After being awarded the prime on a Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) or an Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity contract (IDIQ), winning firms are often faced with a new series of questions and challenges. They have to quickly change gears and transition from contract pursuit to pursuing individual task orders, ramping up the work itself, shifting staff to appropriate task orders, and marketing to their new customer; all while continuing to pursue other growth opportunities.

Transition comes with a cost. Many contractors realize rather quickly that they need to re-evaluate or improve their processes to be able to cost-effectively pursue task orders in the condensed timeframes required for success. During the recent Deltek webinar “GWAC and IDIQ Best Practices to Win More,” speaker Jim McCarthy, principal owner and technical director of AOC Key Solutions, discussed task order-driven contract vehicles. He also shared seven tips for creating a long-tail view of contracting success that every firm should remember, as well as recommendations for effective tools that can help with those pursuits.
Pursuing task orders is ultimately what your role is in any task order-driven contract, but, as many in the government contracting world say, getting a GWAC or IDIQ contract is like getting a hunting license.

You’ve Won, Now What?
The minute the celebration ends following a GWAC or IDIQ contract win, the real work begins. “The capture challenge doesn’t go away after you’ve won the contract,” warned McCarthy. “Arguably, it gets bigger.”

Task orders, the lifeblood of any GWAC or IDIQ prime contract holder, come with their own set of unique challenges:
- Accelerated response times of as few as three days
- Little knowledge about competitor’s intents
- Rules that may limit the ability to switch staff or teaming partners
- Availability of staff or partners for specialized orders
- Growth limitations of pre-competed rate structures
- Company-specific, pre-competed solutions
- Limited customer contact.

With the right tools, resources and drive, contractors can capture revenue from a task order and be successful. Following is a series of recommendations on how government contractors can survive and thrive as a prime on GWACs and IDIQs; ultimately maximizing their potential for task order opportunities once they have won the right to start hunting.

Just being on a GWAC or IDIQ contract does not automatically mean that opportunities come to contractors. Instead, firms receive and must learn to manage task orders issued from the government, in addition to marketing their products, capabilities and services to recoup initial contract investment.

Seven Steps to Task Order Success
Evolving a team from GWAC or IDIQ bidders to task order winners takes time. The following best practices help to speed up a potentially lengthy process.

1: Maintain Constant Capture Posture
Businesses during the pursuit of a contract increase communication and create synergies between their business development and capture teams, as well as other divisions. Yet, many organizations lose that collaborative momentum after the award honeymoon. Companies seeking to continue their success need to focus on three modes to remain relevant:
1. Proactive – Identify and qualify potential opportunities
2. Pre-emptive – Build a better position for future opportunities
3. Reactive – Leverage the output of those pre-emptive activities to pursue new task orders.

Thankfully, solutions that automate delivery of task orders from the government, like GovWin Contracts and Task Order, can greatly reduce the time needed to find new opportunities; with automated delivery of federal task orders updated every 15 minutes for supported contract vehicles. After the new task order opportunity is seamlessly imported into GovWin Contracts and Task Order, potential fits can be emailed to a company’s contract manager or an entire GWAC/IDIQ organization.

2: Take a Broader View
Pursuing task orders is ultimately what your role is in any task order-driven contract, but, as many in the government contracting world say, getting a GWAC or IDIQ contract is like getting a hunting license. If you do not hunt, you will not get new
GWAC and IDIQ task orders reward not only the most innovative companies, but also those that are collaboratively nimble.

Task order opportunities. Yet, focusing solely on pursuing those task orders is not your only goal, your company also needs to think about growing its potential reach within government.

“The attention needs to increase on your external customers from the current IDIQ for potential growth opportunities because often, IDIQ contracts are with multiple agencies, not all the time but often,” McCarthy said. “Now you’re in the position to compete for opportunities that may be outside your comfort area. So if you have this vehicle, this gives you an opportunity to go forward and take that chance. “

With larger multi-agency, task-order contracts, your business will gain exposure with several different agencies, allowing you to start building relationships as tasks are completed, as well as to take the initiative to pursue opportunities that might be outside of your company’s new growth comfort area.

