Small Business Tips - Government Version

Things every small business should do:

Become familiar with the federal contracting rules (Federal Acquisition Regulations) before contemplating entering the federal market.

Learn what a federal office buys before marketing to them.

Have at least one viable working relationship with a large business that does federal contracting.

Keep up with current small business rules on sites like the SBA.gov website.

Consider developing sample proposals to increase response time to opportunities.

Stay current on market trends.

Use databases like FPDS-NG to see which offices buy what you want to sell.

Seek out the opportunities where the offices post them.

Discover where your expertise fits into an agency’s mission before contacting them.

Map your capabilities to specific requirements; don’t market general qualifications and small business certifications.

Learn the FAR Part 19 small business rules and the federal rules on fraud, waste, and abuse.

Do the homework! Know what you are getting into with a federal prime or sub-contract.

Go to the Procurement Technical Assistance Center and get to know them.

Get a CAGE Code and DUNS number, register in SAM.gov, and Dynamic Small Business Search.

Become familiar with DIBBS, ASFI, FedBizOpps, and NECO.

Know your niche and where the federal government needs your skills.

Ask questions when you have them.

Provide value for a fair and reasonable price.

Remember, your small business specialist is a great first contact.
Small Business Tips - Government Version

Things every small business should AVOID:

Don’t assume that you won’t qualify for a contract. Ask questions – submit a quote.

Don’t think it is easy to win a government contract.

Don’t market to every federal agency – find your niche.

Don’t limit your inquiries to functional people or sole-source awards. Follow the opportunities.

Don’t expect that the government has a contract waiting for you.

Don’t get drawn into a situation where you are acting as a front to channel set-aside awards to a large business.

Don’t be overly aggressive to small business professionals. We don’t award contracts and we want to help you find the answers.

Don’t overstate your capabilities or take on too much too soon. Diversify!

Don’t send non-specific marketing emails with large attachments. We probably won’t get them (email limitations) and many won’t bother to read them.

Don’t underbid at your own detriment.

Don’t be averse to subcontract work before pursuing prime contract opportunities.

Don’t rely on socio-economic status alone to market your capabilities.

Don’t disappoint a federal customer once you have an award.

Don’t try to explain away poor performance.

Don’t forget to learn about federal contracts before you get one.
Small Business Tips - Industry Version

**Things every small business should do:**

Be honest about your capabilities.

Understand bonding and requirements for accurate accounting.

Know that your core capabilities are more important than your small business status.

Be prepared for lots of closed doors before one opens.

Keep website data current and put your small business information on your website.

Learn your primary NAICS Code as well as all the NAICS Codes you can work under.

Get to know your local SBA resources as well as the SBLO at the prime contractor site.

Take action to update your SAM.gov profile each year. Keep small business certifications up-to-date.

Know your past performance related to your primary industry areas.

Use private domain emails in lieu of Hotmail, Yahoo, Gmail, etc.

Demonstrate expertise for core capabilities but know your limits.

Ask good questions. Know how you can bring value to the table.

Lead with your capabilities and not with your small business status.

Be able to explain to the prime contractor why they should do business with you ….outside of reaching subcontracting goals.

Know what the prime contractor procures and market accordingly.

Have a good one-page capability statement.

Read the entire proposal and check your math before submitting it.

Present yourself in a professional manner.

Consider teaming with another experienced small business to obtain past performance.

Don’t say ‘yes’ if you don’t know. Get clarifications. Unanswered questions can be costly and can make a difference in proper pricing & technical responses.
Small Business Tips - Industry Version

Things every small business should avoid:

Don’t overextend your cash or your manpower; don’t set yourself up for a failure.

Don’t spend time marketing to firms who do not procure what you can provide.

Don’t say, “I can do anything you want me to do”.

Don't forget to conduct due diligence on a company before contacting them.

Don’t forget to identify your NAICS Code, capabilities statement, and SAM.gov information when contacting a prime.

Don’t insist on signing an NDA for an introductory or first meeting.

Don’t quote on work that is outside your area of expertise just to get your foot in the door.

Don’t rely on LinkedIn or Face Book in lieu of making professional contacts.

Don’t call me every week.

Don't think that a good introductory meeting means that you are getting a proposal next week.

Don’t just say “yes”. Know your capabilities.

Don’t bite off more than you can chew.

Don’t blast emails to companies who don’t buy what you can provide.

Don’t send emails that lack information on what your company does.

Don’t assume that your small business status alone will get you a contract.