

USACE MARKETING 101: THE “REAL DEAL” FOR CONTRACTORS

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Rock Island District

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US Army Corps
of Engineers®



DISCUSSION POINTS



- Market Research- What is it and what should you do?
 - Contractor Perspective
 - Government Perspective

- Marketing to the Government
 - How can you maximize your marketing efforts?
 - What can you do to set yourself apart?
 - What should you expect?



MARKET RESEARCH- WHAT IS IT?



- Understand industry capabilities or needs of Government agencies (your “fit”)
- Ensure that Government is using correct NAICS or that you know what NAICS to monitor
- Ensure Government utilizes appropriate acquisition strategy and that contractors understand how agency buys
- Ensure that Government has visibility of small business capabilities and that contractors understand set asides
 - Do we globally understand the “Rule of Two”?
 - Do we understand requirements under \$250K?



MARKET RESEARCH- CONTRACTOR PERSPECTIVE



- Business Development
- Who are your potential customers?
 - Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS)
 - Search beta.sam.gov (formerly fbo.gov)
 - Internet Searches
 - Networking Events
 - Competitor websites (Government customers?)
 - SBA Subnet (Prime contractors)
 - Use resources (Small Business Administration/Procurement Technical Assistance Center)
- Market research of best potential Government customers
 - Review the agency's:
 - Past Procurements
 - Top NAICS codes
 - Forecasted opportunities
 - Acquisition methods
 - Potential subcontracting opportunities
 - Website
 - Overall program and mission



MARKET RESEARCH- GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE



- Contractor-Base Development
- Who are your potential contractors?
 - **Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS)**
 - Search SBA Dynamic Small Business Search (DSBS)
 - **Internet Searches**
 - **Networking Events**
 - **Other districts' contractors**
 - **Use resources (Small Business Administration/Procurement Technical Assistance Center)**
- Market research (FAR Part 10.002 (b)(2))
 - Previous Similar Procurements or Recent Market Research
 - Formal Request for Information-Sources Sought Notices
 - Databases
 - Known potential contractors-formal one on one marketing or bidding



SOURCES SOUGHT/RFI



How to maximize marketing and set yourself apart:

1. Know how we use the information from sources sought
 - Assess potential capabilities
 - Assess response to key requests from notice

2. Respond
 - Late responses?
 - Answer all questions
 - Provide supplemental information that makes sense
 - Provide CPARS or references
 - Recommend set asides
 - Provide input on proposed NAICS or potential strategy
 - 8(a) include SBA requirements letter
 - What can you provide that your competitors can't?

3. Copy the Small Business Office.

4. Follow Up/Ensure you bid or provide feedback why



DATABASES/ONLINE PRESENCE



How to maximize marketing and set yourself apart:

1. Ensure your Dynamic Small Business Search profile is complete.
2. Pay attention to key words and capabilities narrative.
 - Tip: Put more in your capabilities narrative than just your SB status.
3. Provide links to website and GSA schedule.
 - Can include link directly to capabilities statement
4. Include bonding limits.
5. Provide references/examples of projects completed.
6. Ensure that you include NAICS that match key Government customers.
 - For NAICS that are more broad, ensure keywords are available to explain

7. Make sure your website is up to date and easy to determine what you do and who to contact
8. Understand the rise of social media marketing and market research for Government agencies



KNOWN POTENTIAL CONTRACTORS-DIRECT MARKETING



How to maximize marketing and set yourself apart:

Market yourself...successfully!

1. Understand WHY you are marketing the agency and the players on the acquisition team
2. Use information gathered during market research
 - Blanket emails?
3. Use Procurement Technical Assistance Centers for help honing message
4. Develop capabilities statements/briefings for us!
5. Prepare for any networking event with market research
6. Capabilities briefings:
 - Have specific questions prepared (or a conversation starter)
 - Bring 2-3 forecasted or past procurements to discuss (or understand mission enough to discuss “options”)
 - For forecasted projects, specifically request set asides
 - Be prepared to discuss specific performance information
 - Carry the conversation, but allow for feedback
 - Show comparisons to competitors that have done work with district
 - Discuss subcontracting opportunities
7. Specifically ask the agency to include you on any relevant outreach
8. Follow up....successfully!



PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER SCENARIO



- Example: USACE has a procurement for levee repairs and earthwork
- Project Manager/Engineer/Small Business Program Manager initiate market research
 - What information do we have?
 - Do we need a sources sought notice?
 - What information can we get online?
 - What are some potential contractors that have demonstrated interest and capabilities for this work?
- Does our market research support the “rule of 2” in any category, what are needs of the district?
- Team creates a Market Research Report and recommendation to the district’s acquisition strategy board
- Board approves or denies strategy
 - Small Business Programs Office is a voting member of the board
 - We need you to ensure the maximum opportunity for direct small business opportunities



FINAL WORDS



- Every agency is different
- Business Development/Market Research for Government customer identification should take time
- Utilize your resources
- Become a trusted resource or “go-to” contractor
- Understand that successful marketing techniques ARE a company differentiator
- The more work you have done, the more likely agencies will be to help you...even if it is not for them!
- Best respectful and understanding of the climate and response times
- Don't be the “know it all” or expect the agency to just tell you what to do



QUESTIONS/FOLLOW UP



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- LinkedIn (Personal and Agency), Agency Facebook and Twitter
- Request a Market Research Questionnaire
- Follow Up for a Capabilities Briefing- as applicable