

Event Summary



Optimize²⁵ The Art of Bidding

Bidding isn't just a process — it's an art.

VisibleThread.com



Thank you for joining Optimize25: The Art of Bidding

On behalf of everyone at VisibleThread, thank you for being part of **Optimize25: The Art of Bidding**.

This year's event brought together over a thousand professionals from across the RFP landscape.

Across two days and ten thought-provoking sessions, our speakers, industry leaders, bid experts, and innovators, shared strategies, stories, and lessons that redefined what it means to compete and win in today's environment. From AI in proposal writing to FAR reform, from leadership in uncertainty to the evolving role of the bid writer, we tackled a lot in two days. The insights challenged us to think bigger, move faster, and write smarter.

VisibleThread's mission is clear – let's reimagine how we win. Let's reimagine how we write, review, make decisions, collaborate and compete. The world of bidding is always changing but this year's Optimize outlined the growth that can be achieved.

Thank you for being part of this community. We're inspired by your curiosity, and your drive to raise the standard for bidding and proposal excellence. We can't wait to continue this journey together at the next Optimize.

Warm regards,



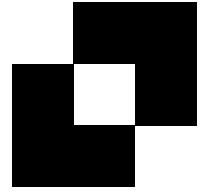
Micheál McGrath

VP of Marketing and Business Development

VisibleThread

Optimize25
The Art of Bidding

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PRESENTATION TITLE

Innovating with AI in High-Performing GovCon Teams

SPEAKERS



Patricia Fieldson
High Impact Capture & Proposal Expert, Former
Collins Aerospace

DESCRIPTION

This forward-looking session explored how proposal and capture teams evaluated and adopted new technologies for a competitive advantage. Speakers shared lessons from high-performing teams, showed how AI streamlined workflows and decision-making, and highlighted real-world “AI horror stories” to avoid. The session ended with a lively Q&A

KEY LEARNINGS

1. Learn how to evaluate, test, and safely apply AI tools.
2. Avoid common pitfalls when integrating new tech.
3. How can teams use AI to boost efficiency without losing accuracy?



Watch Recording



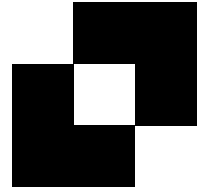
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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Guide [The AI Prompt Playbook for RFP & Proposal Teams](#)

Newsletter [The Human Factor Newsletter](#)

Blog [Creating Effective AI Prompts – Prompt Types and Real-World Applications – Part 1](#)



PRESENTATION TITLE

AI in Government Contracting – Cautionary Tales and Guardrails

SPEAKERS



David Timm
Claim and Bid Protest Attorney
Burr & Forman

DESCRIPTION

David shared cautionary tales where fabricated citations, weak traceability, and blind reliance on automation damaged outcomes. He outlined the essential guardrails contractors needed to ensure accuracy, compliance, and trust when using AI.

KEY LEARNINGS

1. Spot AI hallucinations before they derail your work.
2. Protect privacy, privilege, and compliance when using AI.
3. How do you balance innovation with legal and ethical limits?



Watch Recording



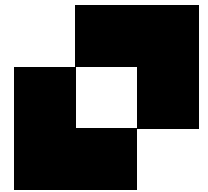
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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Blog [Creating Effective AI Prompts – Prompt Types and Real-World Applications – Part 1](#)

Blog [The AI Accountability Gap: Why Human Oversight and Grounded Data are Non-Negotiable](#)

Optimize Podcast [Your GovCon Strategy Isn't Broken—It's Ready for a Rethink](#)



PRESENTATION TITLE

State of Bidding in 2025

SPEAKERS



Krystn Macomber
Founder & CEO
Summit Strategy



Marcia Watson
President
BTW & Co.



Theresa Thomas
President
BTW & Co.



Jeff Shapiro
Partner
CohnReznick

DESCRIPTION

As 2025 draws to a close, proposal and bid teams faced a rapidly changing landscape shaped by technology, shifting expectations, and tougher competition. A panel of experts unpacked how organizations adapted their processes, tools, and decision-making frameworks to stay ahead.

KEY LEARNINGS

1. Understand key shifts shaping federal and commercial bids.
2. Strengthen human skills to complement AI and automation.
3. How can adaptability help teams thrive in a changing bid landscape?



