Capture Planning, Proposal Development and Win Strategies

Presented by: Jim McCarthy
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>$120B federal contract awards since 1983 averaging $9.1B/yr past 5 yrs

>225 clients—SBs to largest DoD/aerospace firms

45 Full Time BD and proposal specialists supported by >250 SMEs

WINS across all federal agencies
Agenda

► Module 1: Setting the Stage
► Module 2: Capture Planning—Elements of Capture Excellence
► Module 3: Proposal Development
► Module 4: Win Strategies
► Module 5: Wrap-Up—Keys to Winning
► Questions and Answers
The Big Idea
Current conditions in the Government contracts market require more focus and discipline than ever before.

A laser focus helps achieve the winning edge.
Module 1: Setting the Stage

Some Preliminaries
Federal Government Market Metrics
(Source: Deltek Analysis of President’s FY2013 Budget)

Total Budget ~ $3.7 Trillion
  Interest on Debt: $230B (6.2%)
  Mandatory: $2.1 Trillion (56.7%)
Discretionary Spending: $1.3 Trillion (35.1%)
  $140 Billion in Grants

$540 Billion Federal Contracts
(14.6% of Budget)
Unlike at the Olympics…

Silver and bronze medals are rarely awarded in government contracting.
Who Are the Players?
Capture Manager Charter

- Competitive Assessment
- Black Hat Vulnerability
- Strategy Session
- Teaming Alliances/Agreements
- Key Personnel Selection
- Capture Strategy
- Themes and Discriminators
- Bid/No-Bid
- Budget Plan
- Orchestrate Color Teams
- Hand Proposal Manager a Workable Roadmap

*Leads middle lifecycle phases and is multi-focused*
Business Development Manager Charter

- Monitor Market
- Identify Opportunities
- Screen Opportunities
- Qualify Opportunities
- Maintain Customer Contact and Visibility
- Determine Compelling Needs
- Sell Value Proposition
- Hand Capture Manager a Game Plan

Leads early lifecycle phases and primarily market, Customer, and opportunity focused
Proposal Manager Charter

*Internally focused on leading the development of a winning proposal*

- Execute Capture Strategy
- Create & Execute Proposal Plan
- Drive Win Themes into proposal
- Proposal Management
- Ensure Compliance
- Integration
- Production and Delivery

*Development driven by government requirements and output of capture management activities*
Acquisition Lifecycle

**Events**
- Pre-RFP
- Draft RFP
- Final RFP
- Post-Submittal

**Phase**
- Identify
- Qualify
- Commit
- Propose

**Responsibility**
- Business Development
- Capture Management
- Proposal Management
- Performance/BD

**Timeframe**
- 18 Months Out
- 12 to 6 Months Out
- 90 to 0 Days Out
- Post Submission

**Shaping the Procurement**
- Sources Sought
- White Papers
- Meetings/Presentations
- RFI Response

**Activities**
- Update Strategic Plan
- Identify Opportunity
- Establish Customer Contact
- Develop Business Case
- Develop Customer Intimacy
- Develop National Winning Profile
- Perform Gap Analysis
- Track Opportunity
- Qualify Opportunity
- Identify and Mitigate OCI
- Establish B&P Budget
- Develop Business Case
- Assess Profitability
- Evaluate ROI
- Develop Business Model
- Initiate Win Strategy
- Further Customer Intimacy
- Develop National Winning Profile
- Perform Gap Analysis
- Track Opportunity
- Qualify Opportunity
- Identify and Mitigate OCI
- Establish B&P Budget
- Develop Business Case
- Assess Profitability
- Evaluate ROI
- Develop Business Model
- Initiate Win Strategy
- Further Customer Intimacy
- Develop National Winning Profile
- Perform Gap Analysis

**Outputs**
- Capture Plan
- Call Plan
- Capture Plan Updates
- Call Plan Updates
- NWP
- Themes/Discriminators
- Teaming Agreement
- Initial Price Analysis
- Proposal
- Slides
- Change Pages
- Final Proposal Revision
- BAFO
- Proposal Lessons Learned

**Decision Milestones**
- Bid/No-Bid

**Contract POP**
- Performance Metrics
- TPAs
- Change Proposals
- White Papers
- Meetings/Presentations
- Request Debrief
- Attend Debrief
- Debrief Team
- Update Opportunity Database

