first British team to walk unsupported to the geographic North Pole from Canada, Alan taught us about working as a team, to reach the end goal and how to deliver the impossible. It was fascinating listening to his drive and determination to reach that goal and deadline, but also to maintain the high performance of his team. His session was so relevant to us in bids and proposals and I’d love to hear him speak again. His session was so popular, he was still being asked questions at lunchtime! We also had sessions about Hybrid Bidding, Social Value, R&D Grant Funding & Bidding, and Building capacity through external bid support. Big thanks to Alan, Anthony Dyer, Emma Hitchman, Sarah Hinchliffe, Adam Marchant, Nuria Puig-Mas and Strategic Proposals who sponsored the event.

It was great to see people face-to-face after so long, great to hear inspirational keynote speakers, and great to see our members take the stage (so to speak) and present on what they are passionate about. I saw some new faces present, as well as new topics being presented. I'm looking forward to next year when hopefully we'll have more of that too.



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*BIDx Roadshow: Glasgow*

# QUARTERLY BUZZ

Each episode we focus on a hot topic and get industry people to give us their views.

## The reflective art of reviews BY GARETH EARLE

Proposal reviews are extremely important, but let's be honest, at times (and more often than we would like) they are an uphill struggle that we just don't need when getting closer to the deadline. Why is this and how can we make them work better for us?

There's no doubt that proposal reviews are a critical and arguably one of the most important stages of your bid process. No matter how big or small, simple or complex the bid, getting at least a second pair of eyes to read through the response before it's submitted to the customer has multiple benefits to increase your chances of winning.

The purposes of the review stage include:

- Checking that the solution meets the customer's needs and can be delivered.
- Identifying areas of strength and weakness of the proposal.
- Scoring the proposal against an evaluation criteria (ideally the customer's but if they do not provide one, it's not a bad idea to set one yourself with weightings against what you know are the customer's priorities).
- Picking up on errors (e.g., spelling, punctuation, grammar).
- Ensuring the risk (technical, commercial, and financial) to the business is acceptable and mitigated where appropriate.
- And of course, our old favourite, ensuring the proposal answers the question.

Having been on the 'other side' when commissioning work earlier in my career, I can tell you that it's very easy for an evaluator to see when a review hasn't been done well or even at all! Things like the customer's name spelled incorrectly in a header/footer, meaning that it's wrong on every page of the proposal is a big turnoff for an evaluator! And yes, I did see this on more than one occasion.

So why can they be such hard work? Some of the reasons for why this is the case are covered below.

### The Hates

#### 1. Inane comments

How many times have we seen some of these comments?

- *"Rewrite".*
- *"Needs to be more salesy".*
- *"I don't like this section".*

At a recent APMP UK event, one attendee said that one of the comments she'd had from a review was simply "?!"

For comments to be truly worthwhile and help improve the proposal, they need to have context. Think about why a section needs to be rewritten. Is it because it's incorrect? Is it because it doesn't flow well? Is it because it isn't reflecting the customer's hot-buttons or your win themes?

When going through review comments, think about the reviewer's status as well. When analysing historical documents as part of my university degrees, it was always important not just to think about the content, but the context as well, including the author. This holds true here as well. If the reviewer doesn't like a section, does it really matter? If they don't have a relationship with the customer and understand a section's purpose, then how much weight does their comment really have in your review?

## 2. Timeliness

We've all had reviewers submit their comments back to us after the deadline we've set. In the past, I've had to allow 3 days in my schedule for a reviewer to read through the proposal and return comments to account for the fact that they never got it back to me within the day that I'd allowed. Not because the proposal warranted 3 days to review, but because they were always distracted and prioritised other activities above the review. Sometimes I would also get comments back at 3am in the morning - if someone is reviewing at that time of night, how good will their review be?

Some critical reviewers to the specific opportunity may also not be available when the review is needed. This either means delaying the review to allow for this, putting pressure on the team during the post-review pre-submission period, or not having the right people involved in the review.

## 3. Reviewer diversity

Ensuring diversity in your review does not necessarily mean increasing the number of reviewers - too many cooks can spoil the broth. Diversity is all about getting a view from a variety of functions - a review is not all about ensuring the solution is technically sound and compliant. It's also about reviewing the proposal's commercial and financial viability, the readability, the competitiveness, ensuring it answers the question, that it hits the customer's needs, and that it is professionally presented.

