From Reactive to Ready:
Organizational Readiness Model for Proactive Proposal Development

2026 APMP Western Chapter Conference

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Moderator: Tobin Spratte

Special credit: Mike Parkinson's Build-a-Graphic Tool

Arizona State University

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Today's presenters from ASU:



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Moderated by APMP Western Chapter Chair:



Tobin Spratte

Senior Sales Manager, Haley & Aldrich

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The Problem: Ad-hoc, reactive proposal response challenges innovative solution discovery

Our product: Research & Development… We find unique/innovative solutions to intractable problems

Where we are coming from:

- Wait for an RFP to drop,
- then figure out fundamental operational questions,
- develop a technical solution,
- and position ourselves in the proposal.

Intention: Better response to existing markets/agencies

Where we want to be:

- Identify priorities,
- position ourselves,
- organize subject matter experts and partners,
- capture reusable knowledge,
- develop capabilities,
- and prepare teams well before an opportunity requires them.

Outcome: Faster and more efficient responses AND positioning ourselves to pursue new markets/agencies

APMP Key: Early Capture • Capture-to-Proposal Transition • Proactive vs. Reactive BD

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Why ASU Is an Interesting Stress Test

$6B

Enterprise Operation

Scale matching large industry players

$1B

Research Portfolio

Massive, highly complex ecosystem

#1

In Innovation

Recognized national leader

ASU B2B Catalog:

- 400 standardized testing services,
- 1,000 ready-to-license technical patents
- 150 platform consortium memberships
- 3,000 bespoke R&D contracts

Knowledge Enterprise:

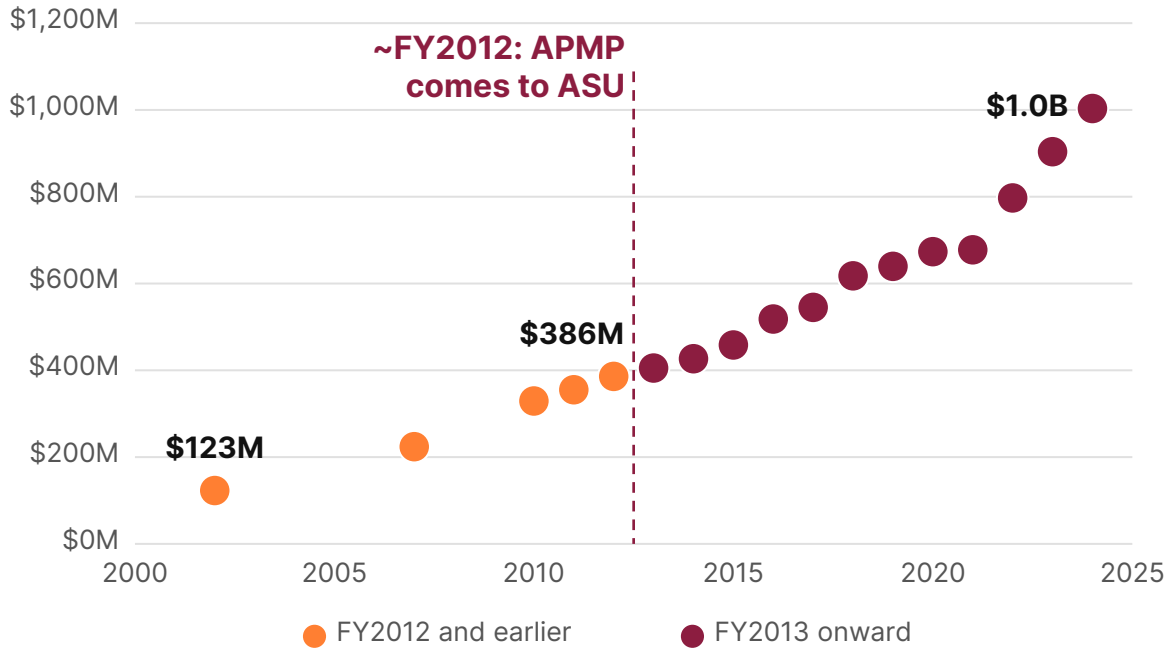
- 2,500 Research experts
- 700 Administrative and Operational Staff
- $3B in proposals annually

APMP Key: Organizational Capability • Past Performance Portfolio • Market Identification

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Research Expenditures: $123M to $1B

Sources: ASU-reported expenditures (FY2002, FY2007, FY2016–24); NSF HERD survey (FY2010–15). Correlation, not causation.



