



2005 Annual Conference

We are pleased to announce that the 2005 Annual Conference brochure is online at www.apmp.org. This year's conference – *Winning and Living: Achieving the Balance* – offers attendees a variety of presentations, from case studies, lessons learned, and approach to several presentations on Living – managing stress, managing time, and improving communications. Additionally, we have several presentations targeting the more experienced proposal professional.

Our keynote speaker, Dr. Tom Barrett, has written a book and given numerous speeches on this subject. His book, *Walking the Tightrope – Balancing Family Life and Professional Life*, offers tools for leaders attempting to navigate the tightrope between life and career. He also specializes in understanding the unique pressures faced by those in political life and has spent over 10,000 hours working one-on-one with Senators and Congressmen on Capitol Hill. He is one of the few individuals ever asked to speak at the orientations for both political parties in the United States Congress.

This reception will offer a unique perspective about the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort and the people who own and operate it.

Quick and convenient registration, along full event details, is offered at the following web address:

www.apmp.org

On the Web

National Web Site:
www.apmp.org

Chapter Web Site: *(New!)*
www.apmpgeorgia.com

Light on the Horizon? Well, maybe.

I can't provide any scientifically valid evidence, but my perception is that the job market for proposal professionals in the Atlanta area is improving after a slump of several years. That should be good news for all of us, no matter whether we are in the job market, happily employed, or making our living as a proposal contractor.

When I found myself in the job market a couple of years ago, I set up monster.com and CareerBuilder.com search agents to alert me about proposal-related openings in the Atlanta area. Even though I chose the contracting fork in the road, I left the agents running as a way of keeping up with the local proposal job market. In the last few months, proposal jobs are seem to be appearing more frequently. By my unofficial count, proposal openings are showing up 5-7 times a week, almost double the pace of a couple of years ago. Similarly, more proposal jobs seem to be appearing on the apmp.org jobs site, and chapter board members are getting more frequent requests from employers looking to fill proposal openings.

Another indicator is a growing demand for proposal contracting support. Admittedly this is even more subjective than the monster and CareerBuilder feeds, but it's no less real. As I talk to other proposal consultants, it seems that all of us have full schedules and are having to decline new contracting opportunities for bandwidth reasons. (In fact, I know of at least two local companies with unfilled needs for proposal contracting support. One opportunity is immediate, and the other is for later in the year. If you're interested in details, check with me.)

So, what does this mean for all of us? A couple of things, I think.

First, an increase in proposal work hopefully means that the economy in general is improving. Companies that were just surviving for several years are re-focusing on business growth and are investing in sales and presales resources, including proposal resources. Continued improvement in the economy would be good for all of us.

Second, the trend should mean a better "seller's market" for proposal professionals. Each of us is engaged in selling our time, knowledge, and expertise. Some have set up long-term leases as "permanent" employees. Others sell and re-sell our services for days, weeks, or, occasionally, months at a time as contractors. In the long run, the higher the demand for our profession, the better return we can expect.

For a contractor, the increased demand might mean not having to consider contracts at a discounted rate just to fill out the calendar. Or it may mean the luxury choosing between prospective assignments.

For employees of proposal organizations, the higher demand may eventually result in improved salaries for proposal professionals. The demand may also impact non-salary aspects of employment—more realistic schedules, better professional development opportunities, or improved job security. As the job market turns in favor of the sellers, enlightened employers will have a growing appreciation for the value of a stable, experienced proposal team. Inevitably, as managers realize that their proposal employees are no longer chained to their PCs by a poor job market, they will look for ways to improve employee retention. Heck, in my wildest fantasies, the concept of work-life balance for proposal team members might become something more than a bad joke. (Here's a good place to remind you of the 2005 APMP Annual Conference with the theme of "Winning and Living: Achieving the Balance.")

This is not a call for proposal professionals to dive into the job market. Indeed, I hope that every full-time employee of every proposal organization is well fed, happy, and secure in his or her current position. Statistically, however, most of us will change jobs ten or more times during our work careers. If and when the time comes to find another position—whether by choice or necessity—it's a blessing to know that there are viable options.

This added sense of security can be very empowering. It may be just the ingredient needed for a proposal professional to approach the team manager with ideas about how to improve scheduling or workload balance for the proposal staff. It might be impetus to starting discussions with management about enabling proposal team members to work from home on occasion or to take some comp time after an exhausting proposal effort.

We are all managers of our own personal business—of Me, Inc. Each of us is responsible for understanding the assets we bring to the marketplace and for improving the value of those assets over time. To a great extent, we control the supply side of our personal economic equation by the professional skills we can offer and the circumstances under which we will work. Good marketing practice requires that we understand the demand for what we're selling. We need to know which companies use proposals to sell their products and/or services. We need awareness of the demand trends for proposal services. We need to anticipate the introduction of new technologies that may impact how we do our jobs and the need for our particular skills.

So, if my perception is right and the demand for proposal professionals is indeed moving up and to the right, that's good news for all of us. The question then becomes, "What do I need to do as the owner of my own career to take the best advantage of this trend?" (Hint: APMP can and should be a big part of your answer.)

By Keith Propst, Chapter Chair

Book your calendar!

Next month's Chapter meeting is on May 11.

Job Opportunities

See the Chapter Web Site for details on the following listings:

| Company | Position Title/Location |
|---|---|
| ECS, Ltd. | Marketing Coordinator Marietta, GA |
| Griffin Services | Proposal Writer Atlanta, GA |
| Manhattan Assoc., Inc. | Proposal Coordinator Atlanta, GA |
| OneSource | Proposal Coordinator Atlanta, GA |
| Porter Consulting | Proposal Writer (Any major city) |
| Spherion (agency) | Proposal Coordinator Roswell, GA Proposal Manager Roswell Ga |
| Marietta-based company (see Keith Propst) | Contractor Proposal Manager for future federal RFP response |
| WorldTravel BTI | Manager Sales Support Atlanta, GA |

Welcome to these new members

Kelly Burns - Scientific Atlanta

Cyndi Cherry - Parsons Corporation

Bob Dement - MTC Technologies, Inc.

Edwina (Hamby) Groover - Digital Insight

Cindy Hunter - Contractor

Moumita Roy - Cingular Wireless

Membership

If you have any questions about membership or would like to join APMP, please contact Judy Shaw at 678-482-5575 or judy.shaw@workscape.com.