

Top 10 Teaming Myths

1. *Locking up the incumbent is the key to ensuring victory*
2. *Winning a prime job outside of your wheelhouse is prohibitively expensive*
3. *JVs and CTAs are more complicated than they are worth*
4. *Smart companies do not donate A-players to winning someone else's prime revenue*
5. *The more the merrier; if five teammates are good, ten are better*
6. *Partners will only commit fully to an opportunity once their workshare has been guaranteed*
7. *Executing Teaming Agreements is necessarily painful*
8. *Cost concerns dictate that proposal teams be composed of whomever is available when the RFP drops*
9. *The right workshare can convince anyone to share "special sauce" in the proposal tank with their competitors*
10. *The prime needs to "own" every major workstream of a winning proposal*

Other Peoples' B&P: Growing Beyond Casual Relationships in the Federal Sector

- 🐾 Build your team the way you build your solution: incumbency takes a back seat to innovation, and efficiency trumps capability overlap
- 🐾 Stay involved in every phase of the subcontracts process; ripples during TA negotiation become tidal waves in execution
- 🐾 Seek partners that share your level of commitment – every member of the team should have aligned incentives for investing in the proposal
- 🐾 While it would be foolish to rely too heavily on subs, the right piece of the right deal can motivate meaningful contributions from them
- 🐾 Give everyone a clear path to meaningful growth on the program: define upside not just in terms of FTE counts, but also capabilities
- 🐾 Reputation = credibility; future partners assume you will treat them like you treat your current and previous partners, so act accordingly

The Dating Scene

The current teaming environment in the federal market feels very much like the modern dating scene. Everyone is too busy to devote resources to finding partners and has been on enough bad dates to be wary of plunging headlong into more of the same. As a result, the prevailing approach is reactive at best, with too many companies looking for partners only when they have to, like finding the "plus one" you need for a sibling's wedding. Some have turned to technology for help – filling out GovWin "interested" forms and combing online databases for possible matches – with success rates worse than OKCupid. The current competitive pressures dictate using teaming as a tool to deliver best-of-breed solutions and to share bid and proposal costs. There is not enough B&P budget to go it alone anymore.

Don't Tinder Teammates

Defining your search criteria and honing those attributes that will make you most attractive to prospective partners are crucial to convincing partners you are worth their time. First dates can be awkward, going on a lot of them is expensive, and they consume an inordinate amount of opportunity cost. Establish what you want upfront – a long term relationship (LTR), a friend with benefits (FWB), or a one night stand. There is no shame in a tactical relationship that only spans one proposal – but both partners must be clear on that. Teaming partners have long memories and will go to great lengths to warn their friends if you mistreat them. Successful companies maintain a small group of strong relationships – a mixture of well-defined LTRs and FWBs built on reciprocity over the long haul – not a series of careless right-hand swipes.

Getting Serious

Once you have found a partner you work well with, consider taking the relationship to the next level. Dedicating top talent and subject matter experts – not rolling out VPs to "convey commitment" – to someone else's proposal tank is the equivalent of leaving a toothbrush at someone's apartment. Teammates who avoid this level of commitment are often replaced by those who do. Teaming Agreement negotiations can become contentious at this stage, so remember that the TA is akin to meeting the roommates – just another

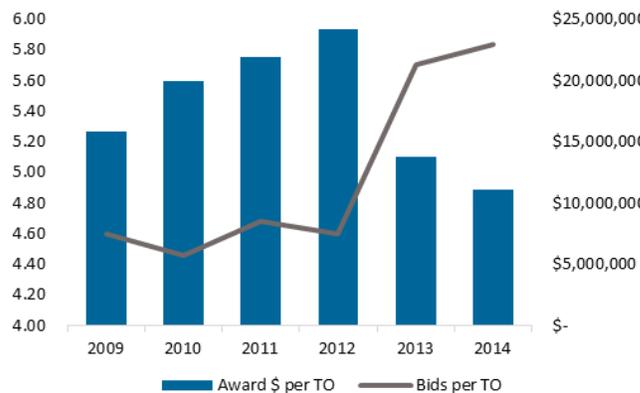
step forward. Trust and mutual respect go a lot farther than the black and white of a contract, and ripples of discord here become tidal waves during execution. Honoring these commitments, even when it is not particularly convenient or lucrative, is not only the right thing to do, it is good business.

It Takes Two to Tango

As with finding Mr. or Mrs. Right, it is critical to

preserve your reputation. Nobody wants to wind up with the teammate who has been with every company around the beltway, neither do people want to waste time with one-way relationships. Even in reciprocal relationships, companies have grown weary of coin-operated partners – those who only call when they need something and only help when there is a clear quid pro quo. Good teammates market their partners to end customers on unrelated opportunities, just like bringing home flowers when it is not Valentine's Day. Over time, being transparent about what you want and what you can bring to the relationship – and then following through consistently – will have you happily hitched to meaningful partners, not wasting your time courting the charlatans.

Changing Bid Economics Require Stretching B&P Dollars



Average task order award value has declined ~54% from 2012-2014. Over the same period, the average number of bids per task order has increased ~27%.

Source: Alliant Small Business Contract Awards