



THOUGHTS OF THE ALCHEMIST

Are you an Alchemist?

I have always been fascinated in understanding the craft of Bid Management. Early in my career, I was fortunate to get great training from organisations such as Shipley Associates. I was an Apprentice to Masters in the game of sales and would devour the learning.

I grew to become a Proposal Manager, Bid Manager, and a Bid Director. I could learn by my mistakes, and I made enough of them. But I could not find relevant training directly in my subject. I went to Sales School. I learnt about commercial, financial and risk management. I took presentation training and how to use the tools of the trade.

While my colleagues would have a formal training path and accreditations in their profession, I had a void.

The number of experts dissipated and the number of apprentices asking for advice from me increased.

I built the first Proposal Methodology for a global IT company and flew around the world delivering training. I worked in different countries building and managing their presales environments. I would take over failing sales areas and get the win rate back on track.

It was then I realised, I was writing the guidebooks, giving the learning, developing the tools. I was creating them for myself to aid me in winning a deal. When it worked, it became part of my common toolset and then I would share.

I would live with the disbelief of others, that you could playout a scenario of the deal. You could assess your proposition, win strategy, and improve them so that you would win.

I understood that I was a mad man, but I did not care. I knew it worked.

I was not alone; I would meet and form long friendships with other mad people who would have a similar mindset. I could learn from them and we could have mad ideas together.

It was in a late-night conversation that I expressed how hard it was to work in a large organisation, populated by lots of normal people. *"I feel like an Alchemist, people know I can create gold, so they let me be; but they do not want to know how to do it themselves"*.

That stuck. I am an Alchemist; I am constantly searching for better ways to consistently make the gold. I am searching for new elements to improve the quality, looking at approaches to make it easier. I am driven by my desire for gold, more and more lovely gold.

I do not want to change; I am proud to be an Alchemist. Without alchemy, we will just have luck and blame to work with.

Does any of this resonate with you? Do you want to drive for more wins? Do you seek better and new ways to get them?

Be Proud, wear your badge and be an Alchemist with me.