



“Real” Federal Contracting Opportunities Come From Relationships

Business Development in federal contracting usually means a combination of marketing (web site, brochures, white papers, etc.) and opportunity identification.

In many companies opportunity identification is exclusively research based without a relationship element.

Research for opportunities usually includes agency web site research, procurement forecast analysis, purchase of commercial opportunity databases, etc. While these opportunity sources are valuable they often end up with the need for frustrating and expensive cold calls.

The best source of opportunities is people who have relationships of any kind with potential federal buyers. This type of opportunity identification is inherently more complex than research and is difficult to manage and control as a standard business process. A relationship-based process could include the following sources of leads.

1. Contract employees working on site at a federal facility. The advantages of this source are obvious. The employees can form strong bonds with the people they work with every day. The downside is that they may think selling is not ethical or do not have the type of personality that recognize opportunities.

“Selling as you work” is not unethical and is a valuable process for successful federal service contractors. You get paid to sell and the federal government understands that this type of sales is inherent to contacting is done off the clock.

2. Your subcontractors, business partners, team members, etc. can be valuable opportunity sources as long as the relationship is mutually beneficial.
3. Your employees can have federal friends and acquaintances that you are unaware of but could be helpful for referrals and introductions.
4. Company management may have friends and/or business relationships that can be of assistance in developing business.

The problem with the use of people relationships to grow more relationships is that someone has to make “asking for the lead” a more formal process than it is in most companies.

If you have any questions about this article or would like more information on this topic please contact us at (888) 661 – 4094, Ext.2. Or call the author of this article, Richard White, directly at (301) 908 – 0546, or at rwhite@fedmarket.com.