

What Insiders Know About Winning Government Contracts

(and You Should Too)



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Every year, billions of dollars are spent by almost 100,000 U.S. state and local governments for a variety of goods, services, and systems. In fact, government spending remains a major portion of the U.S. economy at 34% of gross domestic product (GDP). Public sector contracts present huge opportunities if you're seeking to grow your business. But, for many, re-allocating time and money away from solidifying private sector customer relationships to chase after government contracts can seem like a big gamble. The odds of winning bids do not necessarily increase the more you "play."

The key to landing public sector contracts — and growing your government-derived revenue stream — is to pay attention to a few core principles that will help you become more strategic in your solicitation responses.



Public sector contracts present huge opportunities if you're seeking to grow your business and are strategic in your "sales" approach.

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Know How The Decision Makers Define “Winner”

Before you write the first word in your proposal, be sure you clearly understand which evaluation criteria will be used by the requesting agency. There are traditionally two ways a bid can be judged.

Best Value (BV): In this scenario, awards are based on criteria in which decision makers consider both your proposed price as well as other qualifications such as categorical expertise and resources, past performance track record, and relevant certifications.

Lowest Price Technically Acceptable (LPTA): When government agencies use this evaluation framework, the contract is awarded to the business offering the lowest price, point blank, with no consideration for any other subjective criteria.

Don't make the mistake of pricing yourself out of the competition by thinking that you can justify your rate by touting the “industry-leading” quality or performance of your goods or services. Instead of guessing, just ask what it's really going take to win.

Know When You Will Stand Out As A Winning Candidate, And When To Walk Away Because You Won't

Many businesses pursuing government opportunities become frustrated when they're only awarded one contract for every 50-100 proposals submitted.

They've signed up for every bid notification service, proactively contacted procurement officials to get the scoop on anticipated solicitations, and finessed their proposal writing skills using every tip in the book. Yet they're just not winning — and it's not necessarily due to their pricing position. More often than not, it's probably because they lack the proper expertise or performance records for the opportunities they're pursuing and the reviewer can see right through the language the submitter used to try and prove otherwise. It doesn't make sense for

a company that specializes in landscaping to bid on a road construction project, even as a 10 percenter. Agencies are constantly seeking a vast spectrum of goods and services. Odds are that somewhere in the public sector there is a demand for the product or service you provide. Take the time to assess all government contracting subsectors; then determine which types of business opportunities directly align with your core competencies. Concentrate on crafting strategic proposals that play to your strengths versus trying to stretch your business and your resources too far on opportunities you're not well-positioned to win.





Know Exactly What They Want ...And When

During any given month, government agencies across the country will release nearly 100,000 RFPs and other solicitations.

The only realistic way for a company to track this volume of opportunities is to utilize a bid notification service like Periscope Holdings' Periscope S2G Premium, which delivers targeted opportunities from agencies in the U.S. and Canada to you via email or text on a daily basis. By making an investment in a centralized and automated search tool such as this, you can reinvest the manpower resources that would otherwise be needed to manually scour each state, county and municipal website for solicitations into preparing winning proposals.

You no longer have to spend hours weeding through irrelevant opportunities because a team of dedicated Periscope S2G researchers spends all day manually searching for open bid opportunities nationwide before aggregating them alongside the open solicitation notifications automatically received from Periscope S2G's agency partners every day. By subscribing to a service that gives you access to a central — and complete — database of opportunities around the clock, you're saying goodbye to lost time, regret over missed opportunities, and rushed proposal responses. You'll always have plenty of time to act when you're receiving actionable data in real time.

Become A Known Entity

You will likely need to register with each state, county, city or municipality you want do business with in order to become a qualified vendor candidate, and you may need to obtain other licenses and certifications to compete.

However, this will be to your advantage, as agencies will instantly know who to turn to when they need certain solutions. Plus, if you're a local business, small business or otherwise disadvantaged, being registered and ready to bid when contracts are set-aside for your type of business can pay off significantly. Just be prepared to pay a fee to register or submit bids with some agencies with the understanding that it is only a small price to pay for the business growth opportunities it presents.



Know That Relationships Matter

Any sales professional will tell you that relationships really do matter, even in public sector procurement. It is human nature to want to work with an organization or person that we know, like and trust. Don't expect public sector buyers to make a well-informed decision based on your paper presentation alone. (How many people have said that their resume never truly reflects how hard they work, how well they perform, or their potential to succeed in new opportunities?) Get to know the key players at each agency you want to work with. Listen to what the decision makers have to say about their organization's needs, challenges, opportunities, and values. And learn as much as possible about the criteria the agency uses when awarding contracts. (We've said that twice now, so you know it's important.)

Not only will you gain the insights needed to put your best foot forward in the proposal, but you'll have forged a relationship that will help decision makers remember you and, ideally, give more weight to your response as a trusted vendor.

Know That Quality Counts

If a bid response is not well written, it will be discarded without merit very quickly. Your proposal is representative of your attention to detail, and may be the only quality reference point for decision makers if you're a first-time bidder or unfamiliar vendor. Make sure that your proposal is professionally written and thoroughly addresses how you meet each requirement stated in the solicitation. Even if you have a strong relationship with the agency, all bets are off if there are spelling or grammatical errors or if you omit specifically requested information. Both are deemed reflective of poor business standards.

If you do not have the in-house expertise to produce a quality response, turn to professional services for help.

Also know that the quality of your references and reputation are considered in every proposal review, even if price is the ultimate determining factor for the contract award. For example, if you are submitting a bid for a

contract that will be awarded based on the lowest price, don't be afraid to recommend a better product or service solution than what the agency requested after you've responded to all of the original requests outlined in the solicitation. If the agency asked for one type of window, but you think there's a better quality window available for the same price, be sure to call that out and note that your business can supply either option upon contract award. Decision makers will value your expert guidance and likely give you extra credit for looking out for their best interests.



Helpful Tip

Find ways to stand out from the crowd with each bid. Don't become complacent, as there is always someone new entering the market and eager to put the time and effort into winning. Be willing to adapt your strategy. And harness the power of sales intelligence tools like Periscope S2G Premium, which gives you distinct competitive advantages and has the resources to help open new doors for you when you're ready.

The Advantage of Government Transparency Regulations

Doing your due diligence it's not cheating, it's smart. Public sector agencies are required to document and make available all procurement activities — including past solicitations, proposals received, and contracts awarded — as a matter of public record. Review any and all historical documents pertaining to the goods, services, systems or constructions included in the solicitation. Find out who has won similar contracts in the past, what their prices were and how the bids were written. Conduct site visits, participate in open Q&A sessions, and adjust your strategy as needed to be confident that you're submitting a competitive bid.

How Periscope's Periscope S2G Premium Service Can Help You

As the largest government bid database in North America, Periscope S2G gives vendors and service providers such as yourself access to more than one million bid opportunities posted each year by more than 100,000 state, local, county, municipal, military and federal agencies across all categories of goods, services and constructions. Periscope Holdings' in-house research team and proprietary bid extraction software does all the heavy lifting of identifying and posting the opportunities not automatically submitted to the database by Periscope's in-network government agency partners. All you have to do is set up a profile through the Periscope S2G online portal, denote solicitation criteria to look for on your behalf based on your businesses' expertise and then submit a strong proposal once we alert you of a relevant bid opportunity via your dashboard and daily email notifications.

In other words, the Periscope S2G service saves you time and money. It also increases your growth potential while reducing the risk of missing opportunities — a common issue with manual RFP and bid searches. To learn more about the service, visit

www.periscopeholdings.com/suppliers or call **1-800-990-9339**.



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