

7 Ways To Tap Into FED GOV Contracts Without Having To Be In DC.....

*By Jennifer Schaus,
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Doing business with the US FED GOV was, in the past a great way for companies to diversify their client portfolio and mitigate risk - should the economy collapse. Now, it seems to be the only marketplace that every business large and small wants to sell to. This will increase the already competitive B2G market and give the government more choices at even greater price discounts. However, it is not impossible to play in this vertical - it just takes time and a long-term desire to succeed.

There are multiple ways to sell to the US FED GOV successfully without having to move your business to Washington.

1. Most US FED GOV purchasing actually takes place outside of Washington, which may be a surprise to some. All Federal agencies have offices all around the US - and the world. These offices have needs that range from buying computers to facilities maintenance.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW: Obtain a list of the government offices in your area based on your offering, make your sales call, set a meeting and make your pitch.

RECOMMENDED: Tactical Insight Inc. in VA is a small business helping other small businesses with market and competitive analysis as well as contact info on the decision makers.

2. Having a presence in DC is still important and necessary to keep a pulse on decisions and legislation that may impact your firm or industry in general. There are ample lobbyist and associations.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW: Join the association related to your industry to start building a network of people that have similar business objectives.

RECOMMENDED: The ASBC - The American Small Business Coalition, focused on educating and helping government contractors.

3. In addition to associations, it is important to also have a presence that is looking out for your specific company, not just your industry. Washington DC is packed with B2G sales/marketing experts who can learn your business and make the DC sales calls for you.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW: Know your top 3 target agencies and hire a rep who has existing strong relationships within those organizations.

RECOMMENDED: Keith R Scott Associates - This DC metro firm knows the process and can accelerate your sales process by working "inside the beltway" for you.

4. Selling to the US FED GOV can be complicated, cumbersome and drawn-out. The FED GOV knows this and has placed PTAC offices around the country to help companies learn about how to sell to the FED GOV.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW: Visit your local PTAC office and attend seminars to learn about the process. An educated government contractor makes a better and more profitable contractor.

RECOMMENDED: Attend the seminars and also work 1:1 with an advisor.

5. Many small businesses feel there is an unfair advantage by large firms, called Prime Contractors. We know their names and see their commercials on TV. Most of these firms have a presence in DC and are obligated to sub-contract to small business. They typically have a person or division dedicated to finding compatible small businesses.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW: Register on their website and follow-up with a call.

RECOMMENDED: Align yourself with the top 3 Primes who offer a similar or compatible service.

6. Again, many small businesses feel they are not big enough to compete in this marketplace. The US Government has "set-aside" contracts specifically for small, minority owned, veteran owned, HUBzone, etc. firms.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW: Visit the SBA website to determine if you are a small business or have any other advantages. (Small business sizes vary by industry.)

RECOMMENDED: Contact Mike Veve at Lasa, Monriog and Veve who can help complete the formal SBA small business (8a) proposal on your behalf.

7. Do not underestimate the power of social media. Many sites are popping up that are industry specific. Even the FED GOV agencies are using social media to communicate and locate potential vendors. There are many dedicated to government contracting where you can read, participate, ask questions, post answers and find teaming & sub-con opportunities. You are not restricted by geography when it comes to the web.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW: Join LinkedIn's groups related to FED GOV.

RECOMMENDED: TFCN.us GovLoop.com and GovWIN

In conclusion, there are ways to market and sell to any vertical market. The US FED GOV market seems daunting and can be due to the red-tape and on-going paperwork. Although there is no "silver bullet" to sales in any marketplace these resources can help firms both outside and inside the DC metro area to get a start on compete for and potentially winning contracts.

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