GSA

GSA Federal Supply Service

The Steps to Success

How to Be a Successful Contractor

The Steps to Success

As our partner, there are many steps you'll need to follow to be successful. To make the process a little easier, we have compiled this guide. In the next few pages, we'll show you how to:

- *Create, distribute and update your price list*
- *Participate in* GSA *Advantage!®* *and e-Buy*
- *Market your company to targeted Government customers*
- *Report sales and remit the Industrial Funding Fee (IFF)*
- *Keep your contract current through contract modifications*
- *Be a quality GSA Schedule partner*

We encourage you to review your contract for complete details; it contains all the tools you need to succeed!

We have provided a Business Reply Card on the inside back cover of this brochure. Please take the time to complete this card and mail it by June 1, 2003. This is your opportunity to express your comments on this brochure or to seek additional assistance. We look forward to hearing from you.

Welcome

and congratulations on becoming a part of the GSA Schedules Team!

You've invested considerable time and resources to establish a relationship with the Federal Supply Service and we want to help you make the most of it. As GSA's "face" to the customer, you are our partner in meeting the needs of our mutual customers, and we want you to succeed.

The Multiple Award Schedules program is the premier Government acquisition program in place today. Mirroring commercial buying practices, it is the fastest, easiest, and most effective contracting vehicle available, designed to help customer agencies comply with all the rules and regulations to buy products and services the right way.

With over 11,000 contracts in place, and more being added every day, the competition is fierce. Do you have what it takes to succeed? Are you ready to be an outstanding GSA Schedule partner? We are both dedicated to serving our customers. To promote this relationship and your success, GSA presents this "Step-by-Step" guide to help you reach the top. We are in this together! Success is our mutual goal!!

The Steps to Success

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Step 1 Understanding Contract Requirements

Important Contacts for Success

When you need advice or help, these are the people to contact:

- Your **Procurement Contracting Officer** (PCO) is the individual who negotiates and awards your contract and handles most day-to-day contracting matters.
- Your **Administrative Contracting Officer** (ACO) is assigned after contract award, based on your geographic location. Your ACO is responsible for the Industrial Funding Fee (IFF), 72A sales and other compliance issues, and can provide you with useful springboards to help you climb the stairway to success!
- The **Industrial Operations Analyst** (IOA) works in concert with the ACO and PCO and makes personal visits to your company to explain what is expected of you, provide marketing assistance, resolve sales reporting or fee payment issues, and ensure overall contract compliance.
- The **Vendor Support Center** is your major long-term data source for information on all Multiple Award Schedule contracts. In the future, more and more information will be available and submitted through the VSC. A representative can be reached at (877) 495-4849 or (703) 305-6235, or log on to www.vsc.gsa.gov
- The **MAS Helpdesk** at (703) 305-6566, MAS Helpdesk@gsa.gov
- The **U-MAS Virtual Campus** is a web site designed to provide working knowledge on a vast array of subjects such as: Ordering Procedures, Performance-Based Contracting, Blanket Purchase Agreements, Team Arrangements, and Best Practices. Check it out at http://apps.fss.gsa.gov/umas

Your Passport to Government Agencies

Make sure your price list addresses all of these required items, even if non-applicable. The standard format helps our customers to make distinctions when comparing numerous price lists, so you'll want yours to be as accurate and complete as possible. This does not mean that your price list has to be generic or boring. On the contrary, it is an excellent chance to market your business and stand out from the crowd! **Overall, make your price list easy for the customer to use and follow.**

While the ink on your contract begins to dry, you should immediately turn your attention to marketing your new award! GSA's strength lies in identifying customer needs and supplying those needs through our industry partners. Your contract price list is a "catalog" that lists the items you have been awarded and identifies the terms and conditions of your contract. Ordering agencies use this information when ordering from GSA schedules. Our surveys have shown that customers most often seek the optimal balance of quality and best value, so you should focus on these to succeed. Although the Government is moving towards a paperless environment, we're not there yet. The paper price list still plays an important role as procurement folks make comparisons of schedule contracts. Because our customers rely on them, the price list is mandatory in accordance with clause I-FSS-600, Contract Price Lists. This clause in your contract provides the format for completing a price list that must contain the following:

- Contract items awarded and associated pricing
- Labor Categories and Descriptions
- Maximum/minimum order provisions
- Geographic coverage (delivery area)
- Points of production
- Discounts from the list prices or statement of net prices
- Volume discounts
- Prompt payment terms
- Acceptance of the Government commercial purchase card
- Foreign items offered
- Delivery terms
- Expedited delivery

Note: Look to Clause I-FSS-600 for more information on Contract Price Lists.

Identifying Your Terms & Conditions

Remember: If you are a contractor with participating dealers, the terms and conditions of your contract must flow down to your dealers.

Note: Look to Clause G-FSS-913 for more details on Participating Dealers and Billing Responsibilities

Your price list is your initial "face" to the customer. Make sure that it is user friendly and makes the customer want to do business with you. Your price list must include the terms and conditions that were identified, reviewed and negotiated prior to your contract award. You may only include those items, terms and conditions that were awarded.

Be sure to send two copies of the contract price list to your GSA Procurement Contracting Officer (PCO) within 30 days of your contract award.

Step 2 Marketing Your Business

We want you to be successful, and will assist you in every way possible. Just as you market your commercial business, you need to market your business to Government customers as well. Here are some helpful hints:

Distributing Your Price List

While GSA makes every effort to keep our mailing lists as up-to-date as possible, Government representatives often move. Mailing lists are not always current.

Note: Clause I-FSS-639 specifies that the GSA provided mailing list only be used for the distribution of the authorized Schedule price list. GSAM Clause 552.238-71 specifies requirements for the Submission and Distribution of Authorized FSS Schedule Price Lists.

You should print and widely distribute your price list. For many schedules, GSA provides a mailing list of customers who have expressed an interest in the services and products on a particular GSA schedule, and this can be requested on a CD. Ask your PCO if your particular schedule has a customer mailing list. You should send out your price list to the customers listed. You can do this either by sending out the contract price list itself or by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope or a postcard indicating that your contract price list is available. Potential customers can request your price list by return reply. If you indicate that your price list is available, you should send it out within five (5) calendar days after receipt of returned requests. Make sure that your price list conveys to your customers that you are interested in their business and provide convenient ways to contact you or your representatives.

