

Information Technology: Selling to the U.S. Federal Government

Note: By obtaining some historical pricing information on the same or similar contracts, you can make an informed go or no-go decision and develop a highly competitive procurement proposal. This information is extremely valuable, but difficult to find. The *Canadian Commercial Corporation (CCC)*, and the large consulting firms; *CMA(Computer Marketing Associates)*, *Federal Sources Inc*, *IDC Government Market Services*, and *Input*; all offer services to help you find competitive pricing information.

The Customer

Know your customer. Depending on the government sales channel you are using, your customer changes and so too, must your marketing strategy. For example, if you are using the prime contract or GSA schedule channel, your customer is the government end-user. You must explain how your company's products or services can help them do their job better, faster, easier, and/or cheaper. If you are using the subcontract channel, your customer is the large systems integrator or prime contractor. You must be able to prove to them that there is government demand for your products or services (i.e. the end-user strategy) and you must offer competitive pricing and considerable support in the bid to win the contract. Similarly, resellers, 8(a) firms, and U.S. small businesses all require competitive pricing and support to win government contracts.

Identifying Teaming Partners

Databases

To help you get started in the federal marketplace, the *Canadian Embassy, Washington, DC* will conduct a customised search of its "FedMark Federal" database, its "Federal Prime Contracts" database, and its reseller database to identify potential teaming partners and leading resellers that may be appropriate for your company's products. Call (202) 682-7746.

Eagle Eye Publishers, Inc produces a "Federal Prime Contracts" database that can be used to search previously awarded contracts. By searching for the winners of previous contracts in a certain product or service area, you can identify potential teaming partners. A one-year subscription to the database costs US\$2,495. Call (703) 242-4201.

Federal Sources, Inc sells a database called "FedMark Federal" that tracks contracting opportunities that emerge from the top 500 federal IT programs. In addition to other valuable information, the database identifies prospective bidders and expected subcontractors on each opportunity. In your search to find teaming partners, it can provide many leads. A one-year subscription to the database costs US\$9,750 for small businesses and US\$13,000 for large businesses. Call (703) 883-0728.

Publications

The *Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilisation (OSDBU)* at each federal agency distributes a "Subcontracting Directory." The directory lists the agency's top prime contractors by product and service. It can be used to identify many potential teaming partners; systems integrators and other large primes. Most agency OSDBUs also maintain a "List of 8(a) Firms, Small Disadvantaged Businesses, and Women-Owned Businesses." The publication is an excellent resource.

The "Washington Technology Almanac," published by *Washington Technology*, lists the top 100 federal prime contractors each year; many represent potential teaming partners. The Almanac also profiles many systems integrators and other IT firms, providing a description of the companies and point of contact information. Call (703) 848-2800.