For teams looking for more context and collaboration on the task orders they pursue, Deltek’s GovWin Contracts and Task Order solution allows an entire team to look at opportunities, flag them with reasons why they did not receive bids, and quickly generate monthly bid/no-bid reports. Once automated, teams can use the reports to examine current and past bid/no-bid behaviors and determine if the company needs to invest in resources to pursue those no-bid opportunities in the future.

3: Do Not Go It Alone
Teaming is the best way to build a history and fill in that critical past performance section in every proposal. Businesses should also examine how they can better leverage their company’s current resources, or turn to teaming partners to help complete a task order. Many small businesses get typecast as a single-task performer. Instead, it is better to use the whole company to go after potential opportunities on several task strengths.

4: Have a Defined Strategy
Throughout the pursuit of a contract, the true capabilities of your company become clear. During that time, fruitful discussions will begin regarding the rules and limitations that control which task order you elect to pursue. By creating a defined strategy, you will be able to focus on your skills and limit the threat of exceeding core strengths. Since IDIQs have multiple products and services across many agencies, there is a great deal of temptation to do it all. Smart competitors, instead, use this strategy to help set parameters for which bids to pursue or pass.

5: Establish Responsive Infrastructure
Any delay in the response to a task order makes it less likely that your company will submit the winning bid. Creating a series of processes with the right technological support can decrease the time needed to craft a response, and in turn increase win potential. As the need for rapid replies has grown, the concept of creating an internal department center focused on GWAC or IDIQs has become popular among contractors.

While no two are alike, these centers commonly become a resource for developing proposals, managing the creation of proposals, managing reusable materials (such as templates or pricing sheets), accessing internal/external staffing resources, maintaining partnerships, and establishing task order tool experts.

6: Establish Partnerships
GWAC and IDIQ task orders reward not only the most innovative companies, but also those that are collaboratively nimble. That means reaching out to customers, your customer’s customers and even other primes on the same contract. In certain scenarios, forming coalitions with competitors might be the best way to ensure a piece of the action.

These partnerships often form teaming
agreements, allowing primes to find subcontractors with specialized skills or past performance successes to help meet the needs of a new task order. Traditionally, primes can consult their notes and internal databases to find such resources. To save time and access potential, many contractors turn to the GovWin Network, where they can seek companies, sort through skills based on specific criteria, or present opportunities to a network of more than 38,000 members from more than 18,000 companies. For ongoing partner and supplier management needs across a number of contract vehicles, many companies also turn to GovWin Supplier Management to streamline and improve partner communications, rank and evaluate companies, collaborate in private groups, and save critical time in searching for the right partners.

7: Make Execution Your Best Marketing

Current performance on a task order can often overshadow a lack of past-performance or a previous infraction. Performing outstanding work shows customers that they can rely on your company in the future. Train your project staff to establish themselves as business developers on the contract. This establishes experts who are focused on the needs of the customer, drive the company’s current performance, and take ownership of each task. Treating your employees well means that your employees treat your customers well.

Conclusion

Used correctly and reviewed frequently, McCarthy’s seven tips provide comprehensive insights on how GWAC and IDIQ contractors can increase revenue from their task orders. In one way, these tips could guide a company’s methods for prioritizing long-term goals and using available tools to implement, track and monitor progress towards those goals. For another, these can be assignable tasks for divisions or individuals to improve a company’s readiness to win.

With GovWin’s Task Order Solutions, government contractors of every size can meet their goals as they expedite bid/no-bid decisions, streamline processes used to create task order responses, find new partners to meet the requirements for new business opportunities, and improve an organization’s overall efficiency.

In the end, an efficient company focused on improving its processes is one that displays a readiness to win and profit from more task orders.

For information on how GovWin’s Task Order Solutions can grow your government business, call 888-994-6788, email info@govwin.com or visit GovWin.com.