Marketing Strageties to Government Agencies

An electronic handbook
compiled and edited by
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How To Market to the Government

If you're a business owner looking to expand your client base, the government market can be a lucrative opportunity. Government agencies at the federal, state, and local levels buy a wide range of products and services every year, from construction and technology to healthcare and professional services. However, when you market to the government, it can be a complex and time-consuming process, with a multitude of regulations, procedures, and paperwork to navigate. But don't let that discourage you! With the right strategies and tactics, you can successfully compete for government contracts and grow your business.

Tips For How To Market to the Government

Deciding to market to the government can open up a whole new world of opportunities for growth and revenue. However, navigating the complex landscape of government regulations, procedures, and paperwork can be daunting. Here are some tips and insights to help you successfully market to the government and compete for valuable contracts.

Understand Your Customer

When it comes to government marketing, there are three different types of customers that you want to direct your effort towards.

1. **Procurers:** This includes contracting officers or other individuals who can select procurement methods and conduct the procurement. These individuals hold significant influence over the buying process. However, they are also influenced by "gatekeepers," who often act as influencers.
2. **Influencers:** These individuals are program managers and high-level decision makers who generate requirements for a product or service.
3. **End Users:** This group has a lot of influence in selecting the most qualified contractor for a bid or relevant contract.

To successfully market to the government, it's important to understand that each type of customer will have different interests in your offering. They will want to know the benefits of ordering from you, your pricing model, and the procurement vehicles or contracts that you hold.

Create a Separate Government Marketing Plan

If you're looking to expand your business by marketing to the government, it's crucial to understand the government buying cycle. Knowing when agencies are most likely to spend can help you plan a strategic campaign six to twelve months in advance. Spending is heavily skewed toward the fourth quarter of the fiscal year, which ends on September 30 for the City of Austin, and Travis County, and June 30th for AISD, and August 31st for UT Austin.

To make the most of this buying cycle, you should focus on building awareness and relationships in the first quarter of the year. This can be achieved through events, webinars, and fine-tuning your marketing message to resonate with your target audience. It's also a good idea to develop ways to evangelize your message and consider hosting intimate 'brown bag' lunch and learn meetings on-site to demonstrate your latest offering and its benefits.

In the second and third quarters, it's time to focus on lead generation campaigns. This is the time to use multiple tactics to ensure maximum outreach and drum up interest in your products or services. It's important to use integrated tactics that work together to achieve your objectives. For example, you can use a combination of email marketing, direct mail, and social media to reach your target audience.

The last quarter of the year is often focused on last-minute offers and awareness campaigns to help your company secure its share of end-of-year spending. This is the time when agencies rush to use their remaining budget dollars, so it's important to be prepared with special offers or promotions to entice them to choose your business.

In addition to these seasonal activities, it's important to engage in month-to-month outreach activities such as newsletters and social media to keep your company brand in front of your government customers and prospects. By doing so, you can establish your reputation as a reliable and trustworthy business that they can turn to again and again.

Make Sure to 'Governmentize' Your Message

When you market to the government, it's important to understand that commercial messaging and marketing collateral won't resonate with government agencies. They have different pain points, requirements, and objectives than commercial buyers. To effectively market your business to the government, take the time to understand agency mandates, goals, and challenges, and rework your message to address these specifically. Choose your words carefully and consider utilizing case studies to demonstrate your capabilities. When you are crafting your message make sure to consider:

- What the agency's particular challenges and needs?
- Has anyone else in the government benefited from the services you are offering?
- What does your company do in order to make it easy for the government to buy from you? Make sure to say if your business has previous contracting expertise or has any employees that used to be in the government sector.
- What can your product or service do to help the government?

- Why should the government buy from you? It is important to include your contract vehicles and any small business status or certification on all of your marketing materials and website to effectively market your business to the government.
- Are you speaking the government's language? Using commercial phrases and terminology that won't resonate with government agencies. Instead, use government attuned phrases like 'meet your agency's mandates' or 'address constituent needs more efficiently'. Make sure to consider the agency's particular challenges and needs, and showcase how your product or service can help the government. Utilize case studies to demonstrate your capabilities, and emphasize your contract vehicles and any small business status or certification on all of your marketing materials and website.

