



THOUGHTS OF THE ALCHEMIST

Why Bid and Proposal Managers are mad.

Well, if you are a Bid or Proposal Manager, then it is likely that you are slightly mad. If you are not, then why are you doing the job?

We work extended hours, losing weekends to just try and keep on top of the bid. Yet how many of us get paid overtime? Even if you are provided with Time Off in Lieu (Toil), do you get time to use it?

When we win, is it not the Sales Professional who is the hero? They are the one front and centre in the pictures on your internet. We are lucky if our blurred, exhausted faces are just in the background.

Next, we see our hero Sales Professional prancing around the office with brochures under their arms. *"Would you like to see the car / holiday / house I am buying?"*, *"Would you like to see the plans for the underground extension for my house?"* If we are lucky, we get a discretionary bonus or a nice "pat on the back" award. We are the good people.

So, our win party is the shorted party in history. At least we can have a couple of weeks of rest, get to see our families. Remind our children that we exist. No, our boss is straight on the phone, *"I have an urgent bid, it is running late, but we really needed to wait for you."*

We are straight back on the hamster wheel, buzzing with half the resources we need, enjoying the catch up of developing a win strategy, messaging, storyboarding. All as the clock is ticking.

It is our fault, all our fault! Everything wrong with the bid, is down to us. The coffee is horrible, the desks are too close together, the hotel room is too hot. The Solution Architect cannot work with the Project Manager as they had a spat five years ago and will not talk. There is no paper in the photo copier. You are not giving us enough time. Feeling a bid mad now?

It is OK, there is nothing wrong in mad, there is much going for it. No one sane invents something that benefits society. It takes a mad person to have the vision, the tenacity of finding many ways not to do it and the madness to cut themselves off from society to make it happen.

We are the ones with the vision. We are the ones who must learn each way of not doing things. We are the ones in our hotel rooms reviewing the work of others as they drink in the bar.

We are the inventors. We walk into the room and create a win. We deliver benefit to our organisations by creating and securing jobs. We provide those who need it, with the successes to feed their egos.

We are the ones who just like to see our footprints in the sand. We want to know that we have made the difference. This is what drives up.

Well, that and being mad. Mad is fun. Normal people cannot cope with madness, they shy away for fear of infection. We can wear the dodgy shirts, dancing in the office, talk to ourselves. Do not worry about them, they are the Bid Manager.