+$26M
added per year

+$51M
added per year (about 2× the earlier pace)

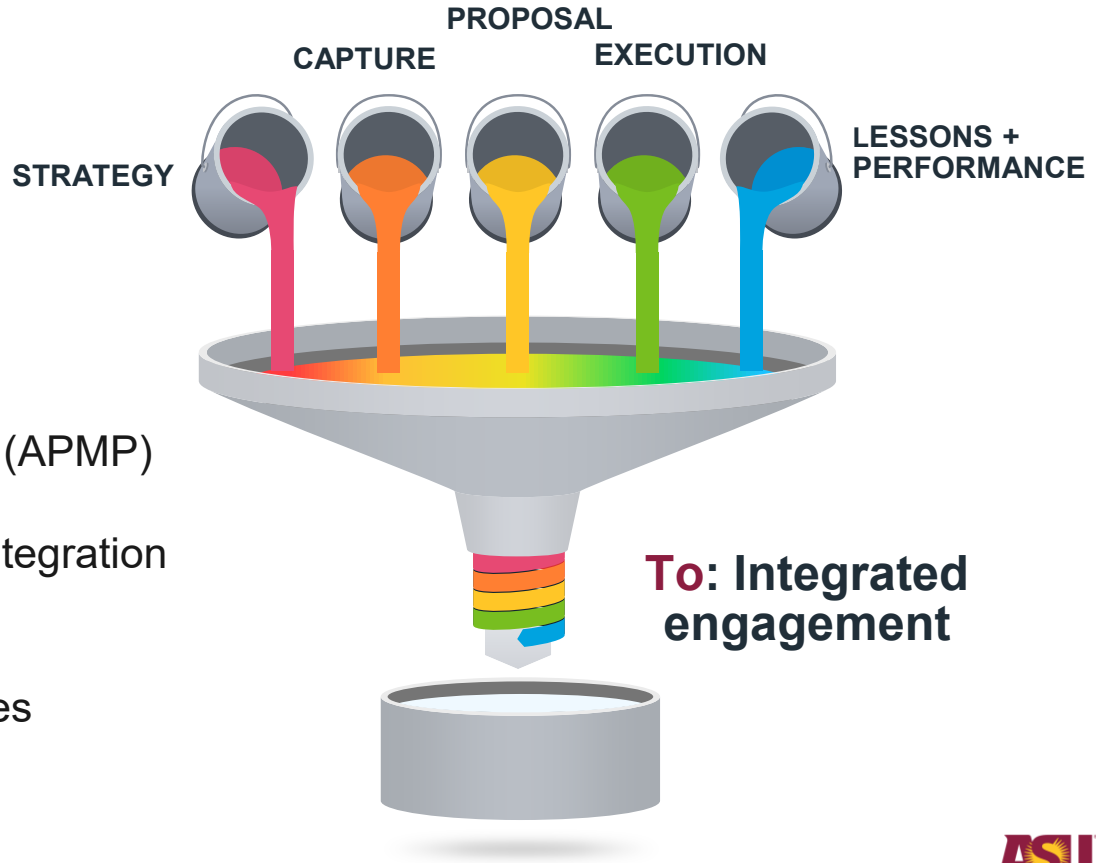
Shout Out:
Faye Farmer, PhD, CP.APMP

APMP Key: Process Improvement • Performance Metrics • Maturity Assessment

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From Reactive to Ready
Inputs to the Framework

From: Independent units that handoff operations



To: Integrated engagement

2016 ($500M)

2026 ($1B)

Our BD maturity pathway:

- Ad-hoc,chaotic bids
- Proposal Management (APMP)
- After-action reviews
- Project Management integration
- Capture Management
- Strategic Prioritization
- Integrated BD processes
- (Decision Gates)

APMP Key: BD Lifecycle • Process Maturity • Bid/No-Bid Decision Gates • Lessons Learned

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ASU's Institutional Readiness Framework

Build the people, knowledge and capabilities before the opportunity arrives

1. Strategic prioritization
Where should we prepare?

2. Stakeholder mapping
Who and what must be ready?

3. Capturing Knowledge
What do we know and need to know

4. Capability development
Where are the gaps? Can we close them?

5. Rapid activation
Ready when opportunities arrive

Cross-functional teams activated

Leadership
Set priorities, commit resources

Capture
Position opportunity, shape win strategy

Research Dev
Build teams, capabilities

Proposal Mgmt
Develop, submit proposals

Project Mgmt
Execute awards, capture lessons

Feedback Loop: Iterate strategy and optimize process across teams

APMP Key: BD Lifecycle • Cross-Functional Capture Team • Capture-to-Proposal Handoff

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Strategic Prioritization

Reactive Stance

Customer response

- Consumer Research

Proactive Stance

Deliberate Readiness Pipeline

1. Landscape Analysis
2. Opportunity Analysis
3. Capacity Analysis
4. Gap Analysis

APMP Key: Market Identification • Opportunity Assessment • Pipeline Management • Gap Analysis

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Teaming Starts Before the Opportunity

STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

- Build persistent networks around strategic priorities
- Connect executive strategy with technical expertise and ownership
- Maintain relationships before an opportunity creates urgency

Treat stakeholder networks as persistent organizational assets.

