

Got Talent? Human Resources For Small Businesses



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Chief Marketing Officer
ClearedJobs.Net

Smith spearheads the community-building and communications outreach initiatives, catering to cleared job seekers, military personnel, and cleared facilities employers in the defense and intelligence community by building relationships with recruiting leaders.



Jenifer Fritz
Director
Federal Civilian Solutions

CareerBuilder
Fritz is the director of Federal Civilian Solutions at CareerBuilder. Prior to joining CareerBuilder, Fritz worked in business development at Daon and in sales at Ipsiti, Inc. and Eid Password.



Rob Edmonds
Director
Sales & Marketing
Uniplus

Edmonds leads a team of sales, proposal, and technical personnel through all stages of the sales cycle. He is responsible for the development of Uniplus marketing and has developed respected relationships throughout both the federal and commercial sectors during his 10 years of sales experience.

Your Legal, Insurance & Ethical Responsibilities: An Update



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As a Partner at Dickstein Shapiro, Conway focuses on issues primarily related to hardware, software and services, technology development and production, and development and lease of buildings and space for the U.S. Government.



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President
P. Allen Haney Company

As an advisor to business owners and nonprofit executives, Haney consults on employee benefits, executive compensation, and retirement planning. He is committed to expanding client capacity by uncovering risks and opportunities hidden in blind spots.



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Compliance & Ethics Services, Watermark Risk Management International, LLC.

Hutchens works with corporations assisting with development of the compliance and ethics infrastructure required by the Federal Sentencing Guidelines and Federal Acquisition Regulation.



Success Inside & Out: Aligning Your Internal Resources To Reflect The Successes Of Your Company

Capacity Building Workshop

Monday, February 25, 2013
Interstate International, Inc.

Upcoming Meetings:

- Capacity Building Proposals Workshop with Josh Kussman: 3/12
- CEO to CEO Networking Breakfast with John Rothenberger, SE Solutions: 3/14
- Insight Session with Starnes Walker, Chief Technology Officer, U.S. Navy: 3/20
- Lunch & Learn Budget Briefing with Michelle Mrdeza: 3/27
- Insight Session with Claire Grady, USCG: 4/3
- Insight Session with Beth Anne Killoran, Executive Director, PARM, DHS: 4/5

Register:
gtscoalition.eventbrite.com

Government Technology & Services Coalition

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www.gtscoalition.com

Workshop Schedule:

- 8:00 AM Registration & Coffee
- 8:30 AM Welcome, Kristina Tanasichuk, CEO, GTSC
- 8:40 AM Morning Mentor Keynote
- 9:15 AM Working With The Big Guys
- 10:30 AM Marketing: You've Got The Plan
- 11:45 AM Luncheon Mentor Keynote
- 1:00 PM Got Talent? Human Resources For Small Businesses
- 2:15 PM Your Legal, Insurance & Ethical Responsibilities: An Update

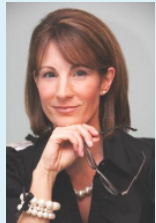
Morning Mentor Keynote



Anne Petera, DHS Client Executive, Harris IT Services

Petera supports various business development teams engaged with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and is responsible for the company's overall business relationship with DHS. Petera served in the Administration of President George W. Bush at the Department of Homeland Security from early 2006 to January 2009, first as the Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary for Management, and subsequently by appointment of Secretary Michael Chertoff as the Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Programs at DHS Headquarters.

Working With The Big Guys: How To Manage Your Resources For Strategic & Tactical Planning



Mary-Claire Burick CEO MC Strategy

Certified in Organizational Consulting and Change Leadership, Burick leads change initiatives, helping executives and managers initiate and integrate change smoothly and effectively to minimize the potential for negative impact to the organization and its employees.



Chris Lawrence Technical Support Group Engility

Lawrence has over 25 years of business development, finance, and operational experience for companies supporting the Federal Government, private industry, and international governments. He oversees technical solutions and services for DOD, DHS, DOS, and international governments.



Josh Kussman President Sentinel Business Advisory Services The Sentinel HS Group

A recognized homeland security expert with expertise in the border control and immigration management space, Josh has played a leading role in the successful capture of large, high-profile, highly-competitive homeland security-related procurements for Sentinel clients.

Marketing: You've Got The Plan, How Does That Translate To Your Federal Clients?



Mary Ann Stoops CEO SAVVY Marketing Partners LLC.

As a dynamic, results-oriented marketing communications executive, Stoops has a 20 year record in delivering large-scale, multi-faceted marketing to the nonprofit, technology, transportation, and telecommunications sectors.



Victoria Laing Sr. Account Executive Gotham Government Solutions

Laing serves to identify and integrate public safety systems to support homeland security. Her focus includes food protection as it applies to animal tracking, agroterrorism, disease management, and emergency preparedness, mitigation, and response.



Earl Holland President Growth Strategy Consultants, LLC.

As a senior executive at fortune 1000, midsize and small companies in the information technology industry, Holland's background includes corporate and government business development and marketing and strategic alliance development.

Luncheon Mentor Keynote



Elaine Kapetanakis, President, Kapstone Technologies Panel Moderator

Elaine's information technology expertise spans a variety of areas, including operations and maintenance, network services, IT field support, and helpdesk. Additional areas of specialization include proven excellence in Program Management. Before starting her own company, Elaine worked at McNeil Technologies as its senior vice president.



Wayne Pizer, VP, Small Business Programs, L-3 National Security Solutions

Pizer is the vice president for Small Business Programs at L-3 National Security Solutions (NSS). He is responsible for developing and executing the small business strategy for NSS. His responsibilities include identifying go-to-market small business partners, promoting small businesses, and ensuring Small Business Compliancy throughout the NSS organization. The mission of his office is to grow NSS revenue through partnerships with small businesses. Pizer was at IBM for nine years prior to joining L-3.



Andrea Marsh, Senior Market Manager, Battelle

Located at Battelle's Eastern Science and Technology (BEST) Center in Aberdeen, Maryland, Marsh is responsible for managing and coordinating Battelle's marketing and business development efforts in the homeland security marketplace; developing and implementing a business strategy; and securing annual sales for contract research and development. Her areas of emphasis include critical infrastructure, transportation security and CBRNE scientific and technology solutions.

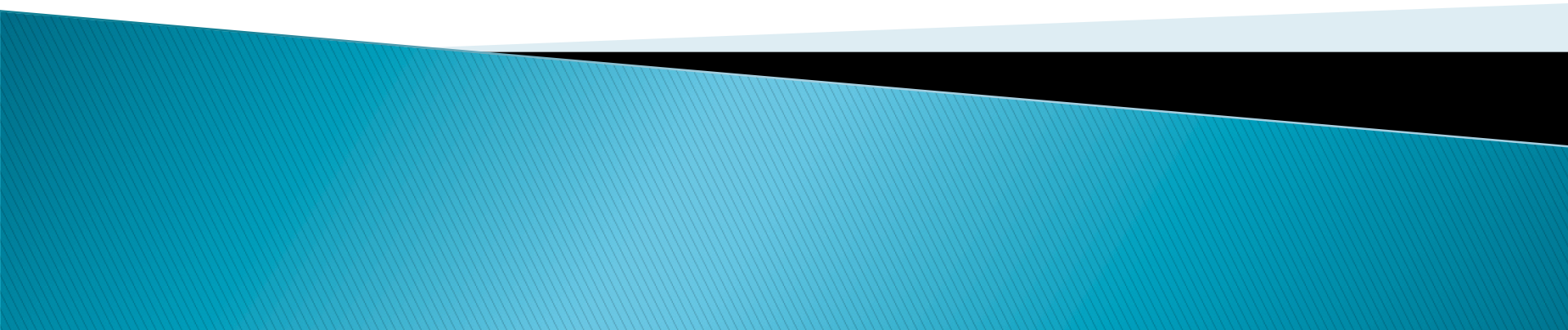


Michael Kelly, Executive Advisor, Homeland Security & Defense, TASC

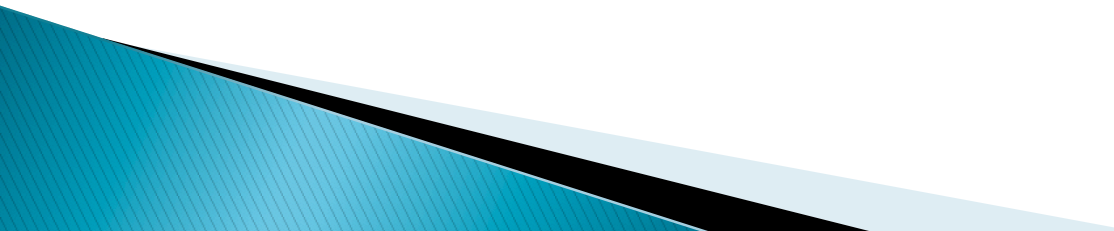
Kelly joined TASC in December 2010 and is responsible for the development and execution of business and marketing focused on DHS and the national homeland security community. Prior to that, he was the Director at Battelle's Office of Homeland Security. He retired as a Colonel in the United States Marine Corps in 2003 after 27 years of commissioned service. His previous experience includes planning and policy formulation for the U.S. Marine Corps and the United Nations Command/Combined Forces Command in the Republic of Korea.

GTSC Capacity Building Workshop

February 25, 2013



Capacity building is defined as a conceptual approach to development, which focuses on understanding the obstacles that inhibit organizations from realizing their goals, while enhancing the abilities that will allow them to achieve measurable and sustainable results.



1. Make the right choices

2. Know that your work and your word are a statement about you

3. Allocate your time & efforts strategically

4. Focus forward



"It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities."

J.K. Rowling

"When you have to make a choice and don't make it, that is in itself a choice."

William James



Your work and your word are
statements about you



“If you can dream it, you can achieve it. You will get all you want in life, if you help enough other people get what they want.”

Zig Ziglar



THE 80/20 RULE

*“If it takes all the future -
We'll live through the past -
If the phone doesn't ring, it's me”*

Jimmy Buffett



“There are no great limits to growth because there are no limits of human intelligence, imagination and wonder.”

Ronald Reagan



IS YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN COLLECTING DUST WHILE YOUR EMPLOYEES WORK OFF OF THEIR OWN TO-DO PILE?

Sequestration, budget cuts and the Continuing Resolution (CR) have frozen contract awards and thrown the federal market into a tailspin.

But successful companies will use this opportunity to revisit their strategic plan and re-think target markets, hone capabilities, and evaluate operational resources to align themselves with the most likely funded programs and attractive agencies.

By following a few best practices for action planning, you can ensure that your plan doesn't collect dust on the shelf, and that your key strategies are translated into everyday action, leading you to your desired outcomes.

Strategic planning provides the vision, direction and goals, but it's the tactical planning that translates strategy into action.

TIPS TO ENSURE YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN IS ACTIONABLE

1. INVOLVE THE RIGHT PEOPLE AT THE RIGHT TIME

It's important to include those who will be responsible for implementing the plan right from the start; they are the most likely to know what will work and what operational obstacles might get in the way. Consider cross functional teams to ensure your plan is realistic and collaborative.