**CONTRACT AWARD**
- Transition Lessons Learned
- Performance Ratings
- Past Performance
- References
- Awards/Recognitions
Identification Phase

First phase of the Acquisition Lifecycle
Led by Business Development
Focus on identifying new business opportunities

It all starts by knowing there is an opportunity to pursue
Identify New Opportunities in Targeted Markets

- Aligned with Strategic Roadmaps and Account Plans to:
  - Sustain/grow in a market
  - Expand in other markets
  - Adjust to changing market dynamics
- Earlier the better – maximizes time to influence acquisition, positioning, and solution

Avoid this common strategy for finding opportunities.
Qualify Phase

What is the opportunity?

Is it “right” for you?

Is it the “right” time?

Answers to all your questions

Second phase of the Acquisition Lifecycle
Led by Capture
Focus on gathering data to clarify the big picture
- Opportunity and your ability to pursue

Is it “right” for you?

Google
What is the opportunity?

- Customer
- Scope of work
- Value
- Contract type
- Competitive landscape
- Schedule
- Funding
- Specialty requirements

Understanding the opportunity drives decision making
Qualify Phase (cont.)

Is it the right opportunity for you?

Based on alignment of:
- Corporate plans
- Corporate capabilities
- Corporate resources
- Government needs
- Environmental factors

Drives resource investment

Forcing pursuit of an opportunity is not a sound business decision
Commit Phase

- Third phase of the Acquisition Lifecycle
- Led by Capture Manager
- Focus on translating qualification efforts into a proposal plan

Links visionary elements of qualification phase to “tangible” offering in the proposal plan
Commit Phase (cont.)

► Brings early strategy and vision to reality
► Detail capture plan to position for bid
► Commit resources to Capture plan development and execution

Requires dedication, patience, and commitment for the long-haul... personal and corporate
Increase ramp up of activity and use of resources

- Develop Proposal Plan
- Begin Staffing
- Competitive Assessment
- Strategy Decision Conference
- Proposal Outline Writing Templates Storyboards
- Improve Execution
- Initiate Past Performance
- Solutioning
- Develop Price to Win Strategy
- Monitor Budget
- Develop: Hot buttons Win Themes
- Data Calls
- Review Proposal Material
- Teaming Discussions
- OCI Tracking
- Schedule Vacation
- Reschedule Vacation
- HELP!!!! GET RESOURCES
- Need to Talk to:
  - Capture Team
  - Line Management
  - Teammates
  - Sub-contracts
  - Finance and pricing
  - Security
  - Incumbent staff
  - Human Resources
  - Competitors
  - Customers
  - Anyone else missed
  - Everyone else
  - Repeat List

- Whats our Win Strategy?? Do we have a value proposition?
Module 2: Capture Planning

Elements of Capture Excellence
Its all about strengthening your position....

Position company to be credible bidder... as viewed by all

Position company to submit a winning proposal... be ready, be prepared
**Elements of Your Capture Toolbox**

*Tools provide guiding framework to get value from:*

- Collection of intelligence
- Development of products
- Expression of analysis
- Decision making process

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<td>Hierarchy of Themes</td>
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<td>Discriminators and Major Selling Points</td>
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<td>Elevator Speeches</td>
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Strategy Decision Conference

Meeting of corporate officials, business developers, technical specialists, capture team members and subject matter experts to frame strategies, issues, decisions, actions, plans and approaches to pursue the opportunity.

- Create a common baseline
- Develop themes/discriminators
- Lock in value proposition
- Perform competitive assessment and black hat
- Develop strategy and tactics to win

*Drives strategic options that form the basis for your Win Strategy.*
Notional Winner Profile (NWP)

This benchmark contains features of the “ideal” winning team from the vantage point of your customer

- Core competencies
- Experience
- Past Performance
- Size and resources
- Products and services
- Technical approach
- Other

Capture Manager should validate and enforce the NWP
Offer Design to Win

► Package your “offer” to the Government what your company is proposing—including promises and commitments—that will make a difference in winning!
► Ability to find the 6-8 “critical few” nuggets
► Forces you to think about and support rationale for bidding
Hierarchy of Themes

