How often do you see a content writer struggling with a section and then 10 minutes later that have finished! They are delighted with their efforts and briefly it looks good. Its only when you start to read it, you see that their brain did not fire into action; they just found the ability to cut and paste. Now please do not get me wrong, I am not against reuse. Far from it. What I am against is the lack of thinking.

It is so easy to grab a reusable text article or, even worse, think, "*I have written that before and find the old proposal*". All you do is copy and paste and job done!

There are multiple problems with this approach, but let us start with the obvious, neither reusable text or old proposals have been written for this customer, with this requirement and at this time. So, the pasted text is going to be bland. It is not going to reinforce your key messages and it is not going to be exciting for your customer to read.

However, the bigger problem is that it may not even be current. If you have a good reuse library that is actively managed, you should hope that all articles are reviewed on a regular basis and updated, so at least you should not have this problem. But old proposals, well it is all in the name, they are old! I have reviewed proposals after submission, including a product road map. The only issue is the road map ends last year. So not so much a road map as a history.

The next issue is that the old proposal text may not even be correct. It may never have been correct, it slipped through the net before and now you are copying mistakes into your proposal. In the years when every business was buying PCs, there used to be a series of questions relating to the international standard that the PC had reached.

We saw the same list of questions from multiple Government customer, so we had a standard answer list. I checked them out. I informed the customer that one of their requirements was that the cable from the kettle was of a certain length and curled. Hardly relevant to big old heavy PCs. They had written the wrong ISO number down. The customer rightly told me, "*let us both just be quiet about this, after all I have used it in a number of tender documents and you have been saying that you comply in all of them.*" It will not always be this funny. If we supply incorrect facts, the customer can think we are not trustworthy and gone are our chance of winning.

The final problem is that we wrote old proposal for a certain customer, at a certain time, for a certain requirement. If the proposal is of high quality, it will be specific to them and the benefits and messages we wanted to deliver. In one year recently, I reviewed more than 50 proposals for becoming a service partner to the customer. In more than 20% of them, I saw the same graphic. It was one I had created years earlier. It was a specific governance model that was relevant to the win strategy of that deal. No one had gone to the efforts of changing the colour pallet, so half their graphic was in another customer's brand colours. In 2 instances, they did not cover up my customer's logo! The graphic depicted the various meetings and steering boards that would apply across the contract. All the names of these events were the names the customer used, within their industry, not ours. So, to save ten minutes in tailoring or redrawing the graphic, if they won, they would have to teach our service delivery team a whole new language for governance.

And that leads me to the answer. Do not cut and paste. Just cut, think, and paste. Find a good section of text to help you with yours, edit it or rewrite it. Personally, I print it out and start writing again, but I am a bit old school and over reliant on printing.

It may take you a bit longer to finish the section, but it is going to save you a great deal of time in rectifying the errors of bling cut and paste.