

MARKETING TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN A CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENT

Presented by Paul Middlebrooks



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- Counseling
- Training
- Conferences
- Bid Opportunity Searches
- Referrals
- Contract Solicitation Review
- Acquisition Regulations
- Marketing Strategy



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1



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94
centers

300
offices



AGENDA

a. Trends (Challenges) in Federal Contracting

b. What Buyers Want You to Know

c. Tactics that make Successful Contractors



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TRENDS IN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING

- ✓ Larger & Larger Contract Opportunities
- ✓ Government Buyers Doing More With Less
- ✓ Category Management being pushed by OMB



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TRENDS IN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING

- ✓ Greater Competition Among Small Businesses
- ✓ Less Opportunities for Personal Engagement
- ✓ Opps. to Meet with Decision Makers is Better



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TRENDS IN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING

- ✓ The Government Market is Growing
- ✓ Marketing Information is Greatly More Accessible
- ✓ The Sales Cycle for New Business is Longer



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TRENDS IN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING

- ✓ Simplified Acquisition Threshold now \$250,000
- ✓ SBA Has Relaxed Size Standards & Programs
- ✓ Socio-Economic Goals Have Increased



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TRENDS IN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING

- ✓ Buyers Are Less Critical About Teaming & JVs
- ✓ Large Primes Are Engaging More Small Businesses
- ✓ More Networking Events Targeted Toward Finding Vendors



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WHAT BUYERS WANT YOU KNOW



“Be Able To Tell Your Story and What You do Succinctly.”



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WHAT BUYERS WANT YOU KNOW

Tell Your Story...

- Be Brief. After the first 2 minutes, your conversation may become noise if you are not able to give an overview of your capabilities. Be less technical unless required.
- Do not lead off with your Socio-economic status
- Know the purpose of the person you are talking to and what is important to them



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WHAT BUYERS WANT YOU KNOW



“Despite all the rules and procedures, PEOPLE ultimately make the buying decisions. Their biggest concern if they do not know you is taking the risk that you will be successful.”



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WHAT BUYERS WANT YOU KNOW

Get to know...

- The Gatekeeper (Small Business Officer)
- Contracting Officers
- Program Managers
- End-Users



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WHAT BUYERS WANT YOU KNOW



“Do Some Research to Understand What We Do and What We Need From You Before Meeting with Us.”



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WHAT BUYERS WANT YOU KNOW

Do Some Research to Understand...

- Previous Statements of Work and Competitors for the opportunity
- How the opportunity fits into the Agency's Acquisition Forecast
- What Contract Vehicles they are using and how it will impact your strategy



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WHAT BUYERS WANT YOU KNOW

“Bidding is part of the process of establishing a relationship and building your Brand.”



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WHAT BUYERS WANT YOU KNOW

Your proposal should follow a theme...

- Be able to tell “Why me” by “ghosting” your competitors
- Be honest to yourself about your strengths and weaknesses by strategizing what you are going to do about them
- Previous history and the solicitation should let you know if the opportunity is about price or about other Evaluation Factors.



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WHAT BUYERS WANT YOU KNOW



“Follow Instructions and Do What you said you are going to do.”



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WHAT BUYERS WANT YOU KNOW

Build your Brand by doing the basics...

- Registering with the agency and viewing their website before contacting them
- Greeting them at their networking events
- Going to Pre-Bid Meetings
- Requesting a Debriefing if you fail to get the contract



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WHAT BUYERS WANT YOU KNOW

Build your Brand by doing the basics...

- If you do get the contract, performance is the key to future business – its easier to grow your business with current customers than new ones.
- Your initial contract may be a small one
- If they tell you to contact one of their prime contractors for opportunities, it does not mean they do not like your company



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SUCCESSFUL TACTICS

SUCCESSFUL TACTICS FOR CONTRACTORS

1. Targeting, Targeting, Targeting

In the government there are numerous of departments, thousands of offices. Their needs are very different and the way they do things are not the same.



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SUCCESSFUL TACTICS FOR CONTRACTORS

- ✓ Develop a List of Target Customers
- ✓ Its important to have an integrated strategy for each target customer, including
 - ✓ Marketing Materials
 - ✓ Communication Strategy
 - ✓ Attending Networking Events
 - ✓ Association Memberships
 - ✓ Bidding, Proposals and Pricing (Best Value)
 - ✓ Social Media



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SUCCESSFUL TACTICS FOR CONTRACTORS

2. Be Prepared for a Long Procurement Cycle

So you have followed all the instructions and completed the basics...**Now What.**

Agency contacts will tell you: “***either understand the agency key issues or don’t go at all.***” This is why research is so important because you have to decide on making a commitment (time/budget).



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SUCCESSFUL TACTICS FOR CONTRACTORS

2. Be Prepared for a Long Procurement Cycle

So you have followed all the instructions and completed the basics...**Now What.**

And how do you make this commitment with a diversified list of agencies. You want to have options but you must also focus your resources. **This is the secret sauce.**



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SUCCESSFUL TACTICS FOR CONTRACTORS

- ✓ Develop a realistic Marketing Budget
- ✓ Know Your Pricing and Wrap Rates
- ✓ Grow Your Business Through Past Performance and Current Customers
- ✓ Consider Teaming and Joint Ventures as an Option
 - ✓ They may already have relationships that your don't have
 - ✓ Sub-contracting opportunities are a good business development strategy
 - ✓ Take advantage of your Socio-Economic Status



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SUCCESSFUL TACTICS FOR CONTRACTORS

3. Developing a process driven strategy executed by tactical goals

It is a focus/time management issue and setting goals for yourself and your company is the key to success.



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SUCCESSFUL TACTICS FOR CONTRACTORS

- # of Contacts Made
 - Telemarketing
 - Face-to-Face
 - Emails
- # of Procurement Shows
- # of Bids Quoted
- Time Spent:
 - Reviewing Opportunities
 - REGISTRATIONS
 - Doing Research
 - Finding Teaming Partners



SUMMARY



SUMMARY

- 1) Develop Target List of Customers - Based on Agency and Geographic Market Focus
- 2) Each Agency has It's Own Mission and Focus - Market Research is the Secret to Success
- 3) Get Involved with the Agency in the Forecast Stage of the Procurement Process
- 4) Consider marketing to Large Primes as a Sub-Contractor



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SUMMARY

- 5) The Small Business Specialist is the key Gate-Keeper for meeting the Program Managers and End-Users
- 6) Brand your Company as an entity that they can depend on starting with following instructions and being able to tell your story
- 7) Take a process approach to implementing a diversified list of tactics
- 8) Regardless of the rules and procedures the government is looking for contractors and want to do business with you



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