

This is a PowerPoint Slideshow – click the mouse button or tap the spacebar to advance; right mouse button to see menu commands.

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# Federal Proposals.Com

Our Approach To  
Winning Proposals





# Overview

- Introduction
- Factors in a Winning Proposal
- Pre-RFP
- RFP Analysis
- Proposal Planning
- First Draft Preparation
- Proposal Review & Critique
- Final Preparation
- Post-Submission
- About Federal Proposals



# Introduction

Winning competitive Federal contracts is the product of many major variables, including:

- Creating the most attractive solution
- Telling the best story
- Competitive pricing





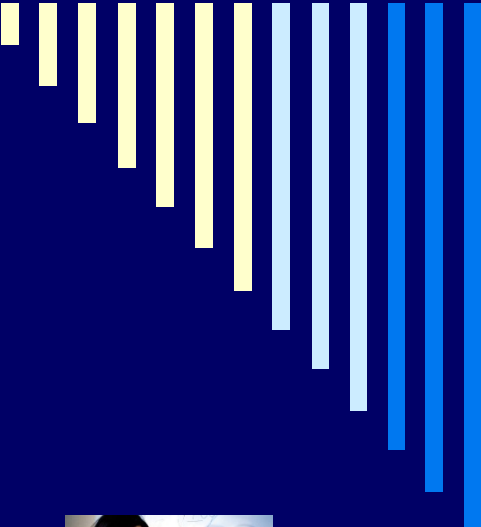
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The foundation for creating the best story lies in:

- Developing proposal strategies and themes which resonate with the customer
- Creating a compelling rationale for selecting your proposal



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# Understanding the Factors in a Winning Proposal

**Responding to the RFP is Only 50% of the Way to Winning**



# Understanding the Need

CUSTOMER'S ENVISIONED NEED

"Interpreted"  
Through

10%  
Remains  
Unknown

20% Marketing  
Intelligence

- History
- Bias
- Spin

- Interviews
- Meetings
- 3<sup>rd</sup> parties

50% RFP

- SOW
- Eval criteria
- Other factors

20% Customer's  
Environment

- The "Frameworks"
- Political
  - Organizational
  - Policy
  - Planning
  - Program/project
  - Technical
  - Bias

*Responding to the stated  
needs (RFP) Is NOT  
sufficient to WIN*

Jump to:

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# Creating the Solution

PROPOSED SOLUTION

[Learn more](#)

Translate  
Solutions Into  
Winning Messages

Program/Framework  
Solution

Technical  
Solution

Management  
Solution

Overcome  
Built-in "Bias"

