

Advancing the arts, sciences, and technology of new business acquisition and promoting the professionalism of those engaged in those pursuits.



## SA Proposal Managers Valued More Than UK

More than 35% of proposal managers in South Africa feel that their company understands the value they contribute; much higher than 26% of proposal managers in the UK.

This was one of the conclusions of the first ever proposal manager salary surveys in South Africa, conducted by proposal consultancy nFold on behalf of the APMP (Association of Proposal Management Professionals). A similar survey was done in the UK by Bid Solutions in 2008.

Despite this acknowledgement by their companies, Pullinger believes that proposal managers still lack the financial rewards they deserve. They also suffer from a shortage of skills. So there is a danger of burn-out from working late hours to meet proposal deadlines. Only 8% benefit from flexible hours and only 16% get a bonus.

And even with these detractors, most proposal managers wish are seriously committed to their profession.

“The majority of proposal managers are in it for the long run, with only 5% seeing this as a short-term career”, says Pullinger, MD of nFold and first chairperson of APMP South Africa. “However, management attitude needs to improve because almost a third of respondents are undecided whether to continue in proposal management.”

And why are the results of this survey pertinent for today’s business leaders?

Pullinger motivates: “Sales and new business development teams in South Africa can no longer afford to scramble at the last minute to complete a proposal or submit a tender. They will fail to compete and lose deals.

“But, procurement has become increasingly complex as competition has become more global. Decisions about intricate products and services from several potential suppliers are made by large teams of people over several weeks. And corporate governance has forced procurement teams to observe strict processes when choosing suppliers.

“This has pushed proposal teams to become more formalised. As a result, proposal and bid management have emerged as brand new job descriptions. That’s why industry leaders should pay attention to the results of our survey.”

The fledgling profession in South Africa now has a local association to promote it: the Association of Proposal Management Professionals (APMP). This association has run for 21 years in mature markets, but the local chapter was only recognised in November 2009.

Pullinger’s challenge to proposal managers based on the survey results is:

- Get a Voice – By joining the newly formed (in South Africa) APMP, proposal managers can promote the

profession, network with peers and share knowledge. The local chapter is brand new, but the international organisation is 21 years old. Join this active global community.

- Spread the Word – More than 60% of SA proposal managers are not aware that the APMP offers internationally recognized accreditation, compared to only 24% in the UK. This points to a lack of awareness about the profession in general. Proposal managers need to educate managers on what they do. Change those attitudes.
- Get Wise – There is a short window of opportunity for savvy proposal managers to shine. Only 3% of proposal managers in SA have accreditation, compared to 22% in the UK, where this qualification is becoming a minimum entry requirement to get a job in proposals. Get the certificate before it gets you.
- Climb the Ladder – If you lack appreciation, skills and pay you know you are not alone. The average proposal manager in the UK earns between R452,482 and R891,268 depending on age and experience. Shouldn't you? Motivate for your position to improve. You deserve it.
- Set the Trend – The proposal profession in South Africa is still young. So there is an opportunity for you to set the example for others to follow. Improve the processes you follow and raise the proposal standards in your organisation. We all win.

The next meeting of the local chapter of the APMP takes place in August. It will focus on how to win corporate business. A procurement specialist will explain how proposal managers can improve their bids. In October, the APMP welcomes two international speakers to the first local conference. Anyone interested in attending should contact [events@apmp.org.za](mailto:events@apmp.org.za).

#### About the APMP

The international chapter of the Association of Proposal Management Professionals was founded more than 21 years ago and has thousands of members world-wide. Our mission is to advance the arts, sciences, and technology of new business acquisition and promoting the professionalism of people engaged in those pursuits.

APMP South Africa is a non-profit organisation registered under section 21. We look forward to growing our local chapter with members from not only the Proposal and Bid Management profession, but also welcome specialists in sales, new business development, procurement, training, industry and others interested in promoting the proposal profession.

#### About nFold

As pioneers of the proposal consulting market in South Africa since 2001, nFold's consulting services include proposal reviews, bid management and proposal writing skills. With the only local trainers accredited by the APMP, nFold offers best practice training in writing persuasive proposals and managing bid teams. nFold also offers software to automate the creation of quality proposals, presentation and tenders. As advocates of proposal best practice, nFold's MD was elected the first chair person of the APMP in South Africa in 2009.

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