

Chapter 2

SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING TIPS

Marketing tips for enhancing your chances to attract opportunities in this growing, competitive World of Business.

I. Company Strengths:

Know your market niche. While it may be nice to say your company can do anything it is better to concentrate on what you do best. Focus on areas where you and your company can stand out. Likewise, research the Government's need for your products or services so as to have a better understanding of your opportunities.

II. Focus on a few private and public sector agencies and companies that your company's capabilities best complement:

A. Locate companies and agencies that need and buy your product or services. References available to assist you in your research are:

1. **[Government Purchasing and Sales Directory](#)**. This document alphabetically lists 4,000 products and services bought by the federal government's major military and civilian agencies and provides the specific purchasing offices that are responsible for purchasing the items. The document is available from the following office and website:

Superintendent of Documents
Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20402
<http://www.gpo.gov>

2. **[The Federal Procurement Report](#)**, published annually by the Federal Procurement Data Center, this report contains information on contracting activities of sixty federal agencies and provides information valuable for market and geographical analysis. It identifies the type of products and services procured by the agencies along with prime contractors who receive the majority of the federal contracts in each state. Contact the prime contractors regarding subcontracting opportunities. The document is available from GSA at the following address and web site:

Federal Procurement Data Center
General Services Administration
7th and D Streets, SW
Washington, DC 20407
<https://www.fpds.gov>

<http://www.gpo.gov>

3. **Selling to the Federal Government.** The government buys many of the products and services it needs from suppliers who meet certain qualifications. It applies standardized procedures by which to purchase goods and services. That is, the government does not purchase items or services in the way an individual household might. Instead, government contracting officials use procedures that conform to the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR). Learning how the government buys, understanding the responsibilities of contractors and recognizing subcontracting and procurement opportunities are the first steps to navigating this complex world of contracting. The guidance available online at <http://www.sba.gov/services/contractingopportunities/basics/index.html> provides information on defining the market, how the Government buys, your responsibilities, and various opportunities.

B. Decide if you should focus on a particular industry, company size, etc.

C. Focus on companies and agencies that have similar customer experience (commercial or specific government agency).

D. Ensure that the companies and agencies that you choose to market meet your long/short term goals.

III. Make maximum use of existing programs:

A. If you are not already on the General Service Administration's (GSA) Federal Supply Schedule (FSS), **apply to get on the Federal Supply Schedule** since the Federal agencies' use of the schedule for purchases is increasing; (To keep current on FSS information, call GSA at (703 305-5600 or access the homepage at <http://www.fss.gsa.gov>).

B. Since the Federal government's use of credit cards is increasing both in volume, and thresholds, **make sure your firm accepts credit card purchases.** The Federal Government charge card program is known as "GSA SMARTPAY". If your company already accepts charge cards, no additional steps are necessary. If not, contact a local bank or a GSA SMARTPAY contractor (American Express (800) 686-5493, Citibank (888) 241-1514, First National Bank of Chicago (312) 732-7828, NationsBank (800) 999-5189 ext. 7991, Mellon Bank (800) 424-3004, or U.S. Bank (202) 408-0101.) Information is available from GSA at http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?P=FCX6&contentId=10141&contentType=GSA_OVERVIEW.

C. Determine if you are eligible for participation in Federal procurement preference programs and take full advantage of the benefits (e.g.), register on **SBA's PRO-NET database of small businesses**, become certified as a Section 8(a) firm, Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB), HUBZone business, service disabled veteran-

owned small businesses, etc., and become eligible for restricted competition contracts, non-competitive contracts, ten percent price preferences, etc. To learn more about the program and to see if your business is located in a HUBZone, go to <http://www.sba.gov/hubzone> and enter your business address. Information about all the SBA programs is available at: <http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/index.html>.

D. In addition, you may wish to register on the **Minority Business Development Agency's (MBDA) Phoenix Database** which is a database of minority businesses. MBDA uses Phoenix with the Opportunities Database to match listed minority forms with contracts and other business opportunities via e-mail and fax. You can access Phoenix at <http://www.mbda.gov>.

E. Seek out and gain benefits from small business organizations such as Small Business Development Centers, Minority Business Development Centers, Women-owned Business Development Centers, Native American Business Development Centers, trade associations, professional development seminars/workshops and other resources that offer an array of services. A current list of Development Centers and over 800 trade associations are listed on the HUD website at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/osdbu/>.

F. **Register at www.FedBizOpps.gov to be e-mailed about upcoming federal agency contracting opportunities.** (Be advised that registering will mean you may receive up to 600 announcements per month).

IV. Learn and research the companies and agencies that you target.

A. Fort Benning is one of the agencies you have chosen to market. Study Fort Benning's web page at www.benning.army.mil/DOC (Follow the links Garrison Command, Installation Support Offices, and then Directorate of Contracting).

B. Know your customer, Review Fort. Benning's mission, program office accomplishments, and updates.

V. First impressions are lasting impressions.

Project a professional image, from the first telephone call to the content and appearance of your company's Capability Statement. Be on time for appointments. Just dropping in the Contracting Office is fine but the person you need to see may be out of the office or unavailable when you drop in. Call first and make an appointment.

VI. Locate the right people.

A. Discuss potential contracting opportunities with the small business, contracting and program office staff.

B. Participate in events/meetings attended by your target audience.

C. Attend trade fairs in your company's discipline and meet with your targeted representatives.

VII. Capitalize on your past experience.

A. Elaborate on previous related experience.

B. Mention any awards and recommendations from highly regarded sources that support the quality of your product or services.

C. Emphasize unique capabilities that your company can provide and how your company would be a valuable asset to the Fort. Benning project and program office.

D. When marketing to federal agencies, tell your potential clients what procurement provisions can be used to "reach you". (i.e., Are you certified as an 8(a), SDB, or HUBZone business? Are you on the GSA schedule?)

Hard work, Perseverance, and Quality Products and Services = Success