

2011 Meetings

Houston Chapter

Wed, June 1, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
RSVP by Mon, May 27 to
Janet Dodd:
janet.dodd@kbr.com

2011 General Meetings
First Wednesdays, 11 a.m.-
1 p.m. June 1, August 3,
October 5, and December 7
Location: HESS Club
5430 Westheimer Rd
Houston, Texas 77056

2011 Board Meetings: First
Wednesdays, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
July 6, September 7, and
November 2.

Lone Star Chapter

June 16, August 17, October
19, November 16
Location:
Spaghetti Warehouse
1517 North Central
Expressway
Plano, Texas 75075
(972) 516-8903.
RSVP to
www.apmplonestar.org

Central Texas Chapter

Quarterly Meetings: August 4,
November 3
Networking Happy Hours:
June 23, September 22,
December 15
Location and topic TBA.
RSVP to
apmpcentraltexas.com

Introduction to Search Engine Marketing

The internet has become an important tool for proposal professionals. Members at the June 1 meeting will learn how to make the most out of websites and using search engines effectively. The basics of optimizing a website and planning a successful SEO campaign; search engine basics like terminology definitions; how search engines work and how to optimize a web site ethically and strategically will be some of the techniques discussed.

Caitlin Kaluza (aka QCait) is Manager of the Search Engine Marketing team at Schipul.



Caitlin Kaluza

Caitlin began her journey on the internet as "qcait" at the age of 12, selling Beanie Babies online and writing blog entries about her cat. In the years since then, she has had the privilege to work in web marketing strategy, web project management, and search engine marketing with amazing clients such as Southwest Airlines, The Houston Zoo, The YMCA of Houston, IKEA Houston, and many others. She still regularly [blogs about her cats](#).

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... Pardon our Dust ...

With this issue, we're introducing a new look to The Final Draft. We are also pleased to announce a new column from Rhonda Cavender, "The Grammer Goddess." She will be regularly writing about "the Right Word" to use in proposals. So if you have a grammar question, please send it to Rhonda at rhonda.cavender@sheaws.com and she'll be glad to answer it in one of her columns.



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President's Corner

By **Marlane J. Kayfes, M.S.,**
President, APMP Greater Houston Chapter

I'll miss seeing all of you at the June 1 general meeting of the Greater Houston Chapter, but I'll be in Denver at the APMP® International Conference and Exhibits. In April I announced that I wouldn't be going but that changed almost as quickly as so many other things in my life these days. Besides, Jeannette called it a proposal writer's Disneyland®. And far be it from me to pass up a visit to a magical kingdom.

Say, have you seen the new Houston chapter? It's refreshed and has new interactivity. Online registration isn't yet active, but that's coming.

Members, soon we will add your names to the administrative end of the site so the board can send emails to the membership through the site instead of maintaining a separate email list. When we add your name, you will receive an email with a temporary password. Then you can log in to the site, change your password, add to your profile information (if you choose to), and designate whether to display your information.

To change your display preferences, when you receive that temporary password, go to the website and log in. Then:

- In the upper right-hand corner, click View Profile, and your profile displays
- Click the Edit Profile button (see Figure 1),
- If you want to display your profile information, click to check the box for Allow to show profile, then click the radio buttons to indicate what information you want to show (see Figure 2),
- Remember to click Save when you are finished.

Check out the Forums with links to discussion sections for Proposal Writers-General, RFP Writers-General, Commercial, Government, and Jobs. We hope to see active discussions.

Past newsletters, presentations, and chapter documents (such as bylaws and minutes of meetings) are on the site, too. Poke around; you'll find them.

Helpful Web Pages

What are your favorite websites that you use regularly? Send your recommendations to Jeannette.Waldie@att.net.

As always, tell any chapter board member if you would like to see any changes or additions—to the website or other chapter activities—that will add value to your membership.

Well, if you're not in Denver for the conference, I hope you'll enjoy the June 1 meeting.



Figure 1: Edit Profile

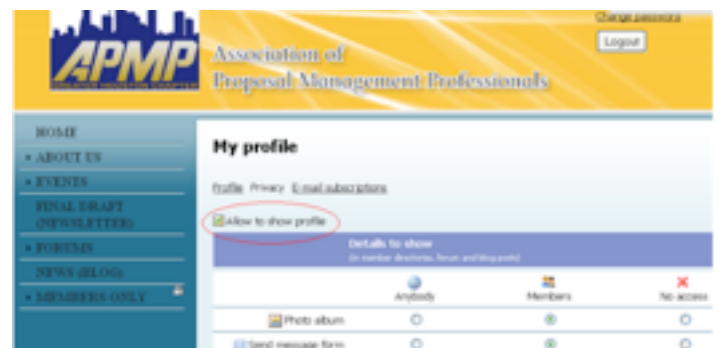


Figure 2: Showing profile information

Welcome New Members!

