



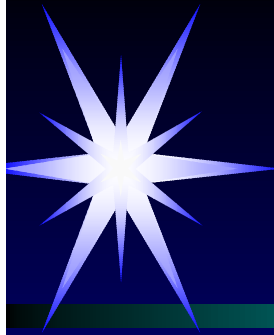
Writing Winning Proposals

SCS Seminar
Oak Ridge Tennessee
September 23, 2010
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The Best Company Does Not Win

The Company with the Best Proposal Wins



What are attributes of the BEST Proposal?

- 100% Compliant
- 100% Responsive
- Easiest to evaluate and/or score
- Most clearly demonstrates *HOW* the customer desired benefits/value will be delivered
- Demonstrates cost realism and cost reasonableness with a fully disclosed Basis of Estimate (BOE)



What is 100% Compliant?

- Comply with proposal format, structure, and content
- Provide every form, certificate, and signature required
- Respond to every instruction, request, and requirements
- Acknowledge receipt of each individual amendment
- Organize/Respond to Instructions to Offerors (Section L)
- Address each evaluation criterion (Section M)
- Where requested incorporate all and individual Statement Of Work elements (Section C)
- Specifically address special contract requirements in approaches (Section H)



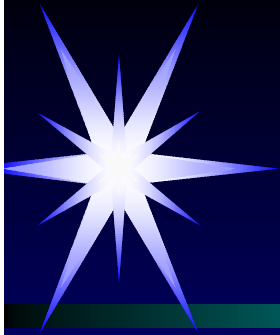
What is 100% Responsive?

- Respond directly and clearly to to the literal meaning of every sentence
- Pay strict attention to RFP Key Words
 - **Describe How, describe in detail, provide, or demonstrate:**
 - Approach
 - Plan
 - Strategy
 - Capability
 - Ability
 - Understanding
 - Knowledge
 - Process



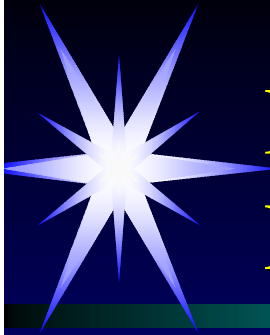
What is Easiest to Evaluate and Score?

- Topics covered precisely in order listed in RFP
 - Never mind what is logically or what flows
- Topics numbered/lettered precisely as in RFP
 - Intentionally leaving numbers/letters blank with no requirement (usually a note to the offeror)
- Use topic titles use precisely the words of the RFP requirement
 - Short titles and synonyms are for losers
- Respond to requirements with declarative sentences that use the RFP Key Words
- Explicitly state the benefits and value provided
 - Never make the customer figure out why it is good for them



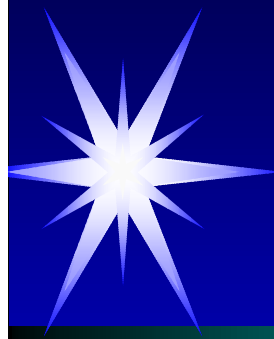
How best to demonstrate benefits and value will be delivered?

- Describe how project objectives will be met
 - Schedule (FASTER)
 - Budget (CHEAPER)
 - Safety (SAFER)
 - Quality (BETTER)
- Speak to the customer hot buttons
 - Kiss the positive hot buttons
(Each is a reason to select you)
 - Force competitors to kiss negative hot buttons
(Each is a reason to NOT select them)
- Never lead off with benefit or value
 - First tell them your proposal feature and then why it is good for them
- Describe economic benefits qualitatively/relatively describe

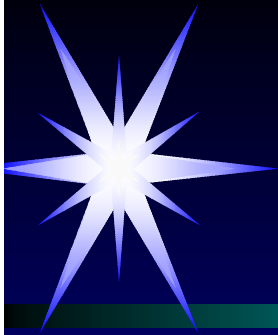


How to demonstrate and defend Cost Realism and Cost Reasonableness?

- The more you disclose in your Basis Of Estimate, the higher the probability your cost will be seen as reasonable and realistic
- The BOE should define the foundation of key assumptions
 - Regulations
 - Defined wages or basis of determination
 - Previously achieved production rates or efficiencies

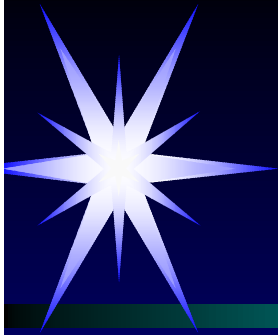


Past Performance and Problems Matter



Requests For Proposals are placing increasing weight on past performance evaluation

- Offeror's description is reality checked with customer's perception of problem and of corrective action to assess:
 - ❖ Responsiveness
 - ❖ Timeliness
 - ❖ Effectiveness
- Even if you don't list problem project as Past Performance reference - SEB can make inquiries regarding incidents/problems and corrective action effectiveness

