Finding Your Government Marketing Niche

Introduction to Government Contracting Presentation
What This Workshop Will Cover

- “Ready, Willing, and Able”
- Crafting your Government Marketing Plan
- Identify your Core Competency
- Confirm that the government buys what you sell
- Mind your “P’s” and “Q’s”
- Put your best foot forward
Is your Business Ready for the Government Market?

Your business is:

- Financially sound
- Experienced
- Ready, willing & able to perform
- Computer and internet capable
- The resources, time, patience and tenacity to pursue government marketing success.
Your Government Marketing Plan and Laying the Foundation

- Part of Overall Business Strategy
- Balanced Portfolio
- Government market may help smooth out the ups and downs of commercial market

Building Blocks to a successful marketing strategy:
- Understand your business
- What do you offer potential government customers?
- Learn about the government market

Learn more about the government market
- Who?
- What?
- How?
- Where?
- When?

- Be ready to market your business.
Understanding Your Business

Some questions to answer:

• What does my business do best?

• How can I differentiate my products or services from my competitors?

• What problems does my product or service solve?

• What needs does my product or service meet?
Find your Niche!

• Don’t say “I can do everything”. You can’t be everything to everyone.

• “You shouldn’t do 4,000 things 12 times, but rather 12 things 4,000 times.”
  o 80% of income comes from 20% of product – focus on that 20%.

• Focus on identifying your core competency

Core Competency

• What you do best

• Past Performance
  o What you have the most experience doing
  o Satisfied customers mean good references
Market and Competitive Research

- Who? Which government agencies?
- What? Which of my company’s products or services?
- How? Which purchasing mechanisms?
- Where? Where is the government sourcing?
- When? How often and is there a pattern?

Maine PTAC can teach you about the online tools that will help you answer these questions.
Market and Competitive Research Tools

- Federal Business Opportunities (FedBizOpps)
- Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS)
- General Service Administration (GSA)eLibrary
  - GSA Schedule Sales Query (SSQ)
- Central Contractor Registration (CCR)
- SBA’s Dynamic Small Business Search (DSBS)
“P’s” and “Q’s” to Ponder

- Product
- Price
- Promotion
- Place
- Quality
- Quantity
Product (or Service)
Elements of Product you should address

- Know your NAICS Codes
  - [http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/]()  
- Past Performance – either in commercial market or on other government purchases
- Sometimes Place of Manufacture
  - Buy American Act?
  - Berry Amendment?
  - Trade Agreement Act?

- Packaging
Price

- Pricing your product is a critical area in your business – you must decided on discounts and concessions

- Your business must be profitable so you must know all your costs

- Don’t set the price so low you can not make a profit

- Not bidding on a particular government job can be a good strategy.

Pricing Strategies

- The Government is looking for the “LOWEST PRICE” on sealed bids (“Request for Quotes/RFQ”) and electronic bidding

- The Government wants “Best Value” in proposals (Request for Proposals/RFP’s”) and will give evaluation factors. “Total Lifecycle cost” & factors other than price are important.
  - Past Performance
  - Personnel

Note: Company may have to follow Government guidelines on wages or levels of bonding or insurance.
Promotion

Some Pre-Solicitation/Pre-Marketing Strategies

- Electronic Strategies – Company Website
- Printed Material
- Face-to-Face (relationship building)
- Develop a contact list
- Fill out the SBA Supplemental Pages in the CCR
- Craft a one-page Capability Statement
Capabilities Statement
A one-page overview

• Effective marketing tool used in pre-bid activities – tells your story

• Core Competency

• Develop your message based on the solution you offer to meet the government customer's needs

• Highlight your strengths and unique capabilities

• Provide relevant past performance information

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Sample courtesy of Google Images/ www.prioritymoving.com
Place

• Identify the geographic scope of your government marketing efforts

• Shipping for products
  o Important to know FOB and where it is to be shipped and who is responsible for shipping and related costs
  o Government often uses FOB destination in solicitations which puts the burden on the vendor to assume shipping costs & other responsibilities

• Places of performance for service providers.
Quality & Quantity

- Quality of product
- Quality of service
- Internal controls
- Warranties and returns
- Can you fulfill the requirement/perform the contract?
“You only have ONE chance to make a first impression…”

How does your business look to prospective customers?

- Business cards
- Marketing material (brochures, other reading material)
- Working telephone and fax numbers
- Professional message on answering machine
- Professional email address

WEB PRESENCE – updated, accessible, easy access, resources available

- Does your business accept credit cards? SECURITY
- Do you attend conferences and matchmakers?
- Establish a BRAND identity (logo, color theme, etc.)
How Maine PTAC can Help

- One-on-one Counseling
- Assistance with online federal market and competitive research tools
- Maine PTAC’s BidMatch Service
- PTAC Training Workshops
- PTAC Matchmakers & Outreach events
- PTAC Monthly Newsletter
Contact Us

You can contact us at maineptac@emdc.org or at the office that serves the county in which your business is located (see below):

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