



Introduction to Procurement

Prepared by the NAWBO Economic Development Forum
February 2008

For most people, “procurement” is just another word for “purchasing,” whether someone is buying a lot or a little. But when hundreds of successful NAWBO members say “procurement,” they’re talking about their sales to the world’s largest buyers of services and goods.

Did you know?

- The U.S. government – federal, state, and local together – will buy more than \$4 trillion this year, including from companies like yours.
- The Fortune 500 corporations buy billions more.
- Both of these giant clients actively seek qualified woman-owned businesses to increase their supplier diversity.

Thinking about selling to government, or supplying major corporations?

**This big decision can take your company to the next level.
NAWBO’s Economic Development Forum is here to help.**

Watch for upcoming Economic Development Forum Programs! Join us this year for:

- **Profiles in Success**
 - We’ll interview NAWBO’s top suppliers to government and the Fortune 500, and share their advice with you.
 - Got a story to tell? We want to hear from you!
- **Special Topic Call-ins**
Got questions on procurement? Tell us...and call in for answers from top experts!
- **Podcasts**
Too busy right now? No worries! Download the sessions and listen when you have time.
- **Member Expert Referrals**
 - Need a specialist in government contracts?
 - Want a referral into one of those big companies?
 - Does your firm prepare government proposals?
 - Does your company want to meet new woman-owned suppliers?
- **Let us help connect you...**
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Considering Procurement?

Reasons Why You Might...

- These contracts build credibility
- Government contract process is public
- Buyers refer their colleagues
- Clients have deep pockets
- Incumbent suppliers compete strongly
- Some prefer small businesses
- Buyers need many things you sell now
- Personal relationships open doors

Points To Ponder First...

- High stakes placed on top performance
- Government contract process is complex
- Prospects have long sell cycles
- Major events can cancel contracts
- Incumbent suppliers compete strongly
- Some prefer huge, complex contracts
- Buyers have unique requirements
- Contract ethics constantly scrutinized

Successful contractors and suppliers start with questions like these before they even start to sell:

- ✓ What do you need to know before you decide to invest in pursuing this kind of business – that is, what's the right "GO / NO-GO" criteria for your company?
- ✓ How much success do you expect and how soon?
- ✓ How can you size up and pick out the best opportunities?
- ✓ How much would you expect to spend developing and winning business from your new government or corporate clients? And how will you finance that effort?
- ✓ How much time and money can you and your marketing team budget to find agencies and buyers, research their missions, requirements, budgets and buying practices, and estimate the potential market before you get started?
- ✓ How will you learn the special skills to prepare and present proposals to government buyers?
- ✓ Would you consider teaming or subcontracting to prime contractors?
- ✓ How will your business financially support the execution of a contract which may involve many months of delayed payments?

So...Now What? Easy First Steps...

- It's Way More Than Registration...Learn how government does business: www.business.gov
- Get free help from one of 93 Procurement Technical Assistance Centers across America. www.aptac-us.org. *At little or no cost, PTACs provide a wide range of assistance covering every phase of government contracting – from initial registrations through contract completion.*
- Dive into the ultimate insider guide: Government Marketing Best Practices by Mark Amtower www.bookmasters.com/marktplc/01338.htm.

Market Research...

- **Read buyers' web sites: How do you meet fit their needs?**
 - Federal: www.usa.gov
 - State: get agency links via map at www.naspo.org/directors
Research & attend regional, state and local government supplier briefings.
- **Check their forecasts: What will they buy, when, how much?**
http://acquisition.gov/comp/procurement_forecasts/index.html
- **Find out who's buying what, and who's winning**
 - Upcoming solicitation, awards, pre-RFP notices, bidder conferences: www.fbo.gov

- Learn who your competitors are, and who they sell to:
www.fpds.gov and www.usaspending.org
- See what your competitors are selling and how they're pricing: www.gsaadvantage.gov

Start meeting buyers and partners...

- **Ask your friends** and current clients for introductions to government buyers and partners, and who they know in those big corporations! Who can introduce you to a friendly informal insider contact willing to chat with you candidly about your prospects?
- **Leverage your networking!** Whether it's at NAWBO, a local Chamber of Commerce, or an industry association, look for people who have won government contracts. Offer to take them out for coffee and ask what they would have done differently on their government contracts if they had to start over.
- **Come to where the buyers are:** Consider attending the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization Conference April 24, 2008 (see www.fbcinc.com). There, you'll meet the agencies' small business officers and the primes' small business representatives.
- **In the greater Washington, D.C. area,** check out the American Small Business Coalition (www.theasbc.org) to connect with buyers, primes, partners, and a select top-tier team of expert advisers.

*Excerpted from the forthcoming publication *Winning Government Contracts: A Market Entry Workbook* by Judy Bradt*

Some NAWBO experts who can help...

(If we've left you off the list... Let us know so we can include you on the update!)

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