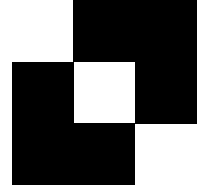
Watch Recording

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Webinar [Reimagine How You Win webinar series](#)

Guide [Ultimate Guide to Bid / No Bid Decision Making](#)

VT University [Free online learning platform](#)



PRESENTATION TITLE

How to Gather Competitive Intelligence Like an Intelligence Professional

SPEAKERS



Brian Lindholm
Managing Principal
FedSavvy Strategies

DESCRIPTION

This session revealed how intelligence professionals uncovered insights others missed—and how those same analytical techniques applied to business development. Attendees learned proven methods to move beyond basic databases and web searches using structured analysis and creative thinking.

KEY LEARNINGS

1. Use proven intelligence methods to outsmart competitors.
2. Turn raw data into actionable insights and win themes.
3. How can structured analysis give you an edge in capture?



Watch Recording

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

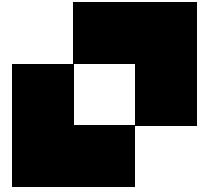
Research [Embedding Social Value into Bid Strategy](#)

Blog [VisibleThread's Methodical Approach to GenAI for Government Contractors](#)

Customer Success Stories [How Government Acquisitions Use VisibleThread as a Force Multiplier](#)

Optimize25

The Art of Bidding



PRESENTATION TITLE

Art of Proposal Writing

SPEAKERS



Anatalia Macik
Founder & CEO
Kanda Consulting



Rachel Charlton
Founder
Sticky Communications



Ginny Carson
Vice President – Proposal and Capture
Management **Chickasaw Nation Industries**

DESCRIPTION

A panel of experts shared practical ways to elevate proposal writing. Attendees learned strategies for crafting clear, persuasive, and compliant content that drives business success in 2026.

KEY LEARNINGS

1. Turn dry technical data into persuasive stories.
2. Collaborate early to align strategy, content, and tone.
3. How can writers keep proposals human as AI expands?



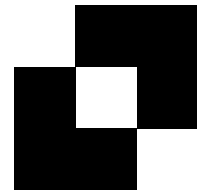
Watch Recording

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Ebook From Hype to Reality e-book [AI in Government Contracting](#)

Blog [Creating Effective AI Prompts – Prompt Types and Real-World Applications](#)

Customer Success Stories [Bid & Proposal Success Stories](#)



PRESENTATION TITLE

AI and Proposal Writing: Prompting Tips & Tricks

SPEAKERS



Allison Ritz
Director of Product Marketing
VisibleThread

DESCRIPTION

In connecting with our current and prospective customers, we've learned that users are looking for examples beyond the basics. The next step to success is understanding how to communicate with your LLM and covering examples of different types of prompts.

KEY LEARNINGS

1. Learn to write clear, structured prompts that improve proposal quality.
2. Build reusable prompt frameworks for faster, consistent results.
3. How can strong prompt design save time and boost accuracy?



Watch Recording



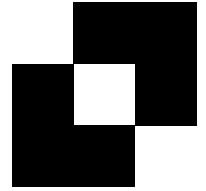
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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Playbook [The AI Prompt Playbook for RFP & Proposal Teams](#)

Blog [Creating Effective AI Prompts – Prompt Types and Real-World Applications](#)

VT University [Mastering Prompting for Proposals and RFPs](#)



PRESENTATION TITLE

FAR Overhaul: Stop Whining, Start Winning

SPEAKERS



Tan Wilson
President
Entellect LLC



Sam Le
(former SBA Policy Director), Managing
Member, **Sam Le Law**



Aaron Tilock
(Independent Growth
Consultant)

DESCRIPTION

As the Federal Acquisition Regulation overhaul reshaped the GovCon landscape, Tan Wilson, Sam Le, and Aaron Tilock broke down what changed and what it meant for contractors. They combined insider insight and strategy to show where to focus time and energy to stay competitive.

KEY LEARNINGS

1. Understand how FAR changes reshape small business and 8(a) contracting.
2. Learn to adapt fast as compliance, competition, and AI accelerate.
3. How can your team turn regulatory change into a competitive advantage?



