

Selling to the Prime Contractors

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Today's Questions and Discussion

- Who has tried to sell to a prime(s)?
 - How do you sell to a prime?
- Who has an existing prime contract?
 - How did that happen?
- Product or Service?
 - Know your CONCISE offering



First Steps to Selling to a Prime

- First stop: Small business office (SADBU)
 - Email, call, email, call...push for an introductory SADBU capabilities meeting
 - Bring your capabilities statement/presentation in THEIR format (don't know it? Then ask.)
 - ✓ Clearly define your niche
 - ✓ Prime answer may be – “Not at this time.”
 - Capabilities from your strategic plan
 - You want names, emails and phone numbers
 - ✓ Agree on the next steps
 - You are not an 8(a) first, but last



Getting that First Contract

- What does the customer want?
 - Are you selling the right product?
 - Do you have the best solution?
- Are relationships important?
- Know your market niche
 - What is the difference between commercial and government sales?
- Politics as part of the process
- Know your customer's requirements
 - Your competitors know them
- Why are you in this at all?



From Whom do You Buy?

- As a customer, what traits do you seek in a seller?
- How important are relationships in your buying decisions?
- If products are the same – quality and price – from whom will you buy?
 - A stranger? Why?
 - Someone you know/like? Why?
- How do customers buy their products?
 - Are your customers different from you?
- First contracts often come from previous work relationships with someone at the prime
 - Relationship based - Knows what you offer
 - Closing a “cold call” is almost impossible



How do You Win New Business?

- Is it the best technical solution?
- Is it the best political solution?
- One example –
- You may offer the prime both a technical and a political solution – if they need what you offer, AND you can help them politically



Small Business Observations

- Most small businesses do not state their niche clearly – what specifically do you do?
- Most small businesses do not have a strategic plan (10 pages or less)
 - Clearly state your vision and mission
 - Define your market space
 - Outline the types of opportunities (niche)
 - How we are going to “get there”
 - ✓ Focus
 - ✓ Targets
 - ✓ No “pop-ups” that do not fit in the plan
- Finances are important – but they are not the vision
- Everyone must understand the vision/plan

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Have a Business Development Process in Place

- Opportunity qualification process (12 questions)
 - ALL new business opportunities go through this gate (not just “b in s”)
 - Fits the strategic plan
- Capture plan (3 pages)
 - The 30-60 day plan including briefing, meetings, white papers, political, etc.
- Communications plan
 - To your stakeholders



Conclusions

- Always start with the small business office
 - Have your CLEARLY defined capabilities in their format
- Know what the customer wants
 - ASK THEM
- Relationships are important
- Do you offer the best solution(technical and political)
- Strategic Plan
 - Post it on your web page
- New Business Process
 - Need one
- Let me know if I can help –
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