- Must “resonate” with evaluators
- Tied to RFP Evaluation Criteria
- Cascading where subordinate theme support the ones above
- Themes must contain a benefit to the Government
- Ensures validated set of themes is transitioned to proposal team
Discriminators/Major Selling Points

- A true discriminator must truly distinguish you
- Pick discriminators that matter to the customer
- Companies are lucky to have 2-3 discriminators
- The Capture Manager works with the entire pursuit team to craft and package MSPs that resonate with evaluators

Eye on what sets you apart.
White Hat Exercise: Your Strengths

White Hat Your Strengths

► Where are you strong?
► What have been your successes?
► Awards, commendations
► Measures of success
► Obstacles overcome
► First of a kind achievements
► What do we alone know about this contract?

Wear a “White Hat”
Black Hat Your Vulnerabilities

► What are your vulnerabilities?
► How will a competitor use them?
► What lessons were learned?

Play the role of a determined competitor
Be honest
Forecast how competitors might win
Then develop countermeasures

Wear a “Black Hat”
Selection Rationale

► Give the Government 5-10 reasons to award to select you
► Help write the Selection Statement
► Attach a benefit to each
► Drive reasons into proposal
► Nail these down early

One key is to articulate 5-10 compelling reasons for why your company should be selected.
Competitive Assessment

- Shows strengths and weaknesses of offeror’s team compared to others
- Use NWP as framework
- Match your company and your competitors to the NWP, L and M factors
- Insist on maximum participation
- Assign importance factors or weightings
- Assign scores and document rationale
- Avoid the tendency to underrate the competitors or overrate yourself
- Revisit competitive assessment throughout lifecycle

One key to performing a valid and reliable Competitive Assessment is to cast a wide net of participants.
Value Proposition

- Offer Design to Win
- Themes and Discriminators
- Major Selling Points
- Selection Rationale
- Promises and Commitments
- Elevator Speech
Capture Guidelines

Key #1

Err on the side of caution and conservatism to select targets

Be Practical
Key #2

There is a difference between being able to perform and being able to win.
Capture Guidelines

Key #3

If you don't have past performance, don't bid by yourself

Past Performance
Capture Guidelines

Key #4

Teaming Strategy

Consider teaming to increase the range of acceptable opportunities.
Key #5

Develop selection criteria and stick to them

Bid Criteria
Key #6: Develop rigorous gate reviews and bid/no-bid reviews.
Capture Guidelines

Key #7

The earlier the opportunity is identified, the better you can position yourself to win.

Be out in front
Capture Guidelines

Key #8
Avoid Pop-Ups

If you are surprised, it is too late
Module 3

Effective Proposal Management

Proven tools are in place to track program performance accurately and to minimize schedule risk.
Establish the Proposal Infrastructure

- Defined by Proposal Manager, Coordinator and Production Manager
- Carefully established infrastructure means
  - Smooth day-to-day functioning and workflow
  - Good communication among team members
  - Maintains organization and order

**Define the Requirement**
- Number of seats/desks
- Conference/meeting rooms
- Teleconferencing capability
- Physical server location
- Local network access
- Internet access
- Wireless capability
- Remote access to network
- Collaborative software
- Printing (color, b/w)
- Computers
- Telephones
- Fax
- Administrative support
- FedEx
The RFP Stage

- Capture Strategy in place—now we’re ready for the RFP
- Need to validate bid/no-bid decision based on RFP (or draft if there is one)

• Begin pre-proposal preparation
  – Develop the Proposal Plan
  – Establish security parameters
  – Develop templates and data calls
  – Hold the Kick-off Meeting
  – Begin to write
Conduct RFP Read-through

- Distribute RFP to Core Team
- Conduct read-through within 24 hrs
  - Dissect RFP to clearly understand requirements
    - Priority 1: Sections L&M, instructions and evaluation criteria
    - Priority 2: Section C, background, objectives, and statement of work
    - Priority 3: Remaining sections, pricing requirements, supporting data, contract terms, and certifications
  - Rest of team review within 48 hours
- First Impressions Session within 48 hours of receipt
  - Areas critical to response
  - Questions or areas that need clarification
  - Areas of concern
  - Conflicts within requirements
Develop/Submit Questions on RFP

