

Graphics Creation for Bids

We live in an era when you need to get your proposal's messages across really quickly, and ideally at a single glance. The modern reader hasn't got the time to process reams and reams of boring, tortuous text-based content. And worse: even when they do have time they often can't be bothered grappling with words anyway. We'll help you turn your important ideas into attention-gabbing graphics which impress and compel your prospects.

Your Readers are Like You

Just think about how you operate yourself. If you don't "get" a new idea straightaway then aren't you very likely to move on to something more interesting and rewarding?

In your intended readers' case this might be your competitor's bid. Beware!

A picture paints a thousand words (as the time-honoured cliché goes), but a great picture also keeps the word count down!

The Winning Proposal takes complex - but important - ideas in raw text (and even verbal) form to re-create them as stimulating and intuitive graphics that are instantly grasped by your readers and reviewers ... your buyers!

Declining Attention Spans

Today the attention span of most humans is rubbish compared to what it was at the turn of the century.

Research suggests that humans typically focus on something for just eight seconds – less than goldfish! And with the modern world continuing to deliver yet more new distractions all the time, attention spans are likely to decline further.

With rapid-fire search engines like Google, Smartphones and fun Apps we don't really need to remember or focus on much at all! We can always go and find information when we need it. So there's no point in trying to understand it and hold it in our heads. **And this has significant implications for developing the winning proposal.**





They have the ability to take complex ideas and simplify them – so that the audience quickly understands the benefits they will get from us. We have been particularly impressed by the eye-catching graphics created for our bids.



Graham Jones, Programme Director and Bid Controller, DoctorLink

Gratuitous Graphics don't Work

Gone are the days when you could throw in a Microsoft Clipart image or a random Shutterstock image to fill in some white space.

Gratuitous graphics don't cut it with readers. They won't study all of your text; and if they don't like your graphics – consciously or sub-consciously - they will zone out and fail to grasp all of the great benefits that you are promising them.

Why Use Graphics in Proposals?

It's easy to lose your win themes, value proposition and key proposal messages in a morass of heavy, textual content.

A well-crafted graphic, conversely, catches the reader's eye and holds their attention.

Good graphics are compelling, easy to "get" (understand) and communicate your sales messages faster and more efficiently than text on its own is able.

When Should I use Graphics?

Whilst a good graphic can "paint a thousand words", graphics alone will not win you the deal.

Outstanding written content remains the underlining prerequisite for proposal success.

The visual elements (colours, photos, graphics, fonts, white space balance, the template used) all help constitute the "icing on the cake".

Without icing you risk the chance of no one picking up your cake and taking a big bite from it.

And yet a sweet and sugary proposal that is light on content and plausible benefits will not suffice.

So what is the right balance between

textual content and graphical content ...

... when should you use graphics?

1. Simplifying Complex Concepts

We coach our clients to simplify as far as possible. But the RFP issuer may be demanding a level of detail that cannot be simplified without your concepts and solutions being reduced to the trivial.

Simplify as far as possible, then use the right graphic alongside your text to guide your reader, step-by-step, through the concept.

2. Functional Overviews

This applies particularly when you are obliged to describe detailed functional aspects of your solution.

Your solution's functions can be brought to life with diagrams, images, process flows and screenshots. Graphics bring your solution off the printed page and to life in the minds of readers, adding genuine credibility to your bid.

3. Iconic Content Enhancement

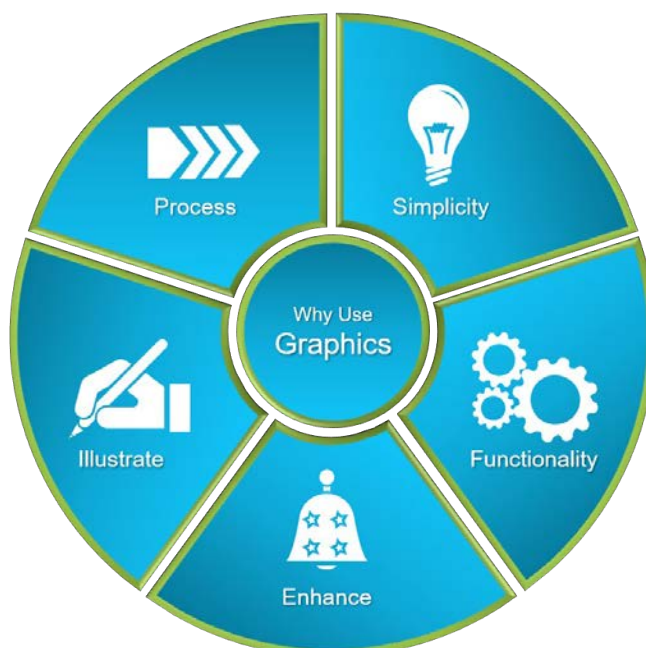
The use of icons and logos has grown exponentially in the digital era. Have you ever asked yourself why? It's because a simple graphic (icon) is quickly associated with an idea in the mind of your reader. A light bulb, for instance, can be used to mean innovation. Thus a small graphical device comes to stand for a company – yours! - renowned for helping clients with new and exciting ideas to give them a powerful competitive advantage.

Even simple graphics enhance content and allow you to repeat important ideas – including win themes – throughout your proposal without having to repeat text over and over.

4. Data Illustration

Arguably the area most deserving of graphical TLC (tender loving care) is data.