TAKEAWAY

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

1. Leadership champions
Strategic prioritization and alignment→ VPRs, executive leadership

2. Opportunity or Solution Owners
Guidance, teaming, organization → PIs, capture, proposal experts

3. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)
Targeted, domain knowledge → Researchers, technical experts

4. Internal Enabling Teams
Coordination, compliance, negotiation → PMO, operations, legal

05. External Partners
Capabilities, reach, credibility → Partners, subcontractors

APMP Key: Account Planning • Stakeholder & Customer Analysis • Teaming Strategy • Capture Team Roles

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Strategically Activate Subject Matter Experts

Content Management

- Turn expert knowledge into reusable organizational intelligence
- Capturing capabilities, technical narratives, and partner insights
- Define ownership to keep assets current and reusable

Capturing knowledge once, maintain it and reuse it.

TAKEAWAY

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSETS



People

Quad charts, expertise maps, personnel directories or profiles



Capabilities

Research and capability matrices, executive summaries, facilities and equipment profiles



Landscape

State-of-the-field and sponsor intelligence, customer and market intelligence



Solutions

White papers, proposal narratives, solution briefs, technical proof points



Network

Ecosystem mapping, partner frameworks and intelligence, consortia

APMP Key: Content Management • Proposal Library • Customer & Competitive Intelligence • SME Management

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Meetings Should Produce Something

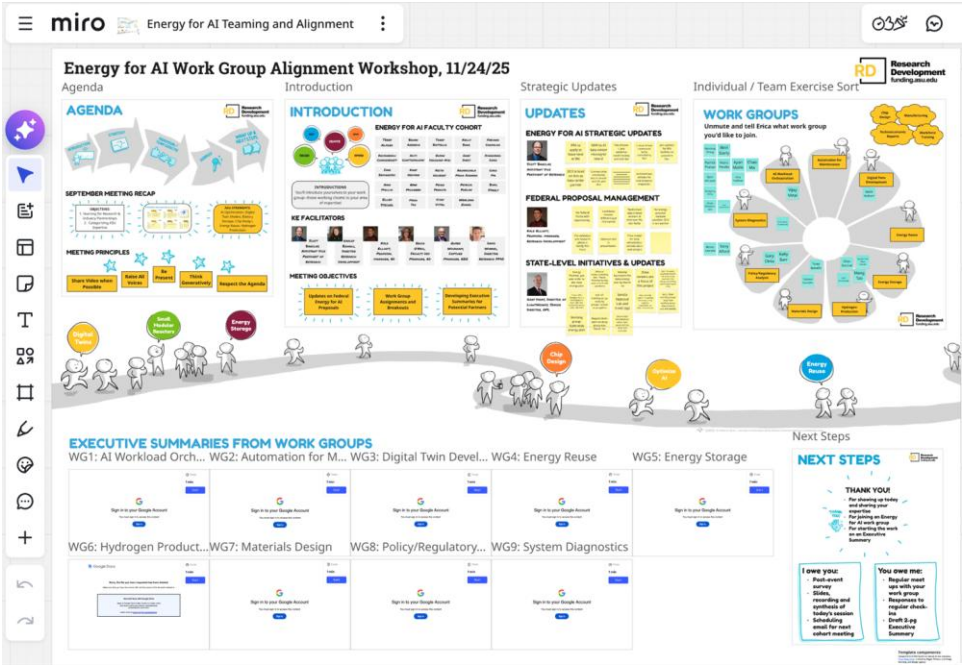
FACILITATION AS PRODUCTION METHOD

- Start with the output the meeting must produce
- Design structured interactions around decisions, alignment and action
- Convert discussion into reusable assets, owners and next steps

Design structured interactions to create usable outputs.

TAKEAWAY

EXAMPLE: WORKGROUP → EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



APMP Key: Solution Development • Win Themes • Executive Summary • Facilitated Strategy Sessions

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Don’t Let Gaps Become Proposal Emergencies

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Surface readiness gaps in expertise, partnerships, ownership, processes, and execution
- Close priority gaps and address risk through targeted investment, relationships, and training

Close capability gaps before they become proposal emergencies.