Understand Government Ethics

When you market to the government, it's important to ensure that all promotional activities and materials comply with the strict ethical rules governing government employees. Commercial call-to-actions such as 'Sign up for XYZ and enter for a chance to win a TV' are not allowed as they could be perceived as a bribe or gratuity. However, it's worth noting that there are certain exceptions to this rule. For instance, educational materials or nominally-valued gratuities such as desktop trinkets are generally permitted. Additionally, government employees are allowed to receive gifts valued at under $20, but gifts valued above that amount are strictly prohibited. If you are planning to market to the government, it's important to be aware of these regulations and ensure that all your marketing efforts are in compliance with them.

Utilize Case Studies

It's important to include case studies in your sales toolkit when you market to the government. These buyers are interested in hearing how their peers in the public sector have benefited from your solution. However, be sure to obtain agency permission and don't assume that real names and scenarios can always be used, especially with the DoD. You can use quotes from the case study on your website and other marketing materials, or even build the case study into an event or webinar to showcase your solution.

5 Marketing Strategies for B2G

If you work with governments, you need to develop an excellent product and marketing strategy. We've prepared 5 tips for you to consider to make your business more attractive to customers.

1. Define your target audience. The first thing you should do is to determine the governmental institutions you want to target. Explore their preferences, missions, posts they share, and products they choose. Once you finish with the task, you can create an accurate buyer persona. This will help you understand how to present your company and product to these prospective customers.
2. Create an engaging website. Before writing any grant bids, you need to build a quality website with your offer. Your site should communicate your brand identity and address customers' needs. Consider optimizing it in terms of SEO, user experience, and usability. Companies should always pay attention to the creation of main landing pages. These web pages should have a responsive design, good website speed, compelling copy, and a visible call to action button. Include unique pictures, infographics, and videos that showcase your product.
3. Work on your content marketing strategy. Establishing credibility and trust requires businesses to provide customers with quality content. By showing your expertise, skills, and knowledge in the industry, you can prove that your company is the best choice for the project. You can reach prospects through different types of content like blog posts, educational videos, demos, photos of completed projects, and email newsletters to make them choose your company.
4. Leverage CRM. CRM tools automate your communication with leads. With their help, you can gather contact information and collect feedback. As a result, you'll be able to qualify your customers. SendPulse's CRM allows you to do it for free. Our service enables users to accept orders, create a customer list, and launch marketing campaigns.
5. Provide virtual reality experience. Interactive experiences and the possibility to explore the peculiarities of a product mean a lot for governmental decision-makers. Customers can test a product before buying it and decide whether it suits their purpose. If yes, you will win the grant and work with government agencies.

The Basics of Government Marketing

Great opportunity doesn't come without competition. While you are part of a unique pool of certified contractors, you still have to compete with other companies for business, and be proactive about advertising your solutions to government agencies.

You may be familiar with marketing to the commercial world, but the government marketplace is a whole different space. If you understand the basics of government marketing, you will have a greater chance of success selling your products and services to government agencies. Let's start simple--here are 4 ways you can improve your company's presence in the government marketplace.

1. Consider Your Value to Government Agencies

The first step you'll want to take is defining a marketing strategy for the target audience you want to reach. But where do you begin?

A great starting point is examining the mission and values of the government agencies you are targeting. How do your products and services meet your customers' needs? Ask yourself how your company can help solve an agency's problem and support their mission.

Address the following questions when trying to understand your value to government agencies:

- Who within the government is requiring your products or services?
- How can your company help the government meet its goals, objectives, and mission?
- What parts of your company's products or services have appealed to previous customers?
- Is there a niche that you can target your products or services?

After assessing your value, start doing research into the government agencies. The more you research, the more you will know how to cater to their needs and make yourself a valuable contractor to them. Consider the following:

- Ask why would a government agency require your products or services?
- Research their budgets. What have they previously spent their money on?
- Determine whether your company can meet the demands of the agency or government contractor, or if you will need additional resources to complete the job.
- Develop a call plan and start developing connections with government agency contacts.