When making decisions to distribute your price list, you will want to familiarize yourself with the peak buying times for your products and services. Government buying trends can be tracked, so do your research and pay attention to timing for best results.

Cover your internal bases — (marketing, sales, cost, customer service, follow-up). Make sure that your customer is satisfied.

Maximize Your Web Presence

You can maximize your web presence simply by adding your web site address to the front of the contract price list. Make sure you provide the web address that sends the customer directly to your GSA contract information.

If you have a company web site already established, consider providing links through GSA *Advantage!*® directly to your home page. There are some restrictions, but this is an excellent way to avoid duplication of effort and "Wow" your customers with all the products or services you have available. It's your contract. Make the most of it.

The GSA Advantage!® and e-Buy Benefit

Remember each time your contract is modified — you need to update your GSA *Advantage!*® file, in order to provide customers your most up-to-date information.

Posting the Price List to GSA *Advantage!*®

After your price list is completed, your next step is to post it to GSA *Advantage!*®, our electronic online shopping and ordering system. GSA *Advantage!*® is a powerful tool which provides online access to several thousand contractors and millions of services and products, and is the official Federal source for Government purchasing. GSA *Advantage!*® serves as a simplified resource to help customers see who is on schedule. It is beneficial for you to include a link to your company web site, where customers can easily view your price list. Make sure you also provide them a link that allows them to toggle back and forth to your site. **It is your responsibility to keep GSA *Advantage!*® information current, accurate and complete** to better help Federal customers find the products and services they need. Make your customers feel welcome!

To find out more about GSA *Advantage!*® go to http://vsc.gsa.gov and click on GSA *Advantage!*®.

To post a file to GSA *Advantage!*®, go to http://vsc.gsa.gov and click on "SIP User Menu". GSA *Advantage!*® has both text and reference options. Review both to see which is better for you. Check with your IOA or ACO if you need help getting loaded onto GSA *Advantage!*®.

The Benefits of GSA *Advantage!*®

Customers use GSA *Advantage!*® to search out sources, perform market research and to place orders. Contractors use GSA *Advantage!*® to find out who their competition is and what they are doing in the marketplace. To shop GSA *Advantage!*®, a customer must be a Federal government employee with a governmentwide GSA SmartPay purchase card or a GSA Activity Address Code (AAC). Customers may also browse the system to conduct market research. Customer browsing currently results in approximately 30,000 hits per week. The earlier your price list is loaded to GSA *Advantage!*®, the quicker your firm is visible to GSA's customers.

The Government uses GSA *Advantage!*® to:

- Search for items using keywords, part numbers, National Stock Numbers (NSNs), supplier names, contract numbers, etc.
- Compare features, prices, and delivery options
- Configure products and add accessories
- Place orders directly online
- Review and choose delivery options
- Select a convenient payment method
- View order history to track status, reorder, or cancel.

Industry uses GSA *Advantage!*® to:

- Research competition
- Check out the market
- Research valuable online information
- Sell to the Federal marketplace.

Note: Participation in GSA Advantage!® is mandatory. Look to Clause I-FSS-597 for more details.

www.gsaadvantage.gov

GSA Advantage!®
www.gsaAdvantage.gov

e-Buy makes RFQs visible to all schedule contractors. Even if you haven't been invited to respond for a buy, you should take a look. It is also a great market research tool – a way to gather good information to help you market yourself to the same Agency in the future.

What is e-Buy?

e-Buy is GSA's newest e-tool, a GSA *Advantage!*®-based electronic Requests for Quotes (RFQ) solution (not to be confused with e-Bay, the auction web site!). It facilitates the request for, and submission of, quotes for a wide range of commercial services and products that are offered by sellers who are on GSA *Advantage!*® (Only those sellers who participate in GSA *Advantage!*® have an opportunity to participate in e-Buy and receive Requests for Quotes. Your registration on GSA *Advantage!*® automatically registers your Contract Administrator on e-Buy!)

e-Buy is dedicated to bringing the customer and the contractor together. e-Buy allows customer agencies to maximize their buying power, leverage the power of the Internet, and increase schedule contractor participation in order to obtain quotes, which will result in "best value" purchase decisions.

Note: To change or add recipients for e-Buy notices, visit the Vendor Support Center. Click on "e-Buy," then select "Profile Update." Multiple recipients can be added.

What are the Benefits of e-Buy?

Through e-Buy, schedule contractors (sellers) have greater opportunity to offer quotes and increase business volume for services and products provided under their schedule contract. e-Buy provides customer agencies with a tool that results in savings of both time and money.

How Does e-Buy Work?

Using the e-Buy system, an ordering agency prepares and posts an RFQ for specific services and/or products for a designated period of time. Once posted, GSA *Advantage!*® schedule contractors will receive an e-mail notice informing them that an RFQ has been posted and a quote is requested. It may take some time for the generated e-mail to get to you, so make sure you check your GSA *Advantage!*® account everyday. You may be missing a valuable opportunity if you don't!

Each RFQ is assigned a category or Special Item Number (SIN) by the ordering agency. Some examples of the categories/SINs are office supplies/paper, consulting services, snow maintenance equipment, temporary help, or services/clerical. The SIN designation and the ordering agency determine which contractors will receive the e-mail notice. It may be sent to all contractors or any number of contractors within the SIN. Contractors who wish to quote must do so at the e-Buy web site. Contractors who are currently listed on GSA *Advantage!*® will have the opportunity to participate in e-Buy and receive requests for quotes. Once the RFQ has closed, the ordering agency may then accept the quote(s) that represents the "best value" and issue an order to the contractor whose quote was accepted. Since there are short response times, it is imperative that you check your account daily.

It is vitally important to keep your paper price list current and properly posted on GSA *Advantage!*®. Ordering agencies are turning more and more to GSA *Advantage!*® and e-Buy for their procurement needs. Don't get left behind!

