



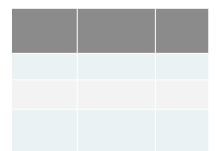
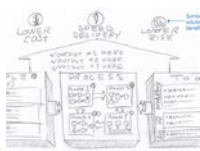
EXECUTIVE summary

Fall 2016 | Volume 23, Issue 4

This Issue's Theme: **High Profile Procurements**

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High Profile Procurements: Focus on GSA OASIS

by Lisa Pafe, APMP-NCA President, CPP APMP Fellow & PMI PMP

If FY 2016 was the year of large information technology (IT) service and product Multiple Award Contract (MAC) procurements, then 2017 is the year of the professional services MAC. The highest profile professional services procurement is the General Services Administration (GSA) One Acquisition Solution for Integrated Services (OASIS) vehicle, which will be open for on-ramps in certain service pools.

OASIS is the vehicle of choice for the Professional Services category of the administration's category management initiative. OASIS Unrestricted and OASIS Small Business (SB) are multiple award, Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts that provide flexible and innovative solutions for complex professional services. The six core disciplines or contract pools include:

- Program management services
- Management consulting services
- Logistics services
- Engineering services
- Scientific services
- Financial services

The total ceiling for all OASIS Unrestricted and SB pools is \$60 billion for the ten-year contract term. Across all six pools, OASIS Unrestricted currently includes 233 contracts totaling \$737.9 million, while OASIS Small Business has 205 contracts totaling \$948.4 million in awards as of the end of FY 2016.

On-Ramps

On September 16, GSA announced an open season on-ramp for OASIS SB Pool 2. The [Pool 2, Financial Services, SB on-ramp RFP](#) is out in draft as of the date of this article, with the final RFP scheduled for release on or about November 3. Proposals will be due on or about January 10, 2017.

With nine incumbents in place, GSA is seeking to make 31 more awards. This procurement is likely the first of several on-ramps. While GSA has not yet announced plans for the on-ramp process for pools under OASIS Unrestricted vehicle, the Program Office had previously announced it would potentially consider an on-ramp for OASIS Unrestricted Pool 2 due to lack of competition. Potential bidders should examine the NAICS codes and corresponding size standards for each pool and use the Pool 2 draft as the basis for getting ready.

Scorecard Approach

Like GSA Alliant 2 and the recently awarded Human Capital and Training Solutions (HCaTs), GSA will evaluate OASIS on-ramp bids using an objective scorecard approach. According to [GSA](#), for on-ramps that involve replacing OASIS contractors, bidders must have a proposal score equal to or higher than the lowest scoring contractor within the pool being applied for in accordance with Section M of the solicitation. Following are the lowest evaluated numerical scores by pool, per vehicle, published by GSA:

OASIS (Small Business)

- POOL 1: 5925
- POOL 2: N/A
- POOL 3: 5875
- POOL 4: 6575
- POOL 5A: 6625
- POOL 5B: 6975
- POOL 6: 5450

OASIS (Unrestricted)

- POOL 1: 7825
- POOL 2: N/A
- POOL 3: 7575
- POOL 4: 7550
- POOL 5A: 7950
- POOL 5B: 8325
- POOL 6: N/A

Note: No minimum score is available for Pool 2 due to the lack of competition resulting in limited awards.

With the first draft on-ramp RFP released, bidders have a good guideline for getting a head start on self-scoring as well as gathering the voluminous documentation required. Like Alliant 2 and HCaTs, prospective offerors must be diligent to avoid compliance or risk elimination.

OASIS Reach

The Air Force, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Army have all committed to use OASIS for professional services. Most recently the Department of the Navy's Naval Supply Systems Command

High Profile Procurements: Focus on GSA OASIS!

(NAVSUP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) securing the Navy's use of the OASIS and OASIS SB contracts as a primary solution for complex professional services requirements. For example, the Naval Air System Command (NAVAIR)'s [long-range acquisition forecast](#) shows that the Joint Strike Fighter Program Office will use OASIS for \$240 million in contract work, with a solicitation planned for FY 2017 fourth quarter.

