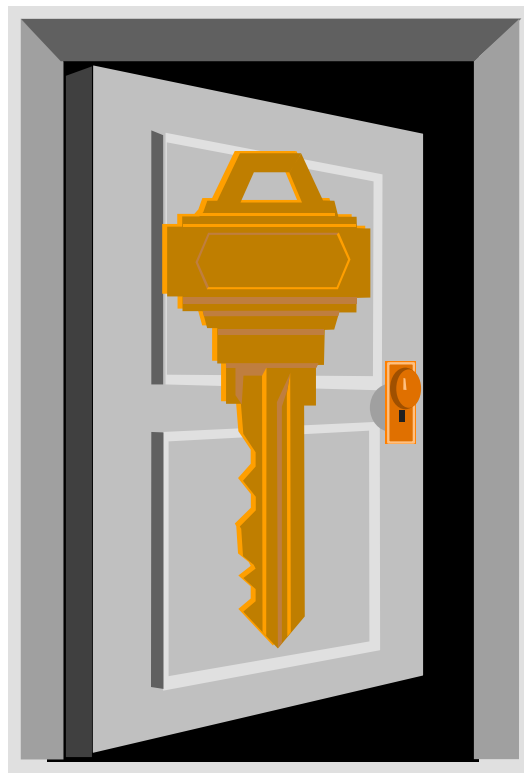




# Small Business



# Marketing Tips

Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization  
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# SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING TIPS

**Marketing tips to enhance your chances of attracting opportunities in this competitive World of Business.**

## **I. Company strengths**

Know your market niche. While it may be nice to say your company can do anything it is better to concentrate on what you do best. Focus on areas where you and your company can stand out.

## **II. Focus on a few private and public sector agencies and companies that your company capabilities best compliment**

A. Locate companies and agencies that need and buy your product or services. References available to assist you in your research are:

### **1. *Selling to the Federal Government***

A 105 page, step-by-step guide to the world of federal contracting that was developed to assist women entrepreneurs in overcoming the barriers that may be limiting their success in procurement. Written by a taskforce of Women-owned Business Advocates and SBA's Office of Government Contracting, the guide is chock full of useful information that provides a comprehensive overview of Federal contracting. It contains chapters on How the Government Buys, Selling to the Government, Federal Agency Resources, Resource Bibliography and a rich supply of Websites of Interest. The guide is available online at:

**<http://www.sba.gov/womeninbusiness/selling.html>**

### **2. *Small Business Resource Guide (Version 2 – June 2001)***

A 425 page document that provides a compendium of practical business information on national, state and local small business resources and, also information on existing small business programs, contracting with the federal government and contracting with HUD and HUD's grantees. The guide is available at the following website:

**<http://www.hud.gov/offices/osdbu/resource/guide.cfm>**

### **3. *WomenBiz Web Site***

The website **<http://www.womenbiz.gov>** is organized to target the five specific stages a woman business owner should go through so she can begin to explore whether the federal government is the right customer for her. The stages are:

- a. Meeting the basics
- b. Finding your market
- c. Getting started
- d. Finding business opportunities
- e. Key contacts

- B. Decide if you should focus on a particular industry, company size, etc.;
- C. Focus on companies and agencies that have similar customer experience (commercial or specific government agency);
- D. Ensure that the companies and agencies to which you choose to market meet your short and long term goals.

### **III. Make maximum use of existing programs**

- A. Under the General Service Administration's (GSA) Schedules Program, GSA enters into contracts with commercial firms to provide supplies and services at stated prices for given periods of time. Orders are placed directly with the schedule contractor, and deliveries are made directly to the customer. If you are not participating in the GSA Schedules program, learn more information by visiting:

<http://www.gsa.gov/>

- B. Since the Federal government's use of credit cards is increasing both in volume and thresholds, **make sure your firm accepts credit card purchases.** The Federal Government charge card program is known as "GSA SMARTPAY." If your company already accepts credit cards, no additional steps are necessary. If not, contact a local bank or a GSA SMARTPAY contractor. Information is also available from GSA at:

<http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/Content>

- C. Determine if you are eligible for participation in the Federal procurement preference programs and take full advantage of the benefits. Become certified as a Small Business Administration 8(a) program participant, Certified Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB) and Certified HUBZone firm and become eligible for restricted competition contracts, non-competitive contracts and ten percent price preferences. To learn more about the programs go to

<http://www.sba.gov/>

- D. Register your company in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database located at <http://www.ccr.gov>. HUD contracting officers and program office staff conduct market research and verify companies SBA certifications through this database. Vendors are required to complete a one-time registration to provide basic information relevant to procurement and financial transactions. Vendors must update or renew their registration annually to maintain an active status.

- E. In addition, you may wish to register on the **Minority Business Development Agency's (MBDA) Phoenix Database**, which is a database of minority businesses. MBDA uses the Phoenix database with the Opportunities Database to match listed minority firms with contracts and other business opportunities via e-mail and fax. You can access Phoenix at:

**<http://www.mbda.gov/>**

- F. **Register at <http://www.fedbizopps.gov/> to receive e-mail about upcoming federal agency contracting opportunities.** (Be advised that registering will mean you may receive up to 600 announcements per month.)

#### **IV. Learn and research the companies and agencies that you target**

- A. If HUD is one of the agencies to which you have chosen to market, study HUD's web page at **[www.HUD.gov](http://www.HUD.gov)**.
- B. Know your customer. Review HUD's mission, program office accomplishments and updates.
- C. Identify potential direct contracting opportunities at: **[www.hud.gov/offices/osdbu/4cast.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/offices/osdbu/4cast.cfm)**.
- D. Start with the following homepages:

**<http://www.hud.gov/smallbusiness>**

**<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpo/index.cfm>**

- E. Identify potential contracting opportunities generated by HUD's grant and funding recipients, which are discussed at HUD's grantees and funding web page:

**<http://www.hud.gov/grants/index.cfm>**

(This site contains information on competitive grants, formula grants, loans, contracts, federal funding sources, tax credits, private funding sources, etc.)

- F. Review HUD's grantees' planned activities that offer subsequent contracting opportunities.
- G. For information on the activities that public housing agencies plan to undertake, visit Public and Indian Housing's Approved Public Housing Authority Plan web site at:

**<http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/index.cfm>**

## **V. First impressions are lasting impressions**

Project a professional image, from the first telephone call to the content and appearance of your company's capability statement.

## **VI. Locate the right people**

- A. Discuss potential contracting opportunities with the small business, contracting and program office staff identified on HUD's website and in HUD's *Forecast of Contracting Opportunities*.
- B. Contact the HUD grantee procurement officials listed on HUD's website to learn about contract opportunities.
- C. Participate in events and meetings attended by your target audience;
- D. Attend trade fairs in your company's discipline and meet with your targeted representatives.

## **VII. Capitalize on your past experience**

- A. Elaborate on previous related experience;
- B. Mention any awards and recommendations from highly regarded sources that support the quality of your product or services;
- C. Emphasize unique capabilities that your company can provide and how your company would be a valuable asset to the HUD project and program office;
- D. When marketing to federal agencies, tell your potential clients what procurement provisions can be used to **"reach you"** (i.e., Are you certified as an SBA 8(a) Business, Small Disadvantaged Business or HUBZone firm? Are you on the GSA schedule?).