Note: For more information about GSA Advantage!® or e-Buy, visit the Vendor Support Center (VSC) web site. It houses a wealth of information. Log on to http:||vsc.gsa.gov for more details, or give them a call at (703) 305-6235 or (877) 495-4849. Your Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO) or Industrial Operations Analyst (IOA) are available to help you as well.

How to Find Customers for Products and Services

Being on the front line, you know that it's not easy to find the right people to talk to in the Federal Government. What agency should you target? Once you have found the agency that fits your niche, then what? Do you work with the Procuring Contracting Officer (PCO)? the end users? or the program manager? Each of these individuals, regardless of specialty or area of interest, expects the same basic features and services when procuring products and services, but how you approach each customer depends largely on what role that individual plays in the procurement process.

The **Procurement Contracting Officers** (PCOs) are many times the "gate-keepers" to the program managers and end users. The program managers know what they want, but turn to their contracting officer to get the materials or services they need and advice on the best way to procure them. PCOs are a key part of the schedules process ensuring proper implementation and formulation of the task order.

The **end user** is the individual who will actually be the recipient of the product or service. They often have tight deadlines and frequently want the quickest way to fill the need. They may not be totally familiar with the procurement process and will turn to their contracting office for help. End users are accustomed to working with good companies and they demand good service. They want a voice in the selection of the contractor and they want to remain the key contact in the working relationship with the contractor. If you want to keep an Agency's business, keep them fully satisfied.

For high dollar value, complex service purchases, the **Program Manager** is typically the visionary. He or she will obtain the requirements for what is needed to enhance the agency's program. Normally the Program Manager has been given tight deadlines by the end user. Program Managers need reliable, high-quality contractors to help them achieve their goals. They are accustomed to working with quality contractors and tapping into this pool of expertise. They want a variety of quality resources available to select from regardless of which mechanism they use. Sometimes they are unsure of the procurement process and turn to their contracting office for help. In many instances Program Managers ask their contractors for procurement guidance or for advice on getting the products and services they need in the quickest fashion.

On the Government side of the procurement, there is a great deal of protocol and formality in complying with the multitude of rules and regulations to ensure proper acquisition results. For commodity purchases in small amounts, the purchase card makes buying very simple. The following is the typical chain of events for more complex Government purchases:

- The end user identifies a need for supplies or services to either a Program Manager or Contract Specialist. A requirements document is drafted, with the assistance of technical personnel, including an estimated cost. This information is packaged as a purchase request.
- The purchase request is routed for approval within the organization (this may consist of many layers of approval and several drafts).
- The approved purchase request goes to the organization's finance office for a commitment of funds, based on the estimate.
- The Contracting Officer receives and reviews the purchase request and:
  - researches the market
  - plans the schedule buy
  - reviews information submitted by industry (market research)
  - issues the RFQ (if appropriate)

The RFQ will tell you whether an award will be made to lowest price or the Best Value.

APPROVED

Response to RFQ

For complex service buys, there is usually an entire team assembled to facilitate the procurement process. Before issuing the RFQ, evaluation factors are developed which will maximize competition, minimize the complexity of the RFQ and the evaluation, ensure impartial and complete evaluation of all responses, and facilitate selection of the source whose performance is expected to best meet the stated Government requirements (Best Value).

Technical evaluation factors such as: past performance, technical approach, management capability, and understanding of the requirement are often used when the quality of technical performance is important relative to price. If oral proposals are called for, one goal will be to verify that you understand these key technical requirements. In some cases the only issue is whether your technical proposal is acceptable or not. In other cases, offers are evaluated against the factors by key members of the Program Office. Higher ranked offers are given more favorable consideration than lower ranked offers. Be sure to read the RFQ carefully to understand the needs of the customer.

Unlike formal source selection, schedule buys are fast and conducted without formal source selection plans. The RFQ will tell you which factors matter most, but don't expect it to provide full weighting information.

Because of the strict integrity associated with this process, key acquisition personnel must remain objective and unbiased. Government procurement officials must avoid improper personal relationships, gifts or any appearance of impropriety, but the face-to-face relationship is still significant to a long-term partnership. Your marketing efforts should be geared accordingly. Remember that the customer most often wants the optimal blend of quality and best value, and for complex acquisitions, the customers usually want a "total solution." In most cases, they do not have the resources or technical expertise in-house to buy and integrate the pieces.

How to Find These Government Customers

Your Primary Tool — Market Research

Market research is a powerful tool to find out who is buying, what they are buying and why they are buying. Gathering information about your target Federal market should be your first step towards increasing Federal sales. An incredible amount of information is available on the web and through Government agency home pages. A good place to start is www.firstgov.gov.

Federal Procurement Data Systems (FPDS)

The Federal Procurement Data Center (FPDC), part of the U.S. General Services Administration, operates and maintains the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS). The FPDS is the central repository of statistical information on Federal contracting. The system contains detailed information on contract actions over $25,000 and summary data on procurements of less than $25,000. Executive branch departments and agencies award over $200 billion annually for goods and services. The FPDS system can identify who bought what, from whom, for how much, when and where.

Note: For more information, go to www.fpdc.gov and then click on Federal Procurement Report.

Several private sector companies and government agencies are available to analyze market data for you. Some examples are*:

- Eagle Eye Publishers, www.eagleeyeinc.com
- Federal Sources, Inc. (FSI), www.fedsources.com
- GEIA, www.geia.org
- GovCon, www.govcon.com
- Fedmarket, www.fedmarket.com

** Note: This list is illustrative only and does not include all the resources that provide market data research. GSA does not endorse any of the private sector resources listed.*

FedBizOpps (FBO)

FedBizOpps (Federal Business Opportunities) has been designated as the single source for Federal government procurement opportunities that exceed $25,000. By signing up to automatically receive procurement information by solicitation number, selected organizations, and product/service classification, contractors can react more quickly to procurement opportunities because they are better informed. Contractors can also search procurements by solicitation number, date, procurement classification code, and agency for active or archived solicitations. Currently, FedBizOpps has 140,000 registered contractors who receive e-mail notification about opportunities; roughly 50,000 e-mails are sent out daily. FedBizOpps has 51 agencies (17,400 contracting officers/specialists) posting data to its web site. To sign up for automatic e-mail notification, go to www.fedbizopps.gov, click on "Vendors" and then click on "Vendor Notification Service".