Michael Bryant

Deston Day, Emerson Process Management

Nancy Ewing, PSC Environmental Services, LLC

Christine Jung, Mustang Engineering

Jerry Campbell, Hamilton Sundstrand Space Systems



The Right Word

By Rhonda Cavender
Shea Writing Solutions

... How do I refer to my company without being overly informal? Are personal pronouns okay?

The first thing you should consider when you are writing any kind of document is your audience. The next thing to consider is the purpose of your document. These two things should help you determine the tone of your writing, which should also help you decide how formal you need to be.

When you refer to a company as an entity rather than the people who make up that entity, use the name of the company, and where appropriate, use the pronoun 'it' to refer to the company:

Penelope's Petal Patch opened its new offices last fall.

Penelope's Petal Patch offers its customers the finest in posies, pansies, and periwinkles.

Regardless of the whimsical name of the company, the use of 'it' when referring to Penelope's Petal Patch gives your writing a more formal tone than if you had used 'our' or 'we.'

The less formal approach is to write from the point of view of the people who make up the company:

Penelope's Petal Patch has opened our new offices.

At Penelope's Petal Patch, we make every effort to give our clients the best pansies, posies, and periwinkles in the greater Houston area.

There is nothing wrong with referring to your company with a personal pronoun when you are speaking of the people who make up that company. There is everything wrong with referring to those people as 'it'!

You might also consider revising:

Penelope's Petal Patch will be open to the public in August of 2011.

Customers at Penelope's Petal Patch can always find the best posies, pansies, and periwinkles in the greater Houston area.

And by the way . . . remember that the possessive form of 'it' is 'its,' with NO APOSTROPHE! Possessive pronouns do not use apostrophes . . .

If you have a question or comment, please contact rhonda.cavender@sheaws.com, and we may use your suggestion for our next column.

About Rhonda Cavender

Rhonda Cavender is Senior Editor at [Shea Writing & Training Solutions](#) and the editor of Shea's Timely Tips. Rhonda earned her B.A. in English with a minor in German at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. She has extensive experience with detailed editing as a result of having spent 19 years in the high school English classroom.



Help Wanted!

The Membership Chair board position is currently empty. Daniel Maddux is currently handling both the Vice President and Membership Chair duties. Let's get poor Daniel some help!

What does the Membership Chair do?

The Membership Chair is an important position on the APMP Houston board. You'll help with the new outreach campaign that APMP Houston has embarked on. This will include:

- Brainstorming new outreach ideas
 - Reaching out to lapsed and unaffiliated members
 - Assisting with membership outreach at chapter meetings
- Reporting to the board about the status of your efforts

Jumping into anything else you can think of that will grow our chapter in numbers and in value

What if I want to help, but can't commit to being on the board?

You're welcome to serve on the Membership board without becoming Membership chair. Any assistance will be much appreciated.

How do I get involved?

Get in touch with Daniel Maddux (madduxd@gmail.com). He'll fill you in on any details that you need

Communicate Your Key Messages Clearly with Theme Statements

Mark A. Wigginton
Regional Director, Shipley Associates

Communicating your company's strengths and competitive advantages to reviewers is accomplished through concise, customer-focused win themes.

As more information about the customer and the competitive environment is uncovered by the sales (or capture) team, elements of the sales strategy change. Maintaining the sales message as the proposal moves through the business development process is critical. Win strategy management keeps the proposal team focused on customer needs and aligns win themes and messages with them.

Evaluators are often quoted as complaining about the "vast sameness" they find in proposals. Evaluating proposals becomes difficult, frustrating, and frequently leads to a decision made primarily on low cost.

To overcome the vast sameness and to ensure that contracts are won on a basis allowing successful delivery with fair profits, it falls to the capture and proposal teams to effectively identify those discriminators that make their proposed solution the best value to the customer.

As illustrated in Figure 1-1, to be competitive the seller's solution must be clearly separated from competing solutions by real discriminators.

Effective identification and/or creation of true discriminators (*benefits of interest to the buyer that are uniquely available from*

the seller) begin with an objective assessment of the customer's issues, the competitors' position, and the seller's position.