These MOUs and forecasts sound like great news for contractors. However, many companies that do business with these agencies do not hold current OASIS contracts. Therefore, GSA may feel pressure to open additional on-ramps to make the vehicle more attractive, especially since they face vehicle competition.

Some OASIS competitors include Army, Navy, and Homeland Security vehicles. The Army will soon award the follow on \$37.4 billion professional services contract, [Responsive Strategic Sourcing Services \(RS3\)](#). The Navy has begun acquisition planning for the follow-on to Seaport-e, its major \$66 billion professional services contract. DHS recently awarded the \$1.5 billion Program Management, Administrative, Clerical and Technical Services II (PACTS II), a 100% set-aside for Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB) in accordance with FAR 19.14.

The Future of OASIS

Professional services contractors should keep a close eye on the OASIS on-ramps. While other MAC vehicles do exist, GSA will continue marketing OASIS as the vehicle of choice

for complex professional services. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will likely continue to push forward category management initiatives that favor government-wide rather than individual agency MACs. OASIS on-ramp procurements provide one of the best FY 2017 opportunities for professional services contractors.

Lisa Pafe, CPP APMP Fellow and PMP, Vice President at Lohfeld Consulting Group, Inc., brings more than 25 years of capture and proposal experience. She is the APMP-NCA President and was Vice President and Speaker Series Chair for two years each. Previously, she was Vice President at Ace Info Solutions, President of Vision Consulting, and Director of Marketing Services at MAXIMUS. She holds a B.A. from Yale University, M.P.P. from Harvard University, and M.I.S from The George Washington University.

[Click here to check out APMP-NCA upcoming events!](#)

Note From the eZine Chair and Chief Editor, Julia Quigley, CF APMP

We are always looking to improve the eZine and would love to hear from you!

What did you think of this issue of the Executive Summary? What did you think of specific articles? Have questions, comments or suggestions for the authors or the editors? What articles, and themes would you like to see in future issues of the Executive Summary?

Please drop us a line at ezine@apmpnca.org or contact Julia directly at 571-421-7766. We look forward to hearing from you!





For High Profile Procurements, Assign a Review Team Lead

by H el ene Courard, APMP-NCA Vice President, JD, CF APMP

With high-profile procurements the stakes are higher—the award values are greater; the winners have the ability to influence the client organization’s growth strategies as they relate to innovation, technology, and approach; and there often is limited access to bid on future work, as is the case of large IDIQs, MACs, and BPAs, (e.g., GSA Alliant 2 and OASIS). These stakes have the ability to make—or break—a firm’s future. Within proposal development, this often means that these proposals get significant, additional scrutiny from senior leadership because the leadership realizes how much is on the line for their firm and for them individually.

It is a true advantage to have the collective insight and experience of senior leadership focused on your deal. High-profile deals get the resources, support, and attention we often clamor for on the rest of our pipeline. However, executive attention can be a double-edged sword. Reasonable people can—and do—disagree on the best way to win. And often, it isn’t that there is one ‘right’ approach; rather it is that there are many ‘possibles.’ Even with the most tightly aligned leadership team, succinct win strategy, and clear capture plan, there are different ways to convey your themes and approach in the proposal. Unbridled executive input can be problematic when the



senior leadership team disagrees, which is a tough spot for the proposal manager and proposal development team. Once these fissures arise, some individuals may try to influence the proposal and substitute their personal points of view for the agreed strategy that was developed and matured throughout capture. Once this control and direction are lost, it is difficult for the proposal team to regain control of the process.

As a proposal professional, it is challenging to maintain the discipline and control of the proposal development process with all the senior leaders weighing in with (often) different, individual perspectives of how to approach each element. What the proposal leadership—the capture manager and proposal manager—needs to do is to channel this attention and scrutiny into the overall plan for the proposal development approach: the review cycle. Color

reviews are the intended forum to engage in these healthy disagreements and debates within the overall context of the process at predefined intervals to ensure continual improvement in a constructive and directed manner. Adopting and implementing a strict approach to color reviews increases proposal quality, focuses the team’s energy on substantive strategy and approach, solicits valuable insight and direction, allows reviewers to give guidance rather than rewrite sections for the authors, and makes it easier for writers to recover and dispose of each comment.