2. PLAN "SMART"

When translating key strategies into action plans, it's critical to clarify and communicate about exactly what is expected; the acronym "SMART" is a great way to keep yourself (and others) accountable during the planning process. So for each objective, ask yourself is this objective or action item:

- ⇒ **S**pecific?"
- ⇒ **M**easurable?"
- ⇒ **A**ttainable?"
- ⇒ **R**elevant (to our vision/mission/customer's needs)?"
- ⇒ **T**ime-based?"

3. CONSIDER BARRIERS AND CSF'S

Include a discussion of Barriers and Critical Success Factors (CSF's) into your planning to ensure that employees and implementers have the resources, systems and skills sets necessary to carry out the plan. It's helpful to think about what could stand in your way, and then think through strategies to mitigate that problem, or consider re-defining the goal. It's also a good idea to be clear about what you need to go *right* in order to be successful. CSF's might include things like executive engagement, management involvement, and effective communications.

4. WHO'S ON FIRST?

Roles, responsibilities and timelines are the key to actionable planning. It's important to specify, and get agreement, on who is doing what and by when. You might consider committees or working groups to organize and carry out the specific initiatives, projects or action items, but each member must have a clear role, responsibilities and timelines for all action items. To really ensure accountability, translate the strategic plan's actions into job descriptions and personnel performance reviews and openly communicate results.

5. MONITOR, MEASURE, MODIFY!

If people know the action plans will be regularly reviewed (and that they are being held accountable), implementers tend to do their jobs without being asked. So it's important to have a clearly identified and agreed upon process for monitoring progress, measuring outcomes and modifying the plan as circumstances change. Communication is a critical tool in this process, and it should be used to inform and engage all key stakeholders in achieving the plan and celebrating the outcomes.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Change is a constant challenge in today's Federal market. But with a proper strategic plan and consistent execution, leaders can guide individuals, teams and organizations from the present state to the desired future state.

ABOUT MC STRATEGY, LLC

MC Strategy works with leaders to **build healthy and effective organizations**. Together we connect employee action, resources, and systems to your mission and goals. Our solutions ensure that your employees are ready, willing and able to act, and that those daily actions are tied to achieving the right goals.

Outcomes of our work include improved collaboration and teamwork, strengthened communication, streamlined processes and workflow that are connected to goals and a shared vision. We incorporate a unique blend of strategic planning, employee development, engaging communication and best practices for change management to effectively transition individuals, teams and organizations from your current state to the desired future state.

So whether you are facing a re-organization or merger, looking to strengthen internal communications or want to improve team performance, we can help make sure that your employees are ready, willing and able to translate your vision into action.

OUR CAPABILITIES AT A GLANCE



Strategic Planning
Change Management Support



Engaging Communications
Strategic Communication Plans



Employee Engagement
Training & Development



Process Improvement
Organizational and Cultural Assessments

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU SUCCEED?

Irresistible Value Propositions



JILL KONRATH

Irresistible Value Propositions

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What is a Value Proposition?

Without a strong value proposition, it's much harder to sell your products or services in today's economy, much less even get in the door of big companies. But what exactly is a value proposition? And how is it different from other commonly used terms?

A value proposition is often confused with an "elevator speech" or a "unique selling proposition." It's essential to understand the difference between these terms because their purposes and sales impact are very different.

An elevator speech is a short, 1-2 sentence statement that defines who you work with (target market) and the general area in which you help them. About 10 seconds long, it's used primarily at networking events to attract potential clients and stimulate discussion. The following elevator speeches show you how some people describe what they do:

- I work with small businesses who are struggling to sell their products or services into large corporate accounts.
- We help technology companies effectively use their customer information to drive repeat sales.
- I help small-to-medium sized manufacturing companies who have difficulties with unpredictable revenue streams.

An elevator speech is the foundation of a value proposition without the specifics that are needed to sell into the corporate market.

A unique selling proposition (USP) is a statement about what makes you and your company different from other vendors. Its primary value is to create competitive differentiation. A USP is often used in marketing materials or in talking with customers who are ready to buy.

Here are a few good USP examples:

- We specialize in working with financial institutions. (specialty)
- We guarantee service in 4 hours or your money back. (guarantee)
- We use a unique tool called SureFire! to analyze your critical needs. (methodology)



Irresistible Value Propositions

Helping customers understand your USP is imperative when they've already decided to make a purchase decision. But USPs have absolutely no impact when customers are satisfied with their situation or when they're frustrated but haven't yet decided to change. USPs are far more effective in the business-to-consumer market than in business-to-business sales.

Both the elevator speech and the USP are cousins of the value proposition, but lack the punch of a value proposition when selling to the corporate market.

A value proposition is a clear statement of the tangible results a customer gets from using your products or services. It's outcome focused and stresses the business value of your offering.

A strong value proposition is specific, often citing numbers or percentages. It may include a quick synopsis of your work with similar customers as a proof source and demonstration of your capability. Here are several examples to stimulate your thinking:

"We help large companies reduce the cost of their employee benefits programs without impacting benefit levels. With the spiraling costs of health care today, this is a critical issue for most businesses. One of our recent clients, a large manufacturing company similar to yours, was struggling with how to reduce spending in this area. We saved them over \$800,000 in just six months. Plus, they didn't cut any services to their employees, nor did their employees have to pay more."

"I help technology companies who are launching an important new product into the marketplace – and need it to be successful to achieve their sales forecast. Where I help my clients is in the often dropped hand-off between marketing and sales. As a result, they're able to more easily meet projected sales goals and significantly shorten time-to-profitability."

Again, notice the specificity of the value proposition and the use of business-oriented language. Prospective customers should be able to visualize exactly what value you could bring their organization.



The Epidemic of Weak Value Propositions

If you're selling to the corporate market, one of the biggest challenges you encounter is getting face time with decision makers.

Stressed Out Buyers

Corporate buyers, after years of continual downsizings and reorganizations, have way too much work to do and not nearly enough time to do it in. Under constant pressure to deliver "results," they zealously protect their schedule, refusing to meet with anybody who can't help them achieve their business objectives.

Busy decision makers screen all callers, using an administrative assistant as a gatekeeper or their ubiquitous voicemail. And, if you're selling something – you're an undesirable interruption. Customers don't have time to update you on their company, sit through an extended needs analysis or explore the possibilities of working together.

They don't want to learn about your products or services just so they can know what's out there. With every dollar they spend being scrutinized by higher-ups, wasting money on frivolous products or nice-to-have services is out of the question. So unless something can be cost-justified and provide a significant return on their investment, they don't want to take time to hear about it.

Not only that, but they're also bombarded with people and companies trying to get their attention. It's not unusual for corporate decision makers to average over 100 emails per day. Their voice mailbox is flooded with calls from co-workers, customers and outside vendors.

And what do they usually hear from people like you who are trying to get in and sell their products or services? A typical phone message sounds like this:

"Hi Mr./Ms. Decisionmaker. This is Tony from Super Duper Products, Inc. We specialize in leading-edge financial software applications and have been rated as having one of the best software by Krumstock Research.

"The reason I'm calling is that I'd like to set up an appointment with you to introduce myself and to tell you more about how we might be able to help your company speed up your reporting capabilities.



Irresistible Value Propositions

"I'll be in your area in two weeks and was hoping to sit down with you for about a half hour. Please let me know if that will work for you. My number is ..."

Why in the world would corporate decision makers take time out of their already overcrowded schedule to meet with this seller? They wouldn't. Pure and simple. Even though the seller mentioned a benefit, it was weak – very weak.

Ineffective and Unappealing

One of the biggest reasons businesses struggle in today's market is because they have weak value propositions. Over and over again, I hear people who sell deliver ineffective statements about the value customers get from working with their organization. It doesn't matter if these sellers are from big companies, small firms, or are independent professionals. They just aren't saying things that get prospective buyers to say, "Come on in. We need to meet."

And the worst thing is that many of the products or services these people sell have extremely high value to corporate accounts! But their failure to articulate it in words that appeal to corporate decision makers is their downfall. Instead, they limp along trying to drive sales but unable to even get in the door.

For example, in discussing their company's products, many people use weak value propositions such as:

- It's the most technology-advanced system in the market today.
- We offer the most robust enterprise system with the widest range of capabilities available.
- Our system was rated best-in-class at the recent Big Deal Conference.
- We are the low-cost provider of this kind of product/service.
- We offer one-stop shopping.
- We have a full range of products to meet your every need in the manufacturing area.



Irresistible Value Propositions

Service firms and independent professionals often say:

- I'm an OD consultant. I do team building and process re-engineering.
- We design brochures, web sites, and packaging materials.
- We help improve creativity and innovation in organizations.
- I do sales training.
- I help companies decide which technology best meets their needs.
- I'm an attorney. I do corporate tax work.

BORING! If you're like most people, you're saying, "So what? Why should I waste my valuable time talking to you?"

Plus any time people hear words such as best, leading, superior and so on – they immediately dismiss them as self-promoting aggrandizement. These words are simply not believable and detract from your message.

So now that you know what doesn't work, it's time to figure out what does attract the attention of busy corporate decision makers.



Customer-Attracting Value Propositions

With today's tight economy, a strong value proposition breaks through the clutter and gets the attention of overburdened decision makers. If you haven't found a way to state your value in business terms, you're in for a never-ending struggle to get business.

Strong value propositions open doors and create opportunities for you to sell your products or services. They're financially oriented and speak to the critical issues your target market is facing.

I recently read an article in a magazine about a company whose software calculated exactly how much retailers should charge to squeeze the maximum profit from every product and at any time.

During an 8-week test with one retailer, revenues jumped 10%, unit volume increased 6% and net profit grew 2% due to their price-optimization capabilities. Payback was expected within 12 months. That's their value proposition!

What retailer wouldn't want to learn more about what this company does! As I was reading the article, I could almost see the retailer's senior management team salivating over the information in it.

That's the power of a strong value proposition.

A while back I had lunch with the president of a \$1/2 billion business unit of a major corporation. She told me that if someone contacted her and said he could reduce waste by just 1%, she would meet with him immediately. Why? Because she knew exactly how much her company spent on waste – and it was a lot of money. Every penny she saved would go right to the bottom line.

Again, powerful value propositions open doors – quickly! Taking time to really clarify yours is well worth the time invested in the process.



Irresistible Value Propositions

Business-Oriented Terminology

Strong value propositions are always stated in business terms. Corporate buyers are particularly attracted to phrases such as:

- Increased revenues
- Decreased costs
- Increased market share
- Improved customer retention levels
- Faster response time
- Increased sales per customer
- Improved asset utilization
- Reduced cost of goods sold
- Additional revenue streams
- Improved time-to-profitability
- Reduced cycle time
- Faster sales cycles
- Faster time to market
- Improved operational efficiency
- Decreased employee turnover
- Increased competitive differentiation
- Decreased operational expenses
- Reduced cost of sales
- Faster collections
- Minimized risk
- Increased market share
- Increased billable hours
- Increased inventory turns
- Reduced direct labor costs

Can your business do any of these things? How about something similar? Perhaps you've never really thought about your products or services in these terms. But this is what corporate decision makers want to hear so it's time to revisit your value proposition.

Think about translating what you do into the language of decision makers. Remember, they don't care about your product's speed or efficiency. They don't care about the wonderful methodology you use. They only care about the results it delivers.