TAKEAWAY

EXAMPLE: LESSONS LEARNED → ASU NEXT STEPS

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

SCIENCE OF TEAMS BRIDGE

Empower leadership, role clarity, teaming skills, pre- to post-award clarity
(along with our “T4 pipeline”)

TEAM OWNERSHIP

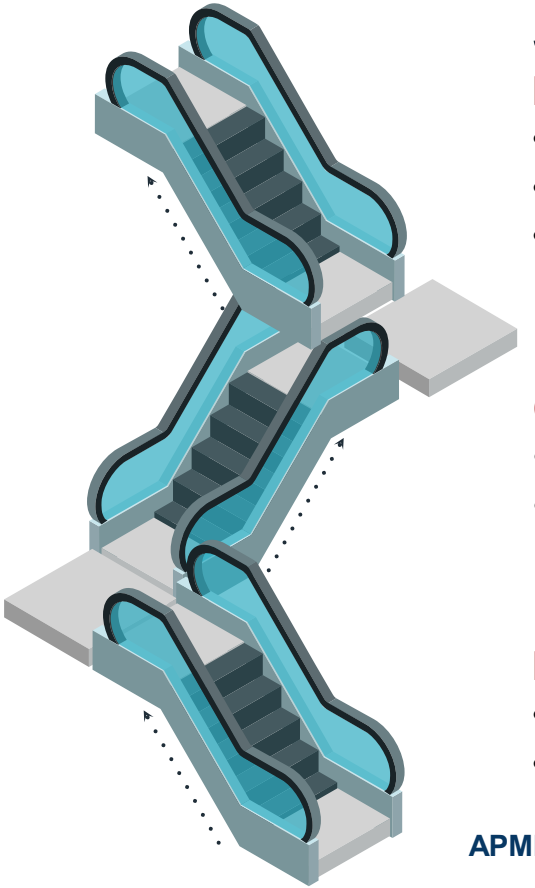
APMP Key: Capture Plan • Gap Analysis • Teaming Gaps • Risk Mitigation • Team Development

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Kick-off Should Activate, Not Discover.

UNRESOLVED	BUILT DURING	MOVED UPSTREAM
Who owns which role?	Role & expertise matrix	Reusable role framework
What expertise is needed?	Compliance matrix	Reusable team map
Who does what, by when?	Shared task workspace	Workspace ready at activation

Lesson learned: We built response infrastructure while simultaneously developing the solution.



Strategic Pursuit

Expanded team

- *Enterprise priority*
- *High stakes*
- *Major partnership needs*

Complex Pursuit

Configured team

- *Multiple disciplines/partners*
- *Novel requirements*

Routine Pursuit

Established team

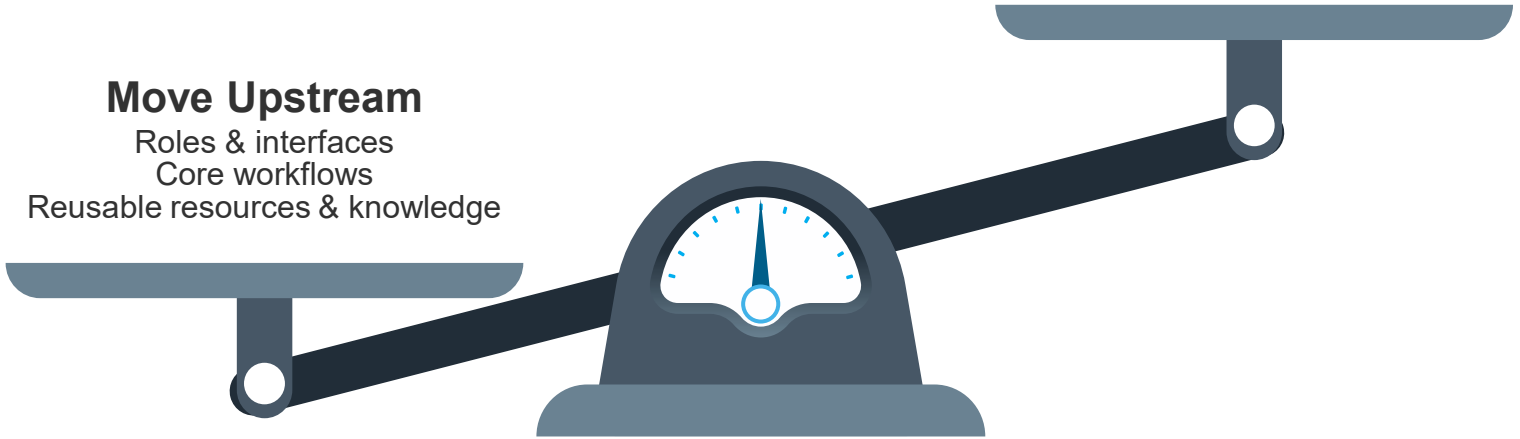
- *Single unit*
- *Known sponsor/process*

Configure the Team to the Pursuit

Takeaway:
The interfaces remain consistent while the support configuration changes.