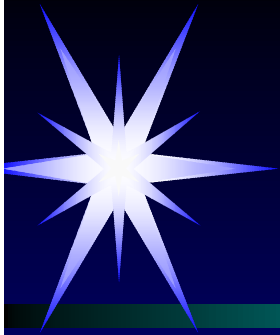


Assume the government evaluators will discover your problems
– Help them find your strengths under adversity

- RFP directs offeror to describe Performance problems and corrective actions taken to resolve problem/issue
- The government is interested in problems of the offerors making, not problems outside of offerors control

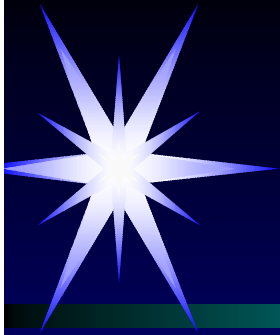
“The problems identified should not be ones that resulted from Government actions or inactions but rather should have been ones within the control of the Offeror or ones that resulted from the Offeror’s operations, policies, planning, scheduling, or practices including, but not limited to: serious injuries or fatalities; Price Anderson enforcement actions; regulatory notices of violation resulting from environmental non-compliances; missed milestones; cost overruns.”

— Recent Department of Energy RFP Past Performance Instruction



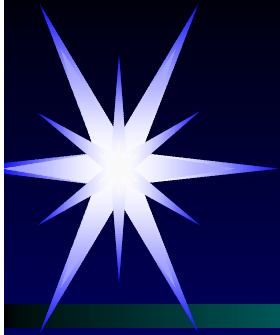
What problems or incidents relate to “When Project Performance Falters”?

- Failing to meet customer requirements
 - ❖ Meet scheduled milestones
 - ❖ Achieve budget targets
 - ❖ Provide deliverable quality
 - ❖ Deliver promised personnel
- Failing to meet customer expectations
 - ❖ Environment, Safety & Health
 - ❖ Satisfaction
 - ❖ Timeliness
 - ❖ Responsiveness
 - ❖ Flexibility



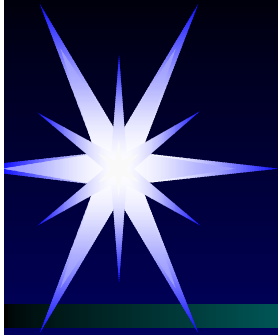
Begin corrective action response with three critical characteristics

- Humility
- Accountability
- Proactive responsiveness



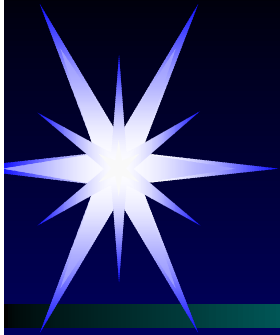
Humble yourself and your company
in the face of adversity

- **Don't** attempt to put a good face on the problem to make it go away
- **Don't** attempt to minimize the problem or tell your customer not to worry
- **Do** show genuine concern for your customer's point of view
- **Do** listen to your customer to understand all aspects of the problem that must be corrected



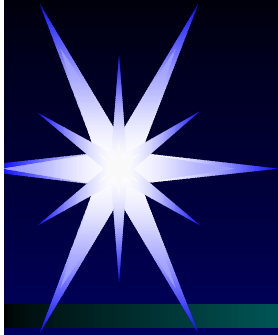
Demonstrate unconditional accountability without sharing blame or pointing fingers at anyone else

- **Don't** blame the customer or other contractors (your Prime or your subs)
- As Prime Contractor you have ultimate accountability for success and failure-
 - ❖ Don't shirk this responsibility
- As subcontractor you must address consequences to Prime Contractor and their customer
- Identify what role you had in the problem and define how in the future your approach will be different and why solution credible
- Identify what you could have done differently to change outcome
 - ❖ Precluding/mitigating those actions that were not strictly your responsibility



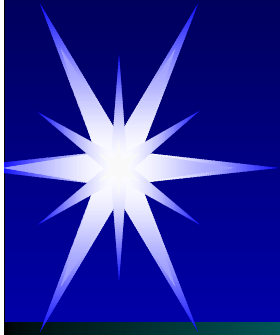
Take swift and aggressive measures to demonstrate proactive responsiveness

- Take action before someone demands you to
- Consider stand down of similar work activities on other projects to avoid repeated failures
- Have independent experts analyze situation to develop credible corrective action and lessons learned
- With your customer establish Corrective Action Plan
 - ❖ Clear performance measures define completion from your customer's perspective and bring positive closure
- Share lessons Learned Report with your customer and solicit their input before considering report final



The Government values a learning and sharing contractor

- Government selections demonstrate their acceptance that contractors are not perfect and do make mistakes
- Critical measure of offeror is behavior and performance in the face of adversity when everything does not go according to plan and mistakes are made
- Implement lessons learned on other projects at similar points in project lifecycle with similar project risks
- Apply corrective action performance measures to ensure effectiveness of application of lessons learned
- Offer to share safety and quality oriented lessons learned outside your company to benefit customers and industry



For Questions or further information

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