Lunch & Learn: Take a Bite Out of GovCon

How to Market Your GSA Schedule

DEVELOPED BY THE PULSE OF GOVCON | April 2023

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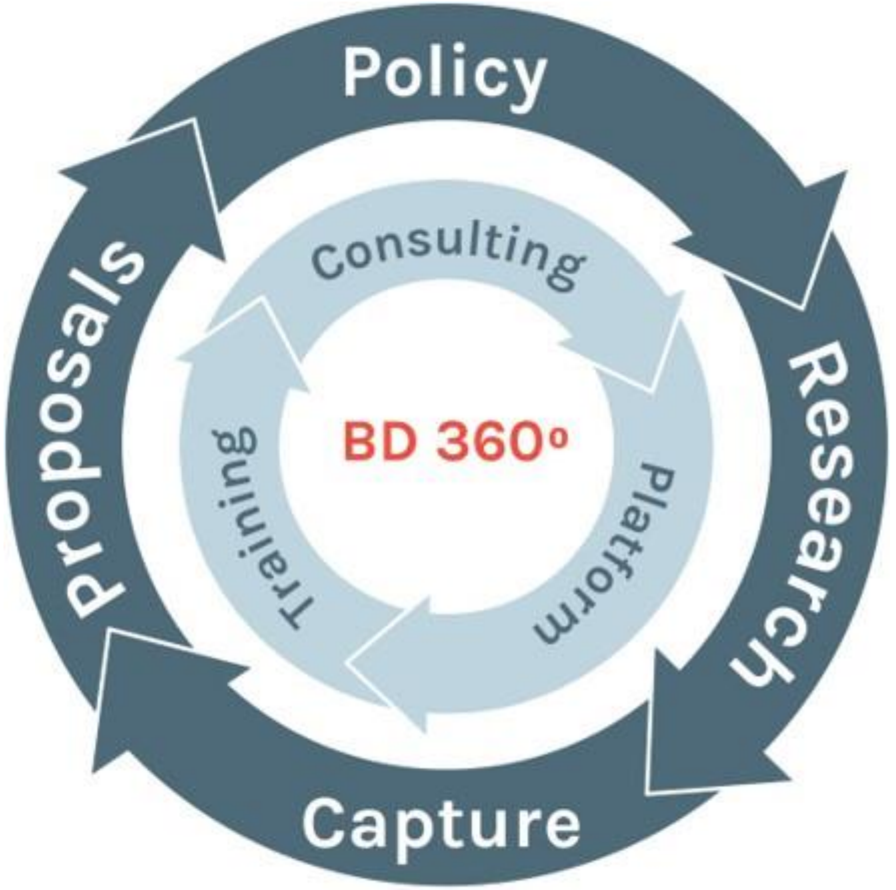

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- Educational Platform
- Dedicated Federal Consulting
- On-Demand and Customized Training

Upcoming Pulse Events

April 26th	May 11th	May 17th
SHRED Event: Upgrade Your Proposal Shop with CX	**SHRED Event: Turn Cold Calls Into Lukewarm Calls**	**Federal Procurement Tools and Functionality**
Does your federal proposal process feel ineffective? Is your proposal team burning out? It may be time to implement some CX best practices to improve the overall experience of your proposal development.	Cold calling is not dead, but how chilly should your introduction be to be effective? Join us on May 11th at ICF HQ in Reston, VA, for a presentation and Q&A followed by networking.	Learn more about where to find certain kinds of market information and how to use open source federal tools more effectively in your business development pipeline.
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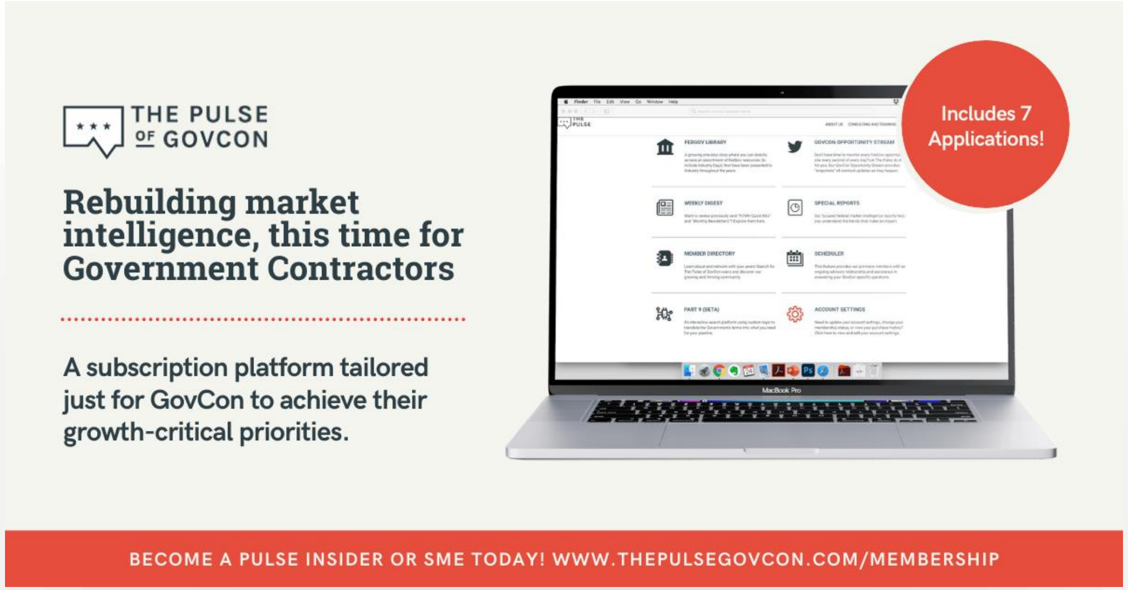