2. Heighten Your Web Presence

After looking at your overall value and target agencies, you should start to look at ways you can optimize your company's web presence. It's important to be able to provide a web address, so any prospective customer can go to look directly at your government-focused products or services. This part of your company's website should be strictly focused on the government and should include:

- Contract information

- Core competencies
- Past performance
- Differentiators
- Corporate data
- Contact information
- Downloadable case studies and/or whitepapers
- Downloadable government capabilities statements

3. Create a Capabilities Statement

Your company should have a government-focused capabilities statement. A capabilities statement should be very brief (aim for 1 page), very direct, and very specific to the individual agency's needs. Ideally, this capabilities statement is a living document that will change depending on the targeted agency.

Think of it as a cover letter. You don't want to send the same cookie cutter letter to every potential employer. A good cover letter is tailored to each employer's mission, needs, and how you can fulfill them. Take this same mentality and apply it to a capabilities statement.

Knowledgeable contractors understand that each agency has its specific mission, vision, and goals. Your company's capabilities statement should be able to address those goals directly.

There are 5 important topics that a well-versed capabilities statement covers:

- Core competencies
- Past performance (show them your past success)
- Differentiators (what makes your company different from the others?)
- Corporate data
- Contact information (this includes your contract information)

Are You Prepared to Successfully Sell to the Government?

When marketing your products or services to the government, it's important to create a government-focused marketing plan, look at a value-based understanding of your company's scope and abilities, create a government-specific web presence, and have government-focused capabilities statements for each agency. Using this knowledge and these tools will help target the needs of the government and its agencies. This will inevitably lead to greater government sales from new and reoccurring customers.

Challenging Market

Nonetheless, the public sector remains a challenging, complex and highly competitive market that rewards those who invest in strategic and proactive sales methods. According to the GovCon Clarity Report, 81% of survey responders plan to focus on improving effectiveness in their sales process as a top initiative to address challenges in the market.

Companies that continue to rely on limited or traditional sales methods are at risk of missing lucrative new contracts and falling behind the pack.

As seen in the Clarity Report, the importance of making investments and improvements in your sales processes is exacerbated by current market conditions and the ever-changing government contracting process - from the recent pandemic to ongoing contract consolidation, there is added pressure on suppliers to up their game.

Obstacles Faced

Contractors selling to the public sector face a variety of obstacles such as:

» Impersonal bid process

» Many rules to follow

» Numerous agencies in a fragmented marketplace

» Challenge to shape bid requirements

» Influencing bid requirements

» Difficulty unseating incumbent vendors

» Pricing pressure yielding thinner margins

Five Best Practices

To combat these challenges, consider these five best practices to navigate the complex public sector market and to support growth and success.

- CHALLENGE ASSUMPTIONS
- WIDEN THE TARGET
- ENGAGE EARLY
- UNLOCK SCALE
- MEASURE PROGRESS

By deploying these best practices within your organization, you will build a strong sales pipeline, and in turn, win more government contracts.

Best Practice #1: Challenge Assumptions

The status quo is a difficult thing to confront in most organizations. It's supported and defended by cautious stakeholders and those reluctant to make a change. Most sales organizations will continue to do what they've always done unless compelled to try something new. In the world of B2G sales, we've found strong evidence that contractors are feeling the pull toward:

» Gaining greater efficiency

» Adopting modern market intelligence tools

» Demonstrating value and ROI

» Adapting proactive sales tactics

By challenging the status quo, contractors stand to be more competitive and increase win rates.

Assumption: You Can Rest On The Strength Of Your Brand

Having a strong brand or a few good contracts under your belt is no longer enough to stay on par with the competition and maintain acceptable sales growth. Even well-established government contracting companies need to use the most effective strategies and methods to stay competitive and relevant. This is why 61% of GovCon Clarity responders are expecting business development investment to increase in 2023. And this months, and even years, in advance allows organizations to make a thoughtful go/no-go decision, build a pipeline with the recommended 3x benchmark with best-fitting opportunities and plan strategically for each proposal. This modern and thoughtful approach increases win rates. Conversely, reacting to RFPs as they hit the street means trying to develop a quality proposal that can compete with companies that knew about the opportunity well before you did and thus have a significant competitive advantage over you. Challenging assumptions will allow your organization to get a leg up. With the right market intelligence solution at your fingertips, you can build a stronger sales pipeline, one that is at least three times larger than what you need to hit your sales targets. In doing so, you will be better aligned with Clarity high-performers and poised to achieve their 75% win rate on new contracts.

