

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

their publication in the CBD. The Commerce Business Daily can also be obtained in electronic form from many companies, including Canada's Open Bidding System, providing on-line and fax services. Appendix D lists point of contact information for thirteen such companies.

Note: As the federal government struggles to become more efficient, government use of the internet is dramatically increasing. RFPs (Requests for Proposals), RFQs (Requests for Quotes), and IFBs (Invitation for Bids) are increasingly transmitted to companies electronically. Similarly, in many cases, companies can submit their proposals and invoices to government and receive their payments from government over the internet. For more information on electronic commerce, contact the Canadian Embassy (202-682-7746) and request the report called "Electronic Commerce with the U.S. Federal Government."

Bid Matching Service

The *Canadian Commercial Corporation* (call 613-996-0034) and Canada's *Open Bidding Service* (call 800-361-4637) both provide the Bid Matching Service. The Bid Matching Service matches contracting opportunities listed in the Commerce Business Daily (CBD) to the specific capabilities of individual companies. When a match is found, a fax that lists the opportunity and the necessary contact information is immediately sent to the Canadian firm or firms that can provide the required good or service. As above, if the first time you hear of a contracting opportunity is via the Bid Matching Service, then you will have to play catch-up to some of your federal competitors.

Bidders' Mailing Lists

To ensure that you receive the federal solicitation packages (required to prepare proposals) for contracting opportunities of interest to your firm, you should submit a "Solicitation Mailing List Application," known as Standard Form 129 (SF129) to each purchasing office that is responsible for acquiring the products or services that your company provides. To obtain SF129, to receive assistance filling out the application, or to be informed of any agency-specific requirements, contact the appropriate *Offices of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilisation (OSDBUs)*. To receive the solicitation package necessary to be placed on a GSA schedule (explained below), you must register on the GSA's Centralised Mailing List. The GSA *Business Service Centre (BSC)* nearest you can help you register.

Note: The *Canadian Commercial Corporation* (call 613-996-0034) can register your firm on the mailing lists that you specify. This service can save you enormous amounts of time and effort!

Implementing Your End-User Marketing Strategy

As noted above, there are two types of government decision-makers that you should market to: the users and the purchasers of your company's products and services.

By effectively marketing to government users, you can:

- find out about upcoming contracting opportunities;
- convince the users of their need for your product or service; and
- influence the stated specifications of required products or services to match the specifications of your company's products or services.

By effectively marketing to government purchasers, you can:

- find out about upcoming contracting opportunities;
- locate government users of your company's products or services; and
- ensure that the government purchasers are familiar with your company and the products or services it provides.