Skills &  
Disciplines

Relevant  
Experience

Tools

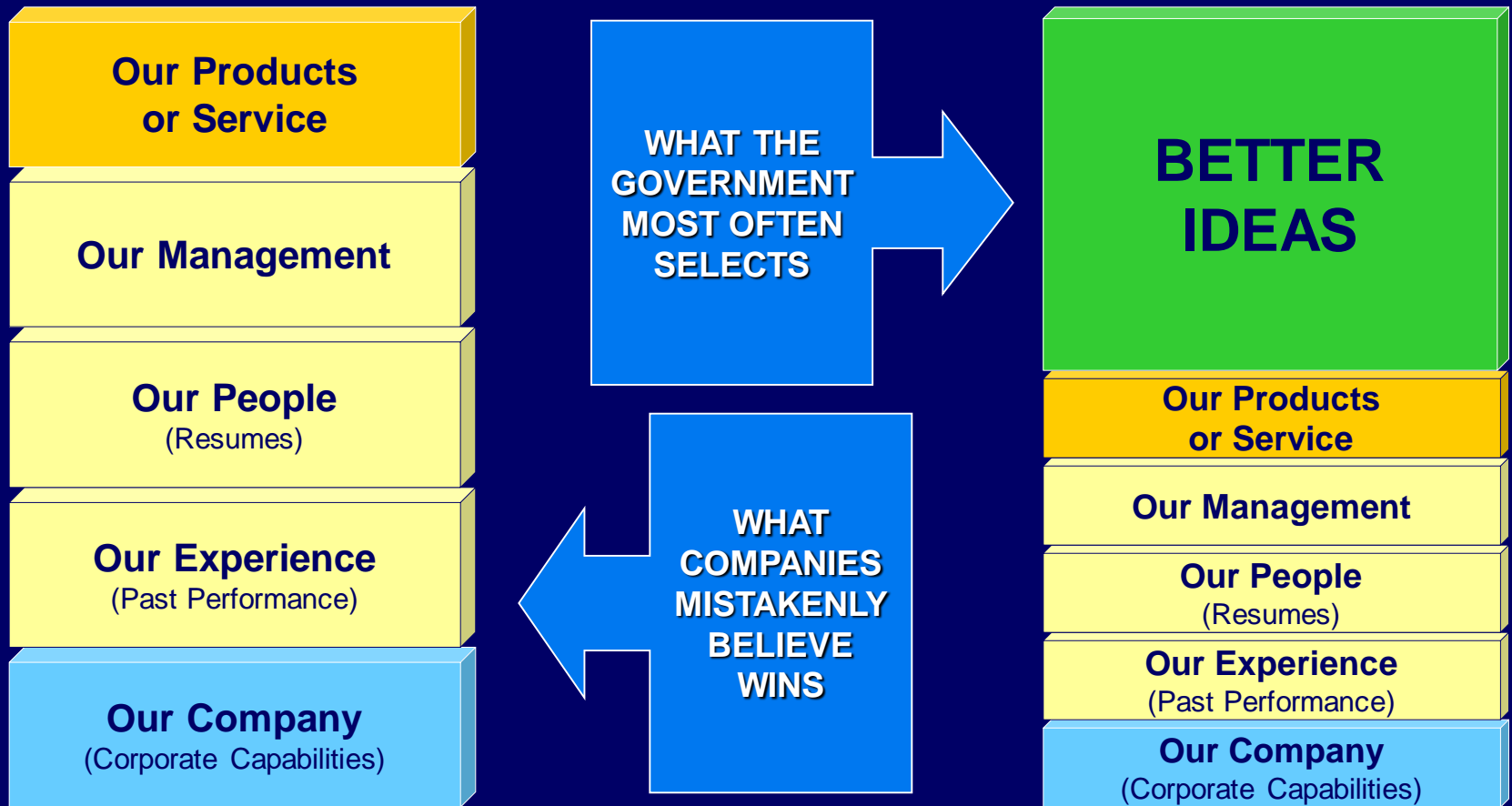
Data &  
Knowledge

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