For high-profile procurements with intense senior leadership scrutiny, assigning a dedicated Review Team Lead (RTL) enables the inclusion of executive-level input within the structured approach, in a manner that facilitates the engagement of the senior leadership in the most constructive way. For example, a chal-

For High Profile Procurements, Assign a Review Team Lead

challenge that comes with involvement of senior leadership on the review team is that they often do not have the time to fully prepare for the review. Assigning a dedicated RTL provides a senior-level point of contact who can work directly with leadership to prepare them for the review.

The RTL is responsible for coordinating and running the color reviews. This begins with developing the assignments for each reviewer (in consultation with the proposal team leadership). The RTL then communicates the assignments in advance of the review to all members of the review team, along with the RFP, attachments, Q&As, and the compliance matrix. Providing the reviewers their assignments in advance allows each to pay particular attention to the instructions and evaluation criteria that apply to their assigned sections. This is especially helpful for senior leadership as they often have very limited time to prepare.

Following the background email, the RTL sends meeting invitations to all review team members to participate in the in-brief, review session, comments consolidation, and out-brief. The RTL should take time to reach out to the reviewers individually in advance of the review date to confirm they

have received and reviewed the key background information and to clarify any open issues or questions.

On the day of the review, after the in-brief by the capture manager and proposal manager, the RTL communicates to the team the expectations, timeline, and results expected from the review and facilitates the discussion during the reviews, gaining consensus on the overall guidance from the review team to the proposal team. The RTL should follow up with the senior leaders to see whether they have any additional thoughts or insights that they may have considered after the review and bring that back to the proposal team leadership.

A good candidate for the RTL is the lead of your proposal organization. This person brings the knowledge and expertise of the function of the review team with the proposal development background, but is either part of, or directly reports to, the senior leadership to facilitate the interaction at the executive level. To be most effective, the RTL has to be able to provide precise instruction of what they need to know, what challenges or conflicts need to be resolved, and the context in which these questions are being asked. The RTL provides a colleague of the senior leaders who is able to

assist in focusing their expertise and insight so that the outcome is clear and actionable.

These high-profile deals span the proposal industry, from federal to state and local to commercial spaces. Regardless of the industry, these “must win” deals invariably have the attention of multiple levels of leadership. While this provides an extra layer of challenges in submitting a strong, compliant, winning proposal, those challenges can be overcome if we apply the right strategy to handling them. Using an RTL is one of the more effective tools that capture managers and proposal managers can use to overcome these challenges and to increase their chances of winning the big deals.

With 20 years' experience leading and motivating teams to success, H el ene has been engaged with APMP-NCA since 2007. She has chaired several committees, mentored junior members through the NCA Mentor-Prot eg e program, and is currently serving as NCA's Vice President. She is the Director of Unisys Corporation's Global Proposal Center, leading a team of more than 40 professionals in the preparation and delivery of winning proposals worldwide for national, state, local, and commercial clients. She holds a BA from Saint Joseph's University, and JD from Santa Clara University School of Law.



Should I Use Complex Graphics for Complex Bids?

by Mike Parkinson, CPP APMP Fellow

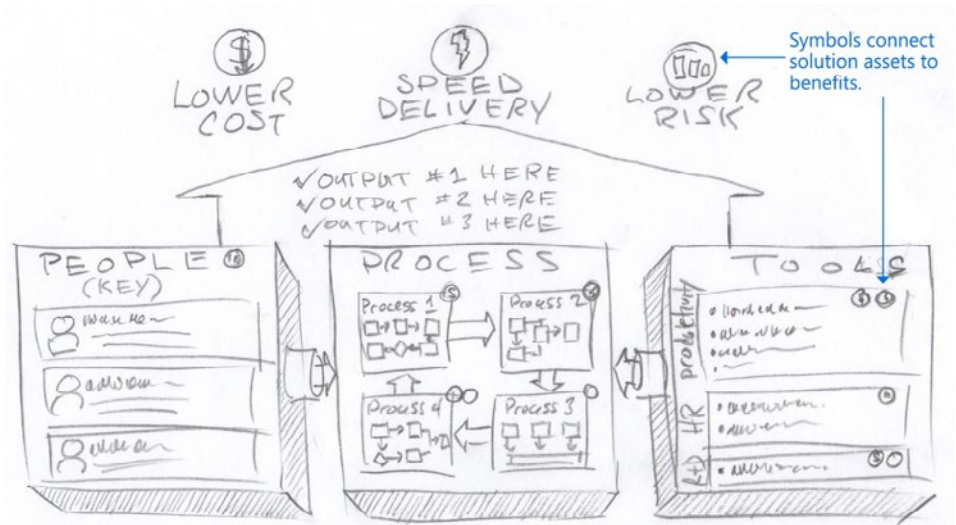
Most complex procurements do not need complex graphics.

