

Win Government Contracts

For your small business

Taken from the book by John
DiGiacomo

Leap of Faith

- A word of caution, there are no government give-a-ways, no one will just give you a contract just because you need it; you have to earn it. Doing business with the Federal government has always been a very good market for any company, but you must learn the rules and what they want. If you do, your chances of success will be greatly increased, if you don't; I can almost guarantee that you will not get a contract.

Do you know how to use the Internet?

- We are not talking about how to play games or surf the World Wide Web looking for sports scores. We are talking about knowing how to use search engines, download and upload files, use viewers like Adobe Acrobat, and communicate via E-mail.
- You must register on SAM.gov to be eligible for any government contract. This can be the single most reason you will not receive a contact. SAM registration is good for one year.

SAM.gov

- SAM.gov is not user friendly. Users will fare better if you use the site at night, after the east coast has stopped working.
- Pay attention to your expiration date. Why, because contracting officers (CO) do. Update your registration 3 months before it expires, so you will always be current. If a CO looks to award you a contract and your SAM registration is going to expire soon, they will want you to renew before award. You have to be current in SAM to receive and be paid for a gov. contract.

Dynamic Small Business Search

- The SBA DSBS page is also updated in SAM. Keeping this page current is a requirement of the 8a program. It is also another site used by CO's to find information on your firm.
- http://dsbs.sba.gov/dsbs/search/dsp_dsbs.cfm
- This is where you sell your firm to the CO, fill out the blocks completely. Your Capabilities Narrative is your 30 second commercial, so make that catch attention. If you leave that blank, then they may move to another firm.

Government Purchasing Thresholds

- Micro Purchases (credit cards) up to \$3,000
- Simplified Acquisition Procedures (SAP) contracts of \$2,500 to \$150,000
- Simplified Commercial contracts: \$100,000 to 5,000,000
- Commercial off the shelf (COTS) contracts: no dollar limit.
- Commercial items: contracts over \$2,500

8a Program

- Any purchase over \$3,000 has to have 3 quotes. As an 8a firm agencies can award to you directly without having to post or bid on requirements. SBA calls them Sole Source Awards. This is one of the benefits of the 8a program. These awards happen all the time, you must be current in both the 8a program and SAM to receive a sole source award.

Federal Acquisition Regulations

- No discussion of government procedures and rules is complete without talking about the basic rulebook for government contracts, the FAR.
- Relevant parts for small business include Part 19, Small Business Programs, and Part 52, which contains the standard terms and conditions contained in a gov contract.

FAR & Bids

- Ensure you understand the FAR clauses and requirements before making an offer. Familiarize yourself with every clause, there will be many. Some will and can cost you money. Pay attention, if you have questions contact the CO.

Federal Business Opportunities

- FebBizOpps.gov is where the government does business. Create an account and create a search profile for every state and NAICS code you want to see opportunities on. The search profile will send you emails when an agency posts a requirement that meets your criteria. This is the single best way to find government contracts. You do not have to pay anyone to do business with the government.

Set Asides

- It is very important that you understand what a Set Aside is and how it pertains to your business. Set Asides tell you how the agency is going to award the contract. There may be Small Business set asides, which are for any small business. Competitive 8(a) set asides which are only for 8a firms. Veteran-Owned set asides, which are for firms owned by Veterans. Pay attention to these. If you are an 8a firm, you still qualify for any small business set aside you will just need to bid on the requirement.

Sources Sought

- Sources Sought (SS) are very valuable to you.
- This is when the gov is going out to the public looking for businesses that can perform their requirements.
- They also drive what type of set aside the action may be, sometimes they state SB for a small business set aside, sometimes they are blank, either way they are gold mines for you.

Procurement Technical Assistance

- PTAC is a wonderful, free resource to assist you in doing business with the government. Use this asset. www.washingtonptac.org to find the office in you county.
- PTAC will also help you navigate SAM
- Most important rule: Keep your SAM and DSBS current and updated.

Small Business Development Center

- Do you have questions and concerns about your firm? The SBDC offers free advice from Certified Business Advisors. These advisors will sit down with you one on one and discuss your goals, finances, any aspect of your business. Check out www.sbdc.org to find an advisor in your area.

Business Opportunity Specialist

- Your BOS is here to help you with any aspect of your 8a program. The 8a program is a business development program and your BOS is here to help you in just that. We ensure you remain compliant in the 8a program. We will help you in any aspect of your business and guide you to the resources available. Contact your BOS often and ask questions.