Standardize what should be repeatable so you have capacity to adapt what isn't.

Preserve Flexibility
Team & support configuration
Customer needs/requirements
Solution, scope & timeline



Move Upstream
Roles & interfaces
Core workflows
Reusable resources & knowledge

APMP Key: Standard Process & Templates • Reusable Content • Tailoring the Process

Moving Project Management Upstream

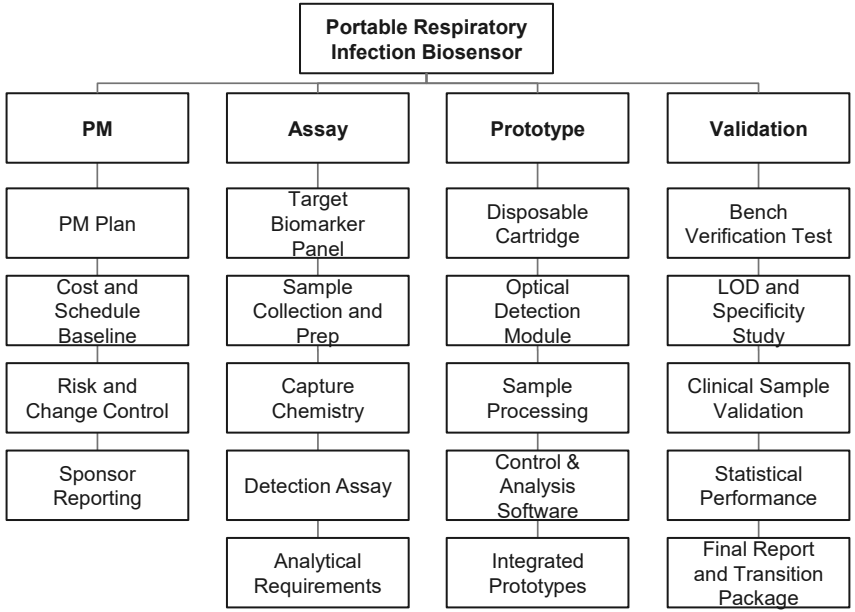
POST-AWARD EXPERTISE HAS PRE-AWARD VALUE

- Shift proposal teams into an execution-ready mindset
- Adoption of basic PM principles for execution-ready proposals

> *"Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now."* Alan Lakein

TAKEAWAY

EXAMPLE: WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE → HIGHER QUALITY TECHNICAL NARRATIVE



APMP Key: Management Approach • Work Breakdown Structure • Risk Register • Basis of Estimate • Pricing Alignment

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Designing for Execution

SOLUTIONS MUST BE EXECUTABLE

- Avoid the common pitfalls that put projects at risk
- Do not operate in a bubble - engage the appropriate support units!
- PM reviews for scope, schedule, budget alignment

Test executability while the proposed solution can still be changed.

TAKEAWAY

EXAMPLE: TACTICAL PLANNING MEETINGS → "PRE-KICKOFFS" TO MOBILIZE ENABLING TEAMS



APMP Key: Pre-Kickoff • Contracts & Pricing Review • Color Team Reviews • Compliance & Risk

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Execution Feeds the Next Pursuit

POST-AWARD INTEL FEEDS FUTURE PURSUITS

- Learn from successes, failures, and realized risks
- Be specifically aware of those with new or trending sponsor solicitation strategies e.g., ROI plans, OTAs

Delivery knowledge should flow back upstream.

TAKEAWAY

EXAMPLE: SCOUT → PUSH ENABLING TEAM AWARENESS EVEN FURTHER UPSTREAM

SCOUT

Strategic Coordination for Opportunity Understanding & Tracking

APMP Key: Lessons Learned • Win/Loss Analysis • Delivery Phase • Continuous Process Improvement

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FROM REACTIVE TO READY

Every pursuit should leave you ready for the next.

1

Choose where to be ready

You can't prepare for everything.

2

Build before you need it

People, knowledge, and capabilities.

3

Activate, don't discover

Kickoff should start with a ready team.

4

Standardize to adapt

Repeat what you can so you can flex on what you can't.

5

Test executability early

While the solution can still change.

YOUR TURN

What can you move upstream in your own organization before your next opportunity drops?

APMP Key: Closed-Loop BD Lifecycle • Process Improvement • Maturity Assessment

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