Sure, occasionally one of your readers will have doctorate in statistics or astrophysics and will be able to grasp the meaning of complex raw data sets with just a minimum of accompanying explanatory



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text - but such readers are few and far between.

When the main points that you seek to **make via data are graphically summarised and beautifully illustrated**, then data tables, charts and graphs all become extremely valuable sources of evidence to bolster your bold claims rather than opaque distractions.

5. Summarising Processes

The processes that your business undertakes daily may be very familiar to you, but to the uninitiated – your readers – **what you perceive as being straightforward might be mind boggling to them.**

So make the effort to graphically highlight core process elements as graphics, thereby allowing your prospects to get a really firm handle on how you do it (and hence on the business benefits that prospects will subsequently enjoy by procuring your solution).



Developing the Right Graphics

Here at the Winning Proposal we help clients develop stronger and more appropriate graphics in a number of ways including:

- Taking existing graphics or outline ideas and “professionalising”

them for you

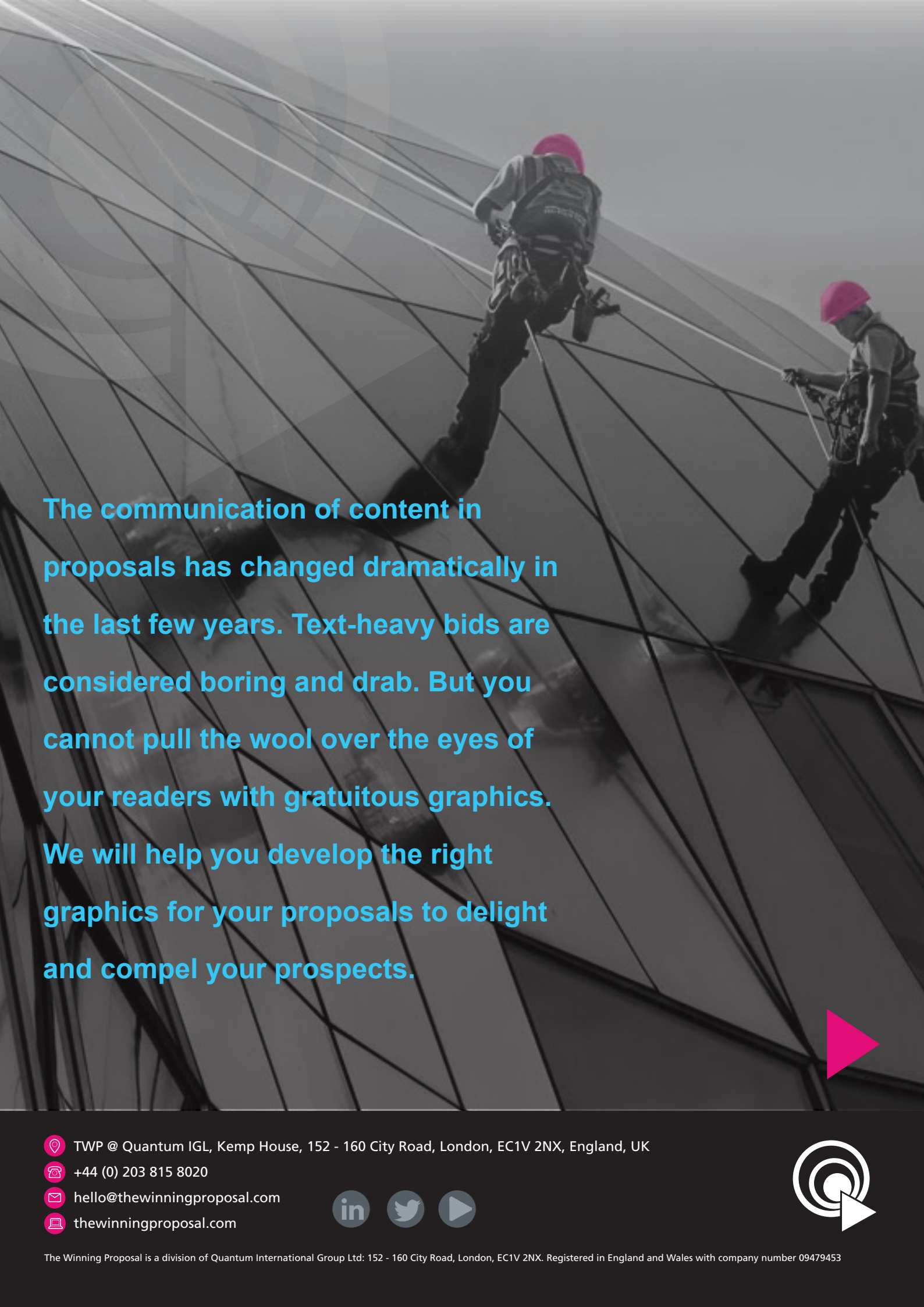
- Talking with you about your early ideas for graphics and then **making them real** for you
- Coaching team members on the “**dos and don’ts**” of graphics in proposals
- **Teaching the use of graphics** in workshops for your bid team




I just wanted to share with you that I just closed one out of my two sales deals that we discussed on the course. (Second is progressing well too). I am very grateful for all I have learned from you and I truly believe that your course was a significant aid in my sales process! A big thank you from Switzerland.”





Bloomberg




The communication of content in proposals has changed dramatically in the last few years. Text-heavy bids are considered boring and drab. But you cannot pull the wool over the eyes of your readers with gratuitous graphics. We will help you develop the right graphics for your proposals to delight and compel your prospects.

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