Best Practice #2: Widen The Target

There is always an inherent risk to putting all your eggs in one basket. A common mistake that government contractors make is being too narrow in their approach by overly focusing their business development resources on searching for relevant opportunities available within a single or small number of governments.

One of the reasons for this is strictly operational, especially for smaller companies who feel that they are constrained by limited resources (staff, time, budget, etc.) to efficiently monitor and screen for relevant opportunities across many government contract websites. As these companies grow their ambitions to expand their footprint in the public sector, a feeling of potentially missing out on a good fit opportunity because of their narrow viewpoint will only fester.

The solution to this challenge is to first take the time to research what your public sector total addressable market (TAM) truly is across U.S. and Canada before making assumptions about what the size of your target market might be. Taking the time to conduct this research may result in unearthing buyers that you were not previously aware of being in the market for what your firm provides.

Painting a picture of your full public sector TAM is a foundational step into understanding what your target market truly is. Take for instance the U.S. state, local and education (SLED) government market, which contains over 100,000 unique governmental entities all publishing bidding opportunities on their own unique portals. Imagine how much of a burden manually attempting to understand your TAM in the U.S. SLED market alone could become. As your public sector sales ambitions grow, this pain will only multiply further as you attempt to understand who might be buying your products or services in adjacent public sector markets, such as the U.S. federal government or Canadian governments.

Another common mistake companies make is assuming that because their firm primarily sells to commercial markets that the public sector isn't buying what they offer. It's important to remember that the government is often considered the largest buyer in the world. To provide its services to the public, the government needs suppliers and contractors to provide almost every product or service imaginable. From goods and services to operate and maintain its facilities, IT services to secure its data and manage its websites, offerings to operate its K-12 and higher educational institutions, equipment and training to protect and serve the public, architectural design and construction services to build and operate civil infrastructure, and everything in between the government at all levels across the U.S. and Canada are likely buying what your company provides.

The truth is that when you look at the pipeline building strategies employed by high performing companies, most remain open for business regardless of market (commercial or public sector). And within their public sector sales channel, those high performers are focused on reducing risk by broadly considering relevant opportunities to pursue across multiple levels of government and across geographies. This strategic approach can pay off especially during times of economic uncertainty, such as during the Great Recession or COVID-19 pandemic era, where opportunities in commercial markets slowed and the public sector was seen as a safe harbor that helped many companies stay afloat, and even thrive, during otherwise challenging economic periods.

Deltek's 2023 Government Contracting Clarity Report reaffirms this, with nearly one-quarter of respondents reporting that they anticipate shifting more commercial business to government as well as the inverse, shifting government to commercial (23% and 22%, respectively).

Most respondents indicated a consistent focus on reassessing their portfolio mix to maximize revenue potential. These strategy reviews also present opportunities to examine and change go-to-market approaches, such as adjacent agencies, changing product designs to appeal to a wider variety of customers and expanding the geographies served.

By company size, larger companies seem more willing or able to change strategic direction. About a quarter of total respondents foresee no change (27%), but 39% of companies with less than $20 million in revenue indicate no plans for any of these shifts. Companies doing business in Canada also showed a bit more of a clearer trend, with 31% shifting commercial to government versus just 19% in the other direction.

The Solution: Broadly Monitor Your Public Sector Tam

The leading government contracting firms have demonstrated that a large part of how they remain successful is by ensuring they maintain broad visibility into their TAM. The characteristics shown by top performers (defined as the top 10% in win rates, or 75% or above) who responded to the 2023 Clarity study assert this clearly, as they were more than twice as likely to explore new markets.

Taking too narrow of a lens when searching for public sector opportunities can prove disastrous. Broadly monitoring your public sector TAM and remaining open to shifting your focus on target markets as economic conditions change over time will help to protect your pipeline from running dry.