Today’s Lunch Menu

Each year the federal government spends over $30B purchasing services and products through GSA Schedules across 12 categories. A GSA Schedule, also known as a Federal Supply Schedule (FSS), and Multiple Award Schedule (MAS), is equivalent to holding a Best-In-Class (BIC) GWAC or a highly effective IDIQ…but better.

Why? Because it is continuously open for bid, gives access to an exclusive marketplace, and provides company validation - and has been one of the most reliable tools for federal business.

Today we will discuss **four ways** to make your GSA Schedule work more effectively for your business:

1. **Get in the right [selling] frame of mind**
2. **Understand your value proposition**
3. **Create and execute the Targeted Marketing Campaign**
4. **Translate what you gathered**

Hold Tight to Your GSA Schedule and Never Let Go

1. Get in the right [selling] frame of mind

GSA Schedules is the most streamlined federal procurement process out there, which allows the government to find you and buy fast.

Recognize how the **“GSA Schedules Brand”** helps you help the federal government (and state and local governments sometimes!) with limited paperwork, red tape, and competition.

By utilizing this process, government buyers are able to focus on other requirement and evaluation tasks since they already know that you have been vetted.

In short, an active GSA Schedule demonstrates that you are:

- FAR Subpart 9.1 compliant (Responsible Contractor)
- Have adequate financial resources to perform work anticipated by the schedule
- Have a satisfactory performance record
- Have the processes, procedures, and resources to do the work

1. Get in the right [selling] frame of mind

Identify WHO in the government frequently uses your GSA Schedule.

- Who is continuously buying?
- Who has done it in the past?
- Who recently put out market research?
- Who is buying under what SIN?

Leverage your relationships.

- Look for allies and form relationships with additional schedule holders.
- Talk to the other people on your schedule to find out how they are successful.
- Leverage your capabilities to help solve their problem, etc.

Know the difference between federal civilian and defense spending.

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2. Understand your value proposition

What does your organization do well? You can't be everything to everyone!

- To fast track your opportunities and relationships – you need to focus on 1 or 2 functional areas that you can strongly market NOW.

What are your strongest past performance references?

- Company or personnel? Are they documented?

What customer space are you currently in now? Where could you currently "walk the halls?"

- In this current environment (Q3 going into Q4), it is best to try and leverage where your footprint currently is. If you are brand new – pick 1 or 2 agencies and start picking up the phone.

Identify where the Government finds their vendors FAST.

Once you understand what you bring to the table…

2. Understand your value proposition

Once you understand your value, you need to identify **WHO** in the government has, buys and/or needs what your organization offers.

This means you must be able to articulate **HOW** you can **HELP** the government meet its goals, objectives and solve it's pain points.

Examples include:

- Cutting out the middleman and save time
- Meeting the Administrations expectations
- Meeting socio-economic goals, leadership mandates, or policies
- Turning a need around quickly (simplified acquisitions)
- Spending their FY23 Omnibus money
- Filling another schedule holder's gap or specialized/niche requirement

2. Understand your value proposition

Create a hard-hitting **ONE PAGER** with your team so everyone understands your value proposition.

The one pager needs to include:

- GSA Schedule contract number(s) and SIN(s)
- UEI
- CAGE
- SAM.GOV link
- Socio-economic status (to include certification numbers)
- Summary of past performance on the schedule(s)
- Point(s) of contact

Reminder…

- Make sure your GSA Schedule number(s) and SIN(s) on business cards, website, email signatures, etc.
- Make sure you have an elevator pitch, and remember – practice makes perfect!

3. Create and execute a Targeted Marketing Campaign

Prior to creating your Targeted Marketing Campaign, your company should develop a **Decision Maker Profile** that targets decision making individuals within an agency, and identifies which members of your team should contact.

Designation of contact responsibilities should be based on their project portfolio, any cross commonalities, or company status depending on the requirement.

- Know your customer buyer
- Develop a profile on each buyer
- Ethically stalk them (do your research!)
- Stay organized – create a tracker and write it down

Your Targeted Marketing Campaign (based on the Decision Maker Profile) is what turns research into MEETINGS!

3. Create and execute a Targeted Marketing Campaign

Where do you find these Decision Makers?

