

Making the Most of the Matchmaker with the *Right Prep & Follow-up*



New Hampshire Department of
**BUSINESS AND
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

New Hampshire Procurement Technical Assistance Center
www.nheconomy.com/sell-to-the-government




NH PTAC

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“Begin with the
end in mind.”

Steven R. Covey, *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*



What are your goals for the Matchmaker?

1. Identify and qualify prospective customers
2. Establish relationships with prospects
3. Maintain existing relationships with prospects
4. Maintain current customer relationships



What are the keys to success?



Preparation



Follow-up



Why a Matchmaker?

“It is the policy of the Government to provide **maximum practicable opportunities** in its acquisitions to small business, veteran-owned small business, service-disabled veteran-owned small business, HUBZone small business, small disadvantaged business, and women-owned small business concerns. Such concerns must also have the maximum practicable opportunity to participate as subcontractors in the contracts awarded by any executive agency, consistent with efficient contract performance.”

FAR 19.201(a)



Small Business Set-Asides

- FAR 19.5 mandates contracts be set aside for small businesses, if appropriate:
 - Contract > \$10,000
 - Contract < \$250,000*
 - Adequate competition
 - Pricing fair to government
- Much larger contracts are often set aside.

Subcontracting...

The Competition in Contracting Act -1984

- ▶ For prime contracts \$750,000 (1.5 million for construction) or more, Federal government requires prime contractors to develop and include in their bid a **small business subcontracting plan** to help meet agency's small business goals.

- ▶ **Sub-goals vary - minimums include:**
 - ▶ 5% Small Disadvantaged Businesses (SDB)
 - ▶ 5% Women-owned Small Businesses (WOSB)
 - ▶ 3% Service Disabled Veteran-owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB)
 - ▶ 3% HUBZone companies.

How Does It Work?

- Event is held online. You will meet in a “virtual room” staffed by a prime contractor or federal agencies.
- You will have prescheduled appointments.
- No “polite lurking” or networking with other attendees.
- There are also training opportunities.





Who will you be meeting with?

- Federal agency –Small Business Specialists and/or contracting personnel
- Prime Contractors - SBLOs-(Small Business Liaison Officers) and/or purchasing staff
- PTACs, SBDC, SBA



Insider Tips

- ▶ Preparation - Do your homework!
 - ▶ Know who you want to see, and
 - ▶ Know why you want to see them.
- ▶ Run your pitch and Capabilities Statement by NH PTAC in advance – time is limited, but there's still a window available.



Have a strategy for each meeting

- Understand who you are meeting with. What is their role?
- Pre-establish goals:
 - What do you want to learn? Prepare questions.
 - What do you want to communicate? Prepare bullets and a strong Capabilities Statement.
- Establish your followup approach, based on your meeting.
- Make good notes – easier to do in a virtual meeting.

Small Business Etiquette

- Arrive, and sign off **on time**.
Virtual time is not flexible.
Others are waiting.
- Understand how to use the virtual platform.
- Control lighting, background noise. Sound is particularly critical
- Appearances count
- Do your homework! Don't show off your ignorance!



Have ready well in advance:

- CAPABILITIES STATEMENT – A simple brochure/one page handout in .pdf form
- Up-to-date website
- DUNS/CAGE Code on literature/website

Capabilities Statement Basics

- One (1) 8 1/2 x 11 Page, (may be double-sided)
- PDF; file small enough to email
- Header or footer Information:

- Company Name

- Website URL

- Physical Address

- Tag line
(optional)

- Phone(s)

- Contact email

Core Content

Core competencies

What are you really good at *that your target cares about?*

Past performance

What have you done in the past *that your target would be interested in?*

Differentiators

What makes you different/better than your competitors?

How will this prospect benefit from your differences?

Company Data

Socio-economic factor(s)?

Special

Facilities/Resources/Equipment?

Certifications/Licenses?

Contract Vehicles?

Do you accept P-Cards?

Bonding/Insurance?

NAICS, FSC/PSC codes



Appearance

- Crisp, legible printing
- Balanced, functional layout
- Ample white space
- Attention-getting use of color/graphics
- Graphic elements reinforce your story



NH PTAC will Critique your Capabilities Statement

- Send as Word* document to your NH PTAC Counselor, or to govcontracting@livefree.nh.gov .
- *Word documents are easier for us to edit, but your final format should be a .pdf file.



Web Sites

- ▶ You must have one
- ▶ It can be very, very simple
- ▶ It should be:
 - ▶ Current – Copyright this year
 - ▶ Accurate
 - ▶ Spelling
 - ▶ Punctuation
 - ▶ Grammar
 - ▶ Capabilities Statement content



Web Sites II

- Not too busy
- Not too technical
- More information than image
- Confirm the reality of your business!

What are your prospects looking for?

Technical capabilities

Capacity for products/services

Financial strength

Adequate Pricing

Drive, determination,
& patience

Effective quality system

Competitive advantage

Bonding, insurance*

Security clearance*

Market Research Pre-Matchmaker





Target Research - BASIC

- ▶ Select your targets well in advance
- ▶ Research them – know about them before you approach them
 - ▶ Know their products & services: use the internet
 - ▶ Know their contracting history: use public databases



Target Research – Next Level

- Research contract awards on beta.SAM and USASpending. Can you help them fulfill their SB goals...?
- Visit their web sites and social media
- Register as a vendor
- Form and maintain relationships...persistence.



