



Business Development in the Federal Government



How do we develop business with the federal government? That seems to be the question every contractor asks themselves, particularly the ones who work for medium and small size businesses. How do you break through into new market places? How do you win a competitive bid against an incumbent who has held the contract for the last 5 years? Is it worth spending the money to hire a Business Development person?

Each organization is unique in their strengths and weaknesses. We at McClure Group do have an approach that we have found to be incredibly successful for our clients and Government customers. We also know that unless you grow the roots of your company, meaning your contracts, financial and program management capability, you cannot be successful in doing federal business.

The best way to build business in the Federal Government is to have contracts available for use!

When you are introduced to a new potential customer, you pitch your capabilities and they are ready to buy, the next step in the process is getting their money to you. While in the commercial world this is a simple process, it is clearly like moving a mountain for Government contractors. How do we get the money moved? Is there a current vehicle that you are prime or a subcontractor on that has ceiling available that you can move the money through? If not.... well, you very well just lost a sale. When a Government customer has money, they typically have from February to September in a calendar year to move it. The life cycle of procurement typically takes longer than that. So, unfortunately, they have to stick to putting money on contracts that currently available to them. Starting from scratch to issue your company a brand new contract isn't an option because it takes too much time.

The best way to win new customers is to make their job easier!

Evaluate your current business practices. Are you capable of executing multiple types of contracts? Are your rates competitive in your peer group of contractors? Do you have a strong management team that represents your company well? These things become critical to how your potential customers will view their relationship with you and ease of doing business with your company.

Start looking at bidding larger IDIQ contracts that you have the ability to move money through. Look at other vehicles coming out of your current customer's organization. Can you help create the requirements that are going to become part of the Statement of Work that will be in the RFP? Focus your attention on diversifying your current customer base to other DoD (Department of Defense) and Government organizations. If you are chasing Navy work, it is always easiest to move it to a Navy or DoD contract. Can you qualify to become a GSA vendor? GSA has flexibility and can be used by all Government customers.



Doing business with the Government can be tricky, frustrating, time consuming, and bear very little fruit. McClure Group recommends that you align yourself with people who understand the Government's acquisition lifecycle and processes. This will help you avoid basic pit falls that exist and can cause the contract you should be winning to go to someone less capable. Doing business with the federal government is never going to be easy, but, you can make company decisions that will foster an easier relationship with our potential customers, and save you time and money.

I want to take the first step to making my business more federal customer friendly!

Start making your business more customer friendly by evaluating your contracts and financial capability. Can you ensure your customer that you can pass an audit, and execute contract actions without delay and problems? McClure Group recommends auditing yourself and identifying your strengths and weaknesses. Once you know where to improve your business processes, your management approach becomes more than three pages in every proposal you pump out. It becomes the way you do business. If you don't know how to audit yourself, or how to fix your weaknesses, reach out to a company that can help you. We find that once we key in on our clients opportunities for improvement, we can make them more successful in their ability to make intelligent bid/no bid decisions.

About the author of this article

McClure Group Business Strategies, LLC is a consulting firm that works with federal contractors of all sizes to help them strengthen their market position and grow. Our depth of expertise ranges from federal contracts management, cost accounting, acquisition lifecycle, bid & proposal, DCAA audits, program management and organizational development. Our group of experts has combined over 70 years of experience working within the dynamic of federal contracting. We help our clients create value for their customers and satisfy their requirements—both stated and unstated. We educate our clients on how to compete and win. We mentor businesses on how to set up the appropriate processes and procedures to ensure that they are performing in accordance with government regulations while successfully growing their business. To be successful in today's market environment, top companies are innovative, employ the right strategies, and make the right corporate decisions. Our value is in assisting your management team in making those right decisions.

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