Having an independent reviewer is important as well - if someone who has little knowledge of the context can understand what we're selling, then whoever reads it at the customer's end is likely to understand it as

well. To get all this, without having 6+ reviewers, means ensuring that your review team can evaluate the proposal with multiple hats on.

## 4. Reviewer capability

It is important to remember that 'proposal reviewer' is a role not a title, and regardless of what some might think, being at a certain management level on an organisation chart shouldn't mean someone automatically becomes a reviewer! They might read the proposal before it goes out the door, but that's very different from being a reviewer. Whilst some people are naturally gifted at reading a proposal and identifying ways it can be improved to increase the probability of winning, my experience suggests that this is a rarity. As with any other role, reviewers' capabilities need to develop so that their skills are honed for the benefit of the proposal.

## 5. Don't score

Regardless of providing our reviewers with an evaluation criteria (set either by the customer or internally) so they can score the proposal, there are some that ignore this and don't provide a view on how each section would score 'out of 10' for example. The issue with this is that it could result in the customer's evaluation team being the first to score the proposal, meaning that you miss the opportunity of knowing which sections could be improved to increase your technical, commercial, or financial scores.

A vital part of review scoring is so you can do some final competitor analysis. With intelligence of likely technical, commercial, and financial scoring by competitors, this can be compared against the scores from internal reviews to identify if there are any areas of your offering that need to be altered to increase your likelihood of winning.

## Top tips

So, with these hats in mind, how do we actively work to prevent them to make it easier to close out the proposal before submission?

Hold a Review kick off session

This will help you set your reviewer expectations.



Be clear on things like who reviews which sections of the proposal. If it's a particularly large proposal, you might want to consider getting people to focus on certain sections to minimise the risk of the proposal not being completely reviewed due to time pressures. As well as using this kick off to highlight what you want the reviewers to do, also use it to highlight what you don't want them to do, e.g., correct spellings, punctuation and grammar. Or even be clear that you reserve the right to ignore comments if they are not constructive. Use this session to indicate if there are any time limits on the review - if you know how long your customer is going to review your proposal, get your reviewers to spend the same period of time evaluating it.

### **Communication**

Communicate with reviewers prior to, during and after the review.

**Prior** - get the review in their diary as early as you can to mitigate the risk of them not being available when you need them. Also, provide updates to the reviewers on how the proposal is progressing so they will know at what level of completion the proposal is likely to be when they will receive it, or even if you need to push the review back/pull it forward.

**During** - don't just leave them to review. Check back in on progress. Get interval scores from them. See if there are any 'unwanted habits' creeping in and stop them early.

**After** - rather than just getting review comments in Word or email, hold a wash-up session so you can get views verbally as well. This doesn't need to be going through the proposal line-by-line, but you can get the salient points and clarify any comments not understood.

### **Checklists**

Make it easier for the reviewer to do their job by giving them checklists that can help them.

This could be a list of the customer's hot buttons and your win themes, which they can then tick off and identify where these are covered in the proposal. It could also be a list of specific evidence you want to be clear in the response - if the reviewer can't find it, the customer probably

won't either. Replicate the score sheet that the customer is likely to use when marking your proposal and give that to your reviewer to use.

As part of this, to see how observant the reviewers are, maybe consider adding a comment on the last page for reviewers to come forward to claim a prize to check that they've actually read it! I've done this before, and the results can be quite interesting – just make sure you remove the comment before submitting the proposal!

### **Reviewer selection empowerment**

As the bid or proposal manager you have a right to be at least part of the reviewer selection, so ensure you are empowered to do so.

When making your selection, do so appropriately - don't choose reviewers you know will 'just wave it through' because you want to just get the proposal 'out the door' with minimal rework. Similarly, select reviewers who have some understanding of the topic, so you don't have to spend a lot of time explaining the requirement and solution before they are ready to review.

### **Reviewer's part of lessons learned**

All members of the bid team need to learn how things can be improved for the future.

Having reviewers being part of this session means the whole bid team gets to know and understand any lessons raised by the review team, as this may identify ways the proposal can be written or managed in a better way in future. It is also a means to develop the reviewers' capability - tell them where they can be clearer with comments in the future.