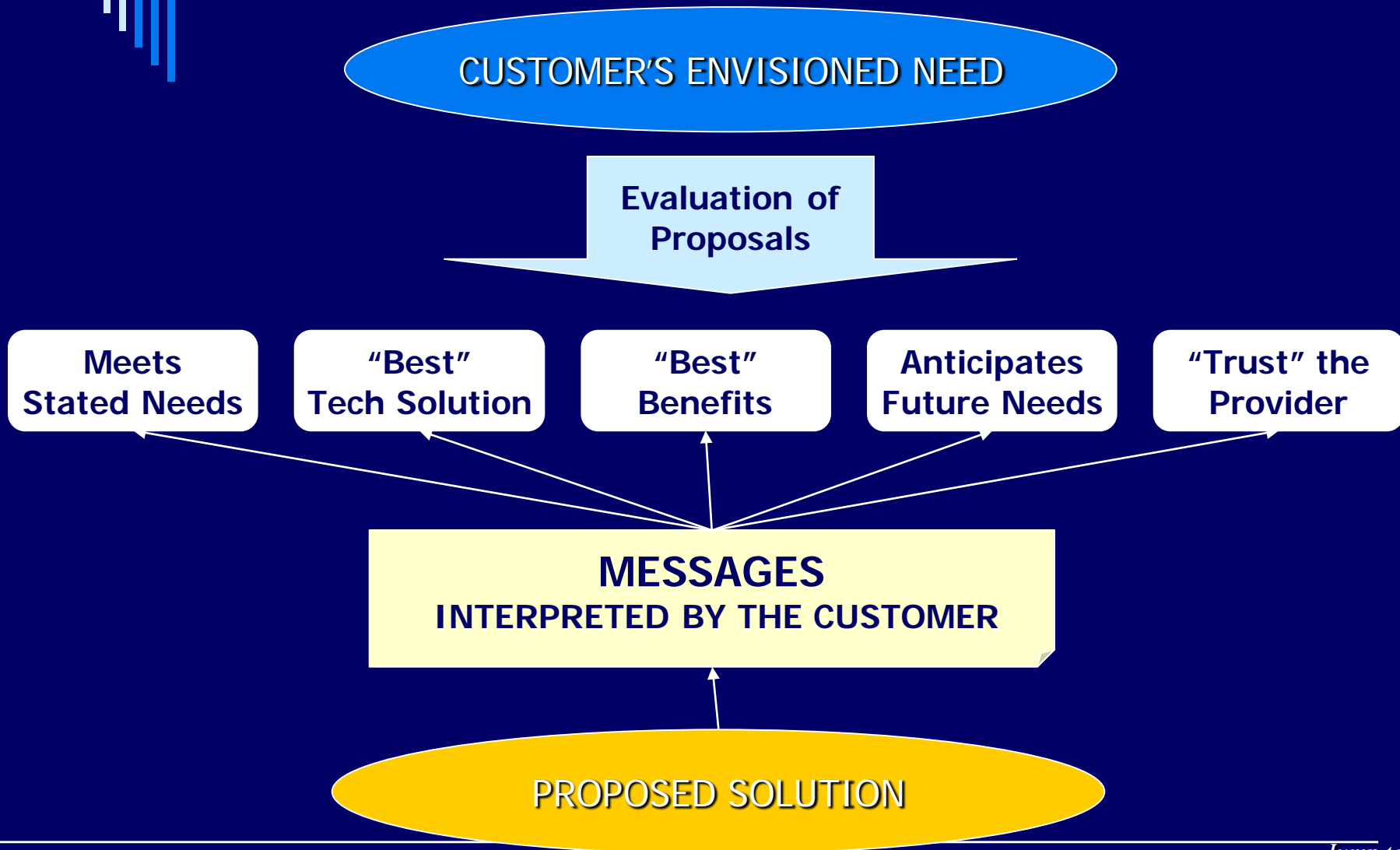
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# The Essence of Winning