When you find the right words to describe your offering, you'll immediately notice a change in how you're treated. Corporate buyers will want to learn more about what you do.

Tangible, Measurable Results

The very best value propositions deliver tangible, measurable results that are highly desirable to prospective buyers. Yet many companies fail to extend their "benefits" into actual numbers. If it's possible for you to do this, it is highly recommended.

Specificity sells. The more specific your value proposition, the more attractive it is. Stories are another way of providing specificity, enabling you to get your message across but without having to make unsubstantiated, across-the-board claims.



Irresistible Value Propositions

I recently wrote a comprehensive manual called *Winning More Sales: Take Your Business to the Next Level with Insightful, Powerful Questions*. One of the first people to purchase it from my website wrote me a note saying that my advice helped him land a \$26,000 sale the very next day. With his permission, I'm using that quote to promote my book. It makes the price seem miniscule compared to the value received!

Sellers as the Real Value Proposition

In today's market, with less and less differentiation between products and services, sometimes the seller is the real value proposition. Customers buy the knowledge, expertise and ideas he or she brings to the relationship.

For many salespeople this is a totally new and unfamiliar paradigm – and they're unprepared to sell their own personal worth. But many sellers do bring extraordinary value to their customers – sometimes in easily quantifiable ways, sometimes not. A woman I know is a sock salesperson who does business with major retailers. Socks are commodities and pricing is often the primary criteria in decision-making. But not for this salesperson. She helps her customers increase sales to their clientele by:

- Regularly shopping the competition and advising her customers about market trends.
- Designing packaging alternatives to encourage customers to buy more socks at one time.
- Developing creative displays that entice customers to buy socks more often.
- Creating unique designs for trendy sock styles for special occasions and seasons.

These things are NOT part of her job description. She's chartered to sell socks. But instead she's bringing her knowledge of design, color and style to the customer relationship. Her customers reap huge benefits. Inventory is turning faster than ever before, sales are up and so is profitability.

Her value proposition is highly personal, but it's what differentiates her from everyone else in the marketplace. When she's in a competitive situation, she needs to share what she herself does for customers – and let them know they're getting a business consultant in addition to a sock supplier.

This is the new and emerging reality in value propositions. In a world where products rapidly spiral into commodities and service offerings can be copied overnight, the only real difference between suppliers is the people involved. You, the seller, become the value proposition – and a huge factor in the decision that's made.



Irresistible Value Propositions

Value Propositions & Service Businesses

Many consultants and professional services providers find it difficult to quantify the measurable results customers realize from using their offerings. Because of this, they think they can't come up with a strong value proposition.

I understand why they feel this way. With 15 years of consulting under my belt, none of my product launch clients measured or assessed the effectiveness of my work. There are many reasons for this — not enough time to compare before/after results, the lack of a benchmark and the multiple factors that impact a new product's market success. But like many of you, I lacked good hard data.

However, this did not stop me from talking about what I did in business terms. Rather than giving exact figures (which was impossible), I emphasized the:

- Lag time between product launch and achieving projected sales results.
- Critical need to shorten time-to-profitability.
- High costs of sales rep downtime preparing PowerPoint presentations and proposals.
- Inconsistent messages delivered to customers and channel partners.
- Lost “windows of opportunity” enabling competitive inroads.
- Inconsistent messages being delivered to channel partners and customers across the nation/world.

This value proposition was extremely attractive to senior marketing and sales leaders. As a result, I had a highly profitable consulting practice in this area for years.

The other day I talked with an independent professional who also works with sales organizations. She told me she did training based on the appreciative inquiry model which builds on what salespeople are already doing right. I asked her what the outcome was of her methodology. She replied, “It energizes the sales force.”

After 25 years in the sales field, I can assure you that I've never met a sales manager or sales executive who wanted their salespeople to have more “energy.” They want results – pure and simple. More orders. Fewer losses to the competition. Bigger or more profitable contracts. Better customer retention. These are the words that belong in your value proposition if you're selling to sales management,



Irresistible Value Propositions

How could you describe your firm to prospective customers if you did web site design? You might talk about:

- Driving more traffic to the web site.
- Decreasing the number of customers who abandon full shopping carts.
- Increasing the transaction value per customer.
- Improving search engine rankings.
- Freeing up corporate resources with improved online capabilities.

What if you do something more nebulous like team building or organizational development? Perhaps you could talk to your customers about:

- Reducing the high cost of employee turnover.
- Speeding up time spent on making critical business decisions.
- Eliminating management time spent on handling employee conflict.
- Maximizing employee productivity at work.
- Streamlining processes to increase operational efficiency.
- Creating a work environment where creativity flourishes, enabling customers to create a competitive business advantage.
- Minimize destructive turf issues that cost companies millions each year as management scrambles for power.

Here's one last example: I have a Mentoring Program that helps individuals and companies boost their sales. I could easily describe it as "telephone consulting." But it's far more effective to tell about the regional engineering firm that called me in to help on a Request for Proposal. They were a major underdog – a regional firm competing against all the big players in their industry.

The buyer was conducting one-hour interviews with eight firms. Only three would be invited back for the second round. My client's only goal was to make the first cut – to prove they could compete with the national consulting firms.

Winning the contract wasn't even a possibility in their minds. They were delighted when they were invited back for the 2nd presentation. Several days later they received another call from the customer. They'd decided the second round of interviews was unnecessary – everyone wanted to work with my client.



Irresistible Value Propositions

With my help they landed a large contract that grew to over \$1 million in just 6 months. Now, wouldn't you like to work with me if you could achieve similar results? This story significantly enhances my credibility and demonstrates I know what I'm doing.

Whatever profession you're in, it's critical to talk about your work in business terms. As a result of working with you, what are the outcomes? What business results are attained? They're there! You just need to find them.



Clarifying Your Value Proposition

So how does your value proposition look? Can you describe what you do in terms of tangible business results? Do you have documented success stories? Or do you need to do some work to enhance your value proposition? If it's not strong enough yet, don't despair. Like I said earlier, most people and companies have a much stronger one than they use. They just get caught up describing "what" they make or "how" they do things.

Both hard values and soft values need to be considered as you work on strengthening your value proposition. You'll want to explore how you impact customers in each of these areas.

Tangible Value

This is the most easily identifiable because it's directly related to your offering and is highly measurable. Tangible value is typically expressed in numbers or percentages. Examples might be:

- Reduce cycle time from 3 days to one.
- Cut labor costs by 25%.
- Save \$100,000 in energy costs.
- Increase market share 5%.
- Improving productivity 17%.

Typically tangible value gains also have related intangible value gains that aren't as obvious, but help strengthen an already strong value proposition. For example, improving productivity means fewer workers. With a smaller workforce, the company saves a significant amount in the benefits area. Less money is spent in recruiting and hiring. These savings can also be quantified as part of your value proposition.

A well-designed web site may cut the need for customer service staff. A more efficient JIT ordering process decreases the amount of warehouse space and its associated costs. A digital asset management system's ability to repurpose data reduces advertising expenditures. Always try to quantify the indirect values as well as the direct ones.



Irresistible Value Propositions

Intangible Value

Sometimes the value of your offering is not quite so measurable – such as lowered risk, increased teamwork, improved marketplace image, or better morale. Intangible value doesn't sell well in today's economy. Most decision makers consider it a nice added benefit, but won't spend money for a solution that only provides soft value.

To increase your sales success, take these intangibles and make them tangible. Find ways to quantify their value to customers.

Opportunity Costs

Opportunity Costs can also strengthen your value proposition. An opportunity cost is something your customer can't do now because of their current methods of operation. For example, it's what they could be doing with the \$500,000 savings they'd get from using your product. Or it's the business strategy and associated profits they can't aggressively pursue because of the internal conflicts that delay decisions.

*To strengthen your value proposition,
follow the multiple suggestions discussed in the ensuing pages.*



Ask Your Customers

Your existing customers are your very best resource to find out what value you bring. Tell your customer you need help understanding the real value of your offering and you'd like a chance to learn their perspective. This builds your relationship with customers at the same time it gives you a chance to learn an incredible amount of invaluable information.

Most people are scared to ask their customers about their value. I know it took me awhile to get up the guts to do it but when I finally did, it was a real eye-opener. I had no idea that certain "little" things I threw in at no charge were extremely valuable to sales leaders. Not only did these discussions change my value proposition, but they also changed my offering and my own self-perception.

Anytime you ask customers for input, you open yourself up to hearing the not-so-good things too. If your customer is upset at your company (or you) for any reason, take notes on the issue and promise to resolve it as soon as possible.

If your customer says negative things about you personally, listen and ask questions. While this is not what you wanted from this meeting, it is critical data that can help you improve.

Make sure you don't get defensive, make excuses, pass the blame or tell your customer they're wrong. If you do, your customer will shut down fast and your credibility will be at risk. Most importantly, be curious at these meetings. Explore all your customer's answers in depth to really learn the value you provide.

Example: If your customer tells you that communications improved because of your work — find out what it meant to them.

- Did they spend less time settling arguments?
- If so, how much less time?
- What was the value of that extra time?
- Did they use it to accomplish more? Like what?
- Because less time was spent bickering, what decisions were easier to make?
- How has the company benefited from those decisions?
- What additional profits or cost savings were realized from those decisions?



Irresistible Value Propositions

Explore ... Explore ... Explore. This is how you uncover the strength in your value proposition.

Below are questions you can ask customers to determine your true value proposition. Remember – your customers haven't thought much, if at all, about the value you provide. Therefore, the responses you hear may be somewhat vague and initially seem like little help in clarifying your value proposition.

Don't jump on your customers and demand they quantify your value. Remain conversational and curious. Gently poke and prod your customer to explore different areas. People need and deserve time to think things through – and agitating them by demanding hard value answers right away won't help at all.

Have you ever seen any old Colombo movies or TV reruns? If so – remember how Colombo, a wily detective who knew a whole lot more than he let on, slowly and softly kept asking questions until he found what he was looking for. Emulating this behavior during these customer meetings will have a high payback for you.

Before you meet with your customer, write down the various problems you think your product or service solves for them. Next write down the business impact of these problems.

Finally write down the value you think your offering provides. Take this list into the meeting; use it to prompt you to explore the full-range of your potential value to the customer.

Customer-Value Questions

To get better data, customize your questions to your product or service offering. Consider the questions below as guidelines for this meeting.

- What value did my service/product/solution provide to your company?
 - Where do the benefits show up?
 - How did that help your bottom line?
 - What improvements did you realize?
 - How did it impact performance?



Irresistible Value Propositions

- What were the three most important benefits you received as a result of our product/work together?
 - Why were these valuable to your organization?
 - What cost/time savings did you realize?
- What did our solution enable you to do that you couldn't before?
 - What else? And how did that help your area?
 - And what else?
 - What is that worth to your organization?
- You said that working with us enabled you to reduce/increase ___.
 - Why was that important to you?
 - How would you quantify its value?
 - What other areas in your company received benefits because of our work together?
 - Tell me more about those areas.
- How have things been better since we worked together or you implemented our system?
 - What impact did it have in ___?
 - How did it affect ___?
 - What were the ramifications for ___?
 - What was the effect on ___?
 - How would you quantify the value of these improvements?
(*Note: This is where you probe for specific areas based on the list you developed.*)
- How did our solution help you achieve your goals/objectives?
 - What's the value of that?
 - What problems did it alleviate?