Also, when you know how the customer has scored your proposal, share this with the reviewers, whether you've won or lost. See if there's a gap between the internal review and the customer score - are your internal review scores higher or lower than the customer? Is the customer picking up on things in their evaluation that internal reviewers are not? Remember, this is not personal, it's all about how you can win as a team!

### **Identify & prominence**

Ensure that everyone knows who the reviewers are and how important their role is from the earliest point you can - they are part of the bid team and remind everyone of that.

Reviewers and their comments are part of the overall solution and are of vital importance. By making their role known, the reviewer and everyone around knows that they must be available to evaluate the proposal and not be distracted when doing so.

### **Register of reviewers**

Keep a register of your reviewers across the company and what their capabilities and areas of expertise are, e.g., size/complexity of proposal, editorial (formatting/spelling/punctuation/grammar), ability to be independent, functional.

This can be used when selecting reviewers to ensure you get a diverse cross-section of capabilities. It can also be used to identify where reviewers' improvements are needed.

### **Reviewer & owner/writer relationship**

If a specific section needs particular attention, encourage, and facilitate the relationship between reviewer and the section owner/author.

By doing this, reviewers can be coaches and part of the team with the same goal of winning. By working directly with section owners, the reviewers can help improve the response in the most efficient and effective way - sometimes the proposal lead can be an unnecessary barrier.

### **Review chair/lead**

If you need a review team of more than three, consider having a review chair/lead.

Not only will this replicate how the customer is likely to organise themselves through an evaluation board, but it will also help you significantly mitigate the 'too many cooks' situation. The review chair/

lead can iron out disagreements amongst reviewers, communicate the feedback, and nudge reviewers to complete on time.

Ultimately, the proposal reviews are one of the most important elements of the bid process and should be respected by all. Reviews are not just a tick-box exercise to say the proposal can be submitted. They should be replicating the customer's proposal evaluation as best as possible and identifying ways in which you can improve your likelihood of winning. As time between the reviews and submission is going to be finite and potentially tight, they need to be done effectively so that expectations are clear, and the bid or proposal manager gets the most out of them.



**Gareth Earle CP.APMP**

BidCraft

[gareth.earle@bidcraft.co.uk](mailto:gareth.earle@bidcraft.co.uk)

# NEW MEMBER?

## WHAT TO DO NOW - ADVICE FROM KRIS MANTLE

So, you've invested your money and are now a fully-fledged APMP member. What now? I've compiled a list of ten things to make the most of your membership and the bidding community.

### **Become a Mentor or Mentee**

APMP UK is always looking for experienced bid professionals to mentor the growing list of mentees who want guidance and support to help them become better bidding people. So, whether you're a bidding newbie or tender master, there is something for you as part of the [APMP UK Rapport Mentor Scheme](#).

Worried you don't have the skills to be a Mentor? We have you covered. APMP UK currently retains the services of Jackie Jenks, OBE to provide all APMP UK Rapport mentors with formal training. This training helps you to avoid common mentoring pitfalls and see that you provide expert guidance to nurture the next generation of bid professionals.

### **Take your first certification**

You've probably seen several people on LinkedIn with a CF, CP or CPP suffix in their

name. These are all graduates of the [APMP certification programme](#).

The first step on our professional development ladder is APMP Foundation which introduces you to bidding best practice.

The next is APMP Practitioner, where you must demonstrate your mastery of best practice and lead others in their use.

And the last step is APMP Professional. To achieve this certification, you must be making significant contributions to your business and the professional, along with excellent leadership and communication skills.

To supplement your knowledge of proposal management, APMP offers the Capture Practitioner certification allowing you to master best practice and implement its use with your bid process.

You will find all our [Approved Training Organisations \(ATOs\)](#) here who provided a range of remote, blended and face-to-face courses to help you complete your certification.

### **Attend an APMP event**

APMP UK's events may well be one of the best benefits of membership. They have continued to offer members digital events such as BIDx 2020 and moving BPC Europe 2021 to a digital platform despite lockdown restrictions.