Clear, easy-to-follow language improves understanding, recollection and agreement. The same is true for proposal graphics. The KISS—Keep It Simple Silly—rule applies to all forms of communication. However, there are times when illustrating complexity is part of a winning strategy. For example, you may want to show that the solution is complex and, therefore, requires specific experience or expertise to complete.

A complex solution does not need to be confusing. Confusing graphics lose proposals. Albert Einstein was right when he said, “If you can’t explain it simply, you don’t understand it well enough.” The secret is to summarize your solution with one, concise message (i.e., headline or takeaway). Because the confused mind says no, a complex graphic must quickly and clearly communicate the main point (the message). It is our job as proposal professionals to help the decision maker(s) understand our solution and choose us.

The following are three methods I use when making a complex, winning graphic:

1. Get to the Point
2. Chunk It
3. Connect the Dots



Get to the Point

The main point should be obvious. Your main point is a one-sentence message. (It is also called an action caption” which often appears with your graphic.) For example, if the main message is that your solution saves money, speeds delivery and lowers risk, the graphic should clearly show this. It must be evident to the reviewer. Never bury the main point. Highlight it through aesthetic choices such as size, style, color and positioning.

Chunk It

Chunking breaks complex content into bite size, digestible morsels. Group and label similar elements to avoid confusion. For example, arrange your approach into a timeline. Drawing a box around pre-award activities chunks those activities, clarifies when they occur and makes the content more approachable.

Connect the Dots

Prove you can deliver as promised by connecting the solution assets to the promised outcomes. For example, use icons to flag those tools, people, or processes (solution assets) that are most responsible for delivering the results (e.g., saving money, speedy delivery and/or lowering risk).

The above sketch is an example that uses my three methods.

Clear, compelling communication is a critical success factor. The three methods—Get to the Point, Chunk It, and Connect the Dots—work together to improve communication quality, and your large procurement win rate.

Mike Parkinson, CPP APMP Fellow is an internationally recognized visual communications guru and proposal expert, professional trainer, and award-winning author. He is a partner and head of marketing at 24 Hour Company (24hrco.com) specializing in bid-winning proposal graphics. His *Billion Dollar Graphics* book and website (BillionDollarGraphics.com) share best practices and helpful tools with professionals. Contact Mike at mike@24hrco.com or call 703-533-7209.



There's More Than One Way to Get That Contract

by Shlomo D. Katz, JD

Some procurements may attract dozens, even hundreds, of bidders. Usually, those are multiple award procurements in which the government may award to up to 50 contractors. Typically, these awards are merely entrance tickets to a future round of task order (TO) competitions. Some call these contracts “hunting licenses” because they entitle the holders to go looking for the “big game” (i.e., TOs) only available to contractors that have received one of the multiple award contracts.

In such a procurement, how can one company stand out from the competition? Of course, by writing a proposal that follows the proposal preparation instructions and pays attention to the evaluation criteria. Provide your best technical approach and your best price. Don't assume that there will be discussions and a chance to improve your proposal, because there might not be. And, don't assume that the government knows who you are and how good you are. A surprisingly common mistake is that incumbents don't bother to establish their basic credentials because they don't think they have to. Believe it or not, some evaluators may not know you. Yes, you! And, even if they do know how great you are, they have to follow the evaluation criteria, which means they aren't supposed to give you credit for things they know that aren't in your proposal. Therefore, make sure you



give them the information they need to justify an award to you.

