Procurement Readiness

Preparing to do Business With VA

This reference guide has been modified to include only Capabilities Statement and website guidance.
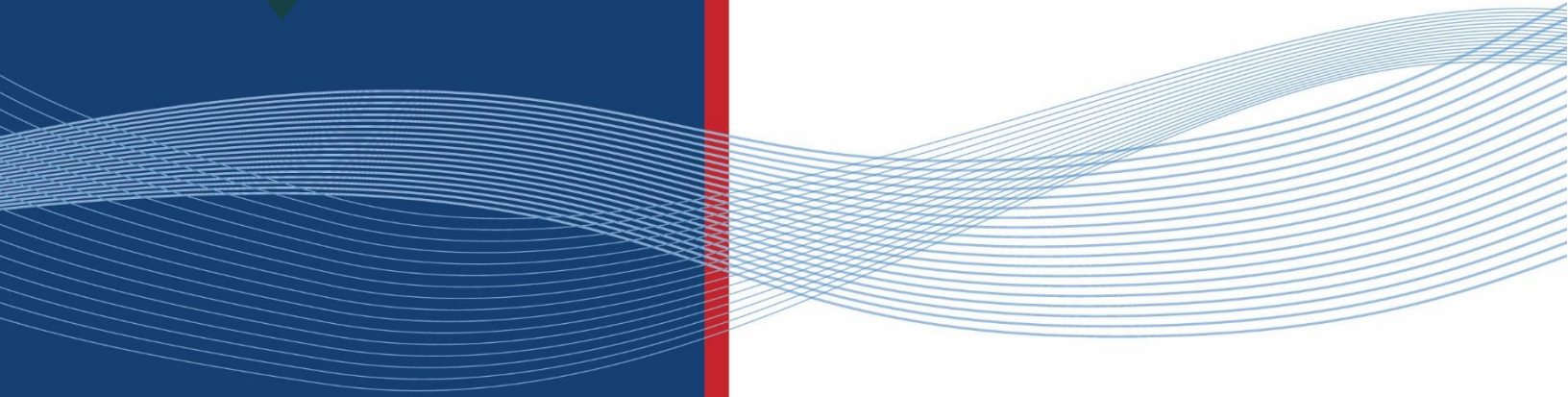
Capabilities Statement

Capabilities Statement is a business resume that can be presented to a PDM to identify the business' capabilities. The following key points should be considered when preparing your capability statement:

- It is your business resume – it is your first impression
- If prepared well, it will help you make your small business stand out
- It is usually no more than two pages – it should reflect your 30-second elevator speech

Your local PTAC offers courses on how to create capability statements. Learn more about creating a capability statement at http://www.aptac-us.org/capabilities-statements-for-government-contracting.

A Capabilities Statement should include the following:

- Company Overview
- CAGE Code (identifies SAM registration)
- VA Center for Verification and Evaluation (CVE) verification logo (if applicable)
- Contact Information
- Core Capabilities
- NAICS Codes and Products/Services Offered
- Project Descriptions
- Certifications/Credentials
- Current and previous business partners/clients
- Company Website

- Socioeconomic Information
- Testimonials(optional)
- National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP) Codes (used for State and Local Gov't Contracting opportunities)
- Awards & Recognition (optional)Performance History Evaluations (optional)
- Contract Vehicles (Federal Supply Schedule, Blanquette Purchase Agreement, Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity, etc.)

Company Website

A small businesses **company web site** is another key component that will help increase visibility. It allows PDMs to learn more about the small business, its capabilities, and its performance history - before face-to-face contact is made. Important factors to consider when building your corporate Web site are:

- **Customize Web site home page to meet requirements:** It is recommended that small businesses consistently update the home page of their website, so it reflects accurate capabilities and past performance relating to procurement opportunities you are looking for. Make it easy for PDMs to find, navigate, and understand your business information.

- **Electronic communication should be professional:** Sending and receiving business related Emails should be done using your company Email address: it should be an Email address that includes your name and Web site domain such as *your.name@business_name.com* (e.g., .net, .us, etc.). Do not use web-based Email accounts like Gmail or Hotmail. Using a business Email address is an opportunity to continue building your business' image.