# Winning is in the Messages



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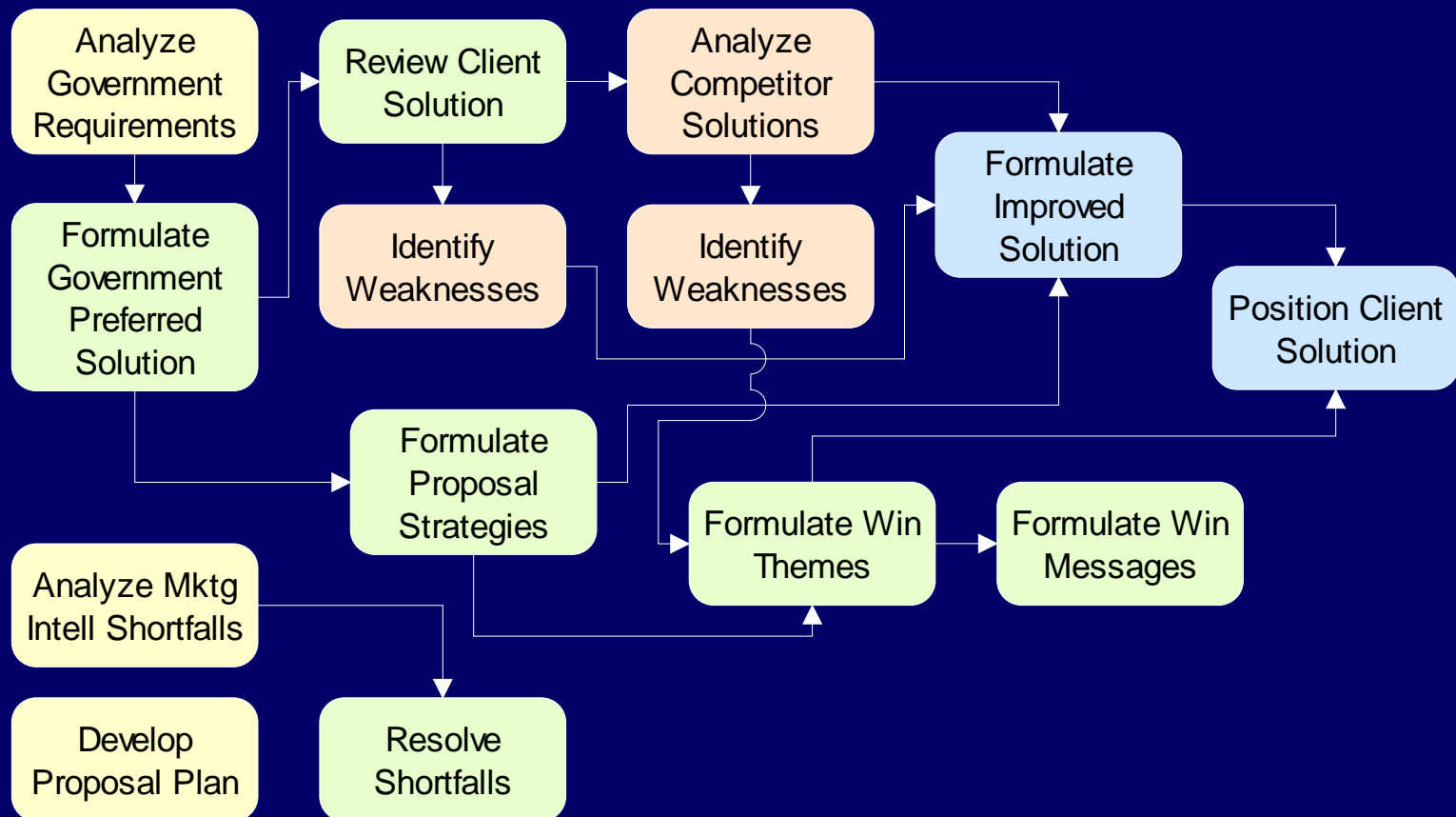


# Pre-RFP

**Many proposals are lost in the pre-RFP phase – yet companies often wait until RFP release to assign their “experts”**




# Pre-RFP Process





# Pre-RFP

- 
- Assess your customer's perceptions, expectations and fears
  - Understand your customer's procurement strategy
  - Create customer awareness and confidence in your company
  - Assess the competition
  - Define a draft solution, program & teaming arrangements

# Pre-RFP

- Position your “company” as one of the customer’s top three choices for this contract
- Select and energize your proposal team
- Identify proposal talent shortfalls and recruit experts to plug holes
- *Every proposal should have an independent reviewer – companies easily fall in love with own stories*



