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PERFECTING YOUR CAPABILITIES STATEMENT

Creating a successful capabilities statement seems like a daunting task for anyone unfamiliar with branding, graphic design or marketing. But there is no getting around it. A capabilities statement is a crucial element in the contracting world.

When your first impression takes the place of your only impression, maximize your talents and show off your best product. Think of your capabilities statement as your company's elevator speech. No matter the size of your company or the government you wish to sell to, a powerful capabilities statement remains key in setting yourself apart from your competitors and earning new business.

A successful and effective capabilities statement incorporates branding, graphic elements, concise writing and a variety of features to showcase a company's strongest qualities. Using these tips and guidelines, your business can produce a capabilities statement that highlights your skills in a brief and appealing manner.

When forced to read multiple CAPE statements a week, some government agencies may dismiss yours simply due to length. A capabilities statement is a quick reference guide, not a novel. When creating your written content, make sure it includes only the most valuable information.

List your company's basic information on one single sheet of paper. Anything that doesn't fit doesn't make the cut. With just a few minutes to sell your services, reiterate your strongest qualities and the essential skills you know will get you the job.

An effective capabilities statement appears organized, easy to read and should address three specific categories; core competencies, past performance and differentiators. When deciding what to include in these categories, approach these sections as questions you need to answer.

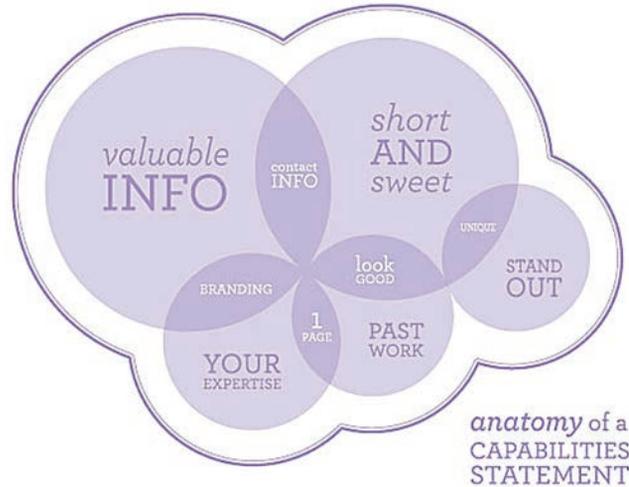
INFORMATION TO INCLUDE:

Core Competencies

- What is your expertise?
- What are your main abilities?

Past Performance

- What work have you performed related to this project?



- Did these projects involve people you could use a reference?
- Differentiators
- How are you best suited for the needs of this agency?
 - What about your services makes you stand out?
 - What about your staff members makes them better than your competitors?
 - Why are your products better solutions than what's currently available?

Once you outline these categories by answering specific questions, make sure to include important facts about your business. Government agencies want to know the size of your company, your revenue, number of employees and the geographic area you serve. You want to tell your company's story in the most interesting and condensed way.

Your capabilities statement should list your office address, phone number, special certifications, D&B number, tax ID number, government website, NAICS codes and social media handles. This data comes in handy when a government agency conducts market research.

Make the material both easy to read and understand. When generating concise written content, share only the most critical information. Creating bulleted lists or bolding key words makes your information straightforward for the

reader, and also shows what you value most.

THE LAYOUT:

Your capabilities statement should look visually appealing in order to stand out from your competitors. Use the same logos and color scheme as your other collateral items in order to keep branding consistent.

Include graphics and visuals to make your capabilities statement different from the rest and more interesting to read. While all of the information you include should fit on an 8x11 sheet of paper, don't limit yourself to presenting it this way.

Be sure to have your capabilities statement available as a PDF document so that you can share it on your website or as an attachment in an email message.

Any company looking to earn a government contract must create a capabilities statement, and while most will show proof of qualification and past performance, a successful one serves as an opportunity to share your business' story in a unique way. Value your capabilities statement just as much as your appearance the day of a big pitch. With something as important as initial interactions and gaining new business, don't be afraid to look to a professional for help if necessary. The presentation of an exceptional capabilities statement will not only set you apart from the competition, but ultimately earn you the job.