Best Practice #3: Engage Early

The most successful contractors develop visibility into future deals or contracts months, and even years, in advance before those opportunities turn into actual bids or RFPs. They do this in two ways:

Tracking Government Spending

To beat the government contracting competition and set your team up with the tools needed to prepare a quality winning proposal, you need to be aware of requirements as early as possible. But with millions of government contractors serving the public sector every year, it can be daunting bidding on an opportunity without having proper background information or having prepared sufficiently – especially when the average proposal costs more than $10K.

For your capture plans to perform to their maximum potential, the sales process should start the moment leads are available – or even before. This is a challenge that business development teams have top-of-mind today:

In Deltek's [2023 GovCon Clarity] report, 81% of survey respondents reported improving their sales process was an important need to address to achieve their public sector BD goals.

Influencing The Bid

If you lack advanced awareness of new, good- fit opportunities and are missing updates on the opportunities you are aware of, your business might become unable to influence requirements on government opportunities you're interested in. In turn, you are left at a disadvantage in an increasingly competitive government contracting marketplace.

A winning strategy to help you shape RFPs in your direction in advance is to review spending trends, such as budgets and expenditures, and centralized capital improvement plans to view line items already budgeted for. This will help you see not only what agencies are buying your goods and services, but who will be buying your goods or services in the future. This advance awareness makes it possible to reach out to the agencies you are trying to do business with prior to them actually releasing the bid or RFP.

Doing this work manually can be daunting, however. That's why many proactive companies like Troy Acoustics lean on proven government business development sales solutions to give them the line-of-sight they need in order to prepare well in advance of the bid.

Best Practice #4: Unlock Scale

For companies that have a foothold in the government market but are looking to grow into new regions or expand in the ones they currently sell to, selecting the right supporting tools and processes is a vital step to unlocking scale. Businesses who partner with a government market intelligence solution can benefit in more than one way: Savings in labor from not having to run an extensive in- house lead gen program, and faster growth in sales based on an increased ability to search for and locate the best, most suitable government leads for your business.

Pursuing Best-Fit Opportunities

Improving the sales process is one of the top challenges that government contractors experience when trying to grow their public sector business. In fact, 81% of contractors ranked it as the number one challenge they face in this space in their response to the 14th Annual Deltek GovCon Clarity survey, with opportunity identification close behind at 75%. Clearly, businesses that sell to the government are universally faced with a need to find better opportunities.

This begs the question: How can you make strategic growth decisions and pursue new business without exhausting your resources trying to identify best-fit leads? The answer points back to what are your lead generation strategies, and additionally, how are you leveraging your go-to-market planning tools?

Using tools that allow you to create best-fit searches is a critical step in opportunity identification; empowering you with searches are broad enough to capture everything you might be interested in pursuing but specific enough to cut through the noise. GovWin IQ's IntelliSearch feature helps government contractors fine-tune their search filters to do just that. Search filters include countless customizations by government type, opportunity type, status, location and much more – making it a sure thing that you receive the best-fit opportunities you need.

On top of that, GovWin IQ's detailed agency profiles and spending analytics help you go a level deeper into your market research. You can quickly identify what agencies are investing in so you can create actionable, go-to-market plans based on insights and analysis collected by our award-winning team of subject-matter analysts.

Saving Time And Money On Labor Costs

Government contracting requires dedicated resources to find, pursue and capture new opportunities. Within an ever-changing regulatory environment and competitive landscape, it's important to maximize your business development investments so you can save time outsourcing the heavy lifting and focus on winning more business.

The federal government is made up of many departments and agencies, each of which have different goals and processes to work with. Add that to the tens of thousands of SLED and Canadian governments, and the challenge of staying on top of potential sales leads across the government can be great.

To help manage this, many successful businesses like GHD turn to a government market intelligence solution like GovWin IQ from Deltek.

Tony Petroccitto, US West/Pacific Federal Program Manager for GHD, said: "Without GovWin, I would say maybe I need 25 full-time employees to review opportunities. They might spend a quarter of their time doing that activity. With GovWin IQ, it would take probably 4 people working quarter-time."