In many multiple award procurements, some of the awards will be reserved for Small Business concerns or for subsets of that category, such as Minority-, Woman- and Veteran-Owned Small Businesses. Small Business rules have changed recently, making it easier for Small Businesses to team without losing their preferential status. Still, there are traps for the unwary and there are serious penalties for false certifications. Know the rules or consult with someone who does so you don't miss any opportunities you are entitled to or get in trouble for claiming a status that doesn't legally apply to your business.

Often, large procurements will include a Sample TO that is given

significant weight in the evaluation. If that is the case, pay close attention to the sample task, but don't ignore the rest of the solicitation's requirements. For example, if the solicitation requires you to fill-in 9,000 cells on a pricing spreadsheet, don't fill in 8,999 cells and accidentally leave one blank. The solicitation may make that a basis to exclude you from consideration, and you can expect that the government will do exactly that. After all, the government has hundreds of proposals to review, and they may be tempted to take any allowable shortcut to reduce that number.

If you are excluded from the competitive range, immediately call a lawyer who is familiar with government contracting because exclusion from the competitive range triggers a

There's More Than One Way to Get That Contract

complex set of timeliness rules both for requesting a debriefing and for protesting. Filing a well-written bid protest in a timely manner may well result in getting you back into the competitive range, but too many contractors forfeit their rights by not understanding the relevant deadlines. It's no secret that many contracting officers would rather cave at this stage than devote resources to fighting a protest while simultaneously managing a massive procurement. After all, putting you back into the competitive range doesn't necessarily mean you will get a contract.

Many contracting officers may take the same approach if you protest the

actual awards. This doesn't mean that protesting will automatically result in an award, especially if your protest is untimely or if your proposal just wasn't good enough. In fact, there can be penalties for filing protests that are completely lacking in merit. Still, if the solicitation doesn't cap the number of awards, there is a greater than trivial chance that a well-written protest will result in the agency voluntarily making an award to you even if they did not choose you initially.

Start writing that proposal for your next high profile procurement. Hopefully, you will win. But, don't forget that there may be more than one way to get that contract.

"Filing a well-written bid protest in a timely manner may well result in getting you back into the competitive range, but too many contractors forfeit their rights by not understanding the relevant deadlines."

Shlomo D. Katz is Counsel in the Washington, DC office of the international law firm of Brown Rudnick LLP, a Corporate Partner of APMP-NCA. Shlomo specializes in all aspects of Government contracting and is a regular presenter at chapter events. If you have any questions about the topic of this article or other proposal or contracting issues, please contact Shlomo at 202.536-1753 or skatz@brownrudnick.com.

Proposal Tip...

You should use one scalable, flexible process for all your proposals, whether they are high profile procurements or small task orders.



Changing Scope of View

by Erin Green

Large businesses proposal environments and small businesses proposal environments present different proposal processes and resources available to the proposal manager. Shifting from one environment to the other can be overwhelming and disorienting. This article presents my lessons learned for pursuing high profile procurements for a small business.

Do not assume the client knows you

When I started working for a small business, I had just come from a much larger company that had a 50-year history of as a market leader. This made winning proposals much easier, because every potential client knew what this company could do.

I knew that this would not be the same experience at my new company; as a young, niche business, no one knew what we could do. We had to work harder to forge relationships with the client and sell our story through multiple methods, such as industry events and trade shows, social media posts, white papers, and hosting solution forums with client participation.

We also had to use language that was much more descriptive in our proposals to make sure the client understood what we were offering and what it meant to them, even if we thought it was our bread-and-butter service. We



modeled some of our proposals after textbooks, having sections before and after the narrative describing each section, and reviewing the themes.

I knew we were on the right track when we called a potential client about a bid, and they not only knew who we were, but they had also “heard great things.”

Do not get analysis paralysis

At the large company, the first high profile bid I worked on required Congress to make a decision that ended up changing procurement regulations for the Department of State. I thought the stress of the deal would kill me and vowed never to do another one of “those” again.

When I moved to the small business, I immediately started working on another high profile bid. This time, I prepared by setting up an overbooked

proposal schedule that included roughly 8 reviews, daily meetings with the whole team, and assigned approximately 100,000 (exaggerated) pages of “light” reading for the team. The proposal schedule was four weeks.