Ask these same questions to more than one person in your customer's organization. Talk to people in different areas and in different positions. They each have a unique and highly valuable perspective. Sometimes you'll hear something totally new from one person that will lead you to a much stronger value proposition.

Strengthen your value proposition by looking at the results attained over time. Annual savings are always better than hourly, daily or monthly savings.



More Ideas to Find Your Value Proposition

While asking your customers for input is one of the best ways to understand the true value of your offering, sometimes it's not easy to do. They may be hard to reach or difficult to visit. Decision makers may have changed since the initial decision to go with your offering. Or, they may not be very articulate about the value of your product or service. If that's the case, don't fret! Alternative strategies are available.

Brainstorm With Colleagues

Get together with a group of colleagues to discuss your value proposition. Your collective wisdom and experience provides a broad perspective. Plus it keeps you from only maintaining a focus on what your product or service can do. Even if you slip back into a description of your offering, your colleagues will challenge your thinking.

Review your marketing materials. Reflect on your customer knowledge. Think about what you say that interests and excites your customers and prospects. As a group, here are some questions you can discuss:

- How does your product, service or solution impact your customer's bottom line or expenses?
 - What costs have been eliminated?
 - Time saved?
 - Can you quantify a tangible hard dollar value gain?
 - What intangible value has it provided?

- What positive impact has your product, service or solution had on bringing additional revenue/business to your clients?
 - What has the gain been?
 - Can you determine a tangible hard dollar value gain?
 - What intangible value has it provided?

- Does your product, service or solution enable your customer to achieve any competitive advantage?
 - What has the gain been?
 - Can you determine a specific hard dollar value gain?
 - What soft values has it provided?



Irresistible Value Propositions

- Does your product, service or solution have an impact on your customer's customer?
 - What has the gain been?
 - Can you determine a specific hard dollar value gain?
 - What intangible value has it provided?
- How has your product, service or solution impacted your customer's bottom line or expenses?
 - What costs have been eliminated?
 - Time saved?
 - Can you quantify a specific hard dollar value gain?
 - What soft values has it provided?

If tangible results aren't forthcoming, challenge the group to take the discussion to the next level. Keep asking each other, "So what?"

- So what if it's an efficient system?
- So what if we have a replicable process?
- So what if it's high quality?
- So what if they have improved communication?
- So what if we cut turnaround time by 2 days?
- So what if the morale has improved.

Asking these question over and over again, gets you much closer to the real value you bring to customers. Look for the impact your offering has in the organization. What financial affect do your products, systems or services have on the business?

Determining your value proposition with only an internal analysis can be dangerous though. Outside validation by your customers is important, if at all possible. When it comes down to spending money, it's only your customer's perception that counts.

Remember, many companies tout really weak value propositions. And, worse yet – nobody realizes just how bad their value propositions are. Don't let another day go by with a weak value proposition. Use all the resources at your disposal to strengthen your value proposition.

If you're an independent professional, get a group of colleagues together and brainstorm each other's business case. You need each other to get to your primary value proposition – you're much too close to it to discover it without help.



Irresistible Value Propositions

Use Industry Statistics

For a variety of reasons, sometimes it's difficult or impossible to measure your value proposition. If this is your situation, I strongly recommend using industry statistics to support your work. For example:

- 75% of executives in big companies involved in a complex sale (long term, multiple decision makers) blame poor value propositions as a major cause of their new products failing to achieve projections.
- 90% of everything learned in training is totally forgotten in 3 months unless sales management reinforces the learning.
- 50% of a manager's time is spent resolving people issues related to trust issues and poor communications.
- In a recent study done by a well-known management consulting firm, it took laid-off executives over 100 informational interviews before they started seeing results.

If you think about your business, I suspect you can come up with some statistics also. Again, they can be great proof sources of the need for your product or service in the market.



Value Propositions & New Products

When companies introduce new products or services to the market, they frequently fall victim to the same weak value proposition problems. A study on new product launches by Siebel found that executives overwhelmingly blamed weak value propositions (75%) as the key factor in not achieving success with the new offering.

Several years ago I worked with a company that introduced a new digital system into the printing market. It worked in conjunction with another company's product. This company felt that the primary value of their offering was in its extraordinary color matching capabilities that were far superior to anything on the market.

However, sales weren't taking off as expected. I was asked to help with a relaunch. In the process, I interviewed a number of customers. One was big into measurement – they had all the numbers. By using this new product, they were able to:

- Cut the staff in one area by 33% and still handle the same amount of work.
- Redeploy valuable workers to other areas of their company. (Finding qualified employees was a major issue in their industry.)
- Reduce project turnaround time by days, creating a significant competitive advantage.
- Decrease the number of customer changes at a savings of \$2000 for each one.
- Balance out their workflow, enabling them to delay purchases of extremely pricey equipment and reduce overtime expenses.

This was my client's true value proposition. But they weren't aware of it because they had never looked at their product beyond its attributes. Great color was nice, but it didn't sell. Customers needed tangible business results to justify their expenditures.

What's the solution? Prior to introducing new products or services, look at the value from the customer's perspective. If your organization conducts beta tests or trials prior to a full rollout, make sure you don't just focus on working out the bugs.

Instead, ask customers about the value of the capabilities they get with the new offering. Don't settle for simplistic responses such as, "It speeds up our process" or "It's compatible with our legacy systems." Ask questions such as:



Irresistible Value Propositions

- What does that mean? Why is that valuable to you?
- How does that help? What is the real benefit to your organization?
- What does it eliminate? What's the value of that?
- What does the faster speed mean to you? How else does it affect your organization?
- What impact does it have in other areas in your company?
- What's the benefit of the compatibility to your legacy systems?
- Can you help me quantify the pay-off you get from these capabilities?

When you ask questions like these, you get a much better understanding of the true value proposition of your new offering. The more you know about the customer's perspective, the stronger your value proposition. And, the stronger your value proposition is, the faster you'll see sales results.



Using Your Value Proposition

Strong value propositions are your best tool for setting up meetings with prospective buyers. Corporate decision makers will nearly always meet with sellers who offer tangible outcomes and measurable results. And they will only meet with sellers who talk their language and are focused on helping them achieve their business objectives.

You can also use your value proposition:

- To develop a telephone script that highlights the key business results your product, service or solution delivers.
- To craft a business letter to decision makers who work at targeted accounts.
- As a basis for your marketing campaign and in all your marketing collateral.
- As the foundation for a customer-centric PowerPoint presentation.
- As the core message delivered in your totally customized customer proposals.

But based on what I've seen in working with sellers, the biggest benefit you get from understanding your value proposition is ... (drum roll) ... a strengthened belief in your own offering.

If you truly understand the value you bring to customers from a business perspective, you'll work harder to get into accounts and be less discouraged by rejection. You won't question or doubt if there's a market for your offering because you will know that what you offer makes a difference. And ultimately you'll sell a lot more!

Remember, a value proposition is a clear statement of the tangible results a customer gets from using your products or services. It's outcome focused and stresses the business value of your offering.

If your value proposition isn't tempting potential prospects to meet with you, you've got some work to do. Get started right away. Having a strong, customer-enticing value proposition changes the game. You'll immediately start seeing positive results!



Exercise I: Finding Your Value Proposition

1. Establish the Customer's Current Situation

Without your product or service, how do they do things today?

2. Define the Problem or Gaps

What problems does your offering solve? What opportunities does it create?



Irresistible Value Propositions

3. Clarify the Business Implications

Explore the "Ripple Effect." Find other areas impacted by the problems/gaps.

4. Determine the Value of Change

What's the pay-off (tangible value, intangible value, opportunity costs) from using your product/service?



Exercise II: Writing Your Value Proposition

Use the space below to write a draft of your value proposition.

Comments from Others

When you're done, go get feedback from others. Describe your customer and request that they listen from that perspective. Ask: *"What caught your attention? Is it reflective of the true value I bring customers? How can I make it stronger?"*

Now revise it to make it even more attractive to your customers. Or create a new one that emphasizes a different aspect of the value provided by your product or service. With close analysis, you'll discover multiple ways to articulate your offering's value to you prospective clients.



Irresistible Value Propositions

About Jill Konrath



Jill Konrath is an internationally recognized sales strategist and author. As a frequent speaker at sales conferences, annual meetings and kick-off events, she shares fresh sales strategies and practical advice that actually works when selling to today's crazy-busy prospects.

SNAP Selling, her most recent book, soared to the #1 sales book on Amazon within hours of its release. **Selling to Big Companies**, her 1st book was selected as a "must read" by Fortune magazine and has been an Amazon Top 20 sales book since 2006.

Get More Fresh Strategies

If you liked the ideas in this ebook, make sure you check out Jill Konrath's new Prospecting Tool Kit that contains four free must-have sales tools. They'll help you open more doors -- and ultimately close more sales.



Download the Prospecting Tool Kit now: <http://bit.ly/JK-ProspectingKit>

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Website: www.jillkonrath.com

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/jillkonrath>



WORKING WITH THE BIG GUYS: HOW TO MANAGE YOUR RESOURCES FOR BOTH STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL PLANNING - Feb 25, 2013

Seven Key Considerations for Effective Collaboration – Presented by Chris Lawrence

1. Validate your assumptions about the “Big Company”

- a. Big companies are not “monolithic entities”- An agreement with one division does not guarantee an agreement across the enterprise
- b. Get to know the management- Is there a mutual commitment to collaboration?