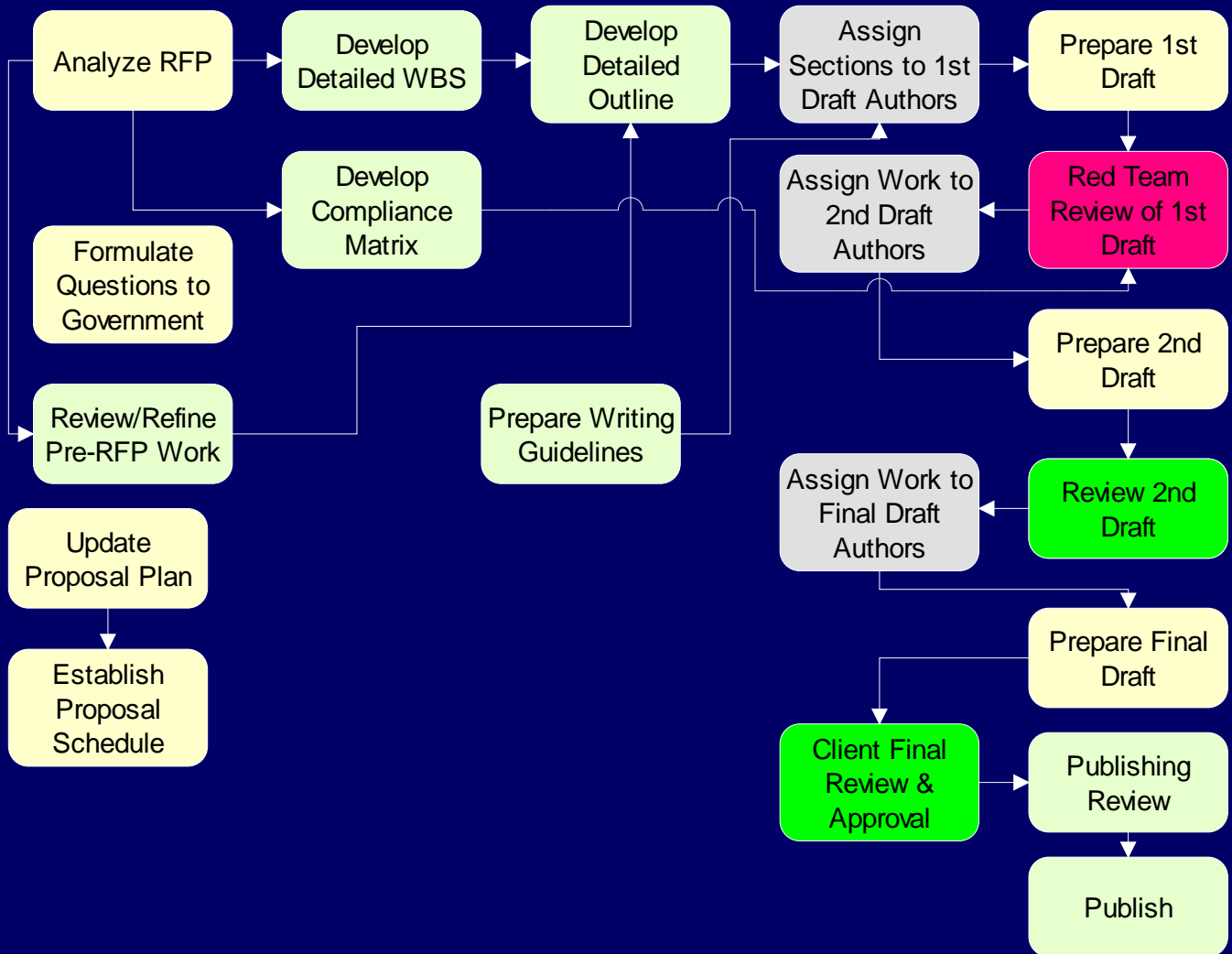
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# Post-RFP



# Post\_RFP Process





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# Proposal Planning

“The” most important  
phase of the  
proposal





# Proposal Planning

- Finalize schedule and stick to it
- Gather the strategic team members
  - Thinkers not writers
- Develop the proposal outline/page allocation (volume allocations)
- Define the win strategy and supporting strategies

*Books have been written on developing proposal strategies – it often requires thinking out of the box. Caution: techies don't do it well and sales people believe their own "spin."*

Boilerplate  
almost  
always  
reads like  
boilerplate  
– and turns  
off  
evaluators



# Proposal Planning

- Define a responsive, winning solution
  - Contracts are won first by the best “ideas” and then “companies” then “programs” then “products”
- Outline compelling themes that resonate with your customer’s expectations & fears

Prepare the solution first, the proposal second

Think:  
Benefits,  
Benefits,  
Benefits



# Proposal Planning (Continued)

## □ Outline the proposal

- Themes that provide a consistent story
- Graphics that “tell stories” with informative or interpretive captions

## □ Review the outline

- This is the time to “get the story right”

## □ Gold team the overall story

- Executive management buy-in

Show you  
understand  
the problem

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# Typical Schedule

Proposals are intensive activities requiring lots of talent, creativity and hard work





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# RFP Analysis

This is far more than  
reading the RFP





# RFP Analysis

- Analyze the RFP – write down every requirement – then read it again
- Develop a detailed compliance matrix
- Define a compliant solution independent of your pet rocks – what the customer is expecting

This is the customer's solution – your "minimum" program. The compelling program builds on the customer's expectations.





