

★ THE WINNING TIMES ★

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★ YOUR TEAM FOR WINNING
FEDERAL CONTRACTS

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ORCA – ARE YOU REGISTERED?

No, it's not the whale. It's for your GSA Contract, of course. More specifically, ORCA (Online Representations and Certifications Application) is a new required online registration regarding your Representations and Certifications. In an effort to replace its' paper-based version, the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE) designed this online registration as part of the E-Gov initiative. This requirement was published as a Federal mandate in the Federal Acquisition Circular 2001-26, FAR case 2002-24. In brief, the mandate details that a vendor MUST be registered in ORCA if the solicitation in reference requires an active registration in CCR. Therefore, since all GSA Multiple Award Schedule contracts require a CCR registration, you too will be required to register in ORCA. It may not be stated yet in your solicitation

documents, but you can bet that it will be, and if you submit without an ORCA registration, chances are you will be asked to complete one.

ORCA is found at www.bpn.gov/orca. With your CCR registration active (www.ccr.gov) and your MPIN (obtained by registering on CCR) in hand, you are ready to answer your questionnaire and gather the information necessary to complete your ORCA registration. The best conveniences of online ORCA registration are: Access 24/7 for updates, more accurate and complete records maintained, and your Contracting Officer can easily view every record and archive online as well. If you feel you need extra Internet help while filling out your registration, please contact the Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) at www.dla.mil/db/procurem.htm.

ALLIANT AND ALLIANT SB UPDATE

Many government contractors are anxiously awaiting the release of the General Services Administration's Alliant and Alliant Small Business Government-wide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs). The final request for proposal was supposed to be released in August or September of 2005 but have been postponed. In late September 2005, GSA announced that the "GSA's Alliant and Alliant SB procurement are undergoing a brief but comprehensive review. After completion of the review, GSA will proceed with the final request for proposals."

The development of the contract program was placed in the hands of Mr. John Johnson, Assistant Commissioner of Service Development and Delivery at GSA, after Mr. Neal Fox, the former Assistant Commissioner of Commercial Acquisition, retired in July 2005. Mr. Johnson was quoted in an October 2005 AFCEA meeting as indicating that the Alliant and Alliant SB contract would be on hold until November 11 2005, while the agency conducts an internal review of the program and its procurement strategy. Keep checking up on the Alliant procurement via the GSA website (www.gsa.gov).

CLIENT CORNER: QUESTIONS FROM OUR CLIENTS

Our monthly feature that allows you to see examples of the kinds of questions we get from our clients and how we respond to their needs.

Q: *When my small business decided to enter the federal government marketplace, we learned that GSA Schedules were one of the largest government-wide procurement vehicles and invested considerable time and money getting on Schedule. However, since we have been awarded the Schedule, we have not seen any sales from the GSA. How should we effectively use our GSA Schedule to win government contracts?*

FEATURED CLIENTS



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CLIENT CORNER: QUESTIONS FROM OUR CLIENTS – CONTINUED

A: You are definitely not alone - your dilemma is shared by many other small businesses that hold a GSA Schedule, and many companies come to Global Services for assistance winning business off of their GSA Schedules. Yours is a very real concern and a valid question - and fortunately, we can help provide some solutions for you.

While the GSA Schedule is an important element of your federal government marketing practices, it does not guarantee a single contract award. A good analogy we have heard is that holding a GSA Schedule is similar to holding a hunting or fishing license - while it allows you access to certain opportunities that you did not have before, it goes without saying that it is then up to you to 'go fishing' and make the catch - or go marketing and win the contract. Essentially, holding the Schedule can open doors for you and make you visible to the government procurement community, but it is up to you to strategically develop a focused marketing plan to pursue contract using your Schedule. It is your responsibility to identify, track and capture the opportunities that your GSA Schedule makes you eligible to pursue, and your responsibility to do all three correctly.

As you develop this marketing plan post Schedule award, please keep in mind that federal government marketing must be pursued in an entirely different way than private sector marketing. Factors to consider include that fact that tens of thousands of vendors hold GSA Schedules and your company must be able to differentiate yourselves through aggressive marketing. Federal government procurements is also heavily relationship-based and the key to being awarded contracts is networking as much as possible and building strong relationships in the areas of the government where you are most likely to be awarded contracts. Your relationships with contracting officers purchasing your products and services is so crucial that one contract administrator at the Navy commented to *Government Executive* that procurement decisions are frequently decided "depend(ing) on the salesman who walked in the door." Becoming that salesperson who influences a contracting officer requires a systematic approach.

Your goal should be to anticipate the agency's needs and step up with a solution rather than merely respond 'scattershot' to released solicitations. The goal needs to be helping craft the statement of work as to how your company specifically can fulfill their needs rather than selling how the federal government should buy your products and services. The successful government contractors understand this and enter the process ideally six months before the Request For Proposal is ever released.

Many clients ask for our assistance in determining where to start investing their time to maximize the return on the investment they have already expended acquiring the GSA Schedule. Given the enormous scale and complexity of the federal government, small businesses must make absolutely sure that when they decide where to spend often limited resources networking and building relationships that they are correctly targeting the agencies that offer the greatest opportunities for them to establish a long-term federal government revenue stream. Over nearly a decade of assisting small businesses with these issues, we have developed a customized market research analysis that examines on company's history, strategies, certifications held such as small and disadvantaged status and procurement vehicles held such as the GSA Schedule to narrow the government opportunities down to a manageable size to begin building your networks of federal clients. It is also important at this point that you determine how to present your products and services as solutions that help government officials solve their needs as well as your rather than angle as how to win the dollar amount of an individual contract. The relationship-oriented nature of the business makes it crucial that vendors understand how contracting officials weed through the masses of information and sales calls they receive daily from the thousands of GSA Schedule holders - you must learn what the agency initiatives are, familiarize yourself with how the procurement officials are required to operate and place your solutions where your government customers are needing assistance. While this does mean a longer sales cycle on the front end, the rewards are great - a steady revenue source from the biggest purchaser of goods and services in the world.

[Elizabeth Murray](#) is available at 202.234.8933 to discuss further how Global Services can specifically help your company build and expand a strong federal government business practice.