

## Reinventing Capture—10 Imperatives for Success

1. *Process is necessary, but insufficient; focus on substance*
2. *Cull your consultants: content creators trump process police*
3. *Think...draw...write; always in that order*
4. *Morph traditional Price-to-Win into Solution-to-Win—LPTA requires more than pencil-whipping cost proposals*
5. *The government wants and needs change, so provide it—“more of the same” is a loser*
6. *Incumbents have never been more vulnerable; take them on and dare to be different*
7. *Innovations and efficiencies matter; winning capture processes embrace both*
8. *Infuse real domain knowledge and understanding; buy it if you don't have it*
9. *BD to capture to proposal is a seamless continuum, not a series of handoffs*
10. *Upgrade yesterday's gate-driven process to an Agile capture methodology*

## Revisiting the Capture Process at Age 30: Time for a Radical Overhaul

- ☛ Process frameworks rooted in a bygone era do not lead inexorably to a winning strategy, but rather to large B&P expenditures and low win rates
- ☛ Compliance matters, but compliant losing proposals are a fool's errand—expensive waste from companies whose best days are behind them
- ☛ Companies that see capture process junkies as modern day alchemists who can convert crap into compelling content are continually disappointed
- ☛ Key anchor “million dollar” graphics tell the story and illustrate approaches, freeing the narrative to focus on key messages and not insipid descriptions
- ☛ C-level execs need to get out of their offices and interact with capture teams to see progress first-hand, not merely call the team to ritual floggings
- ☛ If your capture processes are the same as they were 5 years ago, others will take your work, take your customers, and take your employees

### Thicker around the Middle

Over the past thirty years, capture processes have not kept pace with the fundamental changes in our industry. As many of us discover in our fourth decade, what used to work well is not necessarily as effective anymore. While the capture process has matured into a cottage industry, with practitioners touting experience with canonical process and spawning a coin-operated workforce of dogmatic capture managers, most generally accepted capture practices are looking very thick around the middle and out of touch with current BD challenges. As a result, companies spend a lot, get very little, and end up squandering B&P dollars on losing proposals—while professing their devotion to the “XYZ Process.” The sad reality is that these processes are palliative.

### Nip and Tuck

Companies need to get more nimble and embrace the types of processes that they are offering in their RFP responses. Too many companies are repeatedly disappointed as they continuously fall for the capture equivalents of crash diets and spend too much money on mechanical, gate-driven capture processes. They compound their challenges by surrounding themselves with the junk food of bureaucratic corporate policies that often confuse creative thinking with non-compliance, and provide structure but do not imbue real strategy, creativity, or flexible thinking. Processes rooted in a different era are more likely to lead to large B&P expenditures than to winning strategies. Companies may have had a nip here and a tuck there—laying off underperformers, bringing in some SMEs, and cutting rates—but until they change their fundamental approach to capture, they will spend too much for very little, wasting large amounts on losing proposals.

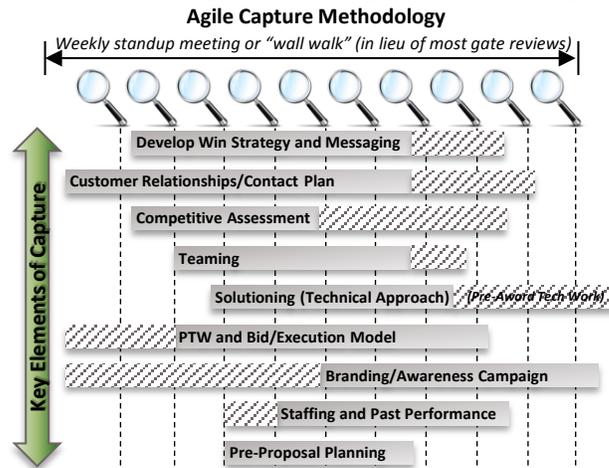
### Detox

The companies spending the most are often doing the worst—with processes anchored in archaic storyboard-centric paradigms that value process over substance, and compliance over content. Capture teams are obsessed with contact plans, teaming, and internal reviews. These are important activities, but they proceed at a glacial pace. Approaches like these breed capture consultants with no skin in the game—content to milk the clock—and paint-by-number capture managers who will never see the big picture. This produces compliant, losing proposals—going through the motions like the

patient who smuggles candy bars into the weight loss clinic. Smart companies are purging these toxins and embracing a healthier capture paradigm.

### Get Moving

The capture model of the future is built on creative and innovative win strategies, execution models, and solutioning. “Million dollar” anchor graphics tell the story and illustrate approaches so that the narrative



Like a modern SDLC, the current state of the art in capture methodology is an Agile approach with a series of overlapping tasks and iterative development. Source: Wolf Den Associates Agile Capture Methodology, 2014

can focus on delivering key messages rather than insipidly parroting RFP requirements. This shifts the focus from regurgitating internal briefing slides to building key capture and proposal artifacts in a series of week-long Agile capture sprints. Weekly “wall walks” replace a string of cookie-cutter slide reviews. The reality is that the market has changed; technology has changed; underlying business economics have changed; the procurement process has changed...The capture process must change to keep pace. What worked well before is unlikely to succeed today. Executives who have not changed their capture paradigm to a more Agile, iterative approach—those still employing processes from 5 years ago—should update their resumes.