

Do you have the internal teams to win big?

By Joyce Bosc



In today's tough economy and our increasingly competitive market, it is more important than ever that government contractors leverage every resource

to position themselves well for key pursuits. A critical component is creating proactive partnerships that draw on the organization's existing expertise to capture those government dollars.

We're not referring to partnerships with other contractors in the government space. We're talking about internal partnerships working in tandem to increase your win rate.

Winning government contractors know that internal collaboration across capture management, business development, marketing, and even human resources and recruitment can be a deciding factor in competitive bid scenarios. According to the latest Market Connections Government IT Contractors Best Practices Study, 83 percent of winning contractors make communicating win themes a top priority. This data highlights the importance of bringing other internal groups into the capture management mix a lot earlier than some might expect.

Internal collaborative partnerships can include the pursuit strategy, the proposal, contract win announcements and even pre-staffing for the contract. To be successful, this partnership strategy requires a deliberate effort to improve the way capture management functions within the organization. Everyone involved must be willing to help

strengthen the process, trust the support available within the organization, and stay focused on the ultimate goal: winning new business.

Use teamwork to strengthen capture management.

Too often, business development and capture management teams view the marketing team as a way to get help for trade shows. However, marketing can also provide tremendous support for new business. The marketing executives can work closely with capture management to brainstorm strategies, develop win themes, identify key discriminators and suggest teaming strategies. Additionally, as a part of capture management, internal marketing partners can support pre- and post-award messages and develop recruitment tactics for building a staff before and after a win.

Leverage all internal expertise.

The internal marketing team already understands the organization's core strengths. That gives the capture management team a powerful, knowledgeable partner ready to step in and apply their expertise to the challenge.

In partnership with capture management, the marketing team should first focus on three key objectives:

1. Position the firm as a recognized player and solid partner in the market, and especially within the agency it is pursuing. This positioning can support win themes and case studies to spotlight differentiating solutions and capabilities.
2. Illustrate that the organization has the right qualifications. The marketing team can create opportunities to showcase

expertise, certifications and other contract criteria for selection.

3. Demonstrate to the customer that the company is a recognized and well-published thought leader. Marketing and public relations efforts can produce and place bylined articles and schedule speaking opportunities in the customer's line of sight.

Start early and stay focused.

Usually marketing enters the capture management process late in the game, if ever. In today's climate, though, it's critical that government contractors realize the benefits of bringing in the marketing team early to develop market research, case studies, strategic media coverage and more.

Simply emailing the business development pipeline to the marketing director won't achieve the powerhouse partnership needed for a must-win pursuit. Instead, the marketing executive must be an integral part of regular business development and capture management meetings.

Marketing must be in sync with capture and business development from the very beginning. The creation, execution and timing of ads, white papers, trade shows and media coverage can strengthen the government contractor's strategy and ultimately help tip the scales in its favor. At the same time, government agencies will get a clearer picture of how the contractor helps meet their mission. **B**

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