The General Services Administration, which manages FedBizOpps, will provide files that can be downloaded free-of-charge to any contractor, service provider, government entity, or other public or private organization that wishes to print the contents of FedBizOpps. The files provide the same information that was formerly found in the Commerce Business Daily (CBD) printed version. If you have questions, please contact the FedBizOpps support desk at fbo.support@gsa.gov or toll-free at 877-472-3779. If you are interested in obtaining a printed version of FedBizOpps, please contact Yancey Stern at 202-482-5781 or ystern@doc.gov at the Department of Commerce.

Note: For more information, go to: www.fedbizopps.gov

Federal Yellow Book Mailing List*

The Federal Yellow Book is a directory of the Executive Branch of the Federal Government within the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Quarterly editions, available on CD-ROM, keep you current with personnel and organizational changes and provide you with contact information for more than 39,500 Federal officials.

All information in the Federal Yellow Book is verified directly with each organization listed, making it an accurate and reliable source of contact information for officials in Federal departments and agencies.

Leadership Directories, Inc. publishes fourteen personnel directories called Yellow Books, which are collectively called The Leadership Library®. They offer all fourteen Yellow Books (including Congressional, Federal, State, Municipal, Federal Regional, Judicial, Corporate, Financial, News Media, Associations, Law Firms, Government Affairs, Foreign Representatives, and Nonprofit Sector books) in electronic form as "The Leadership Library®" on the Internet, which is updated daily. You can search by job titles and compile a good profile list of customers.

Most agencies post an annual forecast of opportunities. Check it out on the Agency home page and determine if you are able to offer a schedule solution. If so, go for it. If they identify a procurement method other than GSA, contact them to see if it can be converted to a GSA buy.

**GSA provides this information on the Federal Yellow Book as informational only, and does not endorse or prefer this product or service.*

Note: For information on the Federal Yellow Book Leadership Directory, go to http:||www.leadershipdirectories.com

DoD Business Opportunities

DoDBusOpps.com is an electronic portal that allows contractors to identify business opportunities within the DoD components. This site is mandatory for DoD and indexes open and active solicitation data from multiple sources: the U.S. Army via their Single Face to Industry site; the U.S. Air Force via FedBizOpps; the Defense Logistics Agency via their Procurement Gateway; and the U.S. Navy via their Navy Electronic Commerce Online (NECO) web site, among others.

Military Installations

A huge opportunity for business exists on military installations. The trick is being able to locate the right program office or procurement official. A good place to start is with Armed Forces Network's list of military installations worldwide or the U.S. Department of Defense's "Defense Link", and then narrow your search by region, state, and activity.

Note: For more information, visit: www.armedforces.net or http:||www.defenselink.mil|faq|pis|sites.html

The Professional Housing Management Association (www.phma.com) is geared to housing professionals who create and promote quality military housing, lodging and lifestyles for men and women in the armed services. You might want to check out their web site. They publish a professional periodical which may be helpful in finding housing customers.

Small Business Opportunities

GSA is an advocate for small, small disadvantaged, women-owned, HUBZone (Historically Underutilized Business Zone), Veteran and service-disabled Veteran-owned businesses. Every agency has established goals for awarding contracts and orders and for subcontracting with small businesses. Some small business programs have "set-asides" under which certain contracts are reserved for competition among small or small disadvantaged businesses. Assistance for small businesses is available through GSA headquarters and Regional Small Business Centers.

Procurement Marketing and Access Network (Pro-Net)*

Pro-Net is an electronic gateway of procurement information — for and about small businesses. It is an online database of more than 195,000 small, disadvantaged, HUB, Vet, D-Vet, 8(a) and women-owned businesses, a search engine for contracting officers, a marketing tool for small firms and a valuable link to procurement opportunities. Pro-Net is used by Federal and state government agencies as well as prime and other contractors seeking small business contractors, subcontractors and/or partnership opportunities, and is an excellent source for Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) teaming possibilities. Businesses profiled on the Pro-Net system can be searched by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes, ownership race and gender, key words, geographic location, quality certifications, business type and EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) capability. As an electronic gateway, Pro-Net provides access to agency homepages and other sources of procurement opportunities, as well as links to key sources of information, assistance and training.

** Note: For more information, go to www.pro-net.sba.gov*

GSA Marketing Partnership

GSA Marketing Partnership

The GSA Marketing Partnership is a service offered by the Office of Marketing to help strengthen the success of FSS Schedule contractors in building identification and increasing sales. This partnership provides news and information about FSS program enhancements, shows, expos and various other marketing opportunities. Participation in our shows and marketing opportunities will help you sell to the Government, increase your customer base, and penetrate overseas Federal and military markets. You can't lose. Check it out! Working with GSA's Marketing Office provides insight into what is happening in GSA, develops better partnering and helps you to be more successful. The Marketing web site provides volumes of additional detailed information that is linked to this page to provide reference and guidance information to authorized GSA Federal Supply Service (FSS) contractors, including existing GSA Schedule Contractors and new vendors considering opportunities with FSS. Be sure to check this out.

Note: For more information, go to http:||apps.fss.gsa.gov|partnership and select Premiere Events or FSS Contractor Guide.

*GSA "Logo" Identifiers**

As a GSA Schedule contractor, you are entitled to use FSS logos in your advertising. Go to http://apps.fss.gsa.gov/partnership/logos.cfm and download the FSS Identifier, GSA SmartPay or GSA *Advantage!*® logo. Placing these identifiers in your printed and online communications promotes your position as a Multiple Award Schedule holder.