Best Practice #5: Measure Progress

As Austrian-American Peter Drucker once said, "you can't improve what you don't measure." Widely regarded as one of the most influential thinkers on modern business management practices, Drucker's simple truth can be applied to optimizing how you approach building and maintaining a public sector sales pipeline.

To measure your return on investment both in time and dollars spent in your government contracting opportunity sourcing process, it's important to gain an understanding of your cost-per-lead, or CPL. Tracking CPL provides an effective way to keep stakeholders informed on how their opportunity capture efforts are materializing over time and can be used as a benchmark for judging the efficacy of a manual bid monitoring process or the ROI of dollars spent on an opportunity aggregation service. Simply put, tracking your CPL is done by dividing monthly dollars spent on leads by the number of relevant opportunities captured.

Forming a better understanding of CPL can help determine appropriate levels of investment in tools, marketing channels, etc. to help answer questions such as:

- On average, how many good fit public sector leads does our team source each month that made it into our CRM?
- How much are we spending to source these public sector leads?
- How many leads did we end up pursuing?
- How many of these leads resulted in a win?
- What is the average revenue brought into the business when we are awarded a government contract?

While determining what your CPL target amount should be will need to be tailored to the unique economics of your business, measuring it will help to ensure that your methods for keeping your pipeline of opportunities full are profitable.

Another detail worth measuring is the size of your public sector business development team and what they are costing you. To ensure profitability, it is important to understand what your sales staff is being paid and to set a revenue goal above that investment in headcount.

Consider this example scenario. A small public sector business development team of 3 people at ABC Corporation, a small IT products reseller, is trying to break into the public sector. To develop this business effectively, they know that they need to juggle a variety of time- consuming tasks such as:

This team also knows that in order to secure their first government contract they will need to spend a lot of time and dollars on marketing and developing relationships with the buyers, end users and potential teaming partners in order to create a winning proposal. Even before submitting their first proposal, the team feels stressed and is working overtime just to source enough good fit opportunities to fill their pipeline. Without having been awarded their first government contract, the team is already beginning to wonder how they will scale their process.

If the challenges that ABC Corporation is facing sound familiar, then it may be a good idea to look inward and begin measuring what your business development processes are costing you today. You can start to do this by determining the answers to simple questions like:

How many free government bidding portals or bid aggregators are we monitoring for opportunities today? And, how many hours does our team spend monitoring them?

- Is the number of opportunities we are finding from free government websites providing us with the minimum of 3X pipeline cover we need to be successful?
- Of the opportunities we do find and have added to our customer relationship management system (CRM) to pursue, how many of those proposals resulted in a win?
- How much are we investing in our public sector sales staff today? Are they spending too much time hunting for opportunities when they could be developing relationships with the buyers?

Here are some tips for measuring a government contracting business development pipeline:

1. **Define your pipeline stages:** The first step is to define the stages of your pipeline. This will help you to track the progress of your opportunities and identify areas where you need to improve. Some common pipeline stages include:

    a. Lead generation: This is the stage where you have just identified an opportunity.

    b. Qualification: This is the stage where you are gathering information about the opportunity and the customer.

    c. Proposal development: This is the stage where you are writing your proposal.

    d. Negotiation: This is the stage where you are negotiating the terms of the contract.

    e. Closed: This is the stage where the contract has been awarded.

2. **Track your pipeline metrics:** Once you have defined your pipeline stages, you need to start tracking your pipeline metrics. This will help you to measure your progress and identify areas where you need to improve. Some common pipeline metrics include:

    a. Pipeline size: This is the total value of all the opportunities in your pipeline.

    b. » Pipeline value: This is the total value of the opportunities in your pipeline.

    c. » Pipeline velocity: This is the average rate at which opportunities are moving through your pipeline stages.

    d. » Pipeline win rate: This is the percentage of opportunities that you win.

3. **Analyze your pipeline data:** Once you have tracked your pipeline metrics for a period of time, you need to analyze the data. This will help you to identify trends and patterns. For example, you may find that you have a high win rate for opportunities in the early stages of the pipeline. This could indicate that you, and the tools your team is leveraging, are doing a good job of qualifying opportunities.
4. **Use your pipeline data to make decisions:** Once you have analyzed your pipeline data, you can use it to make decisions to improve your business development efforts. For example, if you find that you have a low pipeline win rate for opportunities in the negotiation stage, you may enable your team with negotiation skills training or work to develop strategies aimed and forging stronger relationships with government buyers and end users.