There is the annual UK Conference with talks from the UK's brightest bid professionals. Away from home, members can take advantage of events like USA's Bid and Proposal Con (BPC) and BPC Europe. These conferences bring together APMP members from across the globe to develop best practice, drive the profession forward and connect with other members.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE →

### **Take advantage of webinars, blogs and podcasts from bidding experts**

As an APMP UK member, you will start receiving emails about upcoming events. Keep your eyes peeled for future webinars and blog posts. You can also join the [APMP UK Member Community](#) and access previous webinars, including:

- Re useable content. What is it and how do you write it?
- How To Craft a Memorable and Persuasive Virtual Presentation.

APMP's ATOs and many bidding organisations present webinars, publish blogs and host podcasts to support the development of bidding professionals. So, go check out their blogs, watch the webinars and subscribe to the podcast below:

#### **Blogs**

- Three Golden Rules for Proposal Writing.
- How do Public Tenders Work?
- PQQ Basics What you need to know.
- The Challenges and Benefits Of Being The Incumbent Supplier.

#### **Webinars**

- Spotlight on proposal best practice.
- Selling into the Public Sector.
- The Good, Better, Best of Proposal Writing.
- Podcasts
- Scribble Talk.
- The Red Review.

Finally, don't forget to check out Bidding Quarterly, which sees thought leaders from across the industry give insight on a similar topic each issue.

### **Update LinkedIn, connect with your fellow APMP'ers, and use the hashtags**

If you want to get the most out of your membership, then you're going to want to connect with our community. We are an inviting bunch and are more than happy to connect with you.

And, if you find one of us, more of us will be along soon.

Follow the hashtags **#APMPUK #APMP #ProudtobeAPMP** to see posts from your fellow members. Remember to use these hashtags, and we'll soon find you.

### **Check out the Body of Knowledge**

Whether you're new to bidding or need to refresh best practice, then be sure to check out the [Body of Knowledge \(BOK\)](#). The BOK stores everything pertaining to bidding best practice. Whether you need to know what RFI, RFP, RFB and RFQ stand for, need a Compliance Matrix template or brush up on virtual team management, you can find it in the BOK.

If you're studying for your APMP Foundation Exam, the BOK is an excellent resource for learning Bid Management best practice, acronyms and definitions.

### **Reclaim Tax**

As of 2019, APMP membership is tax-deductible. [See if you are eligible to claim.](#)

### **Look into our apprenticeship**

We are incredibly proud of our [apprenticeship at APMP UK](#). While apprenticeships used to be strictly the domain of school leavers, a lot has changed. Now anyone can take an apprenticeship.

New to bidding, changing careers or looking to add fresh talent to your business, then an apprenticeship may well be what you're looking for. Find current apprenticeship vacancies [here](#) or talk to your employer about taking an apprenticeship as part of your professional development.

### **Tell your colleagues**

The APMP UK chapter is 2600 members strong and growing. However, there are still many bid people out there that don't know that other Proposal Writers, Bid Coordinators and Capture Manager or the APMP exist. So please, tell your colleagues, share our posts on social media and use the hashtags **#APMPUK #APMP #ProudtobeAPMP**.

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## Join Thursday Throng & Bid Bites

Thursday Throng was initially set up during the first lockdown to support the bid community through daily engagement. Since the end of lockdown, the sessions have continued with bid people getting together every Thursday at 12:30 to eat their lunch and discuss all things bid, or random nonsense.

Out of the Thursday Throng formed Bid Bites. These are more formal sessions where participants discuss a particular topic, giving a positive experience, a negative experience, and a top tip. Previous discussions have included Social Value, Accessibility, Clarification Questions and Deadlines.



**KRIS MANTLE CF.APMP**  
Bid Scribbler

# HAVE YOUR SAY

**Being a bid professional is not always plain sailing...**

Share your story about what has challenged you during your time as a bid professional and any hints and tips you could give to other APMP members who may be going through similar.

Stories will be published in future editions of Track Changes.

SHARE YOUR STORY HERE

# ANNUAL AWARDS 2021

Congratulations to this year's winners



## **Collaborative Teamwork**

Mel Kerrison, Ryck Williamson and Elizabeth Batt

"We're delighted to win the collaborative teamwork award. A nice round off to the year for a team that's worked so hard"



## **Contribution to the Profession**

Savills Bid Team

"Savills Bids Team is delighted to have won the APMP Contribution to the Profession award for the second year running!