**Use of these "logos" does not eliminate the requirements of the General Services Administration Acquisition Regulation (GSAR) clause 552.203-70, Restrictions on Advertising. Appropriate use of these "logos" in advertisements directed to Federal Government contract use is okay, provided that the advertisement does not state or imply that the product or service is endorsed or preferred by the Government.*

Government Advertising Opportunities

There are numerous publications read by Government employees everyday. The following are publications that offer great opportunities to market your products and services to a particular market. Find the appropriate ones for your industry and consider advertising. Many are industry specific publications. (Check out the circulation figures, especially the number of Government readers). Here is a small sampling of the huge universe of publications (although not endorsed by GSA):

- Military Times (www.militarycity.com) is a publication dedicated to providing readers with the most up-to-date news and information about military careers, lifestyles and futures.
- Armed Forces Journal (www.afji.com) is a publication with international exposure to the U.S. military.
- Stars & Stripes (www.stripes.osd.mil), is the "hometown" newspaper for service members, government civilians and their families in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and the Pacific, offers the same type of national and international news, sports and opinion columns found in newspapers in the United States.
- Government Executive (www.govexec.com) is a monthly business magazine serving senior executives and managers in the Federal Government's departments and agencies.
- MWR Today (www.imcea.com) is the official publication of the International Military Community Executives Association (IMCEA). This publication covers every aspect of military Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) with valuable insights through regular articles about MWR programs and the products and services available from manufacturers.

MarkeTips

Another way to market your products and services to potential customers is to supply advertisements to MarkeTips, a bimonthly publication for GSA customers. **Advertisements are free for schedule contract holders.** This is another way to create awareness for your company. MarkeTips is sent to over 110,000 Federal and Military subscribers worldwide and is available online at http://apps.fss.gsa.gov/pub/marketips.cfm

Note: For information on submitting advertisements, visit the GSA Marketing Partnership web site at http:||apps.fss.gsa.gov|partnership and click on "Marketips Advertising Specifications and Guidelines".

Step 3 Teaming to Propose a Total Solution

What if the Job is Bigger or Broader Than You Can Handle?

What is a GSA Federal Supply Schedule Contractor Team Arrangement?

A Contractor Team Arrangement allows two or more GSA Schedule contractors to work together to meet agency requirements. It permits contractors to complement each other and allows the team to compete for orders that they may not qualify for independently. Team Arrangements can apply to several services within the same Schedule, or can be combined across two or more Schedules. Customers benefit from a Team Arrangement by buying a total solution rather than making separate buys from various contractors.

Under GSA Federal Supply Schedule Contractor Team Arrangements, each contractor has privity of contract with the Government since each holds its own GSA Federal Supply Schedule contract. Each contractor can serve as the team leader and/or interact directly with the Government. Each contractor uses their awarded contract prices for services and products already on contract. These prices have been negotiated and determined fair and reasonable. Total solutions can be put together quickly and easily under GSA Team Arrangements using your MAS contract. This also allows the team to improve pricing to provide "Best Value" quotes.

We suggest that you put the arrangements between teaming partners in writing to prevent any later misunderstandings. At a minimum, the teaming arrangement should clearly identify the Schedule contractor team members, services/ products each team member will be responsible for supplying, and price/discount of each line item.

Invoicing, payment, warranty and reporting remittances are all areas that should be addressed in a Contractor Team Arrangement. Many times, agencies will want to receive a single invoice, citing the lead Schedule contract.

What are the Benefits of a GSA, FSS Contractor Team Arrangement?

- Satisfies the customer with a single solution
- Increases the competitive edge
- Provides complementary capabilities
- Focuses on core capabilities
- Offers additional opportunities with customers
- Integrates different skills
- Builds direct relationships with customers
- Shares risks and rewards
- Maximizes use of one or more Schedule solutions
- Increases market share
- Allows increased small business participation
- Expands visibility
- Enhances contractor images

Note: Find other GSA, FSS contractors who may want to team:

Visit Schedules e-Library (http:||www.gsaelibrary.gsa.) and click on Schedules e-Library. Optimally, look for contractors who provide products or services which enhance your specialty. For more information on Teaming Arrangements go to http:||apps.fss.gsa.gov|contractorguide|section-b.cfm and click on "Contractor Team Arrangements".

Step 4 Stepping Out From the Crowd

Ordering Procedures

Which of the following organizations are eligible to use GSA sources of supplies and services?

- Marine Mammal Commission
- Export-Import Bank of U.S.
- Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation
- Tennessee Valley Authority
- International Coffee Organization
- Government of Guam
- European Space Research Organization
- Organization of African Unity

Would you believe that they are all eligible? If you are looking for additional information on customers who can use GSA Schedule contracts, check the list of authorized users GSA Order ADM 4800.2E by visiting: www.fss.gsa.gov/schedules. Click on "Ordering From GSA Schedules" then go to "Eligibility to use GSA Schedules".

When selling to Federal agencies, here are a few things you will want to keep in mind:

- You are obligated to accept orders below the Maximum Order threshold from all executive agencies. The Maximum Order threshold is identified in each schedule contract. This threshold is not a ceiling. You **can** accept orders over this level. Agencies expect a price break for large volume buys.

  Note: Look to Clause 52.216-19 for more information on Maximum Orders.

- You are not obligated to sell to those outside of the Executive Branch; however, you are encouraged to do so. If you receive these orders and wish to refuse them, return the order within 24 hours if it was made with a purchase card, within five days if it was not.
- You are obligated to accept purchase card orders up to $2,500. (Commonly referred to as the micro-purchase threshold). We also encourage you to accept purchase card orders for amounts higher than $2,500. When you accept purchase card orders for any amount, you may not process the transaction for payment until you have shipped the goods or performed the services. Purchase card orders are considered GSA MAS sales unless otherwise specified by the customer. (See Page 31 for help.)
- To be more competitive for a particular sale or to win a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA), contractors are able to offer one-time, spot discounts from established Schedule contract prices. Schedule contractors can give one ordering agency a discount without passing the discount on to the entire Federal Government. In essence, this provision allows the contractor to offer, and the Government to take advantage of, spot pricing in the commercial market.

At the same time, Schedule contractors can be more competitive by offering higher discounts to a single ordering agency without offering the same higher discounts to all authorized users. This method allows contractors to react more immediately to the commercial market place, move inventory, and respond to technological advancements. **However, if in your commercial business, you reduce a price for your "most favored customer" (the customer/class of customer who served as the basis for your GSA award) you must extend that same price reduction to all GSA Schedule contract users.** Good internal price reduction management on your part can save you many headaches in the life of your GSA contract!

