

How to Best Represent Your Firm: Proposal Writing Tips

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PRESENTER, WHO IS HE AND SO WHAT?

(Contractual activities only)

- Administrative Contracting Officer
- Contracting Officer's Representative
- Construction, Architect-Engine (A/E), Fabrication, & Supply/Service Contracts

Yeah, still so what...GOOD POINT!

Project Engineer manages the day to day operations of varied construction projects in type and size (including a varying dollar magnitude), and all other contract administrative functions (A/E, Fabrication, Supply, and limited services) to ensure contract compliance and customer satisfaction. Directs and reviews staffs work prior to submission to various offices. Act in the absence of the Chief.



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CHIEF, CONTRACT MANAGEMENT SECTION

- Shane Hall, P.E. – Chief Contract Management Section
- Administrative Contracting Officer for Huntington District
- Contracting Officer's Representative for Huntington District
- He performs management of all construction, supply, services, A-E contracts, and task orders for the Huntington District Engineering and Construction Division and work Huntington does for other federal agencies. Supervises other ACOs and CORS as well as a staff of Quality Assurance Inspectors and Construction Representatives. No contracting task goes through Huntington EC Division without his finger on the pulse.



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WHAT IS A PROPOSAL?

YOUR COMPANY'S RESUME

For guidance review the Federal Acquisition Regulations and USACE Regulations and Engineering Pamphlets



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THIS IS YOUR FIRMS RESUME!

First impressions matter (not in any order)

- Clarity
- Spelling
- Did they read the synopsis/solicitation?
- Can they do the work?*

Paying attention to detail matters!

- **Did they read the synopsis/solicitation – see, I said it again!!!**

*is the contractor able to meet the limitations on subcontracting or percentage of work performance required by the FAR?



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WHAT YOU SAY MATTERS

EXAMPLES*:

Contractor states it has 20 professionals with geotechnical, hydraulic, hydrologic, civil, structural, bridge, vertical construction, electrical, and construction engineering experience.

Paragraphs within proposal state:

- Three with **“prior experience”** performing geohydraulic evaluations in rock and soil.
- Six with **“significant experience”** performing vertical construction design.
- Three engineers, two with **“significant experience”** performing electrical design.
- Four professional engineers whose **“experience and technical backgrounds”** are bridge design. “...professionals’ understanding of design **range from moderate to expert.**”
- Three professional engineers with **“experience”** in **“designing”** or **“evaluating”** hydraulic systems.

*These are made up from similar responses on multiple sources sought



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WHAT YOU SAY MATTERS

EXAMPLES* (Cont):

- Four with **“experience”** in designing, evaluating, or providing construction engineering services for building foundations and wall sections.
- Four engineers with **“significant experience”** in developing and executing a simple to complex subsurface exploration program...”
- Two professional engineers with **“specialized expertise”** in structural mechanical analysis.
- Eight professionals **“experienced”** in performing inspection of concrete placement and reinforcement.
- Three staff have **“significant to extensive”** experience preparing geotechnical reports.
- Two professionals have **“moderate”** experience designing roadways and drainage systems.

*These are made up from similar responses on multiple sources sought



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KNOWLEDGE HELPS

When a Source Selection Team is put together guidance dictates it is to be:

“a team tailored to the unique acquisition.”

What does this tell me?

1. Team is probably composed of knowledgeable staff
 2. Likely experienced with the kind of work to be performed
 3. Probably recognize if the information contained in a proposal is objective and substantial.
- You should tailor your proposal to the synopsis published with the knowledge that your readers are going to be familiar with needs and capabilities.



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KNOWLEDGE HELPS

What does this tell me (Cont)?

1. Know your client, USACE, and its needs
 - Read the synopsis or solicitation
 - Know the USACE staff through outreach events like...this one.
 2. Know your company and represent its true capabilities
 - **KNOW YOUR STRENGTHS, tell us!**
- Put together your proposal as if your reputation depends on it, this is your moment!



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WHAT GOES IN THE PROPOSAL?

Everything requested by the SF330 for A-E firms

Everything requested by the synopsis/solicitation

Contractor shall demonstrate through professional registration, company and personnel resumes, executed examples, and supporting customer feedback documentation the ability to provide engineering support of the following activities:

Reminder: What you tell us represents your company; your job is to paint an accurate picture of what your company is capable of actually doing.

I myself love organizational charts.



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WHAT GOES IN THE PROPOSAL?

PROVE your teams capabilities
Showcase your experts!!!

Show how you are different from everyone else, what makes XYZ company special?

Write your proposal such that there are few to no questions. In other words, determine what might be asked, answer it in your proposal to preempt the question.

Make sure your company meets all the requirements in the synopsis/solicitation itself or through a team.



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MISTAKES I HAVE SEEN

Not following directions in synopsis/solicitation

Contradicting yourself within your proposal

Stretching the truth

20 professional employees in company...

20 subject matter experts bridge design

20 subject matter experts geotechnical

20 subject matter experts vertical construction

Really...Remember, we have access to past performance records and experience, don't create doubt in your proposal.



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WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Government employees are tasked with ensuring the best product, value, and expertise for each dollar spent by the Government.

Soooo...we have to be thorough in evaluating proposals to ensure fairness and proper stewardship. Your objective should be to develop a proposal that provides sufficient compelling and relevant information to clearly demonstrate your firm's strong ability to perform the required work. It must be based on substantial facts and objective data.



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HAVE YOU SEEN THIS?

SOURCES SOUGHT NOTICE FOR MARKET RESEARCH ONLY –

This notice does not constitute a solicitation announcement or restrict the Government to an ultimate acquisition approach and NO AWARD will occur from this notice. The purpose of this notice is to gain knowledge of potentially qualified small business sources to include small businesses in the following categories:....



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HAVE YOU SEEN THIS?(cont.)

Contractor shall demonstrate through professional registration, company and personnel resumes, executed examples, and supporting customer feedback documentation the ability to provide engineering support of the following activities:

- Concrete building foundation design
- Geotechnical foundation sampling, testing, and analysis
- Vertical construction
- Hydraulic system design, testing, and evaluation
- Structural reinforcement of water control structures
- Concrete placement during construction
- Exploratory drilling
- Geophysical surveys
- Material fracture analysis
- Instrumentation of dams both gravity and embanked



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HAVE YOU SEEN THIS?(cont.)

- 3) Offeror's capability to perform a contract of this complexity and examples of comparable work performed within the past 10 years based on the above criteria.
- 4) Describe the professional qualifications of your firm. Provide the **number** and **qualifications** of registered professional personnel in the key disciplines noted above.
- 5) Describe your firms' capacity to perform up to approximately \$2,000,000.00 in work of the required type in a one-year period and accomplish the anticipated work in an efficient and quality manner.



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MARKET RESEARCH

The Government uses Market Research to determine if there are small businesses that can perform the required work.

- Sources Sought
- Small Business database searches
- Internet Searches,
- Etc.

Make sure we can find you!

Make sure you are watching...Sources Sought matter



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RESOURCES

These are my opinion only, not Government guidance

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/654/1/> ← Accentuate the Positive!

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/638/01/> ← Great one! Tailor to the skeptic.

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/548/01/> ← Is your document sound?

Internet search SF330, Federal Procurement, great USACE solicitations, etc. Use the tools you have available at your fingertips.

Good idea...

Make sure your website does not contradict what your proposal states and is up to date with your capabilities. While not all Source Selection Boards check sites, they might and a significant number of Market Research can occur over the web.



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Questions?



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