This is a fantastic achievement in a year that has seen the team thrive and significantly increase our win rate.

We are #proudtobeapmp."



## **Supplier of the Year**

Carley Consult

"Carley Consult are absolutely delighted to win the inaugural APMP UK Supplier of the Year Award. We've had a great year in supporting our clients to develop winning bids across a range of contracts, and we are looking forward to more success in 2022."

**WATCH THE AWARDS CEREMONY HERE**

# ANNUAL AWARDS 2021

Congratulations to this year's winners



**Bid Excellence**  
Matt Antill  
Virgin Media O2

"I was delighted to win the APMP UK 2021 Bid Excellence Award. I have a particular interest in effective written communication, so it's rewarding to be recognised for my work to promote and embed bid-writing techniques to create engaging and credible written content."



**Industry Innovation**  
Mel Kerrison  
QinetiQ

"It was even more of a surprise to win the innovation award straight after collaboration and certainly saw the bubbles get consumed. Winning two awards in the same night is such an achievement"



**Outstanding Leadership**  
Tom Flowitt  
DHL

"It is a huge personal honour to receive the Outstanding Leadership Award and fantastic recognition for the hard work that the entire team has put in over the last 4 years. I am proud to lead the team here at DHL Supply Chain, whose dedication, drive and commitment to innovation has played a massive part in me receiving this award. As always, they have my thanks. Lastly I would like to pay tribute to the other nominees who I am sure were as equally deserving of this award."



**Best Newcomer**  
Imogen Allen  
EiB

"I'm delighted to win Best Newcomer Award! Since joining EiB, I have been surrounded by encouraging colleagues who are always on the other end of the phone to provide support in this remote working world. This has been invaluable to continually develop my skills as a Bid Writer."

# SOMETHING TO SHARE?

# SOMETHING TO ADVERTISE?

Submit a [ticket](#) via the APMP UK [help centre](#) with the Product “Track Changes” and Priority “Just FYI”.



# APMP UK DEVELOPMENT

## FROM THE DESK OF THE APMP UK CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

I have much to share with you in this update. As Chief Development Officer (CDO), my job is to make sure that there are ample opportunities to help all of you develop in your careers and that APMP UK is supporting you.

### **What have I been up to?**

I have just moved to a new company after 12 years at my previous employer. Not an easy decision. But I decided I personally needed new challenges and fresh faces to develop. I was happy where I was, but knew that if I really wanted to grow, I needed to move. Why am I telling you this? Because sometimes we need new experiences to grow. We can all get comfortable and love what we do, but if we are intent on growth, we may need a change.

### **Mentorship Programme**

We have now had three cohorts of mentors go through training and you can see their profiles on the APMP UK website. The programme is running well, and we are getting great feedback from the mentors and mentees. The mentors are excited about the progress of their mentees. The mentees are sharing that they are getting good mentoring, and some have even got promotions.

As a reminder this is NOT coaching. Coaching is more transactional and working on a specific problem. Mentoring is about transformation and longer-term development. There is still a bit of a waiting list to be matched with a mentor but if you need some career mentoring, please apply. We are looking at adding more mentors in 2022 to meet demand.

If you have experience and want to become a mentor, please apply.

### **Apprenticeship Programme**

We have graduates! Several of our original apprentices have now completed the programme. I have interviewed a few of them and they all had positive things to say about the programme. Even through the darkest period of the pandemic, the training organisations and employers kept the programme engaging and valuable. A few have now been promoted and are working on completing their Foundation level certification which should be a breeze after two years of apprenticeship.

We have also been able to grant these apprentices free student membership, so they have access to the APMP Body of Knowledge (BOK) which helps them learn and study.

This programme is no small feat. It requires employers, training organisations, end point assessment organisations, assessors, and APMP UK to all work together, meeting Ofqual standard to deliver this programme. I meet with all these groups periodically to ensure that the programme is running smoothly. We are currently working on building out more and better questions for the end point assessment to ensure high quality.

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### **A degree in in Proposal Management?**

Right now, we are in the final stages of developing a module on proposal management for a UK university. This has been a project we have been working on for years. We have submitted the content outline and will be working with the university to develop the content and find lecturers to teach it. It is planned to go live in the autumn of 2022. I can't share the details yet, but once it is live, it will be the first in the UK and the first step towards creating the opportunity for someone to earn a degree in proposal management. I know we have all migrated to bid and proposal management from other professions and degrees, wouldn't it be great if you could just start from university in this great profession?