In retrospect, I went overboard on the schedule and fell into analysis paralysis. I got lost in research on every aspect of the bid, to the point that I was not able to make decisions the team needed me to make. The company had already defined a great solution, and they needed me to make the proposal shine, not have me second-guess the whole process because of the deal’s high profile nature. Sticking to the best practices you already know, and being confident in the processes your company adopts is the path to strong proposal management, no matter the size of your company.

Find your hidden gems

When everyone on the team is focused on the win of a high profile bid, it is easy to overlook the people in your company who might have a real connection to the client or knowledge that sets your solution apart. My company had just hired a project manager to work on an unrelated project, and she had in-depth relationships and experience working with the bidding client. She was not part of the proposal team or even offered the chance to share her experience until one week before the submission date. After award, I used the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to read the winning bid and was shocked to find information our project manager could have provided.

Going forward, we actively publicized the opportunity and client to all departments, and encouraged everyone to participate, leading to solutions that were more complete, and client knowledge that was vital to our wins.

Do not feel “too small to bid”

I felt the hardest part of working in a small business was walking away from opportunities that we tracked for months, even years, because we felt we were “too small to bid.”

The federal and state bids I have worked on have always welcomed proposals from qualified small businesses. There has been terrific movement in the last two years in the federal arena around Woman Owned Small Businesses (WOSB) and small business

regulations in procurement, both as new set-aside rules and expanded NAICS for WOSBs, but also more industry events, mentorship programs, and outreach from various agencies.

If you are tracking a large, high profile procurement ahead of proposal release, I urge you to try to talk to the client. Tell them your story and describe how you can solve problems for them. They do not want sales; they want problems solved, and they would love a small business to do it.

Erin Green has been a proposal manager for large and small companies in the D.C. area, and is currently at MAXIMUS.

APMP-NCA Professional Development

This year’s Mentor-Protégé program is coming to a close. The final 2016 Mentor-Protégé meeting will be held on November 7th, with guest speakers as well as recognition for each of the 32 mentors and protégés who participated this year. The good news for readers is that the end of the year signals your opportunity join next year’s program!

Applications for both mentors and protégés in the 2017 Program will be available on the NCA website beginning November 1st; the deadline for submission is December 15, 2016.

Another aspect of Professional Development is assisting NCA members in achieving APMP Practitioner and Professional Certifications. As part of this effort, free orientation sessions will be held November 19 at the Tyson Westin hotel each certification. Sessions will overview what is required to achieve each certification, present successful questionnaires and presentation submitted in the past, and review any draft documents that attendees have prepared prior to the sessions. [Check the NCA website for registration details!](#)



Create a Proposal Story That Resonates

by Robert Polster, PMP, CF APMP

To make your proposal rise to the top in a high profile procurement, tell a compelling story about why the customer must select your solution. This article describes the 4-Step IMPACT business development (BD) Win Theme Methodology for systematically teasing out a narrative that will make your story resonate with the concerns of the Source Selection Authority (SSA).

The steps are:

1. Categorize your knowledge
2. Identify your gaps
3. Fill your gaps
4. Write your stories

Step 1: Categorize your Knowledge

Gather your knowledge about the opportunity, your solution, and your history on related projects, break it up into factoids, and then categorize those factoids into 5 buckets:

- Goals
- Risks
- Features
- Results
- Proof

These categories (or GRFRPs) were inspired by the book *Powerful Proposals: How to Give Your Business the Winning Edge* by David G. Pugh and Terry R. Bacon. Pugh & Bacon



explain that their five categories are what you need to create a complete win theme. By sorting your factoids into these buckets, you are gathering the win theme elements you will later use to build complete, compelling win themes.

Step 2: Identify the Gaps

Next, you will need to identify what Goal, Risk, Feature, Result, and Proof (GRFRP) factoids are missing. To do this, first look for alignment among the GRFRPs you have. For example, you probably have lots of features. Can you find the Risks and Goals that those Features address? Can you find the Features that align with your Proof factoids? Once you have aligned all available factoids, where are your gaps? Where do you need a Goal, a

Risk, a Feature, a Result, or Proof to form a complete win theme?

