

Developing Competitive Intelligence on Federal Contracts

BACKGROUND. The incumbent has had the service contract for several years. They have a large force of employees on the job, but performance has declined, and the incumbent is inattentive to customer needs. It is re-bid time.

PROCESS OBJECTIVES FOR COMPETITIVE RESEARCH. There are six objectives in the intelligence gathering process.

1. Obtain solid information about the customer and the project
2. Obtain a labor resource pool for the project
3. Obtain detailed information about the incumbent's project management
4. Obtain detailed technical information about the project
5. Create good PR and credibility for our company
6. Hope for some "pass-through" public relations to customer.

In order to justify the expense of gathering this information you must be convinced that you can really perform the specific project. You must be committed to the training required of the people who are going to gather the information, and they must believe in the cause.

STEPS.

- Examine geographic area where the competition is doing business.
- Obtain the locations of the competition's offices.
- Obtain a list of local media (newspapers, radio stations, etc.)
- Use your strategic plan to produce a description of the future project
- Prepare job descriptions for task categories.
- Prepare and run recruiting ads in the targeted local newspapers.

- If appropriate for the labor force, call the local community college job placement or career advisors. In a small community this can have an exciting effect. You hope to get two kinds of responses:
 1. Responses from the competitor's employees
 2. Responses from the rest of the labor market
- Review resumes sent by candidates and compile information contained in "current position" description.
- Prepare a written job description for the candidate to refer to (don't let them take it away) in an interview.
- Prepare a draft of a project organization chart.
- Prepare draft of a project time-line.
- Prepare drafts of "Contingency Hire Agreements."
- Train interviewers.
- Solicit interviews from all competitor's workers who apply as well as from the better resumes from the rest of the labor market.
- Conduct candidate interviews, however, do not schedule two competitor candidates at the same time.