



National Defense Industrial Association Annual Small Business Conference

“How to Respond to a Request for Proposal to Enhance Your Competitive Edge”



July 23, 2014

**Bradley Price
Megan Dake**

**Ondrea Neal
Jesse Kirstein**

Approved for Public Release
14-MDA-7918 (16 July 14)



AGENDA

- **Introduction**
- **Proposal Do's and Don'ts**
- **Lessons Learned**
- **Website Information**
- **Questions**



INTRODUCTION

- The Missile Defense Agency (MDA) is a research, development, and acquisition agency within the Department of Defense. Our mission is to develop, test, and field an integrated, layered, Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS) to defend the United States, its deployed forces, allies, and friends against all ranges of enemy ballistic missiles in all phases of flight.
- The Director of Contracts (DAC) provides people, training, tools, and oversight to ensure the BMDS and ancillary support is contractually executed in a prudent and timely manner. In that capacity, DAC advises the MDA Director, Deputy Director, Director for Acquisition Management, Program Directors, and their staff on contracting matters involving planning, management, execution, and reporting of programs and activities under the cognizance of MDA.
- Panel Members Introductions



INTRODUCTION (continued)

- The goal of this segment is to help the small business industry become more competitive in responding to the Government's RFPs.
- MDA has noticed a downward trend in the quality of received proposals in response to the Government's solicitations. In some cases, lack of attention to details of the solicitation requirements, ambiguous responses, and unsubstantiated information are a few of the issues we see.
- We will discuss some "Do's and Don'ts" when a company makes the business decision to compete on a solicitation.



DO

- Do tell the story of how you intend to meet a requirement, do not just restate or repeat the Performance Work Statement or the Statement of Work sections. Demonstrate your ability to fulfill the Government's requirement.

- Your proposal should answer the following questions:
 - ✓ Is the proposal persuasive and are the statements made in the proposal substantiated?
 - ✓ Are the proposal volumes clear, consistent, and integrated?

- Do pay attention to page counts and other Section L requirements. If possible have an independent participant review your proposal.
 - ✓ Is the proposal easy to read and the response easily understood?
 - ✓ Is the writing style consistent throughout?
 - ✓ Are graphics used effectively or are they taking up page space?



DO (continued)

- Do decompose the Government's RFP requirements into a matrix or checklist and ensure every requirement is addressed in your proposal.
- Do keep in mind the order of importance of the evaluation criteria in Section M. Integrated assessments making best value tradeoffs are based on these.



DO (continued)

- Provide the information to the Government in accordance with the Section L instructions:
 - ✓ Thoroughly address each sub-factor.
 - ✓ Offerors should pay close attention to each paragraph, sentence, elements of the sentence, and address each component.
 - ✓ Be clear with your answers and write them so they can easily be found and understood (e.g., Sub-factor 2: Management Experience – if the question specifically asks for the number of years experience and the type of experience the Program Manager has; answer both parts of the subfactor there!).
 - ✓ Pay very close attention to Sections L and M; provide applicable responses, and recognize that the Government evaluates in accordance with Section M.

- **Foremost – Do comply with ALL aspects of the solicitation.**



DON'T

- Don't submit a proposal with errors. The simplest ones can cause delays in the source selection process.
- Don't read anything into the Government's requirements, take them at face value.
- Don't assume you know what the Government really needs or wants; ask questions during the solicitation phase.
- Don't make assumptions that the Government knows your company can meet the requirement. The fact that you are the incumbent, doesn't allow you to assume anything. Only what is written within your proposal is considered during the evaluation phase.



LESSONS LEARNED

- Submitting a timely and complete proposal and heeding page limitations seems like a no brainer, but even seasoned major defense contractors are failing to do so.
- Use the draft RFP process to suggest improvements. Industry often knows a better or more efficient way to deliver what the Government needs. Helping the Government ask for products and services in a way that industry understands can benefit both parties greatly.
- Engagement with the Government before the final RFP is released can greatly enhance your understanding of what the Government wants. Early involvement may reduce your proposal preparation time.



LESSONS LEARNED (continued)

- In a funding constrained environment, industry's input could mean the difference between an RFP being released or not released.
- Know your competition.
- Submit an affordable, competitive, and quality proposal.
- Elicit feedback at debriefs and use this in your next proposal development.



Feedback the Government Needs During the Draft RFP Phase

- Procuring Contracting Officers and the Technical Advisors need to know if the Government is asking for something that is prohibitively expensive or the requirements are impossible to meet. Are there requirements that are technically not achievable or unaffordable?

- The Government official needs to know:
 - ✓ Are page number counts sufficient?
 - ✓ Is proposal response time adequate?
 - ✓ Do you have enough information to successfully propose?



Public Website Information

For further details on how to do business with the Missile Defense Agency go to the Missile Defense Agency public website at:

http://www.mda.mil/business/acquisition_center.html

This section will provide you with the basic information on how to do business with the Missile Defense Agency, including links to necessary government sites and our own agency acquisition information resources.



Questions?



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