It is important to challenge your assumptions and to look for customer issues that will ultimately result in winning discriminators and themes. Areas to explore include:

- Politics
- Buying Styles
- Past Experience
- Decision Biases
- Customer Pain
- Price
- Unstated Requirements

The objective is to identify strengths and weaknesses that can drive winning strategies—actions you can take to leverage or create discriminators.

Developing Themes and Messages

After clearly defining discriminators, you can develop win themes for the proposal.

Besides aiding in selling your solution in a powerful, discriminating way, themes also help develop a consistent story and value proposition throughout the proposal. An overall proposal theme is critical. This proposal theme then must be reinforced by complementary section themes.

At the proposal subsection level, theme statements that should meet a simple test—can the evaluator cut-and-paste the theme statement into an evaluation sheet to justify awarding the highest possible score for the subfactor being evaluated?

Use a Logical Process to Develop Theme Statements

Following a logical process will enable you to develop meaningful theme statements more quickly and consistently. Ask yourself the following questions to help determine the key point you want the evaluator to remember:

- What is the point of the section?
- Why should the prospect be impressed with your solution?
- What aspect of your approach makes it worth buying?
- What do you offer that is different from your competitors?
- What makes your offer unique, desirable, or beneficial?

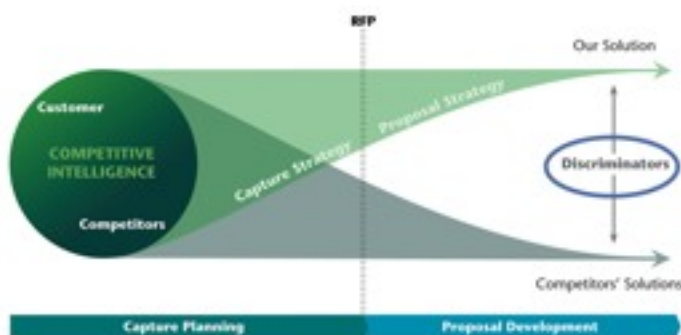


Figure 1-1. Discriminators Are Key to Effective Proposal Themes. An effective capture strategy will lead to discriminators that can be transformed into powerful proposal win themes.

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2011 Board of Directors

- President - Marlane J. Kayfes
- Vice President - Daniel Maddux
- Secretary - Janet Dodd
- Treasurer - Fritz Rumscheidt
- Program Chair - John N. Owen
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- Webmaster - Lisa Edwards Tinsley

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The mission of the Association for Proposal Management Professionals (APMP) is to advance the arts, sciences and technology of new business acquisition and to promote the professionalism of those engaged in those pursuits.

We are extremely proud that we have grown into an internationally recognized association with membership and corporate sponsors from a diverse range of disciplines and industries who are committed to the pursuit of proposal excellence. Our journey has been one of promoting the professionalism of our members and shaping the future of the proposal profession throughout the world.

APMP is a learning environment for both novice and seasoned proposal professionals. We offer professional symposia, conferences, and publications - the **Perspective** and the **Journal of the Association of Proposal Management Professionals**.

Join our organization online at https://apmp.site-ym.com/general/register_member_type.asp?

You can pay with a credit card or check (follow the online instructions). For a chapter affiliation, simply select the Greater Houston Chapter from the corresponding drop-down list. Join us and discover how we can help you pursue new horizons in proposal excellence

In Appreciation

Thank you to all who help make the Greater Houston Chapter and its meetings a success. In particular, thank you to our in-kind sponsor [B&E Reprographics](#), who prints duplicate receipts for the general meetings.

Introduction to Search Engine Marketing

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Caitlin is a fiercely proud graduate of Texas A&M University. She holds a BBA in Marketing, a Classical Studies Minor, and an International Business Certificate.

A social media addict with a background in internet marketing and web strategy, Caitlin is passionate about the web as a place for organizations to get connected, get creative, and get their hands dirty.

Communicate Your Key Messages

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- Does your theme answer the question “so what”?

Finally as you develop your theme statements, remember to put yourself in the evaluator’s chair. How does it read? Can you make them concise; preferably in a single sentence? If you can remove any words in the statement without changing the meaning, do it. If you can use a shorter,

but still accurate word, do it. If you can use a short, active verb instead of jargon, do it.

About Mark Wiggington

Mark is Shipley Associates’ Regional Director for the South Central U.S. He has worked as a proposal manager and orals coach as well as facilitating Shipley’s core curriculum of business development courses. He is an active member of APMP’s Central Texas Chapter and speaks regularly at APMP Chapter meetings and National Conferences. Mark is an Accredited Member of APMP (AM.APMP).