- Prepare questions to address vague, confusing, and inconsistent requirements
  - Structure to allow for clear, concise, yes/no answer
  - Include reference, and interpretation

- Proposal and Capture Manager review
  - Determine relevance and need for answer, avoid competitive give-aways
  - Approve final list for submission
Develop the Proposal Plan

- Serves as operations plan for Proposal Team
- Coordinator prepares for distribution at Kickoff Meeting
- Contains game plan for proposal preparation
  - Schedule
  - Assignments
  - Page allocations
  - Annotated outline
  - Graphics
  - Available data
  - Contact information
Prepare the Schedule

- PM prepares
- Contains all milestones
- Needs to be realistic
- Accommodate reviews and approvals
- Allow for slippage
- Leave slack time
- Use weekends for make-up
Develop the Detailed Proposal Outline

- Prepared by Proposal Manager and Coordinator
- Complete before Kickoff Meeting
  - Outline to Section L
  - Incorporate impact of
    - Section M, evaluation criteria
    - Section C, Statement of work
    - Sections G, H, and I, contract clauses
    - Section J attachments
- Core Team should review for compliance and consistency with evaluation criteria
Create the Compliance Matrix

- Critical tool to enforce RFP compliance and integration across all proposal sections
- Developed by Proposal Manager and Coordinator
- Two levels of detail
  1. Array of all RFP requirements, answers to questions, amendments, and attachments. Includes page allocations and assignments
  2. Integrates all section cross references, shows where themes and discriminators are to be applied, and identifies strategic elements for writers

You’ll score 70% of the points by complying with the RFP
Proposal Manager uses to assign writing responsibilities and page allocations for sections.

**Figure 2-9. Page Allocation and Assignment List Format**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section #</th>
<th>Section Title</th>
<th>Primary Responsibility</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Pages Allocated</th>
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Create Evaluation Factors Scoring Tree

What is an Evaluation Factor Scoring Tree?

- Graphic depiction of Section M evaluation factors according to weights described in RFP
- Includes Section M text
- Used in briefings/reviews
- Drives page allocations

This tool provides the proposal and the review teams clear direction for allocating proposal pages and resources.
Create List of Approved Conventions

- List assists writers with consistent use of terminology
  - Company names
  - Team name
  - Client name
  - Program name
  - Standard acronyms
  - Names of processes
  - Other as determined appropriate

- Establish/distribute it early – saves time at final editing and production (crunch time)
Create “Hit Parade of Leading Metrics”

- What are “Leading Metrics”
  - Metrics that show quality, success, sufficiency, safety, other measures of performance
  - Metrics showing basic information on team members
  - Examples
    - Labor force demographics
    - Staff retention rates
    - Award fee scores
    - Regulatory and OSHA compliance data
    - Awards and certifications
    - Others as determined by nature of RFP

- Proposal Coordinator responsible for list
- Writers use as “proof” of performance
Develop the Visual Package

- Document and graphics template
- Resume and Past Performance templates
- The Production Manager works with the Proposal Manager to develop graphic conventions and color palate
  - Hot Box design
  - Theme box design
  - Icons
  - Resume template
  - Contract Profile/Past performance template
  - Cover design
Develop Data Calls

- Questionnaires used to gather data and ensure consistency and adequacy of proposal information
  - General company information
  - Leading metrics
  - Resumes
  - Past performance and corporate experience
  - Pricing
Conduct Kickoff Meeting

- Event to “kick off” the proposal effort - a critical milestone
- PM in charge
- Describe opportunity
- Answer questions
- Make assignments
- Coordinate proposal process
- Create cohesive team
- Invite the right people
With release of the Final RFP, prepare the proposal, including:

- Conducting a read-through of the Final RFP
- Developing/submitting questions
- Validating pre-Final RFP planning
- Attending the Pre-proposal Conference
- Performing daily operations
- Developing proposal sections
- Conducting proposal reviews
- Producing the proposal
- Submitting the proposal
Perform Daily Operations

- Management by Walking Around
- It is essential that the Proposal Manager communicate consistent, concise, and unambiguous guidance to the proposal team at all times
- Tools to do this include
  - Standup Meetings
  - Punch List
  - Red Flag List
  - War Room and Proposal Wall
Conduct Proposal Reviews