- Look at what RFIs, Sources Sought, etc. that you responded to in the past year – **follow-up!**
- Look at the RFQ's, RFP's, etc. that you won and lost – **follow-up!**
- Know what customers like, and don't like about you.
- Leverage your past and current performance.
- Market directly to the Agencies that typically buy your services and use your schedules.
- **Follow-up** with your fellow schedule holders– ask them where you can help.

We told you how to find the right people, now how do you access them?

Where to find contact information:

- White Papers, RFIs, RFQs, RFPs
- Presentations and research papers
- Bottom of SAM.gov page
- Social media (i.e. LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.)

How to contact them:

- Know their schedule
- Know the best times to call or email –know their preferences
- Use social media to check out what events they are going to, what topics they "share" or "retweet" – What is on the top of their mind?

3. Create and execute a Targeted Marketing Campaign

What is the point?

- Always aim for the best case scenario. *Any Contact Plan should be enacted Pre-RFP.*
- If there is communication after RFP release, government agencies are required to give the same information to every other potential bidder.

What are you trying to gain?

Winning a bid not only requires compliance and a good price, but it also requires understanding the buying prospects:

- Goals
- Problems
- Preferences/Bias
- Constraints

Why are these questions important?

- This is your competitive edge.
- Answers to questions like these provide your team with the information they need to demonstrate your company's insight and to stand out from the pack.
- These are the questions company executives, BD personnel, program managers, and technical experts should be asking.

4. Translate what you gathered

The next step in the search for customer knowledge and understanding is gaining insight into what the customer is looking for in the way of a solution.

Having the information isn't good enough—you also need to start translating the customer's wants, needs, and desires into the company's abilities, technologies, and innovations.

Pose questions in other ways to gain positive or negative feedback:

- *"Have you tried…"*
- *"Have you ever thought of…*
- *"Would you be interested in…"*
- *"Wouldn't it work better if..."*

Don't get caught in a "what do you want?" loop!

Key Takeaways

- **Accountability is Key**
  - Treat your Contact Plan like a major project—assign a leader and team
- **Know Your Audience**
  - Know the difference between decision makers (buying authority) and mere players in the Government
- **Stop Talking About You**
  - Ask questions and listen
- **Make Contact Frequently**
  - Be pleasantly persistent
- **Don’t Always Go for the Sale**
  - Do not overtly sell
- **Test Drive Your Value Proposition**
  - Make sure your left hand is talking to your right hand
- **Document Results**
  - Make sure emails, outcomes of meetings are accessible
- **Push for Facetime**
  - Non-incumbents should always push for facetime opportunities with the customer
- **Respond When Called Upon**
  - Be prepared to respond when RFIs, RFQs and RFPs come your way. There will be QUICK turnarounds so make sure you have the resources allocated to respond. *(No response = no business.)*

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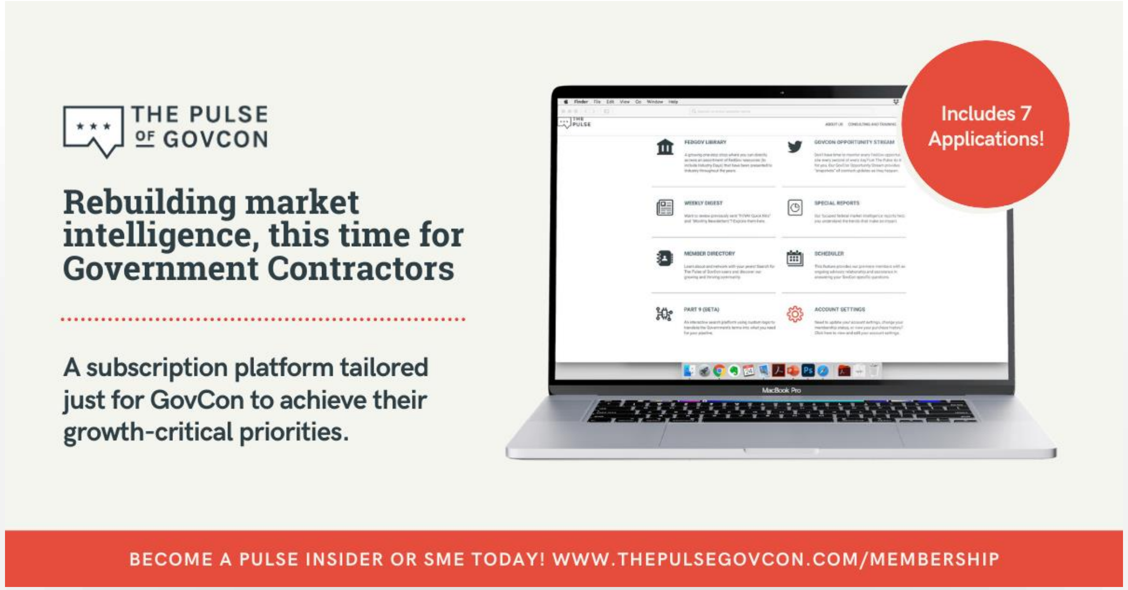

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