

Writing an Effective and Compliant Capability Statement

Make sure that you use quality paper stock, to avoid bleed through of text and enhance your overall presentation. Arrange the text to fit best on the page (a two column approach is easy to read and helps break out the different sections). Pare down text as necessary, making sure to edit down the least relevant and least important information first.

Proof read your Capability Statement and have at least two other people proof read it as well, perhaps one from within your company who is familiar with your business (they can help to identify gaps in the Capability Statement) and one from outside the company who is not necessarily familiar with your business (they can give you that all important reasonable outsider input). You might also want to try to find someone else in your industry to review it.

The Capability Statement is often created as HTML or a Word document, but to secure the document and its contents and to provide ease of electronic distribution, convert your Capability Statement to PDF format. Make sure the PDF is in color and that it converts accurately. Government contracting has developed into a very competitive marketplace, thanks to its potential for being very profitable. Companies of all sizes, from small, micro-firms with one employee to large, mega-firms with thousands of employees have been successful in selling products and services to government agencies at the federal, state, city, county and municipal levels.

However, competition has heightened as more companies try to break into, be competitive in, and stay successful in this market. Five years ago, no one knew what a Capability Statement was, and now, it is a critical tool to help you be as successful as possible, no matter what size company you represent. Another complicating factor is that fewer people are employed by the government to handle outreach and acquisitions. This means that contractors must know how to distill the information that is most important to a particular decision-maker, state it in a clear, concise manner, and reinforce its importance to the prospect, even more so than in the past. Successful firms use their Capability Statement for a number of purposes:

- Required in many government registration processes
- A door-opener to new agencies
- Proof of qualification
- Proof of past performance
- It will set your apart from your competitors

Capability Statement Format

A Capability Statement should be very brief (only 1 or 2 pages), to the point and specifically related to the individual agency's needs. Ideally, it is a living document that will change depending on the targeted agency. Why is this? Because savvy contractors know that each agency has its own mission and focus, and they speak directly to those in their capability statement. It is important that the document be visually interesting and has similar graphic elements to your company's brand and logo. It must also be a searchable document that can easily be sent as a PDF file. Therefore, we recommend that Capability Statements are created in Word or Publisher using a template that reflects a firm's brand with its own logo, colors and graphic identity. It is important to fit all critical information on one side of one page. The second side, if absolutely necessary, may contain additional supporting data important to the targeted agency such as case studies of past successful projects.

Capability Statement Contents

The five key areas included in a successful are:

1. Core competencies
2. Past performance
3. Differentiators
4. Corporate data
5. Contact information

Tips:

It is best to call the document a Capability Statement. This should be stated at the top of the document. This is a term known throughout government contracting decision-makers, and indicates that you have knowledge of the contracting process. A Capability Statement should also show a firm's logo and other branding elements, for recognition, and be free of long paragraphs, instead, using short sentences and bulleted lists for quick visual scanning. When composing a Capability Statement, use the following section labels: Core Competencies, Past Performance, and Differentiators. These are the key elements that government buyers are looking for so that they can make a speedy decision. Show contact information, including web site and a specific person's name, email and phone number, on each side (page) of the document.

Create a new document for each agency, prime or teaming opportunity. This way each Capability Statement has all the information it needs for that opportunity, and only the needed information. A Capability Statement is preferably only one page, one side. Go to two sides only if absolutely necessary. Save and distribute as a PDF, not a Word, PowerPoint or other format. Save the document with your company's name in the file name. Many federal agencies block Word and Publisher documents because they may harbor viruses, however, a PDF file is much safer, usually smaller and stays visually consistent when mailed.

Core Competencies

These are short introduction statements relating the company's core competencies to the agency's specific needs followed by key-word heavy bullet points. This is NOT everything a firm is able to do, but the core expertise of a firm, specifically related to the agency this Capability Statement is written for, its mission and identified opportunities.

Past Performance

Begin by listing past customers for whom your business has done similar work. Prioritize starting with related agency, to all federal to other government, to commercial contracts. If the past projects do not relate to the targeted agency's needs, do not list it.

Tip: Ideally, include specific contact information for immediate references. Include name, title, email and phone. Use this information when meeting with decision-makers. Leave this information off the Capability Statement when you are sending the PDF as an initial outreach effort or leaving as a handout at conferences.

Differentiators

Doing business with the government is highly competitive. Contractors have the burden of dealing with this competitive market and rising above the other contractors. Many companies who are trying to increase sales to the government market do not have a clear value statement detailing what makes them different from their competitors. A succinct, clear statement that relates to the specific needs of

the agency is what will help the procurement and purchasing people, the program managers and end users understand why they should pick your firm over other competitors.

Sample Differentiator Questions:

How is your company best suited for the needs of this agency? What is it about your services that make you stand out from the rest? What is it about your people that give you the advantage over your competitors? Why are your products better solutions than the others that are available?

If these benefits cannot be clearly communicated, it is impossible for a decision-maker to make a clear recommendation for your company over one of your competitors. Many companies fail to take this critical step. And they wonder why they are missing out on contracts.

Company Data

Include one or two short sentences with a company description detailing pertinent history. Include: the size of your firm, your revenue, the number of employees you have, and the typical geographic area you serve.

Tip: Readers will visit your web site for additional information. Make sure your web site is constantly updated and government-focused.

List Specific Pertinent Codes

DUNS

Socio-economic certifications: 8(a), HUB Zone, SDVOB, etc.

NAICS (all) Do not include code descriptions, just use the numbers

CAGE Code

Accept Credit and Purchase Cards

GSA Schedule Contract Number(s)

Other federal contract vehicles

BPA's and other federal contract numbers

State Contract Numbers

Name (a specific person)

Address

Phone (main and cell)

Email (a personal email, not info@)

If your firm has won any awards, received accolades or has notable accomplishments relating to that agency, list them only if you have space. Use this information to help you create a Powerful Capability Statement and open doors to contracting opportunities in the federal government. This document is the key to building relationship with important decision-makers in government contracting, providing them with a concise description of the goods and services your business can provide, and a consistent reminder of your firm. When properly written, a Capability Statement is the tool that sets your company head and shoulders above your competition.

SEE TEMPLATE FOR A BASIC CAPABILITY STATEMENT LOCATED ON THE NEXT PAGE



Logo or
photo of
business

Company Name

Capability Statement

Company

Enter a brief and factual description of your company

Past Performance

List successful deliveries of a product or service. Product and Service listings are things you can do. This is for things you have done.

Key Products

Use sentence or bullet format to list generic types of product. This is an end product and not a process

Demonstrated Capabilities

Sentence/s summarizing your core competencies.

Services

Use sentence or bullet format to list generic types of service. This is more process oriented and can include equipment.

Company Designations

Very Important to list following

- Business type (small, WOSB, DVOSB, etc.)
- Cage Code
- JCP (need only if you are a manufacturer)
- DUNS
- Federal ID
- Quality Certification (list ISO, etc.)
- NAICS

Customers

List customers for whom you have done work (gov't or non-gov't)

Principals

List the owners of the business and key management staff

Contact Information

List company name, address, city, state, zip, phone, fax, [website](#).

Primary Government Business Contact
Name, phone and e-mail

Instructions: The three grey boxes are mandatory. All others are suggested. This form is in MS Word and the boxes can be sized to accommodate your input. This is a "facts only" document and should not include marketing statements. When you are finished, reformat each box to eliminate the line around the box and delete this Instructions box.