**Best Practices**

**DO:**

Always be ready to give an “elevator speech”.

Be familiar with trends in federal acquisition.

Be familiar with acquisition and small business programs, and know your eligibility.

Be honest about your capabilities.

Understand bonding and requirements for accurate accounting.

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

Be prepared for lots of closed doors before one opens.

Keep website data current and highlight your small business information.

Know your primary North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code as well as all the NAICS codes that can support you.

Get to know your local Small Business Administration resources.

Get to know the Small Business Liaison Officer at the applicable prime contractor site(s).

Update your SAM.gov profile each year. Keep small business certifications up-to-date.

Know your past performance related to your primary industry areas.

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

Demonstrate expertise for core capabilities, but know your limits.

Ask engaging questions. Show how you can bring value to the customer.

Lead with your capabilities and not with your small business status. How can you meet the customer’s need?

Be able to explain to the agency or prime contractor why they should do business with you, outside of just getting small business credit.

Know what the agency or prime contractor procures and market accordingly.

Have a good one-three page capability statement that makes your company stand out. Tailor it to the agency or company you are marketing.

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

Present yourself in a professional manner.

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

Not say ‘yes’ if you do not know. Get clarifications. Unanswered questions can be costly and can make a difference in proper pricing & technical responses.

**DON’T:**

Overextend your cash or your work force; do not set yourself up for a failure.

Spend time marketing to agencies or firms who do not procure what you can provide.

Say, "I can do anything you want me to do”.

Forget to conduct due diligence research on an agency or company before contacting them.

Forget to identify your NAICS code, capabilities statement, and SAM.gov information when contacting an agency or prime.

Insist on signing a Non-Disclosure Agreement for an introductory meeting with another company.

Quote on work that is outside your area of expertise just to get your foot in the door.

Rely on social media in lieu of making professional contacts.

Call the applicable Small Business Professional every week.

Expect immediate replies for emails or phone calls. Everyone is busy; be respectful of another’s workload and priorities.

Think that a good introductory meeting means that you will soon be getting a proposal.

Just say “yes”. Know your capabilities.

Bite off more than you can chew.

Blast emails to agencies or firms who do not buy what you can provide.

Send emails that lack information on what your company does.

Assume that your small business status alone will get you a contract.