Note: See the Price Reduction Clause of your contract for more details.

Step 5 Reporting Requirements

Your contract contains several reporting requirements. Some reports, such as Sales and Subcontracting, are filed directly with GSA. Others, such as Affirmative Action and VETS 100 Compliance, are filed with other agencies. Pay attention to who gets what report and when. The following reports must be filed as indicated:

What:	Where:	When:
Affirmative Action (EEO-1)	GSA	Annually, On/Before 9/30
Sales	GSA	Quarterly
Subcontracting (SF-294)	PCO/ACO & SBA	4/30 and 10/30
Subcontracting (SF-295)	PCO/ACO & SBA	10/30
VETS 100	Veterans Administration	Annually, NLT 9/30

Reporting GSA Schedule Sales

Reporting your sales is a critical piece in the success of our relationship. The Office of Contract Management, through routine Contractor Assistance Visits (CAV), aims at making sure you succeed under your contract and verifies that you establish and maintain a good system that isolates your GSA Multiple Award Schedule sales from your commercial sales. This makes the required reporting of your MAS sales a lot easier. We have provided a secure web site for the reporting to GSA of your MAS contract sales. Go to http://vsc.gsa.gov. Click on "72A Online System" and follow the instructions.

Sales reports must be submitted and fees must be remitted quarterly. If no sales occur on your contract for the quarter, you are still responsible for filing the sales report by entering zeros. Quarterly IFF remittances are due by the end of April, July, October and January of each year. All GSA MAS contracts require contract sales reporting via the Internet.

Note: Look to Clause 552.238-74 for more information and instructions pertaining to Contractor's Report of Sales and GSA Form 72A.

Paying the Industrial Funding Fee

After you've reported your sales, it's time to send GSA the Industrial Funding Fee (IFF). When the Federal Supply Service became self-supporting, the IFF was established to cover GSA's operating costs to run the MAS program. Federal customers that use the program pay a fee that is included in the purchase price of the product or service procured.

We have provided a Business Reply Card on the inside back cover of this brochure. Please take the time to complete this card and mail it by June 1, 2003. This is your opportunity to express your comments to us or to get additional assistance. *We look forward to hearing from you.*

Regardless of whether you're paying electronically, by company check or via IFF Online, it is vitally important that you provide proper identification of the IFF payment to assure that credit is given to the proper GSA contract.

You must follow the instructions in the IFF clause and provide the following information:

- **Contract number(s)**
- **Report amount(s)**
- **Report period (s)**

If your payment is for more than one contract and/or for multiple report periods, the specific amount to be allocated to each report period and each contract number must be included on the check.

Note: For additional information on IFF payment, contact the Vendor Support Center at http:||vsc.gsa.gov or call (877)-495-4849 or (703) 305-6235. You can also contact the ACO assigned to your contract. We provide your ACO's name and telephone number shortly after your contract is awarded.

Technological Advances to Make Remitting the Fee Easier

Check out our new electronic payment mechanism to remit your IFF online. IFF Online became available in October 2002. This new initiative eliminates the expense and inconvenience of processing paper checks, eliminates the delays and uncertainty of mail deliveries, and eliminates the post-payment stress of incorrect payment amounts or incorrect allocation of payments to the contract and report period.

Connect to the Internet through the use of a web browser for electronic submission of sales reports after being awarded a MAS contract. Before you can utilize this new automated system, you must register with the GSA Vendor Support Center (http://vsc.fss.gsa.gov). This will make reporting virtually (pun intended) pain free!

How Do I Know If a Sale is a Schedule Sale?

One of the biggest questions about sales is how to recognize whether or not the sale is a MAS (Multiple Award Schedule) sale. You should give your GSA contract the widest publicity possible when Federal agencies call for information about your products and services. You should encourage all Federal customers to use your MAS contract when they place new or renewal orders. That is why you have a contract with GSA, to make it easier for our customers to meet their needs in the most efficient and economic manner.

Any one or more of the following common indicators show that a sale is a MAS sale:

- The GSA Contract Number is stated on the purchase order or task order
- The ordering information and terms are the same as your GSA contract
- The customer made contact with you through GSA *Advantage!*® or e-Buy
- The product or service is on your GSA contract
- The customer pays with the government purchase card
- The pricing is at or below the schedule price
- The order is over the micro-purchase level ($2,500) and there is no indication of any other procurement vehicle being used.

The bottom line is, when a Government order fits within the MAS contract parameters, the order should be considered a MAS sale unless the ordering agency indicates otherwise. By contract parameters, we mean the product is on schedule, the ordering organization is authorized to use the schedule, the ordering procedure used is consistent with the schedule price list, the schedule delivery terms are used, and there is no evidence of any other contracting vehicle being used by the contracting office. If you have questions or need further clarification, please talk to your ACO.

You should remember that GSA does not award contracts unless the anticipated sales are expected to exceed $25,000 in the first 24 months, and $25,000 in each subsequent year. The maintenance and administration of a contract that is generating no sales or minimal sales is costly to you and to GSA. Neither of us wants to keep a contract that is costing us money. GSA wants all our contractors to be successful.

Reporting Subcontracting Progress

If you are a large business, you need to report progress on your subcontracting goals. Subcontracting reports (SF 294 and 295) are due 30 days after the report period (04/30 and 10/30 for the SF 294; 10/30 for the SF 295). Originals go to the PCO (or the ACO, if you have been notified of this delegation in writing) and copies to the Small Business Administration as required. Look on the Vendor Support Center web site for future implementation of Online Subcontracting Reports!

- A **Commercial Products Plan** is used when a company sells large quantities of commercial off-the-shelf commodities to many Government agencies. Goals are negotiated on a company-wide basis. The plan is done annually, effective during the company's fiscal year, approved by the first Federal agency awarding a contract for commercial products during the contractor's fiscal year, and is applicable to every additional Federal contract for commercial products awarded to that contractor during the contractor's same fiscal year. **A new plan must be obtained and approved 30 days prior to the expiration of the current plan.**
- An **Individual Contract Plan** covers the entire contract period (including option periods), applies to a specific contract, and has goals that are based on the company's planned subcontracting and purchasing in support of the performance of a specific contract. (Indirect costs incurred for common or joint purposes may be allocated on a prorated basis to the contract.)
- An **Individual Contract Plan Incorporating Master Plan** — Master plans containing all the required elements of an individual contract plan, except goals, may be incorporated into individual contract plans providing the master plan has been approved. A master plan must be approved once **every three years**. Once incorporated into a contract with specific goals, it is valid for the life of the contract.