- What are proposal reviews?
  - Reviews by select, knowledgeable technical persons and outside experts to identify problems, improvements, shortcomings, cost issues, and other important factors
- Formal reviews, each with a different focus, include
  - In-process reviews (IPR), periodic
  - Gold (or Blue) Team, one before sections are written
  - Pink Team, one at about 50% completion
  - Win (or Red) Team, at about 85% completion
  - Management review and signoff
- Reviews are critical to the process of developing a winning proposal
Module 4: Win Strategies
Everything must start with a comprehensive well thought-out binding strategy

- Strategy
- Planning
- Execution

You can accomplish anything with the right strategy
Multiple strategies comprise a Capture Strategy for any opportunity

- Intelligence Gathering Strategy
- Win Strategy
- Staffing Strategy
- Teaming Strategy
- Pricing Strategy
- Risk Strategy
- Proposal Strategy

All roads lead to your overarching capture strategy
Capture Strategy - Blueprint for Action

Initiates development and execution of:

- Vision and strategies
- Action items to improve win probability
- Competitive countermeasures
- Value proposition and messages
- Customer contact (call) plan

Encompasses activities associated with positioning your company as a credible bidder and to submit a winning proposal.
Most customers are searching for ways to improve acquisition effectiveness and cost efficiency
Solutioning

**Boiler plate designs, products, practices, approaches, and capabilities are not a “proposal solution” - no matter how proven**

A Proposal Solution is what the customer is buying from you...

- It differentiates you
- It is your proposed offering
- It is in your proposal response
- It is what you have to deliver
- It is what you have to execute

Proposal solutions need to be thought out and developed against the stated customer requirements
Solutioning (cont.)

Solution must align with key customer priorities and predisposition

- Solution Types:
  - Capabilities
  - Approach
  - Technical Solution
  - Combination

- Additional Sub-components:
  - Pricing
  - Teaming
  - Personnel (staffing)

The challenge is in integrating multiple solutions into one winning solution
Price-to-Win (PTW): Establish a competitive price which is acceptable to all...not always the lowest

PTW influences cost and technical proposal volumes
Implementation of PTW strategy must account for customer requirements for….

- Compliance
- Reasonableness
- Realism

Ignore government drive for realism at your own risk
Why We Team...to improve our position

- Remove competition
- Weaken competition
- Intelligence Gathering
- Larger staffing pool
- Reduce B&P costs
- Spread risk

Team mates increase available corporate capabilities and resources
Bad teaming practices can turn a dream to a nightmare

Bad Teaming Practices

- Committing too early
- Assuming a strong competitor will only prime
- Subcontracting the majority of the work except where the business case exists
- Committing to percentages or guaranteed level of effort

Think before you team
Key personnel are critical solution points

- Qualified, available and committed
- Early involvement and buy-in
- Use as SMEs and reviewers
- Verify references – current and accurate
- Include in meetings with government customers

One key to selecting the “right” Program Manager is to look for name recognition by the customer.

Provides credibility to solution
Module 5:

Wrap Up—Keys to Winning
Unlocking the Secrets

Thank you David Letterman
Keys to Winning

Key #10

Plan early.
Start early.

Be Out in Front
Keys to Winning

Key #9

Listen more than you speak.

Question more than you answer.

Employ Two Ears, Only One Mouth
Keys to Winning

Key #8

Be tenacious.
Be resilient.

Be In for the Long Haul
Let Not Your Reach Exceed Your Grasp.

Key #7

Team for bandwidth.
Keys to Winning

Key #6

Use a laser not a shotgun.

Exercise Market Focus
and Discipline
Keys to Winning

Key #5

Customers want servants not partners.

Know Your Place
It’s Not What You Are Selling—
It’s What They Are Buying

Key #4

Recognize this truth: you don’t capture. They award.
Keys to Winning

Key #3

Be a capture leader.
Not just a capture manager.

There Is a Difference
Keys to Winning

Key #2

Realize it’s not about you. It’s about the customer.

Your Prime Directive
Keys to Winning

Key #1

Be Customer-Focused

Find important needs of your customer.

Then meet them.
The Big Idea
Current conditions in the Government contracts market require more focus and discipline than ever before.

A laser focus helps achieve the winning edge.
Questions?
Thank you