

# Successful Proposals/Tips 2008 SAME Small Business Workshop

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# Basics

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- Do you understand the Specifications/SOW/PWS?
- What is Section L (FAR 15.204-5)
  - Instructions, conditions, and notices to offerors
- What is Section M (FAR 15.204-5)
  - Evaluation factors for award. Identifies all significant factors and any significant subfactors that will be considered in awarding the contract and their relative importance.
- Speak Up Early – for clarifications
  - Challenges - after closing date – too late



# TOP 10 Mistakes

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1. Read the **entire** Solicitation & all the amendments – this includes all posted questions and answers
  - Don't just read the SOW/PWS/Specs
  - Many clauses are by reference – pull the full text clause and read it
  - Read all attachments/exhibits
  - Acknowledge all amendments



# TOP 10 Mistakes, cont

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## 2. Ask Questions

- Ambiguities, inconsistencies or lack of clearance guidance
- Order of Precedence- inconsistency resolved by giving precedence in this order:
  - Schedule (excluding Spec)
  - Representations and other instructions
  - Contract Clause
  - Other doc, exhibits and attachments
  - The Spec
- Never assume – ask for clarifications (challenge evaluation criteria before the closing date)



# TOP 10 Mistakes, cont

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## 3. Pay close attention to bid/offer closing date

- Generally late bids/offers not considered
- Don't wait until the last minute to submit –stuff happens
- Delivery/address to proper location
- Hand delivery difficult – access to military installation

## 4. When Clause FAR 52.215-1, Instruction to Offerors – Competitive Acquisition, (f)(4) – intends to award without discussions – **believe it!**

- Submit best proposal/price with initial offer
- Most favorable terms with initial offer
- Don't rush proposal preparation – no second chances to correct



# TOP 10 Mistakes, cont

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## 5. Follow all RFP Instructions

- Instructions on page limitation and font size
- Organize volumes of information per instructions – don't make the evaluators look for the information
- Answer the questions – be specific and not colorful
- Comply with all instructions

## 6. Only the Contracting Officer communicates with offerors

- Don't seek advice from other gov't officials
- Verbal advice/clarification do not amend solicitations, these are not legally binding
- Put every thing in writing to the CO



# TOP 10 Mistakes, cont

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## 7. Non-conforming bids/proposals

- Taking exceptions to specific RFP requirements (if you must - be specific and draw to the attention of the CO)
- Offering alternate products when alternatives are not solicited/allowed
- Exceeding or failing to meet PWS/SOW/SPEC requirements
- Adding or revising terms and conditions
- Failing to conform to essential requirements of the Solicitations



# TOP 10 Mistakes, cont

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## 8. Not understanding the evaluation factors

- Evaluation factors and sub factors importance is specified in the RFP section “M”
- Which are more important? Technical/price, etc
- Don’t make your own assessment/interpretation on what is more important and spend more time on that section at the expense of other sections
- Low price doesn’t always win –and the best technical proposal doesn’t always win
- Increasing price/cost is carrying more importance because of recent lean budgets
- Integrated assessments are based on importance specified in the RFP
- Past performance information key in many of today’s Source Selection decisions (prime and subs)



# TOP 10 Mistakes, cont

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9. Check proposal before submitting – and then check again
  - Helpful to have others outside immediate team review proposal and compare to RFP terms
    - Legal review
    - Purchase dept review
    - Budget dept review
    - Outside consultant



# TOP 10 Mistakes, cont

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## 10. Post-award debriefing

- Submit requests in writing within specified timeline (specified in unsuccessfully letter notification)
- Minimum FAR requirements
- Evaluation of significant elements in the offeror's proposal
- Summary of the rationale for eliminating the offeror from competition
- Reasonable response to relevant questions about source selection procedures etc
- GAO filing down 2% from FY 2005, sustain rate of 29%

# Get It Right

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- Or no soup for you!!



# Resources

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NCMA Jan 07 article “10 Big Mistakes”, by Richard D. Leiberman  
Carol Singleton’s 25+ years of contracting experiences  
Government Contracts Year in Review Covering 2006 – author  
unknown