Step 3: Fill the Gaps

Filling the gaps requires thinking and inference. As an example, consider a bid to provide Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) services for a systems integration project. IV&V involves checking contractor performance to confirm they are meeting standards and fulfilling requirements. Suppose a Feature of your team's solution is their ability to establish cordial relations with contractors whose work they are reviewing, but the team is missing a customer Goal or Risk to go with it.

To find a Risk to accompany this Feature, they ask themselves: "What risk or problem might we solve for this

customer by establishing cordial relations with the systems integrator?”

Customers often have a lack of visibility into the challenges facing their systems integrators. Customers like to know about those challenges if on-time project completion might be at risk. If delays are possible, early action might be needed. But systems integrators do not always want to reveal their challenges, hoping they can resolve the problems before the schedule is affected. Given that dynamic, cordial relations could address following risk: *“Lack of visibility into problems that could cause delays.”*

By developing trust with the systems integration contractor, the IV&V contractor is able to develop a complete picture of project status, and can signal the customer about emerging problems. So they now have a Feature and a Risk. They still need a Goal, a Result, and Proof. To get the Goal, they ask another question: *“If the customer faces the Risk cited above (about lack of visibility) what Goal might not be attained?”*

If the customer were to receive no warning about schedule challenges, delays could go unaddressed. So the Goal to deliver the system on-time would be at risk. Suppose that would mean missing their Congressionally-mandated deadline. The affected Goal would then be, *“Meet the Congressionally mandated deadline for new service.”*

Putting the feature, goal, and risk together brings us to the result: *“The customer gets early warning about any emerging Risks, in time to take evasive action.”*

And the Proof? Review past performance files and interview project leads to discover relevant proofs, like the following: *“Because of the atmosphere of openness and trust that the IV&V contractor created, the customer received early warning about likely delays and was able to manage the expectations of their stakeholders in Congress and the OMB.”*

Together, each of these examples makes one GRFRP set. Each GRFRP set that you complete enables you to write an IMPACT BD Mini-Story.

Step 4: Write the Stories

The IMPACT BD Mini-Stories are well-written snapshots of your GRFRP sets. For example, here is the complete IMPACT BD Mini-Story for the above examples:

To help the Government meet the Congressionally-mandated deadline, we will provide early warning of any risks we discover that could affect the program schedule. By developing a relationship of trust with the systems integrator, we expect to have deep insight about program status and be in a position to notify the Government about emerging problems. This is similar to what we were able to do

for the Department of Energy on the XYZ program where our early warning about schedule delays enabled them to negotiate a solution with the stakeholders affected by the delay.

You should build a set of stories like this for each proposal. You will have to decide which stories will be most important to the customer, and highlight them accordingly. The power of this approach is that it enables you to systematically build compelling win themes using logical inference. By considering the customer's Goals and Risks, you create stories that resonate.

Robert Polster, D.Sc., PMP, CF APMP is a proposal and business development consultant. His IMPACT Business Development Process enables government contractors to stop merely responding to RFPs and start shaping them. They can learn about opportunities well before RFP release and connect with senior decision makers with stories that resonate. A network of contacts that reaches across the federal government facilitates this. Reach him at robert.polster@polsterconsulting.com and 301-637-5425. More information at polsterconsulting.com.



High Value but Not So High Profile

by Brenda Crist, MPA, CPP APMP Fellow

For the past seven years, the total value of Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts has kept pace with or exceeded the value awarded to definitive contracts.

Agencies issue definitive contracts to one company to provide a product or service for a specified price. In contrast, agencies issue IDIQ contracts to a multiple awardee pool, who bid on task orders (TOs) that also provide a product or service for a specific price. Some of the most popular IDIQ contracts include the General Service Administration’s (GSA) Alliant/ Alliant Small Business (SB), the National Institute of Health’s (NIH) CIO-SP3, and the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Enterprise Acquisition Gateway for Leading-Edge Solutions II (EAGLE II). According to Bloomberg Government’s “Contracts Drive Federal Market: BGOV Contractors Digest,” in 2014, definitive contracts took 53% of the contracting market value while IDIQs took 47% of the contracting market value.

