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Volume 24 > Number 16
October 2, 2006

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World's biggest customer may want you

Over 100 Canadian companies work hard to win contracts with a buyer that makes no commitment to buy anything.

The U.S. federal government, the world's biggest customer, uses a special procurement system to pre-negotiate the purchase of products and services so that it doesn't need to go through a complex process each time it wants to purchase things like pens, chairs or office furniture.

The system, known as General Services Administration Schedule Contracts (or GSA schedules), is an indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity agreement. The U.S. federal government centrally negotiates the pricing and other conditions under which vendors offer government buyers over 53 different kinds of products and services that they already supply to the commercial market. Many American government buyers prefer these GSA schedules among the kinds of contracts they can use to purchase high-volume, common-use items.

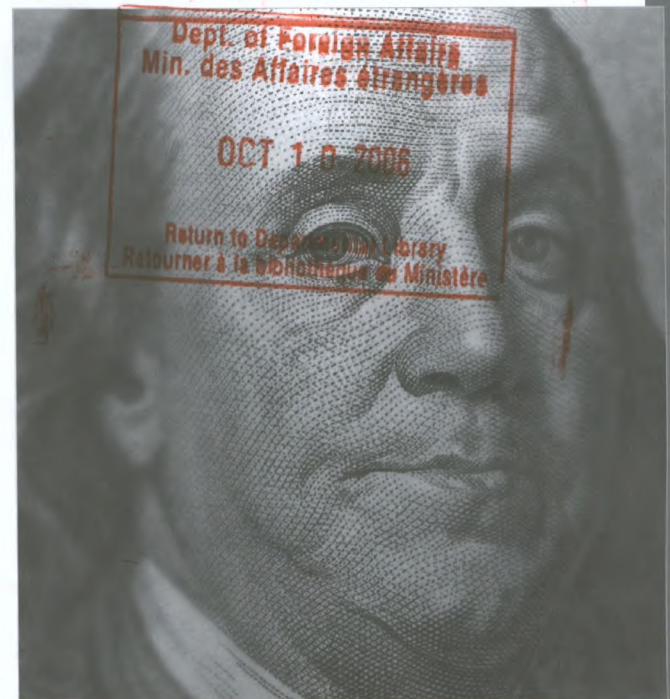
Canadian businesses have been doing well using GSA schedules. Last year, 103 of the 707 Canadian companies who won U.S. government contracts sold over \$62 million through GSA schedule contracts.

Canadian successes

Office furniture manufacturers led the way with over \$20 million in sales. Top vendor Krug Furniture of Kitchener, Ontario, is among 25 Canadian furniture companies with GSA schedule contracts.

A total of 57 Canadian IT providers with combined GSA sales came a close second, with just over \$19 million. David Martin, Co-CEO of leading

vendor SMART Technologies of Calgary, Alberta, learned early on about GSA schedules. "When we began to pursue U.S. government buyers, prospects kept asking us if we were on a GSA. So we realized that this was important," says Martin.



Doing business with the U.S. government, the biggest customer in the world, can be great for business.

"At the initial stages, we got experts to help us prepare our proposal for GSA. After all, just because you read the solicitation doesn't mean you have all the knowledge you need to navigate your way through the complex terms and conditions."

see page 2 - GSA success takes time...and a plan