Measuring your government contracting business development pipeline is an important part of ensuring your success. By following these tips, you can track your progress, identify areas where you need to improve, and make decisions that will help you win more contracts.

Here are some additional considerations for measuring your government contracting business development pipeline:

Use a CRM system: A customer relationship management system can help you to track your pipeline and manage your relationships with potential customers. And if your team is leveraging a government contracting opportunity database or notification service, it's ideal to ensure that system easily syncs with your CRM of choice.

Set Goals: Such as the number of opportunities you want to have in each stage, the percentage of opportunities you want to win and the amount of revenue you want to generate over a set period of time.

Review Your Pipeline Regularly: Do this to identify opportunities that are at risk of falling through the cracks and take steps to improve your chances of winning them.

Take Action to Optimize: Don't just track your pipeline data; take action to improve your results over time. For example, if you are not converting enough opportunities into awarded contracts, you may need to inspect your 'bid go/no-go' decision process or improve your proposal development processes.

Ensuring that you are collecting feedback from your team on its pipeline management processes can help you make incremental changes that improve your award conversion rates over time.

Conclusion

Successful contractors do not take for granted the complexities of selling to the public sector. High- performing B2G sales teams recognize that government contracting requires strategic planning and follows five best practices:

1. CHALLENGE ASSUMPTIONS
2. WIDEN THE TARGET
3. ENGAGE EARLY
4. UNLOCK SCALE
5. MEASURE PROGRESS

By following these best practices, contractors are better able to meet their top sales goals and:

- » **GROW** their business bottom line
- » **ACHIEVE EFFICIENCY** in the sales process (better, faster, cheaper, etc.)
- » **BETTER MONITOR** the competition
- » **GAIN EARLY VISIBILITY** into future deals to add to their pipeline
- » **INFLUENCE** their customer's buying decisions

Pursuing Growth

Sales, marketing and business development executives have an edict to grow their business. To do this within the public sector, they need to increase their supply of public sector leads to pursue. High-performers from the GovCon Clarity Report indicate developing a pipeline of 3X is needed for success. This can be a challenge when a B2G organization only works with certain agencies or has limited resources, and only relies on web searches or free government sites to hear about new opportunities.

Driving Efficiency

From customer relationship management systems, to marketing automation and sales acceleration tools, business leaders are under pressure to do more with less and show improvement in efficiency and output. This can include processes, workflows, notification and monitoring from lead to win. With the right investments in the solutions that can support your organization today, they can also scale with your organization as it grows.

Monitoring Competitors And Channels

The best companies monitor their competition as well as their partner/dealer/reseller/distributor networks to keep up with which agencies are being pursued, what types of products or services are selling, and how they are priced. Subcontractors can use this information to target the right primes before the bid comes out. This approach is much easier to operationalize if you subscribe to a full-service government contract information solution that provides market intelligence like historical awards searchable by vendor or contractor and labor rates across the levels of government and geographies where your firm does business. It can be a tremendous advantage in screening deals to go after, managing partners and pricing correctly.

Creating Visibility

Less successful B2G sales teams will only focus on the bids in front of them - or those that are already released - ignoring the potential that comes with capturing future leads that can be discovered early in the process. With analysts and tools supporting your team, you can get an edge over the competition and rely on the quality of their opportunity assessments and predictions months, even years, in advance. Armed with advanced and timely information like this, the most savvy sales and marketing professionals can ensure that they've beat the competition even before the bid "hits the street."

Building Influence

Finally, companies must make an effort to influence their potential customers in B2G selling, where there are strict rules about how and when to engage and what is permissible during the actual bid process. The most successful firms will approach a select number of governments well ahead of expected deals and build respectful, consultative relationships with a focus on helping them achieve their goals to attempt to shape the eventual RFPs in their favor. Developing a strong relationship with potential buyers keeps your business top of mind for when procurement agents may have a need for your solution.

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A non-profit organization serving Asian businesses
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