In addition, high value opportunities in the \$100-\$500 million range that were once the only sponsored by agency contracting departments are now found on IDIQ vehicles. Figure 1 shows six large IDIQ TO contracts with 2017 expiration dates.

Depending of the number of IDIQ contract holders, an agency can easily

Figure 1: Sample 2017 Task Order Values:

Task Order Name	IDIQ Vehicle	Contract Ceiling
IT Ops & Maint. (DHS)	Alliant Enterprise	\$546M
Computer and Cyber Forensics (DC3) (Air Force)	Alliant Enterprise	\$464M
USCENTCOM C4 Directorate (Air Force)	Alliant Enterprise	\$433M
State Dept. Help Desk	Alliant SB	\$283M
CMS IT Support	CIO-SP3	\$266M
NRCS application development (USDA)	Alliant SB	\$106M

receive a dozen bids for a high profile task order, while lower value IDIQ task orders often attract a handful of bids or less.

High Value but Not High Profile

The tricky part about winning a high profile task order can be getting information about the bid. For a high profile definitive bid, the contracting office usually publishes all the previous solicitation documents on FedBizOpps.gov or its own website, holds an industry day, and releases draft and final solicitations. A capture

manager can also find substantial information about the bid on commercial databases such as Bloomberg Government, Deltek GovWin, Govini or GovTribe.

Finding an equal amount of information about an IDIQ TO can be challenging. Some IDIQ vehicles do not keep a library of their solicitation documents, so unless you saved the originals, you must ask the Contracting Officer for the previous solicitation documents, which may take some time. Finding solicitation documents for TOs on commercial

High Value but Not So High Profile

databases is a 50% - 50% proposition at best. In addition, finding historical information on TOs is unlikely since the ruling governing the protest of TOs only changed recently.

One free and useful tool for finding information about a task order is the Federal Procurement Database System (fpds.gov), which maintains updated expiration dates, ceiling values, and obligation information about TOs.

Bid to Win Task Orders

Given that it may take longer to acquire the intelligence needed to bid a high profile task order, consider implementing these five tips:

1. Create a TO pipeline of bids that will expire during the next three years to give your company enough time to mount a successful bid.

2. Use the available time to learn as much as possible about the bid from the customer, subject matter experts, and vendors and validate your solution with the customer.
3. Work to influence the bid in your favor or at least level the playing field; TO bids have a notorious reputation for being wired.
4. Ensure you understand your competitors. Many new competitors form as businesses as bought, merged, and sold. Many SB IDIQs require companies to

recertify which may remove them from the competition and make their incumbent work fair game.

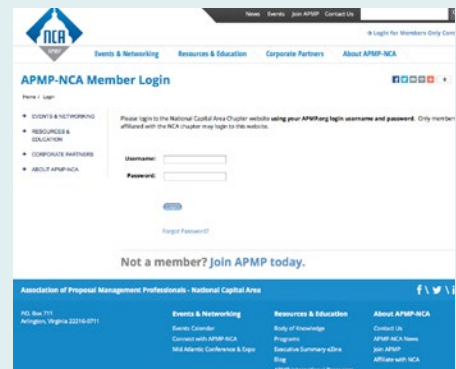
5. Sharpen your pencil. Many IDIQs procure IT or professional services as commodities, so understanding your customer price vs. value tolerance is essential.

As more work moves to high profile IDIQ contracts, understanding and analyzing potential TOs is crucial to building your pipeline.

Brenda Crist has 25 years of experience providing capture, proposal, and program management support for information technology companies serving the Federal market. Ms. Crist is a Vice President at the Lohfeld Consulting Group and has held management roles at OAO Corporation and Harris Corporation. She holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration, is certified at the Professional Level, an APMP certification trainer, a member of the Chesapeake Chapter Board and an APMP Fellow.

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The Board of Directors for APMP-NCA meets the first Tuesday of every month. Two out of every three meetings are virtual meetings. If you would like to join a meeting, contact us by going to <http://www.apmpnca.org/contact/>.

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Advertising Rates

Page Size	Width x Height	Rate
Full Page	8.5" x 11"	\$500
Half Page	8.5" x 5.25"	\$250
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A Publication of the Association of
Proposal Management Professionals
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