

Consulting Firms

Consulting firms can conduct custom and very accurate research to identify your best potential teaming partners; systems integrators, 8(a) firms, U.S. small businesses, and other IT firms. For a sample list of firms, refer to the "Consulting Firms and Course Providers" section in Appendix A.

Teaming Strategies

Marketing to Potential Teaming Partners

Identifying contracting opportunities is an essential part of an effective channel strategy. This is especially true when approaching a potential teaming partner; whether it be a systems integrator or another large IT firm, a 8(a) firm, or a U.S. small business. It is not enough to offer expertise, a good reputation, a 1-800 number, or attractive promotional material. These items do not set you apart from other firms. To successfully market to prospective teaming partners you must bring a piece of business with you. Use the resources identified in the report to research upcoming contract opportunities that provide a situation where it makes strategic sense to for your company and another firm to compete for a contract as business partners (see "Identifying Federal Contracting Opportunities" on page 15).

It is at least as important, however, to have government demand reflected by your end-user strategy, on your side. Large systems integrators, 8(a) firms, and U.S. small businesses are not going to team with you on a particular opportunity, unless you have the support of the government end-users. In fact, government demand for your company's product or service can often pressure prime contractors into teaming with your firm. After all, the government is the customer.

Also, remember, when you are approaching a teaming partner, be prepared to offer support in the contract bid. The more incentives you can offer a potential teaming partner, without selling yourself out, the better.

Identifying Bidders

You will often locate opportunities, such as complex systems integration contracts or 8(a) and small business set-asides, where it makes strategic sense for you to partner with another firm. In fact, in the case of set-asides, you must team with another firm to take advantage of those opportunities. One of the most successful methods of establishing teaming arrangements is to locate and market to the firm or firms planning to bid on a particular contracting opportunity. Obviously, since this information is closely guarded, finding bidders who are planning to bid on a specific contract is difficult. Still, it is possible.

The *FedMark Federal* database, available from *Federal Sources Inc*, can also be used to identify the bidders on particular contracting opportunities. The database tracks contracting opportunities emerging from the top 500 federal IT programs from the initial point of APR (Agency Procurement Request) to the final point of contract award. One of the many valuable pieces of information that it provides is the prospective bidders on each opportunity. The database costs US\$9,750 for small businesses and US\$13,000 for large businesses. If you are committed to the federal market, the database is well worth the investment.

In addition, consulting firms offer services to help you find out who the bidders are on particular contracting opportunities.