Step 6 Caring for Your Contract

Your GSA contract will be more successful if you take good care of it. This includes keeping it up-to-date. Work with your PCO to get rid of obsolete items and add new ones. You should continuously fine-tune your contract listing to maximize its potential. Make sure all of your items are under contract for your customer's easy access. Here is the procedure for modifying or updating your contract. When a modification is necessary (phone numbers, names, email addresses, titles, model names and numbers, etc.), your first step is to talk to your PCO. No modification is too insignificant!

Name Change/Novation

If your company is undergoing a name change/novation or is being bought or sold, notify your PCO immediately. They will guide you through the necessary steps and direct you to what paperwork is required.

Note: Look to the Federal Acquisition Regulation Part 42.12 for the required Change of Name and Novation Agreement documentation.

www.dunandbradstreet.com

Address Change

Every GSA MAS contractor has a Dun and Bradstreet number (DUNS) to participate under GSA Schedules. The DUNS Number is tied to your address, so if you move, you must notify your PCO, and Dun and Bradstreet. This is extremely important to the proper administration of your contract.

Note: Go to www.dnb.com for more information on changing your DUNS Number.

Regular maintenance of your Dun and Bradstreet information is very important. Be sure to check it every 30 days, especially if you have recently moved or plan to move.

Price Adjustments and Adding New Items

To adjust prices or add new items, bone up on the requirements of Clause 522.216-70 Economic Price Adjustment, and 552.243-72, Modifications. These clauses tell you what documentation you need to submit with your request. You will have to negotiate these modifications with your PCO. (Check the Economic Price Adjustment Clause for pricing caps, time limitations and procedures).

New items or services must fall within the scope of your awarded GSA Schedule contract. In order to reduce turnaround times, be sure to send the PCO all of the required information when requesting additions to your contract.

Note: Check Clause 552.243.72 for more on modifications to your contract and the information needed to process a modification.

When requesting price adjustments **for products**, you need to submit:

- A copy of the new commercial catalog/price list
- Relevant invoices, purchase orders, contracts, or similar substantiating documents demonstrating that you've sold the items at the new price
- Effective date for commercial customers
- The most favored customer
- Product testing

For price adjustments **on services**, you'll need to submit:

- A copy of the new commercial catalog/price list or
- Relevant invoices, purchase orders, contracts, or similar substantiating documents demonstrating that you've sold the services at the new price
- New labor categories (including definitions and qualifications)
- The most favored customer

Many service contracts allow no adjustments since escalation factors were negotiated and prices fixed at the outset. In such a case, your prices are set unless there is a massive change in the industry.

Important Definitions

Solicitation: Any request to submit offers or quotations to the Government. Solicitations under sealed bid procedures are called "Invitations For Bids" (IFBs). Solicitations under negotiated procedures are called "Requests For Proposals" (RFPs). Solicitations under simplified acquisition procedures may require submission of either a quotation or an offer. (FAR 2.1)

Amendment: Any change to the terms and conditions of a "solicitation", "Request For Proposal" (RFP) or "Request For Quotes" (RFQ). Amendments are used when it becomes necessary to make changes in quantity, specifications, delivery schedules, opening dates, etc., or to correct a defective or ambiguous invitation. Changes to a solicitation are accomplished by issuance of Standard Form 30, Amendment of Solicitation/Modification of Contract. (FAR 14.208 or FAR 15.206)

Modification: Any written change in the terms and conditions of a contract. (FAR 43.103) Modifications fall into two classifications, unilateral or bilateral. A **"unilateral"** modification is issued by the Government, carries only one signature and generally **directs** the contractor to accomplish a specific action. A **"bilateral"** modification carries two signatures (the contractor's and the Government's) and represents a mutual agreement of the parties to a course of action or change in performance requirements.

When GSA Requests Changes

GSA contracts are periodically refreshed to update terms and conditions. Clauses may be updated, new clauses may be required, old clauses may be obsolete, etc. Normally, the PCO tries to combine changes to a contract, but there is no limit to the number of times a solicitation can be amended or a contract can be modified.

Refreshing contracts allows everybody to compete on the same terms. We also may be exercising our option to renew your contract and may ask you for information to determine if exercising your option remains in the Government's best interests. Read all documentation from the Contracting Officer and comply with timing requests, if any are specified. Don't hesitate to talk directly to the person initiating the change for clarifications and questions. You'll want to be well informed of any changes that impact your contract.

Note: Ask us about the "Contractor Assessment Initiative" (CAsI). It is an exciting new initiative in the Office of Contract Management, which will help you succeed under your contract and will provide "Best Value" information to our customers. Don't miss out on this terrific opportunity.

Canceling Your Contract

You and the Government both have the right to cancel your contract with 30 days notice and walk away free and clear. There are several reasons why the Government may choose to cancel a contract. Some of these are:

- Violations of contract terms and conditions
- Non-compliance with contract deliverables (failure to report sales, repeated late reporting of sales, failure to remit IFF, failure to keep the price list current, failure to load the price list to GSA *Advantage!*®)
- The Government no longer has a need for the products and/or services offered
- Low annual sales (maintaining the contract is not profitable to you or GSA)

You may choose to cancel your contract for numerous reasons. Some of these are:

- Change in corporate structure (company bought or sold)
- Change in business direction
- Low annual sales (maintaining the contract is not profitable to your company)

Cancellations are effective 30 calendar days after the other party receives the written notice of cancellation.

Note: Look to Clause 552.238-73 for more information on Contract Cancellation.