2. Understand your capabilities

- a. Ask how the “Big Company” identified your company for potential collaboration? Client recommendation, Research or desperation?
- b. Ask “What’s in it for me? All companies have choices- Make the best decision with all known information

3. Start with a contractual discussion

- a. A teaming agreement is not the same as a strategic relationship- Be honest about what you want
- b. Consider scope- specific opportunity or time based relationship
- c. Assess core capabilities and joint value proposition- if the collaboration does not add value to the customer or is not perceived as adding value, don’t proceed
- d. Specify duration and conditions to end the relationship
- e. Is a Mentor- protégé relationship a possibility?
- f. Identify scope limits- Exclusivity? Define what is fair for both parties

4. Specify roles and responsibilities for Capture efforts

- a. Understand the capture plan- If one does not exist, the bid process might be a long expensive waste of time and resources
- b. Identify cost and efforts needed for bids and proposals- be specific
- c. Identify roles and responsibilities with customer communications- who does it and how is intelligence shared

5. Develop tools to communicate and collaborate

- a. SharePoint?
- b. Website – limited access for teammates
- c. DELTEK CATO tool for collaboration

6. Specify regular reports and meetings

- a. Get commitment to meet regularly to assess progress with collaboration
- b. Regularly review performance with the customer- don’t wait until a bad CPARS shows up
- c. Incorporate SMART goals in regular reviews (Smart, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time Bound)- If both parties are not working to progress the relationship, maybe it is not worth the time/effort

7. Plan for ending the relationship

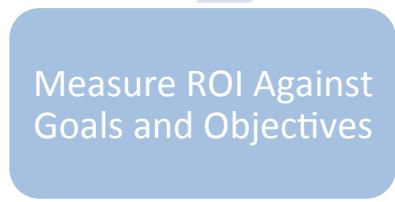
- a. Time based- Regardless of how long it takes for the bid evaluation – otherwise, you might be locked out of future bids
- b. Activity based – Identify milestones
- c. Mutual agreement-Free Agency model – Criteria and time frame required to notify other side that you want to discontinue partnership



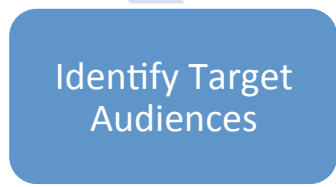
Prepared for GTSC
Capacity Building Workshop
February 25, 2013



- Align with corporate goals and objectives
- Develop supporting marketing strategies and tactics
- Define metrics



- Evaluate against Metrics
- Determine ROI
- Revise as needed



- Know your target audience, how they think, what they value
- Identify the level you need to reach within the organization
- Understand their challenges
- Map your services as solutions to their challenges

Marketing Plan Life Cycle



- Networking ops (GTSC, etc)
- Website
- Collateral
- Speaking ops
- Tradeshows /events
- Public Relations
- Social Media



- Position your company as thought leaders & industry experts relative to your core capabilities
- Discuss/describe your solutions using their terminology
- Identify competitive advantages-- why they should choose your company
- Tout proven successes in other agency/departments

Prepared for:



Government
Technology &
Services Coalition
Capacity Building Workshop

February 25, 2013

Today's Topic

- Marketing to Potential partners for going into contracts together
- How Strategic partnerships Can Help Market Your capabilities
- How to maximize your marketing Reach with the Appropriate Partner

Marketing to Potential Partners

- Know Thyself
- Know Thy Market
- Find Thy Mate

Marketing To Potential Partners

- Why Collaborate/Partner
- What's In For Me-What's In It For Them
- Growth In Market Share- Revenue -Profitability

The Package And The Presentation

- Capabilities Statements and Websites

What Do They Tell You

- Websites

They Tell You A Little More

- The Partnership Package

Tells Who and The Why

Know Thy Self



Know Thy Self

- Assessment
 - Internal and External
- Analyze The Data
 - Identify Gaps
 - Strengths and Weakness
 - Identify Processes, Culture, Management Styles
 - Risk, Vision and Value Proposition
- Establish and Document Your DNA

Know Thy Market

- What are the Characteristics of the Market
 - Dynamics
 - Stagnant
- Who are the Market Leaders In your Segment
- What Assets and Tools Do I Need to Compete
 - Soft Assets
 - Hard Assets

Why Collaborate and Partner

- The Dynamics of the Market Are Such Today, That You Cannot Go At It Alone
 - Limited Access to Buyers, Program Managers and Contracting Officers
 - Shrinking Contractual Opportunities
 - Increased Competition
 - Size of Opportunities are Bundled and Larger
 - Increase Demand for Technology
 - Increase Demand for Human Resources

Finding Thy Mate

- Commonality of Interest
- How Well Are They Positioned In the Market
- Are They Financially Sound Enough to Help Me
- Identify Their DNA/Integrate
 - Determine The Strategic Fit
 - Determine The Chemistry Fit
 - Determine the Operational Fit
- What Do I have To Offer Them That They Can Leverage In The Market

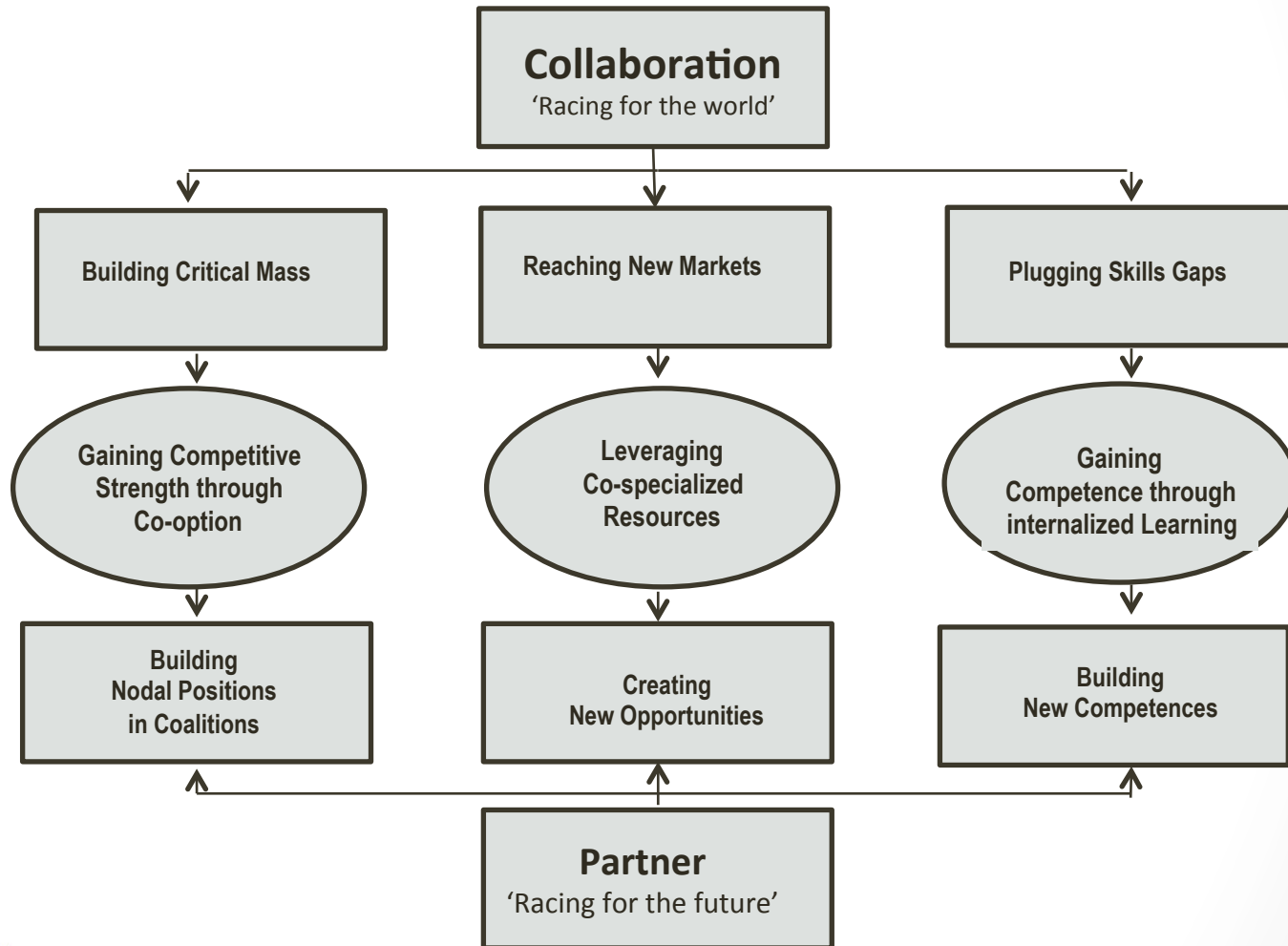
Understanding and knowing Thy Mate's DNA

- What type of infrastructure do they have
- Is the organization structure flat or hierarchical
- What is the corporate culture
 - Sweat shop
 - People oriented
 - Family oriented
 - Hands on micro management or hands off
 - Incentive based or bottom line/top line
 - Good, average or poor benefits Program
 - Do we share the same vision, principals
 - Do we have the same integrity, ethics and values

The Relationship

- Are There Any Accounts That We Can Grow Together
- How Long Do We Want The Relationship to Last
- What Will Be The Exit Strategy for Both Partners

How Strategic Partnerships Can Help Market Your Capabilities



How To Maximize Your Marketing Reach With The Appropriate Partnership

- Equality - create a win-win relationship in which each side is delighted to be a part of it
- Operations- eliminate self-interest and concentrate on delivering the best service or product, lowering joint cost, risk and build TRUST
- Innovation- this is the “spark” in the relationship that generates the enthusiasm to innovate and go the “extra mile”

Maximizing Marketing Reach

- Investment- build a shelter against uncertainty by working more closely with fewer partners and pursuing mutual objectives through value creation, joint investment and harmonized processes and proactive relationship management
- Communication-must occur at all levels, information must flow fluidly between the partners to eliminate and dissuade cheating or concealment

The Take Away

- Change Your Vision
- Collaborate
- Increase Capacity
- Asses Your DNA
- Package Your Value
- Communicate
- Trust

Change Your Mindset

Develop New Business Model

Through Collaboration

Integrate Your DNA With Partner

Present Your Value

Communicate Communicate

Trust

Trust

Thank You

Growth Strategy
Growth Strategy
Consultants

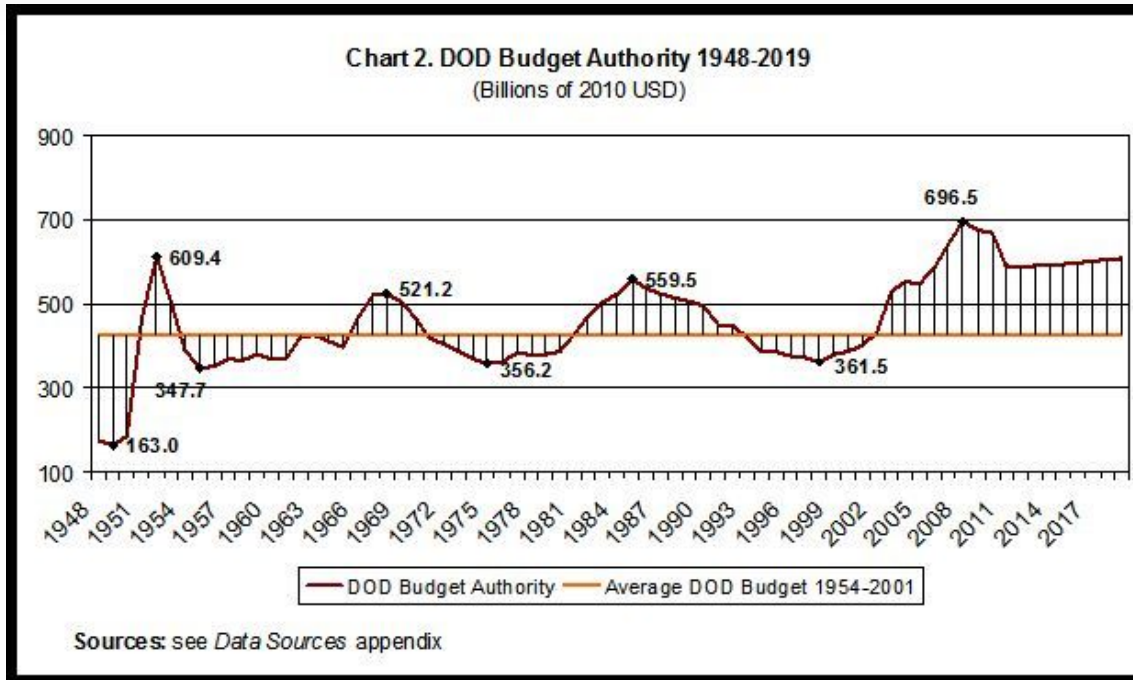
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“Helping You Grow Your Company”



THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT: WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

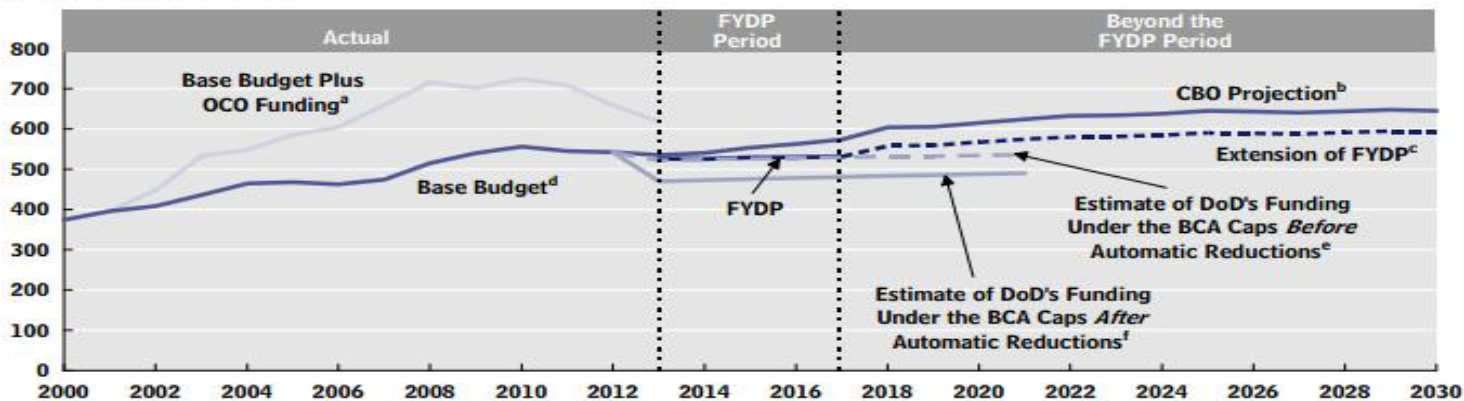
▶ Budgets seem to be cyclical



Post-Korea	609.4	347.7	43%
Post-Vietnam	521.2	356.2	32%
Post-Reagan	559.5	361.5	35%
Post-911	696.5	487.5	30%

Costs of DoD's Plans in the Context of the Budget Control Act

(Billions of 2013 dollars)



Source: Congressional Budget Office.

► Changes in Customer Needs and Behaviors

- Customers are required to “do more with less”
- Acquisitions will be cancelled or schedules will shift further to the right
- Move to IDIQ, task order-based contracts is accelerating; fewer large single-award contracts
- Small business set-aside support increasing
- Customers want cost efficiencies and ‘risk-free’ innovation
- Many customers are unable to give clear direction
- Contract consolidation eroding value of incumbency, leads to fewer RFPs and requires extremely competitive bid (no other work coming)

▶ **Where do you/we go?**

- There will be opportunities and business to be won; somebody will grow
- Decide whether you are in or out
- Find an early adopter with a huge need; a requirement that has a need for you
- Looks for ways to be noticed: product, service, Thought Leadership
- Stay close to the Small Business Offices
- Develop a relationship with the senior contracts officers of each agency; they are being pressed hard to increase small business participation; small business contracts are very easy for them; they need to meet their goals
 - Tell them how you are different from your competition
 - In an era of declining budgets, your clients are concerned about their careers and success
- Develop relationships with peer companies; more importantly, develop relationships with medium and large companies
 - Everyone needs partners to be successful; 3 Cs: capability, capacity, contract vehicles
 - Look for companies that will offer a fair deal

Adapt or Die



How to Find the Talent to Help Your Company Succeed



What Are Your Options?

- **Contingency Staffing Firm**
- **Recruitment Process Outsourcing**
- **In House Staff**

Each Has Its “+” and “-”

Contingency Staffing or Headhunter

“+” Immediate results, “+” pay at 90+ days, “-” high cost per hire

RPO or Contract Recruiter

“+” No overhead, “-” but higher costs, “+” can turn the function on/off as needed

In House Staff

“+” Builds a pipeline, “+” sells the company better than someone outside, “-” overhead costs

**Overcoming Small
Business
Perception
Challenges**



The Talent Professionals Are the Judges

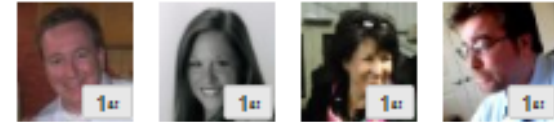
Talented professionals want to know that your company has opportunities for their skill set, their career path and benefits that are different than other companies.

This is engaging an entire community rather than keeping the talent acquisition a separate part of your business.





HOW YOU'RE CONNECTED



5 first-degree connections
201 second-degree connections
370 Employees on LinkedIn

[See all](#)

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Mortar @mortardata 5h

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MADPASS @MADPASS 4m

Do you have a reminder on your calendar big enough for Hadoop with @billpreachuk? Get one from our website! madpass.org

Details



Krish Krishnan @datagenius 6m

#BigData is not tough if you know the architecture to address it. Not all of it is Hadoop r NoSQL. Want to learn more? watch 4 #TDWI Chicago

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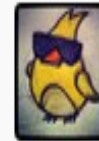


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Nadeem Douba @ndouba 32s

The folks over at @conciseonline have created an updated page for today's webinar with added info: concise-courses.com/infosec/201302...

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Details



Being a community member on Twitter to maintain your pipeline of IT folks

users, beware of an extension by the name o... bit.ly/XBQoty



Farm, Sandbox, or Client Object Model?

By Johnny Boudier | Published February 19, 2013



When developing solutions for SharePoint 2010 there are 3 primary options for development. These options are as follows:

- Farm
- Sandbox
- Client Object Model (Managed, Silverlight, and Javascript)

It's great that we've been provided options, however with these options we're also presented with a choice. And in my opinion you should choose wisely, because each option provides some advances and disadvantages.

Because of these distinctions and my own growing pains, I thought I would share what I've learned.

Archives

Archives

Select Month

February 2013

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
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24	25	26	27	28		

Having your key staff share their thoughts with the community



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**Meetups- topic oriented
very specific to skill set,
and bring in your
speakers.**



FEATURED MEETUP

jQuery Best Practices

Now, you can invite your Facebook friends to this Meetup. Send them a private message! X

Tell a friend **NEW!** Share

Thursday, February 21, 2013

6:30 PM To 8:45 PM

Booz Allen Hamilton

8283 Greensboro Drive, McLean, VA (map)

Come join us as Greg Franko of AddThis shares with us his best practices in jQuery development!

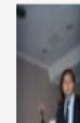
84 attending

RSVPs closed



Andrew Cubides
ORGANIZER
EVENT HOST

I am a senior software engineer for Booz Allen Hamilton currently working on a project that has me c... more



Amit Sharma
Hello



Jay

Mc Lean, VA

Founded Jan 24, 2013

About us...

Web Developers 167

Upcoming Meetups 2

Our calendar

We're about

Top 57 Tech Meetups this week

Show me the Meetups

How Do You Start this Journey?

Understand what you provide a talented professional in opportunities, benefits.

Communicating the mission, skills set and culture map for your customers



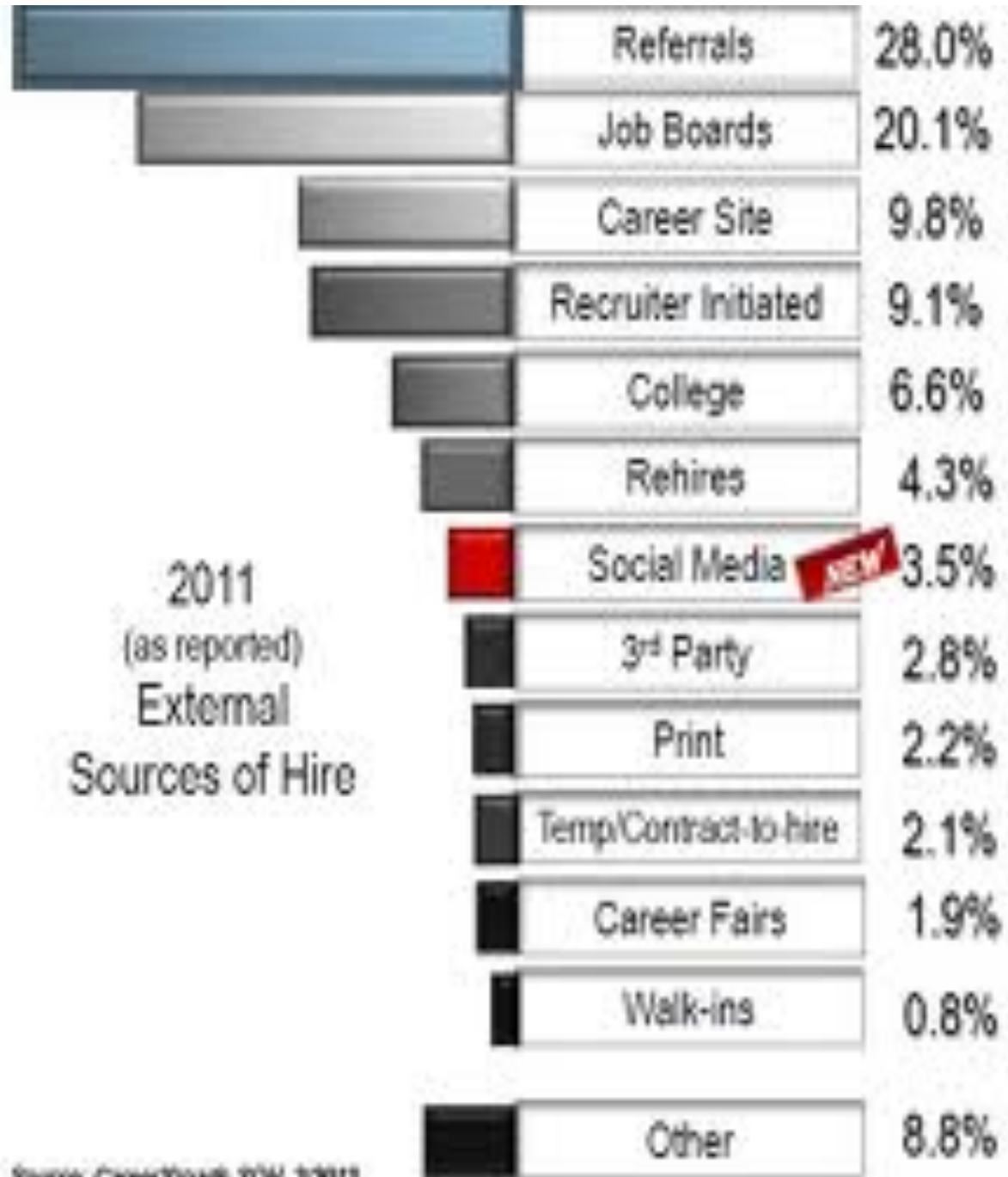
1 Source of Hire: Referrals

Establish a referral program that is constantly communicated with your team.

