

How to Find Large Prime Contractors – Mentors

NASA HBCU/MSI Technology Infusion Road Tour
Florida A&M University

by

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NASA Mentor-Protégé Agreement of the Year winner

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How to Find Large Prime Contractors – Mentors

By UTC Aerospace Systems and MRI Technologies – NASA Mentor-Protégé Agreement of the Year winner

- Know your business strengths
- Know the programs your company can support
- Know the contract cycle
- Study past selection statements
- Study prime contractors/small contractors
- Determine your business needs to continue successfully
- Develop a value proposition
- Meet Primes/Smalls at events
- Setup introduction meetings
- Stay in contact, be persistent



Preparation – Learn What is Going on

- Know your business strengths
 - Spend time identifying your strengths
 - Identify project or contract successes
 - Think 3 years ahead
- Know the programs where you are a fit
 - What Agencies are you targeting?
 - What Large Companies can you support?
- Know the contract cycle
 - What companies are performing on specific contracts?
 - Small Business Office can help with this

Preparation – Learn What is Going on

- Study past selection statements
 - Identify weaknesses of past winners
 - Identify weaknesses of past second and third place losers
 - Map weakness to your strengths
- Study prime contractors
 - Review information on the web
 - Recent contract wins and losses
 - Who are in key positions
 - Which ones match your 3 year plan
 - Look for common community interests
 - Get to know executives

Execute – Contact Companies

- Determine what your business needs to continue successfully
 - Have a idea of what your company needs to achieve to continue successfully
 - Business changes at rapid pace
 - Must stay up-to-date
- Develop a value proposition
 - How can you help increase win probability?
 - Do you have a key person for the work?
 - Is the customer looking for Mentor-Protégé agreements?
 - Do you know the customer and the work?
 - What are the small business goals?

Execute – Contact Companies

- Meet Primes
 - Industry Days
 - Community Organizations (Chamber, Space Day, Etc.)
- Setup introduction meetings
 - Ask for introduction meetings
 - Discuss Mentor Protégé program
 - Does the company have a lead?
 - Do they have a current protégé?
 - Are they looking for protégé candidates?
- Stay in contact, be persistent
 - MRI's first contact with UTC was in 1998
 - Small Support started in 2005 (0.3 FTE)
 - It can take time to build trust

Execute – Develop the Agreement

- Know the Mentor-Protégé program
 - Review templates
 - Draft templates and plan (be ready)
 - If the large company is interested
 - Outline the program for them
 - Reveal the Win-Win
 - What contracts would benefit from the MP program?
 - Who from your organization would lead effort?
 - What corporate commitment do you have?
 - MRI started discussion on possible MP with over 10 companies
 - Started agreements with 5 companies; only 2 developed into MP agreements
 - Have had two Mentors
 - USAF Program – not successful – Mentor not committed to program
 - NASA Program – very successful - Mentor committed to program

Keys to Success of a Mentor Protégé Agreement

- Clear program goals
- Mentor who believes in the program
- Commitment from the top of both organization
- Communication
- Metrics
- Regular program status with actions and accomplishments
- Flexibility – things change, keep eye on goals
- Assign to talented and motivated individuals

Success of Agreement for MRI

- Provided marketing to position on large bids
- Bid three large \$90M plus contracts)
- Teamed on two contracts worth over \$1B
- Critical review of business
- AS9100 provided strategic realignment
- Sustained growth of 10%
- Diversification of business base
- Reduced cost to customer
- All Objectives met