

What The Karate Kid can teach us about the APMP Certification path

By Ilse Sfreddo CF ES-M APMP

If you've ever watched The Karate Kid, you'll remember that moment of frustration.

Daniel wants to learn karate. Proper karate. The exciting stuff.
Instead, Mr Miyagi tells him to wax cars, paint fences, and sand floors.

At first, it looks like he is being kept busy. Not taught.
And yet, that is exactly where the learning begins.

I've thought about this often when speaking to proposal professionals who are eager to move on to Practitioner, or even Professional. I understand the ambition. It is a good thing. Wanting to grow in your career should be encouraged.

In my role, engaging with professionals at different stages of their journey, I see this almost daily. The enthusiasm is there. The intent is right. But so often, the starting point is slightly ahead of where the real need lies.

And that is where I find myself pausing.

Are we in such a hurry to progress that we forget the value of learning the basics properly?

In Bid and Proposal Management, many of us learned by doing. We learned under pressure, on deadlines, in live pursuits, and often without formal training.

That experience counts. It really does. But experience does not always mean everything connects neatly. I often see gaps, not in effort or ability, but in understanding best practice. In seeing how the pieces fit together. In building a consistent approach from capture through to submission.



That is why Foundation certification matters.

It is easy to think of it as the “wax on, wax off” part of the journey. Not glamorous. Not advanced. But a vital foundation in the journey of success.

Foundation is where the language, structure, and discipline start to come together. It gives context to experience and turns instinct into something more deliberate.

Of course, not every path looks the same. If your role is more specialised, a micro-certification may be exactly the right step for you!

But if the goal is long-term growth, then the question is not only, “What is my next certification?” It may be, “What do I still need to build to take my game to the next level?”

Because in this profession, the people who look most confident at the next level are usually the ones who did not rush past the basics. Often, they are the ones who took the time to “wax on, wax off” when it mattered most.



nFOLD
inspiring success

www.nfold.com
info@nfold.com
+27 (0)105970860

