

Profile Enhancement and Marketing Techniques – NOTES

Slide 2: While these are helpful hints and suggestions, you need to do what is best for your business regarding your strategic business plan. This does not guarantee getting a contract; however, we hope that it places you on the radar when we are conducting market research, seeking potential small businesses for set-aside opportunities. It also assists small business specialists in getting procurements set-aside as well. Bottom-line: The more information you provide the better.

Slide 3: In order to get to your Small Business Administration (SBA) profile, you must go through the Central Contractor Registration (CCR). Once you have successfully finished/updated your CCR, look to the bottom of that page and you will see a SBA logo which states “Register or Update your SBA Profile.” This is how to get to the “other” side of CCR. Is everyone registered in CCR?

Slide 4: Keep your profile up-to-date. We suggest every 90 days. If nothing has changed, go in to the system, change something and change it back the next day so that the date will change. By not updating and keeping things current, it would suggest to the government that you are not working.

Make sure you provide an e-mail address.

Always fill out “yes” and “no” questions. Do not leave blanks.

Slide 5: Make sure you provide a web page (if applicable) and be aware of E-Mall.

E-Mall is the Department of Defense (DOD)’s answer to the General Services Administration (GSA) schedule. If you have an Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) (Blank Ordering Agreement, Job Order Contracting, etc.) check with your contracting officer to see if E-Mall is a good fit or is required for your contract.

State if you accept Government Credit Card and if you have a GSA contract. If you have a GSA contract, you should be able to provide a link to your contract under GSA advantage for that block.

The public is no longer allowed to see your “Average Annual Gross Revenue” or “Number of Employees”, the Government still has access. Sometimes your average annual gross revenue and/or the number of employees (depends on the NAICS code) is utilized to determine if your firm is able to handle the current procurement opportunity. Some firms put in \$1 dollar. Be honest as this could affect your small business status and/or your potential opportunities.

Profile Enhancement and Marketing Techniques – NOTES

Slide 6: Provide your legal structure, and other self certifications. If a category “fits” make sure you mark it as such. Also, provide current principals. We might want to talk to them instead of the point of contact on the first page.

Slide 7: You do not control the first 4 categories on this slide, SBA does.

Also, if you have received your congratulatory letter for entering the 8(a) or HUBZone program, make sure you go into the system and verify that SBA has checked the appropriate box and provided the right dates. If you don't verify, you could be losing potential opportunities.

If the boxes are not checked, contact your Business Development Specialist at SBA.

The system has added a new place to identify 8(a) mentor-protégé Joint Venture (J/V). All 8(a) mentor-protégé J/Vs should have a second profile. You fill it out as the J/V; include joint capabilities narratives, bonding, NAICS, Keywords, and references so that the J/V shows up on the radar.

Slide 8: While the Federal Government does not utilize DBE certifications, it would be prudent to add all your certifications as other government agencies (state) might utilize this when doing their market research.

Non-Federal-Government Certifications. Place certifications that are required to perform what you do, such a Registered Architect, Professional Engineer, State licenses, Commissioning, etc.

Slide 9: NEVER leave your capabilities narrative blank. When we do a search in the system, we pick certain variables to meet the requirement.

Do not state that you are, for example, the following:

Company name is an 8(a), women-owned, service-disabled veteran, HUBZone, minority firm.

We already know that based on other areas within your profile. By eliminating excessive words, you can really concentrate on the “meat” of your business. You are only given so much character space (250), so use the most of it. If you have special equipment and/or material put it in there. You might also want to use this space to continue your capabilities narrative.

Profile Enhancement and Marketing Techniques – NOTES

Business Type: Never leave this blank. Provide the type of business that you offer. Is it construction, services, research and development or manufacturing? Sometimes the government will use business type to look at the current market. Many firms utilize many NAICS, so sometimes we will utilize this as search criteria to get a more appropriate group to work with...for example, IT firms use construction and/or engineering NAICS, but show no construction or A/E experience.

Bond: Make sure this is up-to-date and accurate; this is for construction projects. If you state under your NAICS code that you provide construction, then you need to have bonding. Bonding requirements are as follows:

>\$150K – 100% performance and payment bonds

\$30K-150K – There are a variety of ways, but 100% payment bond seems to be the easiest method

<\$30K – no bond required.

Also, make sure that the bonding capacity, per contract and aggregate, are correct. Aggregate bonding is utilized when performing market research for an IDIQ type contract that could have simultaneous task orders.

