Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP)
where small business makes a big difference

HOW TO FIND A LARGE PRIME CONTRACTOR/MENTOR

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2016
Mentor Guiding Principles

• Sound leadership commitment to Supplier Diversity and Mentor-Protégé Program
• Mentor serves as a “coach” and “teacher”
  – “Can do” attitude; know how to get things done!
  – Skills: Flexibility/creative problem solver with excellent people/networking skills
• Protégé capabilities/core technology should complement mentor’s needs
• Mentor must fully understand the Protégés needs (needs assessment) and implement them
• Outline a developmental strategy/plan to address protégé’s needs
• Mentor-Protégé is a “team effort!”
  – Must have frequent physical presence with protégé; proximity to protégé very beneficial
  – Treat protégé as an extension of mentor
• Build trust relationship via goal alignment and open communication
  – Be flexible since protégé’s needs change over time
• Serve as a Protégé ambassador within own company and with other companies
• Sound continuous improvement is the foundation of developmental assistance
• Follow Mentor-Protégé Program Rules (e.g., semi-annual reports)
Protégé Guiding Principles

• Maximum leadership commitment to program by providing excellent quality, on-time delivery, at affordable prices
• Leadership very responsive to mentor’s process improvement recommendations
  – Jointly develop goals, objectives and detailed, measurable technical developmental assistance plan
  – Mentor and protégé must understand and develop strategic plan together
  – Protégé must listen to mentor and follow-through on agreed actions
• Mentor-Protégé is a “team effort!”
  – Protégé should find the “right” mentor (aligned in technology and culture)
  – Protégé must dedicate time to help mentor, learn protégé’s business
  – Constant, consistent communication (phone, e-mail good; physical presence better).
  – Mentor is the “coach” for the team
• Build collaborative relationships through trust
  – Mentor and protégé must be direct and honest with each other
  – Must take risks together (and still make good business decisions)
• Continuous process improvements must be key strategy of mentor-protégé agreement
  – Protégé must be open-minded and embrace necessary change