Celebrate the successes of the hires and program outreach. Your client facing managers are going to be your best recruiters.

Everyone in your recruitment pipeline is an ambassador; make sure that they realize this rather than just pushing paper through the system.

You might not hire someone, but they may refer someone to you, work for you later or at least spread the good word.



2011
(as reported)
External
Sources of Hire

Source: CareerRoads 2011, 2012

#2 Source of Hire: Job Boards

Utilizing job postings =
Online Advertising

A way to advertise to a key market by using the search terms that your key talent will be searching under.

Use Resume Database Searches to build your pipelines that match with your contracts.

Cultivate candidates with updates and news.





**Incorporate Veteran Hiring into
Your Community Engagement**

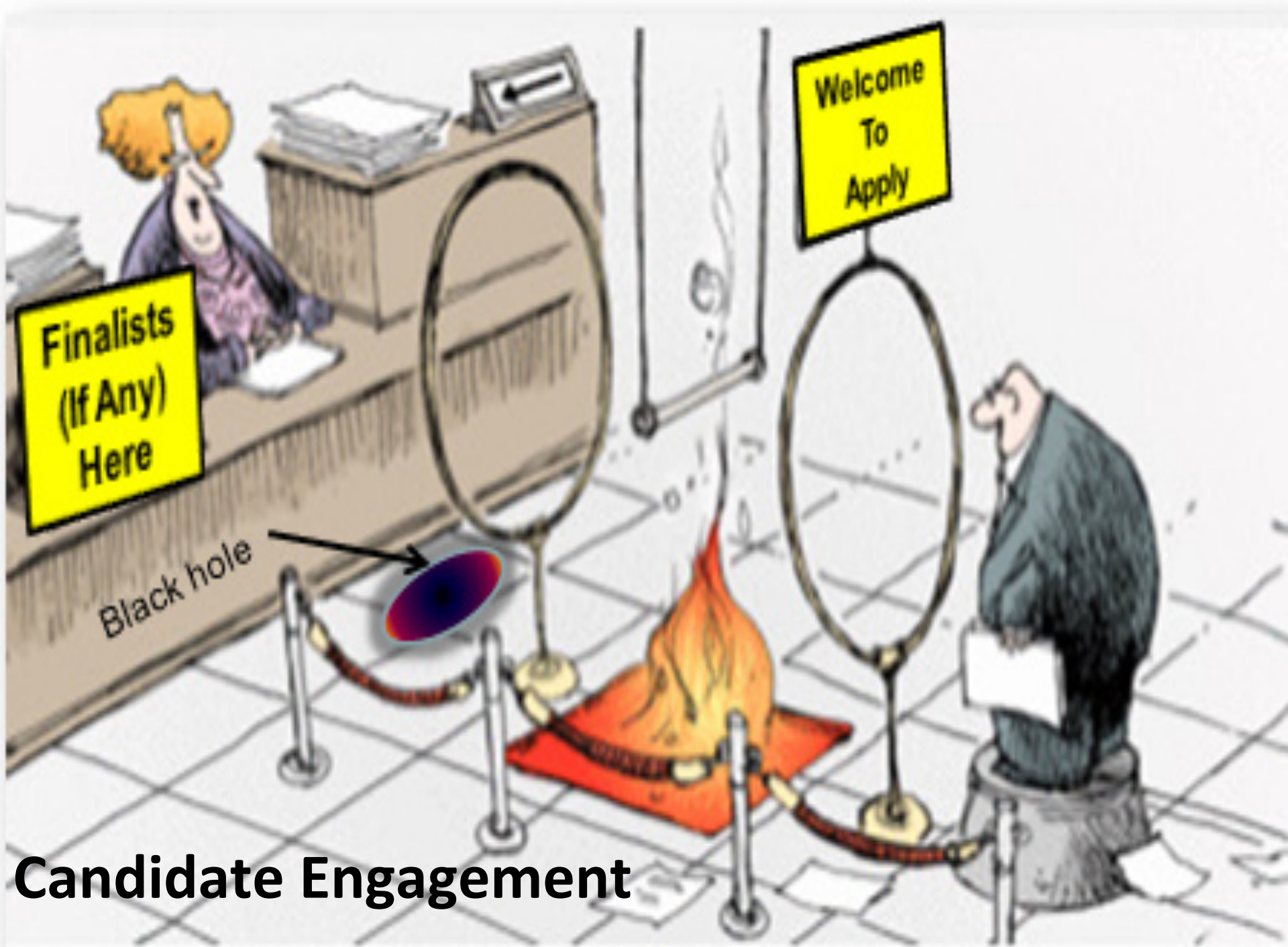
Why Go to All of This Trouble?

Maintaining a Talent Pipeline

Integrated Community Engagement

Employment fraud





Candidate Engagement



Small Business Collaboration Group (SBCG)

Enabling Collaboration Through Easy
Communication

Introduction

Small Business Collaboration Group (SBCG)

The mission of the SBCG is to promote an easy to use, dynamic environment – both in person and virtually – that promotes small business collaboration within GTSC to increase business opportunities and save members time and money.

SBCG Areas

The “Bench”

Help Wanted

Small Business Forum

The “Bench”

- o The Challenge: Small Businesses do not have the expendable capital to keep resources on the “bench” between projects.
- o The Solution: An area where posting members can post resumes of employees that are available for subcontracting work, along with appropriate information such as: clearance level, rate, availability, relevant skills, and recent projects completed.
- o The Result: Less capital burden placed on Small Businesses and greater use of resources across multiple organizations.

The Bench

efiia.com

My Networks

Chris Gorman

Home

Inbox 1

GROUPS +

All Company 2

Browse Groups

Create Group

Create a New Collaboration Space

Internal Group
To collaborate with people inside your company.

External Network
To collaborate with people outside of your company.

Group Name Name is available.

Description 78 characters remaining

Who can view content?

Public - Anyone in this network

Private - Only approved members

List in Group Directory

Create Group

Groups Files Apps

Online Now

Suggested Groups

- IT Support
- Svetlana Winsk
- Lara Donato
- Jason Gdowik
- kelly oconnor
- Jamison Day
- Will Gaskins
- Kimberly Kenton

Help Wanted

- The Challenge: Most Small Businesses do not have the resources for full time recruitment.
- The Solution: A venue to post staffing requirements, allowing other SBCG members to view and contact the posting member with staffing solutions
- The Result: An enhanced resource promoting easy collaboration and teaming between SBCG members

Small Business Forum

- The Challenge: Small Businesses have very limited BD resources, limiting the amount of areas effectively covered at any given time.
- The Solution: A forum where SBCG members can share ideas, events, trainings, lessons learned, and general information
- The result: Through shared resources, contributing members are able to gain access to much more robust information than by researching alone.

Forum

efiia.com

My Networks

Search for people, groups and conversations

Add | [People](#) | [Groups](#) | [Files](#) | [Apps](#)



Chris Gorman

Home

Inbox 1

GROUPS

All Company 2

The Bench

Browse Groups

Create Group

Share an Update Add a Doc/Image Post a Poll [More](#)

Who has the contact information for Mr. Smith from the last awesome GTSC meeting?

+ Add people to notify

Search for topics...

Done

Add: File Topic

Post to My Colleagues

Top · All · Following



Chris Gorman has created the [The Bench](#) group: Resources that are available for hire on a short term or long term basis

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Share](#) · [More](#) · 3 minutes ago



kelly oconnor has created the [Efiia Cares](#) group.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Share](#) · [More](#) · December 18, 2012 at 8:31 pm

RECENT ACTIVITY

Chris Gorman created the [The Bench](#) group.

kelly oconnor is now following [Chris Gorman](#).

kelly oconnor has joined [RPD Gangs](#).

Jason Gdowik installed the iPhone application.

Jason Gdowik has joined [RPD Gangs](#).

SUGGESTED PEOPLE

[see all](#)



fred littlefield
Office Manager

Questions



An Overview of *Qui Tam* Actions Under The False Claims Act and Post-Award Bid Protests

By Richard J. Conway

February 25, 2013

The False Claims Act

- The False Claims Act (“FCA”), 31 U.S.C. § 3729 et seq., was passed during the Civil War to combat fraud against the government.
- In general terms, the Act imposes liability on any person or corporation who knowingly presents “a false or fraudulent claim for payment or approval” to the government. 31 U.S.C. § 3729(a). It is similarly unlawful to knowingly make a “false record or statement” to get a false claim paid by the government. 31 U.S.C. § 3729(a)(1).
- The statute provides for triple damages and a civil penalty from \$5,500 to \$11,000 per false claim (these amounts are adjusted from time to time).

What is a “Claim”

- A “claim” is defined generally as “any request or demand...for money or property” that is:
 - “presented to an officer, employee, or agent of the United States” OR
 - “is made to a contractor, grantee, or other recipient, if the money or property is to be spent or used on the Government’s behalf or to advance a Government program or interest” and the Government provided any portion of the money or property requested or demanded or will reimburse such contractor, grantee or other recipient for any portion of the money or property requested or demanded.

31 U.S.C. § 3729(b)(2).

The FCA Intent Requirement

- Under the FCA, contractors are only liable for false claims, records or statements, submitted “knowingly,” which is defined as:
 - 1) having actual knowledge of its falsity, OR;
 - 2) acting in deliberate ignorance of the truth or falsity of the information, OR;
 - 3) acting in a reckless disregard of the truth or falsity of the information
- No proof of specific intent to defraud is required.

Typical False Claim Cases Involving Government Contractors

- Billing for services not rendered;
- Billing for services partially performed;
- Inflated requests for payment;
- Submitting proposals in response to an RFP that are false to get a contract award;
- False certifications of compliance with contractual requirements or with laws and regulations as part of government contracting.

Qui Tam Actions

- The False Claims Act includes an ancient legal device called a “*qui tam*” (Latin phrase meaning “he who sues in this matter for the king as well as for himself”).
- This provision of Act allows a private person, known as a “relator,” to bring a lawsuit on behalf of the United States, where the private person has information that the named defendant has knowingly made false claims.
- The relator need not have been personally harmed by the defendant’s conduct.

Qui Tam Actions

- The *qui tam* provision is also known as the whistleblower provision, since *qui tam* actions are nearly always brought by whistleblowers.
- If a whistleblower wishes to file suit under the FCA it must be done through an attorney. A complaint is normally filed outlining the whistleblowers allegations. This complaint is initially sealed for 60 days while the government conducts an investigation.
- The government has the option to review the whistleblowers allegations and intervene in the case. If the government intervenes it has the primary responsibility for prosecuting the action. If the government declines intervention the whistleblower has the right to prosecute the case themselves.

The Whistleblower Incentive

- FCA damages and penalties can be enormous. Standard damages are treble the loss suffered by the government and a civil penalty of \$5,500 to \$11,000 *per false claim*, which can become numerous if, for example, companies submit regular invoices to the government for ongoing services.
- If an FCA action is successful, the whistleblower will receive anywhere between 15-30 percent of the government's recovery and attorney's fees and expenses.
- These cases are extremely lucrative; from October 1987 to September 2010 the False Claims Act recovered over \$27 billion of which \$2.87 billion went to whistleblowers.

