

The Government Market

Having supported government agencies for most of my life, I now assist small and mid size companies in understanding what it takes to win business in the government. Once we have an understanding of the commitment, time and cost involved we then implement a direct sales approach to winning business.

Below are areas and items to consider if you are considering doing business in the government market.

Business owners new to the government market must remember that the government sale is one based on a strong relationship with the client. Building these relationships takes time. Therefore, you need to expect to invest in this time to nurture the first level sales. Eventually, this uphill battle will snowball into some huge opportunities. I'm hoping that you and your team have the strength to work uphill for a while. The opportunities on the other side are well worth it.

Keep in mind that the more experienced executive may have a great deal of embedded government contacts. Since there is an underlying government and military philosophy to "take care of their own," hiring someone with strong contacts could result in some sales within your first year.

Business owners are constantly challenged with the issue of what to expect from their government sales executives in terms of time management, goals and actual results. What should my expectations be for a government sales effort, The following are factors to be considered when making such decisions. To start with we need to assess how and what you offer and:

...on the sales cycle in the commercial market place of your product/service.

...on whether you already have government business.

...on the experience and personal contacts of the sales executive.

...on whether you are on GSA schedule.

...on where your corporate office is located in regard to your potential clientele.

...on the dollar amount of the sale itself.

...on whether you sell a product or service.

...on your corporate reputation. Are you a name brand or are you a small unknown?

...on whether you are willing to invest in travel expenses in order to get your sales staff in front of the customer.

A quick study by a pro representative: After about eight months in territory, I was able to identify my true opportunities and key clients. Once I had established who these key clients were, my visits were much more welcome and the resulting conversations very informal and more personal. It takes time to get federal employees to open up to you and they need to get to know you on many levels before they will take a risk and actually give you an opportunity. But, if they see you face-to-face fairly regularly, or at least hear your voice once in a while, they will realize that you are in this business for the long haul.

The federal marketplace is a tough nut to crack. Many companies throw the towel in too soon or quit in general frustration because their approach is all wrong. Don't waste any more time guessing what might be the best way to approach this marketplace.

Hire a professional, let GBSC produce the results.