



Myths and Realities of Creating a Collaborative Government and Industry Contract Environment

**Presented by: Ann Gladys
GWAC Center of Excellence Director, CSC
NDIA National Small Business Conference
6/7-8/2011**

Primary Points

- Commonly held myths and realities within government about industry
- Commonly held myths and realities within industry about government
- Best-practice realities of a strong government/industry working relationship

Commonly held myths and realities within government about industry

- Myth: B and P money is infinite and industry wants to bid on every RFP! Reality: industry works to a budget and bid decisions are made based on availability of budget \$\$\$ along with the probability of a “win”.
- Myth: Industry has deep pockets for posh offices, unlimited travel, the best hotels, unlimited expense accounts, and exorbitant salaries and bonuses! Reality: Simply not true! Industry is metrics driven and works to a tight budget defined well in advance of the current fiscal year.
- Myth: Industry would rather deal with relatively inexperienced and untrained contracting officers. Reality: industry wants to work with the “best and brightest” of contracting officers. The better the contracting officer the better the chances of a successful project and a sound working relationship.

Commonly held myths and realities within government about industry

- Myth: Large businesses can “turn on a dime” and are not beset by bureaucracy. Reality: the checks and balances for accuracy that exist in large businesses add time and complexity to business processes.
- Myth: Since corporations are in competition with each other, they do not get along. Reality: today’s competitor is tomorrow’s teaming partner!

The top commonly held myths and realities within industry

- Myth: Government debriefs are unnecessary when you win a contract. Reality: this is where industry learns about what really made their proposal shine!
- Myth: Only industry has “sandboxes” and “swim lanes”. Reality: all organizations have some degree of stove piping.
- Myth: Government contract evaluators don’t make mistakes. Reality: people author the proposals; people evaluate the proposals; and people can make mistakes.
- Myth: Government just wants the lowest price. Reality: Government wants successful contract performance at a reasonable price.



Best Practice Reality #1

The best partnership starts with a strong COP!

- The importance of Communities of Practice to leverage communication
- How COPs Work
- Building Relationships
- Establishing Common Ground
- Sharing Insights
- Listening

COPs at Work





Best Practice Reality #2

Understand and respect the differences of roles of government / industry partners

- Builds trust
- Anchors relationships
- Enhances collaboration
- Drives problem resolution
- Drives project success



Best Practice Reality #3

Maintain communication

- Government and Industry need to raise issues early
- Working together Government and Industry need to brainstorm possible and plausible solutions
- Both Government and Industry need to do pulse checks; don't communicate only when
 - There is a problem
 - It's time for recompetete
 - It's contract performance evaluation time



Best Practice Reality #4

Be interested and engaged

- Respect the professional passion of your government and industry partners
- Offer creative ideas
- ...and most importantly, take time to listen!



Best Practice Reality #5

Lose the defensive posture

- Defensiveness can cause others to shutdown – a “let’s work together” attitude can make all the difference in resolving issues and problems
- Try to understand the position of the other party – this brings a new dimension to the situation and may preclude inappropriate statements
- Carefully phrase statements to be non-argumentative – take a positive approach to problem resolution



Thank You!

Questions?