Other Resources

- ▶ beta.SAM.gov - contract opportunities and awards

<https://beta.sam.gov/>

- ▶ USASpending.gov – historical

<https://www.usaspending.gov>

- ▶ DIBBS Board – 3 defense supply centers

<https://www.dibbs.bsm.dla.mil/>



More Resources

- Some Supplier Pages
- **General Dynamics:** <https://suppliers.gendyn.com/>
- **BAE Systems:**
<https://baesystems.hicx.net/bae/hicxesm-portal/app/selfRegistrationFlow.html?execution=els1>
- **Elbit Systems:** <https://www.elbitsystems-us.com/suppliers>
- Don't forget Linked In and Twitter.



Still More Resources

➤ Some Facebook Pages

➤ **Department of Veterans**

Affairs: <https://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs/?fref=ts>

➤ **Electric Boat:** <https://www.facebook.com/pages/General-Dynamics-Electric-Boat/150822291615688?fref=ts>

➤ **Methuen Construction:** <https://www.facebook.com/Methuen-Construction-652456441494481/?fref=ts>

➤ **National Park**

Service: <https://www.facebook.com/nationalparkservice/?fref=ts>

➤ **Environmental Protection**

Agency: <https://www.facebook.com/EPA/?fref=ts>



Keeping Track of Information

- ▶ Create some sort of spreadsheet or database with names of primes and agencies. Keeping track of contacts, notes, etc.
- ▶ Pay special attention to commitments you made to them and vice versa



Follow up info collection:

Company Name:		Date met:		
<u>Contact Person/People</u>	<u>email</u>	<u>phone</u>	<u>location</u>	<u>title</u>
Notes:				
Followup:				
When?				
With whom?				
How?				
About:				



Follow-up!

- ▶ It's essential that you follow up in an appropriate and timely way. Prioritize:
 1. People you made a promise to.
 2. People who made a promise to you.
 3. Existing customers
 4. Companies that are your top priorities.
 5. Companies that you wanted to meet, but failed to connect with at the event.



Follow up – when?

- First followup within 1 week of the matchmaker. Ten days, tops.
- Second followup within 3 weeks.
- Third followup in another 3 weeks.
- Schedule follow-ups on a calendar.



How to follow up...

- Email is usually best.
 - Individual, not a “blast” to a list
 - Individualize each note; include something personal or company-specific if you can.
- **LinkedIn** can work for you to build & maintain a relationship..



How to follow up...

- ▶ Telephone is ok.
- ▶ Snail mail can be surprisingly effective.
 - ▶ Handwrite the envelope in **blue ink** (better chance that it will be opened).



People you made a promise to:

- ▶ **Who asked you to get back to them?**
Contact them within a few days, being sure to address their specific questions – even if it's to promise a more complete response soon.
- ▶ **If you're not sure what you promised, say so.** It's ok to say "I believe that this is what we spoke about, but if I'm missing anything, please don't hesitate to let me know, and I'll respond at once."




Dear Alina:

“I greatly appreciate the time that you spent with me and many other small businesses at the matchmaker last Friday. I am sure that you also have a great deal of followup to do, and I wanted to **promptly** provide the additional information **that I promised**.

My recollection is that **you had a particular interest in** our meerkat collection. I have attached a current price list, and detailed spec sheets for our most popular models. Please note that all of our products are non-corrosive and explosion-proof – suitable for use in your work environment. All these items are currently in stock, and available for overnight delivery. **We are eager to demonstrate our responsiveness, as well as our exceptional quality and fair pricing.**

Please don't hesitate to let me know if you require any **additional information**, or if there are **other points of contact** in your company that I should be reaching out to.”



People who made a promise to you:

- **Polite reminders are essential!**
 - Who promised to refer you to someone else? Politely remind them, **by thanking them for their willingness to introduce you** to “so-and-so”, possibly asking when they can expect to meet with you.
 - Promised to send you something? Again, thank them in advance, and **make it easy for them to reply** by email, snail mail, or other means – maybe offer a quick visit?
 - Promised a bid opportunity? Let them know that you’re eager to have an opportunity to **understand their requirement(s) and to compete** for their business.



Dear Brian:

“Thanks for taking time to speak with me at the Matchmaker in Manchester last Friday. I hope that it was as productive a day for you as it was for me. Your company certainly was popular with the small businesses.

I was particularly happy that **you offered to introduce me to William**, who I understand would be the best point of contact in your company regarding widget testing. It is highly likely that we can help you with your current widget challenges, and I’m confident that a **short conversation with William** will make it clear whether or not we should be doing business together.

I’ll look forward to receiving **William’s direct contact info**, and I have attached **our capabilities statement and the widget testing protocol** for you to pass on to him.

I look forward to hearing from you, and thanks once more for your time.”



Existing customers...

- Often, we make simple courtesy calls on our existing (or former) customers at a matchmaker. A quick “nice to see you – hope you had a successful day” note is always appropriate.
- If you have news about your business – a new capability, a major new contract – this is a great place to update them.



Priority Companies


- ▶ If you met with them, tell them how important it was to you and ask about next steps.
- ▶ If you didn't, tell them how important it was to you, and ask about next steps....



Companies that you missed...

- Send a note & a capabilities statement:

“While the matchmaker last week was a very satisfying event for us, we were disappointed that we were unable to find an opportunity to meet with you. Discovering whether or not there may be a possibility that we can provide solutions for Abt Associates, Inc. remains a top priority for us. I have attached a current capabilities statement for your review. We would welcome a chance to meet with you to briefly explore your requirements and our products (services). Please let me know if we can arrange a meeting.”



Keep doing your research!

- It's farming, not hunting.
- You're building relationships.
 - Some will lead somewhere, soon
 - Some never will
 - Some will take time
 - Don't worry too much about which is which.
- Just keep farming!



Thank you!

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