Key Elements of a Web Site

When building a Web site, there are many online tutorials and tips to read through that can help you plan. To help small businesses understand the basics of a web site, VA OSDBU would like to point out key elements to consider:

1. **Plan your web site goal.**

   - **Web site Purpose:** The goal of any web site can be easily defined by knowing what you want your web site to do. Are you selling one or more products directly or indirectly to customers? Are you selling one or more services to customers directly or indirectly? Are you advertising your product(s) and/or service(s)? Whichever your purpose, the goal should be to get the visitor to do something; that is – to learn more about you and/or to contact you to discuss a need.

2. **Register your domain name.**

   - **Domain Selection/Registration:** Choosing a domain name that resembles your company name is often the strategy taken. By doing so, you aide in the effort of building your company's credibility. Another key point by having a domain name that references your company is email – creating a professional means to electronically communicate with potential customers. For example: the use of john.doe@yourcompany.com (.net), eliminates the need for a third-party email address often created and used through one of the free web-based services; such as Hotmail or Gmail.

3. **Choose a reputable hosting company.**

   - **Domain Hosting:** The next step after choosing and registering a domain name should be to secure a hosting company. That is, a company that offers a service to host your domain and your web site – once built. Choose one that's reputable – one that minimizes the risk of losing hosting services. Even without a website, hosting allows you to immediately create, use, and access professional email addresses associated with your domain. **Build a visually appealing web site:**

   - **Visual Design:** A Web site should be visually appealing to the site visitor and should clearly define what the small business does and what it has done in the past – define its capabilities and past performance. Each section should be easy to read and important information relevant to PDMs should be easy to remember.
     - The use of meaningful visual imagery is one way to emphasize important information.
     - Create a logo that stands out, one that is appealing.
     - Choose font that is easy to read and bode well across various browsers and mobile devices.

4. **Choose relevant web site content:**

   - **Relevant Content:** Web site content is probably the single most important element of a Web site. Content should be short, well-organized, and current. Most small businesses have a lot they want to say, but relevant information should be easy to find and read. For example: when a PDM wants to learn about a small business wanting to do business within the federal marketplace, the PDM would expect to visit the web site to access your small business capabilities and history information in a timely manner.

5. **Ensure that the relevant content is credible:**

   - **Credibility:** Make sure that the content you present to visitors – especially PDMs – is credible and that you can back it up. Misspelled words as well as inflated capabilities can affect how potential customers perceive you. Present relevant, objective, and accurate information in your website. Make it a positive experience to be remembered.

6. **Test the _functionality_ of the web site.**

   - Web site functionality can refer to two differing scenarios:
     - Functionality can refer to the purpose of the web site. Small businesses should make sure that the web site accomplishes the goal you predetermine during the planning phase.
     - Functionality can refer to the ease of navigating through the web site for information. Small businesses should make sure that menu bars, links to pages, and interactive widgets function properly.

7. **Test Browser/Mobile Device Adaptability.**

   - **Responsive Design:** With a variety of browsers (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, and Safari) and the increased use of mobile devices (smartphones, phablets, and tablets), potential customers can search for businesses and preview web sites at any time. **Become the visitor** – ensure that your website adapts to the platform being used - test your web site – ensure it responds to the environment.

8. **Test the _navigation_ of your web site.**

   - **Easy Navigation:** Keep it simple! A web site visitor should be able to move through content – from one section to another or from one page to another - as easy as possible and as quickly as possible. Hyperlinks (links) accessed through vertical and/or horizontal menu bars and/or embedded in content should be easy to see and use and tested to make sure they lead potential customers to relevant information.

9. **Review, refresh, and revise.**

   - **Maintain and update:** Once you complete and publish your web site for public viewing, regularly check your web site content to make sure it is always up-to-date. Ensure that it is optimized for search engines and that social media options are available. Social media functionality will add options to communicate with potential customers while simultaneously adding a way to promote your web site.

Based on your online search results for tutorials and tips on building a viable web site, key elements may differ slightly depending on the _function_ of the web site.