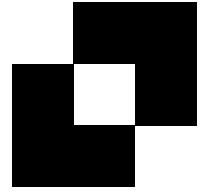
Watch Recording

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Playbook [Opportunity Assessment Playbook](#)

Optimize Podcast [FAR 2.0, Fewer People, Bigger Bets – GovCon's New Reality](#)

Blog [How Capture Managers Use SAM.gov and RFP Software to Find the Best Federal Contract Opportunities](#)



PRESENTATION TITLE

The Evolving Role of a Bid Writer

SPEAKERS



Leonie Thomas
Proposal Writing
Consultant

DESCRIPTION

The bid writer role is transforming faster than ever before. As AI, automation and shifting client expectations reshape how we develop proposals, bid writers are moving from reactive content producers to strategic communicators and facilitators of winning ideas. In this session, Leonie Thomas draws on over 20 years of experience in work winning and her work with the APMP UK's Bid Writing Focus Group to explore what this evolution means for bid writers.

KEY LEARNINGS

1. See how bid writers are becoming strategic communicators and storytellers.
2. Learn how to balance human creativity with AI-driven efficiency.
3. How can bid writers shape the future rather than react to it?



Watch Recording



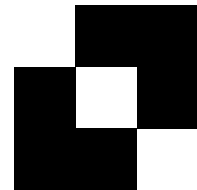
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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Research [Embedding Social Value into Bid Strategy](#)

Optimize Podcast [Navigating OCIs, Bid Protests, and Cybersecurity in GovCon](#)

Guide [Ultimate Guide to Bid / No Bid Decision Making](#)



PRESENTATION TITLE

Benchmarking Your Proposals

SPEAKERS



Jon Williams
Managing Director
Strategic Proposals

DESCRIPTION

What are the most successful proposal teams working on right now to gain competitive advantage? This research-driven session revealed what top proposal teams were doing to gain an edge. Attendees assessed their own position on the proposal journey and walked away with practical tips from one of the industry's leading voices

KEY LEARNINGS

1. Discover how to measure your team against top-performing bid organizations.
2. Learn where leading teams gain an edge—from early capture to AI use.
3. How does your proposal function compare to the industry's best?



Watch Recording

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

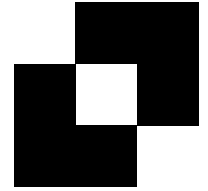
Webinar [Reimagine How You Win webinar series](#)

Playbook [RFP Lifecycle Playbook](#)

VT University [Free online learning platform](#)

Optimize25

The Art of Bidding



PRESENTATION TITLE

VisibleThread Deep Dive – What’s New and What’s Next

SPEAKERS



Allison Ritz,
Director of Product Marketing
VisibleThread



Fergal McGovern
CPO & Founder
VisibleThread

DESCRIPTION

Showcasing the latest enhancements, including Opportunity Assessment, Bid Analysis, and Business Fit Analysis. Transparent look at upcoming timelines and roadmap priorities, highlighting how VisibleThread supports the complete lifecycle with RFP intelligence that enables analysis with traceable results.

KEY LEARNINGS

1. See how the new VisibleThread platform supports the full bid and proposal lifecycle.
2. Learn how AI, logic, and security come together to improve accuracy and trust.
3. How can grounded, traceable AI make proposal writing faster and safer?



Watch Recording



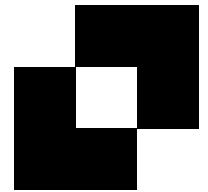
View Presentation

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

VT University [Mastering Prompting for Proposals and RFPs](#)

Customer Success Stories [Bid & Proposal Success Stories](#)

Newsletter [The Human Factor](#)



PRESENTATION TITLE

Opportunity Starts at the Top: Leadership, Risk, and the Bidding Mindset

SPEAKERS



Chris Hamm,
CEO, FIN Acquisitions & Former
SES, **GSA AAS Defense**



Alan Thomas,
Founder, **AlphaTango Strategies &**
Former Commissioner, **GSA FAS**

DESCRIPTION

Let's talk about risk aversion, decision-making culture, and why some teams don't move first, all of which would affect whether an opportunity is pursued. This conversation is part of the first episode of the new series of the Optimize Podcast - out now. Listen to the podcast [here](#).

KEY LEARNINGS

1. Learn how strong leadership drives performance in uncertain times.
2. Discover how trust, culture, and adaptability shape GovCon success.
3. How can leaders inspire confidence when the rules keep changing?



Watch Recording

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Optimize Podcast [Listen to all episodes](#)