Step 7 Getting the Support You Need

GSA's job doesn't end with your contract award; in fact, it's really just the beginning. We are your partners. We're available to you throughout your entire contract period (potentially 20 years) and will strive to develop a close working relationship. We want to ensure that you have the tools necessary to be a GSA schedule success!

Your Rights in the Face of a Disagreement

If a disagreement arises between you and a Government customer, the first step should be to try and iron out the differences with the agency's Contracting Officer who made the award. If that doesn't work, the use of Alternative Disputes Resolution (ADR), as provided at FAR 33.214 (www.arnet.gov/far), is encouraged.

Schedules E-Library – A Valuable Online Information Resource

Schedules e-Library is GSA's official online source for complete Federal Supply Schedule information. Information is updated daily to ensure access to the latest Federal Supply Schedules and contract award information.

You can update your own information or find out if your competition has a contract, and what's covered under their contract by using various search options, e.g., Schedule contractor's name, contract number, Special Item Number, Schedule Number, or keyword. This is also a great tool for you to use to find Teaming Partners when responding to a customer's requirement. (www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov)

Note: If you find that your information is not up-to-date, go to www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov and select the "Help" icon on the top of the screen, then scroll down to "IV. Changing Your Company Information")

Step 8 Reaping the Rewards!

How Do I Get Paid?

Payment on a Multiple Award Schedule contract is similar to that of your commercial invoicing practices, but will largely depend upon the terms of your actual task order or blanket purchase agreement (BPA).

Whether your order was with DoD or a civilian agency, an even better way to get paid faster is to ask the customer agency to make payment by purchase card. While you will pay a transaction fee to the bank, you will avoid invoicing costs and the efforts of chasing the payment.

Department of Defense

Payments are made by the Defense Finance Account System (DFAS).

To be paid, you must be registered in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) system. To register, go to the web site www.ccr.gov and follow the directions. This site also provides links to getting a Dun and Bradstreet Number, Cage Code, learning about NAICS codes and other helpful information. Your registration is good for one year. You must update this registration at least once every 365 days. If you do not keep your registration current, DFAS will not pay you.

DFAS maintains a payment inquiry site on the DFAS homepage at www.dfas.mil. If you are registered in the CCR, and have submitted a valid invoice, this site is a good place to start.

Civilian Agencies

Vendor Express is an electronic funds transfer program to make direct deposits to your bank. Using this system eliminates potential loss of a paper check being mailed to you or your bank and is much faster.

The Department of Treasury web site http://www.treas.gov also has answers to questions regarding your rights when offering prompt payment discounts and charging interest if a payment is late and lots of other helpful information regarding "money."

For more information on Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) or Vendor Express, visit www.fss.gsa.gov, click on "Selling to the Government" and follow the link to "Vendor Assistance."

Note: For additional information on submitting invoices and getting paid review FAR Clauses 552.232-74 — INVOICE PAYMENTS (SEP 1999) and 552.232-77 PAYMENT BY GOVERNMENT COMMERCIAL PURCHASE CARD (MAR 2000) (ALTERNATE I — MAR 2000)

Establishing a Merchant Account to Accept the Government Purchase Card

The benefit of accepting the Government Purchase Card is a greater assurance that you'll get paid! If you currently accept Visa or MasterCard, there is nothing more to do! If you currently do not accept these you need to set up a Merchant Account. A Merchant Account is an agreement between your business and a merchant processor that allows you to accept credit card payments from your customers. If you are setting up a new merchant account, you may be required to pay an Application Fee. Merchant Account costs depend on several things:

- The type of business and product or service sold
- The credit worthiness of the applicant
- How business is transacted (number, type and size of transactions)

Depending on these factors, your Merchant Account fees will include a discount between 1.45% and 4% compared similarly to the way you shop around for bank interest rates, plus a flat fee per transaction. New businesses may also be required to pay a one-time setup fee to process your application. Additional monthly fees for your Merchant Account may include a monthly Statement Fee ($0.00 to $15.00) and sometimes a minimum assessment of transaction fees to be billed to your account each month (ranging from $0.00 to $25.00). The Merchant Account only enables you to process credit card transactions. You will need a vehicle to move the customer's credit card information to the processor, which might be a telephone, a credit card terminal or a virtual terminal integrated with your web site. Shop around! Bank charges will vary.

Enjoy Your Success!

A Schedule contract represents a whole lot of work on both our parts. You're on Schedule because we believe in you and want you to be our partner...our "face" to the customer. The range of authorized users is vast and your contract allows you the opportunity to sell to all of them. We are dedicated to working with you and helping you achieve great things. We have created this guide, "Your Stairway to Success", in the hope that it will help you become a successful Schedule contractor!

Helpful Web Addresses

Additional Web Sites that may be of interest:

ASSIST (Acquisition Streamlining and Standardization Information System)	**http://assist.daps.dla.mil/**
Central Contractor Registration	**www.ccr.gov**
Dun & Bradstreet	**www.dnb.com**
FSS Publications	**www.fss.gsa.gov/pub**
FedBizOpps	**www.fedbizopps.gov**
Federal Acquisition Regulation Home Page	**www.arnet.gov/far**
Federal Agencies Directory (LSU library)	**www.lib.lsu.edu/gov/fedgov**
Federal Computer Week	**www.fcw.com**
Federal Procurement Data Center	**www.fpdc.gov**
GSA Advantage	**www.gsaadvantage.gov**
GSA Expo	**www.expo.gsa.gov**
GSA Home Page	**www.gsa.gov**
GSA Marketing Partnership	**www.fss.gsa.gov/partnership**
GSA Schedules E-Library	**www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov**
Government Executive Magazine	**www.govexec.com**
Military Newspaper Advertising	**mconetwork.com/gsafss/**
Security Clearances	**www.dss.mil/isec/index.htm**
Small Business Administration	**www.sba.gov**
Smart Card Links	**www.gsa.gov/smartcard**
Vendor Support Center	**vsc.gsa.gov**
72A Quarterly Reporting System	**72a.fss.gsa.gov**
1122 Program	**www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/html/bulletin.htm**

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We look forward to hearing from you.

Success is our plan…
only you can make
it a reality!!

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Spring 2003

U.S. General Services Administration
Federal Supply Service

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