

# 9 Ways Foreign Firms Can Compete For US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

By Jennifer Schaus

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Selling to the US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT continues to draw a growing interest, especially when the economy struggles. Although most of the US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT contracts are awarded to firms in the US for work, there are quite a few of the \$500 Billion (annual) contracts that are awarded to non-US firms for work both inside and outside of the US.

## 1. Social Media

The internet has allowed people and companies to reach into areas geographically, once thought impossible. Through the use of social media in a targeted manner, companies can quickly obtain information, meet business partners and learn about markets they wish to explore. There are several social media sites dedicated to contracting with the US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

**What You Can Do Now:** Join and create your company profile on [www.TFCN.us](http://www.TFCN.us); [www.GovLoop.com](http://www.GovLoop.com); [www.Linkedin.com](http://www.Linkedin.com) – join groups related to US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT; [www.GovWin.com](http://www.GovWin.com)

## 2. Setting up a Subsidiary or Branch Office

Having a US presence or US office is a key factor, although not necessary in selling to the US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. By establishing a US office, you are demonstrating a commitment to the FEDERAL GOVERNMENT marketplace.

**What You Can Do Now:** Contact Mike Veve (of Lasa, Monroig and Veve) who is a bi-lingual government contracts attorney and can assist you with this process.

### **3. Partnering**

Most people and businesses tend to purchase from people or companies that are most similar to them – for a good price and quality offering, or out of necessity. Partnering with a US firm aligned with your offering may help increase your chances of winning business. These firms may have the relationships in place and understand the US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT purchasing process.

**What You Can Do Now:** Establish your company profile on [www.GovWin.com](http://www.GovWin.com) for teaming opportunities. Then, contact the Prime Contractors most aligned with your offering and register in their Small Business or Partner database.

### **4. FBO – Published Contract Opportunities**

The US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT is required to post procurement notices for \$25,000 and above on a free/public site, (Federal Business Opportunities), [www.FBO.gov](http://www.FBO.gov) Enter your country (ie. ITALY) as your keyword search to find opportunities - past & present. You will have access to other interested bidders and contact information for the procurement officer. You can also search by your industry codes - most of these searches will bring back responses within the US.

**What You Can Do Now:** Go to FBO.gov and set up your company profile to be alerted of notifications in your country or for your industry.

### **5. B2G Business Plan**

Selling to a specialized vertical market requires having a roadmap of how to accomplish your goals. Business-To-Government, or “B2G” is no different.

Understanding what the US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT buys, when they buy and what their budgets are will help you be more strategic in your approach to this large market. Competitive analysis, upcoming contract notices and contact names/phone numbers will help accelerate the sales process.

**What You Can Do Now:** Contact Anna Urman of [www.TacticalInsight.com](http://www.TacticalInsight.com) for all of the above information and your industry specific road-map.

#### **6. Register in Required Databases**

Doing business with the US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT requires that you are registered in various databases, mostly so that they can pay you, but also to ensure your legitimacy, business size and other factors such as the TAA, Trade Agreement Acts.

**What You Can Do Now:** Ensure you are registered with [www.DnB.com](http://www.DnB.com); then [www.CCR.gov](http://www.CCR.gov) and then <https://orca.bpn.gov/>

#### **7. American Chamber of Commerce**

The American Chamber of Commerce is a US organization with offices in most countries. These are typically comprised of large firms (Fortune 500) and other US firms who commonly seek sub-contractors. Although their US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT office may not be in your country, it is possible they may be doing a small percentage of work at a US FEDERAL location (typically military base) in your country.

**What You Can Do Now:** Contact your Chamber.  
<http://www.uschamber.com/international/directory>

#### **8. Embassy in Washington**

Your country most likely has an embassy and/or consulate office in Washington, DC. There is usually an individual or division (depending upon size) whose

responsibility it is to assist firms from the home country wishing to do business in the US, or specifically the US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. They may also be responsible for trade delegations coming into Washington, DC.

**What You Can Do Now:** Contact your embassy.

### **9. Washington DC Consultants**

Even though it is possible to win US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT contracts without being in the US, it helps to have an advocate or sales/marketing person on the inside who understands your objectives and has existing relationships. This expert can be your US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ‘translator’ helping to make the necessary sales calls in Washington, DC.

**What You Can Do Now:** Contact our offices for specific request,

[www.JenniferSchaus.com](http://www.JenniferSchaus.com)

The US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT market seems daunting and complex to enter. Although there is no “silver bullet” to sales in any marketplace these resources can help firms outside of the US compete for, and potentially win contracts.

*Jennifer Schaus runs a boutique government consulting firm in Washington, DC focused on business development and marketing efforts for B2G contractors. For more information please visit [www.JenniferSchaus.com](http://www.JenniferSchaus.com)*