### **BIDx Live Roadshow**

Yay! Back in front of real humans, what a treat! While not something that is directly development related, there were good things to learn. It was sooo good to be in the room with some of you and finally meet my fellow board members. I presented at the Glasgow event. I actually forgot how much you pick learn from just side conversations over lunch and how much we rely on these relationships. I hope you attended or are going to attend an event near you in 2022. We are making these events as safe as possible and want everyone to feel comfortable.

### **Plans for Next Year**

2022 will be here before you know it. I am already thinking about what opportunities would be the best use of your member dues. I take that very seriously. You trust us to spend them in a way that brings maximum value, but the needs and desires of our members is varied. So I am looking to create opportunities that vary in breadth, depth and focus so that there is something for everyone. We will continue the apprenticeship programme to help bring new people into the profession. We will continue to support those members who are benefitting from our apprenticeship programme. I am looking at how to best leverage

new offerings from APMP International like micro credentials. And also thinking about how to incorporate some practical offers to help support career development.

But here is the question to all of you: What's next? What's the next innovation? We talk a lot about best practices and yes, there are STILL many companies that are not utilising even the most basic best practices. We will always need to revisit current best practices. But are some of you ready to stop following current best practices and start developing the next generation? Where will this profession be in 10 years? Will video proposals be the norm? Will custom proposal websites? Will AI be writing our content? What do we need to be talking about now, to be ready for tomorrow? I'd love to hear from you.

I hope you all are succeeding in your endeavours.

Cheers,



**John C Usher CAP CPP.APMP**  
Chief Development Officer, APMP UK  
[john.usher@apmpuk.co.uk](mailto:john.usher@apmpuk.co.uk)

# INCOMING CEO FOR 2022

## A WARM WELCOME TO OUR INCOMING CEO FOR 2022

It's my great pleasure to be taking over the reins of APMP UK CEO for 2022 from Steven Coles. Steve has done a great job in 2021 and one I hope to repeat in 2022.

2021 has seen its own challenges with COVID-19 still very much in play, which has had an effect on our events this year, seeing us provide a series of successful BIDx roadshows instead of our Annual APMP Conference. Hopefully 2022 will see a return to face-to-face events, as well as a programme of informative webinars and other initiatives to provide benefit to all our members.

We will continue with our strategic goals of:

- Enhancing APMP UK's professionalism and image to strengthen our position as an influencer and authority in the field of bid and proposal management.
- Increasing our support to members in validating your professional standing and developing your skills with your bid and proposal management careers.
- Broadening the conversation – depth, breadth, quality and diversity – with you to foster meaningful communication and engagement.

We'll be maintaining good governance and sustainability of the UK Chapter to ensure it is managed for your benefit.

I'm looking forward to serving the UK Chapter as CEO in 2022 and listening to you as members as to what we can do to further strengthen the qualities that make our Chapter the great Chapter that it is.

In the meantime, I wish you health and happiness over the festive period, where hopefully you get to spend time with your loved ones instead of having to focus on imminent bid deadlines! Here's to 2022!



**Mairi Morrison, CAP CPP.APMP**  
Deputy Chief Executive Officer, APMP UK  
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FROM ALL AT **APMP**<sup>®</sup>  
**UK**

# CHAPTER RESOURCE DIRECTORY

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[Apply To Be A Mentor](#)

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[Assist The Membership Team](#)

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[Speak At A Regional Event / Webinar](#)

[Support APMP UK's Not For Profit Focus Group](#)

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## FAQ AND HELP

[Find answers to questions](#)

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## APMP MEMBER COMMUNITY

[Access the APMP UK member community](#)

[Watch past webinar recordings](#)

[Join our community groups](#)

[APMP UK Social Value](#)

[APMP UK Wellbeing](#)

[APMP UK Diversity & Inclusion](#)

## APMP EVENTS

[Official events app \(Apple\)](#)

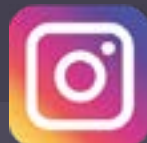
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# LINKS & RESOURCES





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