# RFP Analysis

- Preliminary pricing analysis
  - Can you develop a competitive price?
- Rationalize source selection
  - Using the customer's source selection criteria – justify the selection of your solution over competing solutions
- Estimate the probability of win
- Make a bid/no-bid decision

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# First Draft Preparation

Writing begins with  
“approved” outline





# First Draft Preparation

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**Storyboarding techniques don't work well for amateur proposal writers**

- ❑ Make sure that technical and management “writers” understand the outline
- ❑ Make writing assignments
- ❑ Make graphic assignments
- ❑ Write – no more than 4-5 days for first draft
- ❑ Edit & re-write first draft

**Pictures “do” sell**

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# Proposal Review & Critique

Checking to see the written word matches the outline





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# Proposal Review & Critique

Assign a review team to:

- Check proposal accuracy
- Confirm compliance with RFP
- Assure stories match approved outline

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# Final Preparation

Check and re-check





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# Final Preparation

- Final editing
- Publishing review
- Publishing
- Delivery plan

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# Post-Submission

Organize the proposal, draft documents and notes for easy access







# Post-Submission


- Fill-in the “gaps” in the proposal
- Develop the BAFO strategy
- Prepare documents for easy access for orals and Q&A
- Develop and dry-run a winning “presentation”
- Prepare for negotiations

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# About Federal Proposals

The Winning  
Edge



We complement your  
proposal team – not  
replace it!

# About Federal Proposals

- Practice limited to “value-added” by strategy and innovation
- Our principal, Don Marx, leads nearly every major proposal effort



View a list of our winning proposals at  
[www.federalproposals.com](http://www.federalproposals.com)



# The Nature of Our Engagements

- About half the time, we assist with one or more of the proposal tasks discussed in this presentation -- filling gaps in a company's talent pool
- The other half of the time, we manage the proposal from beginning to end

*Review pre-RFP tasks*

*Review proposal planning tasks*



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# To Learn More

- Email: [info@federalproposals.com](mailto:info@federalproposals.com)
- Web: [www.federalproposals.com](http://www.federalproposals.com)
- Phone: (703) 662-5820

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# You Get An Executive Team With Decades of Experience



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# Click on “Esc” to End





# Solution Development

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The single greatest failure in proposal development is failure to develop the solution. One way to improve solution development is to:

- ❑ Analyze the customer's needs and carefully re-state them as the preferred solution
- ❑ Design the preferred solution independent of your company's pet rocks. Be careful to go beyond the concept level, to include:
  - Detailed description of products or outcomes
  - Detailed work breakdown structure (WBS)
  - Management plan to include quality assurance
- ❑ Migrate your company's ideas, strengths and capabilities into the preferred solution
- ❑ Test the solution to see that it maps back to the requirements





# Management Trump Card

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Winning proposal management plans include:

- ❑ Use of management tools that reflect the government's own objectives for e-government; that is, they reflect the use of real-time online tools for collaboration and reporting.
- ❑ Use of documented management processes.
- ❑ Use of government recognized management tools like MS Project.
- ❑ Quality assurance consistent with ISO-9001:2000 (sometimes mandated).
- ❑ Incorporation of performance-based work and subcontracting.
- ❑ Customer-centric continuous improvement.
- ❑ Explicit identification and management of risk.
- ❑ Project managers with professional management accreditations (there is trend toward making this a requirement in some agencies).
- ❑ Focus on government and company managers working as a team to ensure success.