

Review by Bernie Siben, CPSM

Bookshelf: Insider's Guide to SF330 Preparation

Insider's Guide to SF330 Preparation

By Nancy J. Usrey, FSMPS

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First, let me say that I've been involved in this book for a while, reading and reviewing as chapters were completed, questioning and making recommendations as to content, organization and wording. Then, I did a final read of the meat of the book, the chapters on actual preparation of the SF330, and other sections at random. I know what's in this book and why the information is important. So I have no reservations when I say that if you market professional services to federal agencies, this is one book you must have, read and keep as a handy reference forever.

There's a lot of useful information here – what/why the SF330? – using the form – how the form has changed – use of the form by non-federal agencies – assembling teams to fulfill solicitation requirements – and step-by-step guidelines, with example sections of the form.

The book is also an extraordinary primer – for small and large firms – on how to pursue work in the federal arena. There is general information on identifying and doing business with federal clients, public sector business trends, finding and taking advantage of opportunities, accounting and QA/QC issues, developing/maintaining relationships, making go/no go decisions about clients and projects, making and tracking contacts, and many other things businesses must do to succeed in the federal arena.

In fact, there is so much information about opportunities for small businesses, and the activities that will lead to their success and growth, that this book is a great resource for all small businesses, whether they are pursuing federal work as a prime contractor or subconsultant.

The book takes you through all the marketing steps, from understanding solicitations, moving on to selecting teaming partners and making go/go decisions, to the actual preparation of the forms. For every section of the form, the book presents the official instructions, an interpretation of the instructions for use as a further guideline, a discussion of what information needs to be included in your submittal, suggestions on how to find or develop that information, a discussion of what alternative information might serve if the requested information cannot be provided, and a graphic depiction of that

section of the form completed. You would think this alone would be enough.

Then, the book discusses the actual selection process – what happens to your SF330 when it arrives at the client's office – how the pre-selection and selection boards are constituted and how they operate – how the interviews are conducted, etc. Understanding the evaluation process could make a significant contribution to your submittal.

Finally, the Appendices include blank forms, a sample FedBizOpps notice, a list of useful websites, list of general and government acronyms, and lists of helpful resources and organizations.

Appendix J, Insider's Tips on Effective Government Submittals, is of particular value. This section contains observations from senior staff at GSA, USACE, AFCEE, NAVFAC, the Coast Guard, NASA, SBA, the VA and other agencies. They address such concerns as the best way to get to know and market an agency, what defines a good submittal, the importance of appearance, challenges of the selection process, the importance of teaming and small business participation, and others. It's interesting to see how these answers differ from agency to agency.

As of this writing, I have read this book once from cover to cover, and I've read some sections twice. I am already feeling like something of an expert on the SF330 based on those readings. The book's coverage is complete – both broad and deep. The organization is logical, the details are provided, the forms are filled in and the examples are all relevant.

Whether you develop SF330s for your employers or, like me, provide assistance to a variety of firms across the A/E/C/Environmental community, this book will be your expert guide, enabling you to make winning submittals to federal or non-federal agencies. It will also give you a broad range of strategic insights that will help you be better and more successful marketers, regardless of where your paycheck originates.

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