Slide 10: North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) – Put in as many codes as you know you can do well (back up your NAICS with keywords and references of performed work). If you are an 8(a) firm, you will need to check with your Business Development Specialist before adding NAICS codes that were not in the approved business plan. Keywords – Put in as many keywords as possible. Use one word with a comma and space, however, if a known keyword in the industry is actually 2 words, put it in. Examples....under environmental consulting services...keyword, NEPA, endangered species, HTRW, etc. Never abbreviate a word, like “demo”, spell out “demolition.” For example in construction, put the disciplines that it takes to build a building (foundation, roofing, HVAC, etc.) and then provide building types (schools, offices, barracks). IT firms should use keywords like SIPR/NIPR or other-type terms. A/E firms should use words like vertical, horizontal, and then provide the types....schools, offices or dams, roads, levees.

There are only so many characters (250) that you get, therefore, if you run out of room, put the remaining keywords in your narrative capabilities statement and/or special equipment.

Never repeat the same keyword under your “narrative capabilities” category, however, you might want to use similar keywords, for example, if your experience is in “medical”, you might want to use “clinic”, “healthcare” or “hospital” as well because you never know how an agency will utilize the keywords. Think about using IDIQ or JOC as examples if you have these types of contracts and you have room to spare. Another keyword is “Design” for construction firms performing design-build work.

Profile Enhancement and Marketing Techniques – NOTES

Slide 11: Electronic Data Interchange capable? Refers to the structured transmission of data between organizations by electronic means. It is used to transfer electronic documents from one computer system to another (i.e.) from one trading partner to another trading partner. It is more than mere [E-mail](#); for instance, organizations might replace [bills of lading](#) and even [checks](#) with appropriate EDI messages – Wide Area Work Flow.....

This feature as well as Quality Assurance Standards is not something we normally utilize when performing market research.

Slide 12: If you do it, provide the information.
USACE within the Southwestern Division do not use this criterion when performing market research.

Slide 13: Name: Who you did the work for and Title of the work, including measurement and/or complexity....
Example: D/B 400sf, 2-story medical building
Example: A/E services – 600sf, 3-story DoD school (did it include LEED?) – cite the construction value, not the design fee
example: Janitorial Services – 1,000 sf, 2-story office building

The “NAME” area wraps, so you should be able to include a descriptive and measurable title to the work
If title is vague, make it clear. For example, if you have a GSA schedule, don’t put “GSA Schedule” as the title; tell us what the schedule is for, what was the work that you performed, also include 3 orders from that schedule.

Contract: Put the contract number here.

Start: Self-explanatory
Finish: Self-explanatory

There is always a start and finish. For example, I have seen where firms state “on-going” in the “Finish” area as they are continuous credit card purchases. The “contract” for credit card ends when the client receives the product and you receive payment.

Value: Self-explanatory. Make sure to use commas.

Profile Enhancement and Marketing Techniques – NOTES

Contact: Self-explanatory. Make sure that your POCs are up-to-date. For the most part, do not use military personnel. They tend to leave every 2-4 years. Use either the contracting officer or the contract specialist.

Phone: Self-explanatory.

As your business grows, so do your references. Your biggest \$-value job should be the first reference we see, unless you have an existing contract like an IDIQ, in which you would want to capitalize. Also, if you have an IDIQ-type contract, put in the basic contract along with 3 task orders (variety) to show use of the contract vehicle. If you don't have an IDIQ-type contract, then provide 3 projects (variety) from repeat customers. This shows the agency that you are continuing to get work from the same agency or repeat customer.

Include current work. This should assist in keeping your profile updated every 3 months.

Bottom-line: Make sure we know exactly what you did, without us having to call anyone.

Reminder!!! Large business firms utilize the dynamic to search for capable subcontractors.

Slide 16:

Look at your business card; this is your ***“5 second elevator speech”***.

It has all the information, correct? Your name, name of the firm, address, etc. Does it have an email address? Website (if you have one)? Any small business certifications? NAICS codes? Data Universal Numbering System or DUNS Number?

By the name of your firm would I be able to know what services/supplies you provide, if not, did you provide that separately? Use the back of the card.

Please re-think laminate/shiny stock for your cards. Typically, Govt personnel like to write quick notes regarding their conversation with you on the cards, but that type of stock is not “pen-friendly”.

Email, Mail, or call – Check with the small business specialist, however, email is the best method as you are able to provide an intro in the email and provide an attachment for further information.

Profile Enhancement and Marketing Techniques – NOTES

Be specific in the email. Tell us what you want us to do. Do you want us to forward it on to the buyers? Do you want set up an office call to discuss? Do you want to set up a capabilities meeting with district staff?

Mailing your capabilities is ok; however the reality is that the government person is asked to do more with less, which is the reality for us. In order to pass it around they would have to scan it and make copies depending and who would benefit from the information. Now, what if you had one of those really nice capabilities presentation files that have the multiple rings, printing on both sides, etc. and how many copies would need to be made, etc. Keep this in mind.