Increasing Whistleblower Activity

- In announcing record FCA recoveries in the 2012 fiscal year of \$4.9 billion, the DOJ highlighted the particularly significant—and increasing—role that whistleblowers have played in litigation under the statute.
- Whistleblowers brought a record-setting 647 federal *qui tam* suits last year, and of the record \$4.9 billion recovered to the U.S. Treasury in FY2012, \$3.3 billion stemmed from whistleblower suits.
- From all indications this will only increase over the coming years.

Whistleblower Protection

- The False Claims Act, 31 USC § 3730(h), provides protection for any whistleblowing employee, contractor, or agent who is discharged, demoted, suspended, threatened, harassed or discriminated against for lawful acts done in furtherance of a False Claims Act action or other efforts to stop one or more violations of the False Claims Act.
- Thus it is unlawful to terminate or discriminate against an employee for bringing a whistleblower lawsuit or for reporting a false claim internally to the company, or externally to the government, and such disciplinary action may subject a contractor to liability under this provision.

The Expansion of FCA Liability: Implied Certification

- *Qui tam* relators and the DOJ continue to push to expand FCA liability by arguing that claims become false if the company that submitted them violated a regulatory or contract requirement connected with the goods or services that are being reimbursed by the government, since the claims carry a false “implied certification” of regulatory and contract compliance.
- Eight different Federal Circuit courts have approved of the “implied certification” theory (including D.C. Circuit) and the DOJ is now actively pursuing treble damages and penalties in cases that often appear to be mere differences in the interpretation of contractual terms or regulatory requirements.

The Expansion of FCA Liability: Implied Certification

- The implied certification theory has the potential to turn every “mistake” by a government contractor or disagreement into a potential fraud case.
- As a result, there is a heightened risk for contractors without strong compliance programs or those operating in contractual or regulatory gray areas.
- It is highly likely that the DOJ and *qui tam* relators will continue to become more aggressive in pursuing implied-certification theories of FCA liability.

Tips to *Qui Tam* Actions

- It is important to recognize that almost all *qui tam* actions are brought by current or former disgruntled employees.
- Basic steps to mitigate FCA exposure:
 - 1) Hold regular, companywide fraud prevention and ethics training (can be integrated with existing training programs);
 - 2) Maintain an internal whistleblower hotline, including a system to investigate FCA issues and to protect whistleblowers from retaliation;
 - 3) Carefully handle employee separations by conducting detailed exit interviews for high-risk employees and craft severance packages and releases to minimize legal threats;

Tips to Avoid *Qui Tam* Actions

- Additional measures to limit risk:
 - 1) Maintain Positive Employee Relations: Good morale and company loyalty are often the best means to prevent employees from filing *qui tam* complaints that can lead to frivolous but expensive litigation;
 - 2) Develop Rigorous Compliance Programs: Institute proper oversight and ensure that laws, regulations, and contractual requirements are being followed;
 - 3) Utilize Risk-Based Strategies: Identify risks, ambiguous laws, regulations, and contractual requirements, and then deliberately act to obtain government and/or expert opinions to ensure compliance. Do not assume your interpretation of an ambiguous requirement is the correct one.

Tips to Avoid *Qui Tam* Actions

- Arbitrate Retaliation Claims: Almost all *qui tam* suits include claims that employees were retaliated against in connection with their whistleblowing, in violation of the FCA. Such retaliation claims can proceed even if the underlying suit proves meritless.
- However, these claims may be subject to arbitration. Companies should review their employment agreements or handbooks to ensure that retaliation-based claims are subject to arbitration, thereby speeding resolution and reducing the costs associated with litigating *qui tam* retaliation claims.

Post-award Bid Protests

- A post-award bid protest is a challenge to the award or proposed award of a contract for procurement of goods and services.
- There are generally three kinds of post-award protests:
 - 1) Agency protests;
 - 2) U.S. Government Accountability Office (“GAO”) protests, and;
 - 3) Protests at the U.S. Court of Federal Claims (“COFC”).
- Agency protests, while inexpensive are rare, and are typically filed when the procurement error by the agency is objectively clear on its face. For the purposes of this presentation we will focus on GAO protests, the most common post-award bid protest forum.

GAO Post-award Bid Protests

- A key advantage of a GAO protest is the automatic stay of contract performance while the protest is being decided. This stay is granted automatically if the protest is filed 10 days after contract award or within 5 calendar days after a scheduled required debriefing under FAR section 15. Moreover, GAO protests are typically less costly and usually faster to resolve than protesting at the COFC.
- By law, a GAO protest must be filed by an “interested party,” which means an actual or prospective bidder or offeror with a direct economic interest in the procurement. 4 C.F.R. § 21.0(a). In challenges of the evaluation of proposals and the award of contracts, this generally means an offeror that would potentially be in line for award if the protest were sustained.

GAO Protest Procedures: Timeliness

- A protest of an evaluation of proposals or an award of a contract is timely filed at GAO if it is filed within 10 days from the date that the protester knew or should have known of the grounds for the protest.
- The exception to this rule is if the protest timely requests a required debriefing within three days of the contract award. If so, a debriefing is usually required, and the protest may be filed within 10 days from the date the debriefing is held (or 5 days to get an automatic stay).
- Once a required debriefing is requested, the protester cannot bring a protest before the date offered by the agency for debriefing.

GAO Protest Procedures

- **Automatic Stay of Performance:** As mentioned, contract performance generally must be suspended if a GAO protest is filed quickly. This is a key advantage because it can provide over three months of continued contract performance at a minimum for incumbents, making the protest worthwhile.
- **Intervenors:** GAO permits an awardee of the contract to intervene as an interested party.
- **Protective Order:** GAO will issue a protective order if the protest involves a company's proprietary or confidential data or the agency's source-selection-sensitive data. Confidential information in the filings are then limited to the attorneys and experts of interested parties (i.e. you will likely not see the record). As a result, it is often critically important to hire quality experts in highly technical cases.

GAO Protest Procedures

- **Summary Dismissal:** GAO may summarily dismiss a protest if, on its face, the protest is defective.
- **Agency Report:** Within 30 days after the protest is filed, the agency will submit to GAO, the protester, and the intervenor an agency report responding to the protest allegations, including all relevant documents.
- **Written Comments:** The protester and the intervenor may file written comments on the agency report generally within ten days after receiving the report.
- **Supplemental Protests:** From reviewing the agency report, the protester may file any supplemental grounds for protest that it learns from that review within ten days after it learned or should have learned of any such claims.

GAO Remedies

- After comments, GAO will typically decide a protest in two to three weeks. If GAO sustains the protest, it may recommend that the procuring agency implement any combination of the following remedies:
 - 1) Terminate the contract;
 - 2) Refrain from exercising options under the contract;
 - 3) Reevaluate proposals and re-compete the contract;
 - 4) Issue a new solicitation;
 - 5) Award a contract consistent with all applicable statutes and regulations; and/or;
 - 6) Such other recommendation as GAO determines necessary in order to promote compliance.

Post-award Protests at the U.S. Court of Federal Claims

- Protests can also be brought at the COFC, however, there is no automatic stay of performance (injunction must be sought) and litigation costs are higher;
- Filing a protest at GAO, in the first instance, does not preclude the protester from subsequently filing at the COFC if the protest is denied at GAO. COFC is not bound by GAO's decision or any findings GAO makes.
- However, COFC will likely show deference to GAO's findings, particularly when the unsuccessful protester is seeking a "second bite at the apple."

U.S. Court of Federal Claims Procedures

- Protester files a complaint (i.e. the protest) generally under seal, and can also file a motion for preliminary injunctive relief to obtain a stay of performance, and a motion for protective order.
- Pursuant to the case schedule set by the Court, the parties will file motions for judgment on the administrative record and responsive briefs. Oral argument is normally held.
- COFC typically reaches a decision within three to six weeks after oral argument, however, it depends on the Judge and their docket commitments. The Court will award any relief they consider proper, including declaratory and injunctive relief, but monetary relief is limited to bid preparation and proposal costs.

Key Tips to Remember About Post-Award Protests

- In most cases GAO is the quickest and least inexpensive vehicle for a disappointed bidder to obtain relief from alleged improprieties in the procurement process.
- However, you need to act quickly. GAO timelines are strict and normally inflexible. You need to decide whether you want to protest and engage attorneys as soon as possible (10 calendar days) when considering a challenge to an award.
- Even if there was an error in the procurement process, consider whether you have a realistic chance of being awarded the contract if reevaluated. A protest is normally pointless if there are five other bidders ahead of you or if you are not prejudiced.

Your legal, insurance and ethical responsibilities:

An update:

Mistake made by contractor results in new requirements that impact your responsibilities.

When bidding on contracts must carry minimum insurance coverage:

1. Comprehensive General Liability - for BI/PD Completed operations
2. Comprehensive Automobile Liability - BI/PD
3. Workers Compensation & Employers Liability
 - a. Defense Base Act – Extends the Longshoreman's & Harbor Workers Compensation Act – working outside the U.S.
 - b. Extended through War Hazards Compensation Act – against risk of war Hazards i.e. injury, death, capture, or detention.
4. Professional Liability

Insurance under fixed-price contracts:

Government not concerned o except may specify insurance requirement in contract.

Insurance under cost-reimbursement contract - as above.

Insurance through Group contracts – prior approval needed. Premium refunds and credits – back to the government.

Additional coverages needed – depending on the contract:

- Aircraft public & passenger liability
- Vessel Liability
- Leased motor vehicles
- Cargo Insurance
- Builders Risk
- Garage Keeper Legal Liability
- Marina operators Leal Liability
- Owners-Contractor's Protection
- Ship Repairs Legal Liability
- Surety
- Umbrella Liability
- Performance Bonds
- Payment Bond Public Works
- Pollution Legal Liability

An update:

Steps to take in bidding on a contract:

1. Work with an Insurance Broker
 - a. Get copy of contract bid requirements
 - b. Share with Broker – and company underwriters
 - c. Get written confirmation O.K. and coverage terms will be issued and cost projection.
 - d. Work with the Underwriter.

Insurance Issues:

1. Certificate of insurance – does not amend, extend, or alter coverage afforded under the contract
2. Additional Insured endorsement – Who and where possible – never W C, professional liability.
3. Entity, officers, officials, employees and volunteers
4. Insurance company A.M. Best Rating – not below A rated.
5. Surety Bonds – result from Capital, Capacity, & Character
 - a. Bid Bond
 - b. Performance (completion) bond
 - c. Payment bond
 - d. Labor & material bond
6. Commercial General Liability Coverage endorsements.
 - a. Personal injury & advertising Liability
 - b. Premises medical payments
 - c. Host liquor law Liability
 - d. Fire legal liability
 - e. Broad form property damage
 - f. Incidental medical malpractice liability
 - g. Non-owned watercraft liability (under 26 feet).
 - h. Limited worldwide liability
 - i. Additional person insured
 - j. Extended bodily injury

Reference sources: Insurance requirements in contracts. A Procedure Manual – Version 4.0 by Daiver Alliant Insurance Services Inc., January 2004

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