Calling is for setting up appointments and asking questions. Calling is not an effective method in marketing.

Slide 17: Which 4 small business-related emails will generate the fastest response or gives an appearance that the writer is focused giving you a chance to help them be successful on an immediate procurement?

When you respond to the contracting specialist, also copy the SB Specialist.

Slide 19: Conferences – Pick the conferences that your firm finds to be the most effective for them. It provides a great avenue to network not only with agencies, but with other firms as well.

Volunteer to be on a committee, this usually lends free access to the conference.

For large firms, I see you at these conferences, but no booth. Now I understand you having a marketing budget too, however, it's easier for you to stay in one place and have the small business firms come to you vice you trying to find them.

Slide 20: Do your homework – For example, I had a firm call me up. I had a firm very recently call me up. They got my name from the Army Small Business webpage. They were going down the list of each person by state in which they wanted to work in....how time consuming is that?!?!?!?

How can you find out quickly, who buys what you sell? Fedbizopps and FPDS are great websites to get that answer.

You know what we are about to buy and you know how we bought it in the past. FPDS is also a great marketing tool in knowing when a requirement will expire and who to potentially team up with in the future.

Profile Enhancement and Marketing Techniques – NOTES

Use your Resources

Who are they? This would be anyone you think can get your foot in the door. This could be the SBA Procurement Center Representative, the Chief of Contracting under a different district, the small business specialist. Find out who they are and use them.

When to use them...all the time...it's about keeping and maintaining relationships, right?

Slide 21: If USACE comes a knockin'... Answer, if you want to help get things set aside. What I mean is a sources sought. We utilize this method to seek industry input as sometimes the Dynamic does not produce positive results. If we receive responses from at least 2 responsible small businesses and the Government has a reasonable expectation of receiving a fair market price, then we are to set the action aside for small business. Exception A/E: at least 3 or more. This is an opportunity for you to provide your capabilities on specific projects. Instead of providing a broad capability when you normally market, you are able to be more specific and expand those specific capabilities.

Firms tell me they don't have time to respond...The sources sought should request minimal information, so if you are to provide something just short of a proposal or a SF330 package, there is something wrong. In addition, you need to be in contact with the small business specialist, they are your advocates, when things like this arise.

Since a sources sought always asks for past experience, another idea to minimize your time responding, is to have a file of your projects electronically. You might do this now, but one of my suggestions would be to use EXCEL or ACCESS as it's a quick program to use to get started. Provide the basic information, contract number, title of project, price, etc. and then insert a picture of the completed project that way you just have to copy/paste when you need to.

Slide 22: You should never "cold-call" technical/contracting personnel and make an appointment without talking or meeting with the agency's Small Business Specialist first. They will know how you should market to the technical/contracting personnel. On occasion, call the technical and contracting s personnel. It keeps you "remembered", but keep it short and light.

Slide 24: When marketing, emphasize your experience, past performance, and financial capability. Small Business size status does not override proven ability to perform successfully.

Profile Enhancement and Marketing Techniques – NOTES

Minimize the “fluff” and **SHOW** the agency what you have done. Always state your certifications last.

Slide 25: Have a working-knowledge of the Federal Regulations; however, never quote the FAR or any regulation back to a Contracting Officer or Contract Specialist. They know the rules and regulations.

Slide 26: Determine the best time to market to an agency. If you are new to an agency, you might want to market in the 1st or 2nd quarter. Be cautious about marketing in the 4th quarter. Keep this in mind, do you want to be remembered in the 1st and 2nd quarter or forgotten in the 4th quarter.

Slide 27:

When you want to come and visit:

Make an appointment and arrive on-time

When showcasing your projects, include the projects you have done for that agency, if applicable

Slide 28:

The Government considers you a partner in our process. Therefore, your suggestions/comments regarding a sources sought, pre-solicitation notice, solicitation, etc. is welcomed. If you have concerns, make sure you contact the Deputy for Small Business Programs as they are your advocate. Also, you may go through the SBA PCR monitoring that Agency.

Slide 29:

Seek assistance from your local resource partners as well. Some examples are SBA, Procurement Technical Centers, and Small Business Development Centers etc.

Slide 30:

Start bidding/proposing. This is the best marketing tool in your tool box. It shows that you are interested. If you are not the successful offeror, request a debrief, this is how you learn and improve your bidding/proposing capability when seeking Government procurement. We do realize there are costs associated with this, however, start out slow and go after the smaller projects first and then build from there.

If there are projects that are not small by nature...become a subcontractor....learn the process, the paperwork, network, build relationships and alliances and then bid or propose when you have your team together.

If you win the award, Congratulations! Complete the project on time and within budget.