

myContracting Magazine

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for Women Entrepreneurs

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Women Impacting Public Policy

Best Practices: When What You Do Is Different

By Anne Crossman, President,
Vertical Jobs, Inc. & [Completed Systems, Inc.](#)

When I tell people that Vertical Jobs provides experienced role players for law enforcement and government agencies, the first thing people say is: "I didn't know there was a NAICS code for that." This is quickly followed by "That sounds like fun." So what are best practices when you don't fit in? How do you navigate the standardized process of doing business with the government when you don't fit neatly in any one category? Here are three best practices we use:

1. Spend time clearly defining what you do. This includes a list of services and who exactly benefits from them. Pick each word carefully, and stay away from the complicated end of the dictionary. Once this is so clear that your mother would understand what you do, it is time to closely examine the NAICS codes listing. Although you might not fit exactly into any one category, if you understand clearly what you do and who it benefits, you can find the codes that fit most closely. This process will take longer than if you provide "software development" or "paper products", but is definitely worth the time invested. In our experience, government clients may use several NAICS codes in RFIs and solicitations for the same services. Choose the codes that current and prospective clients use for your unique services.

2. Clearly define the benefits of what you do and be prepared to educate others. If what you do is out of the ordinary, it is even more important that you understand your industry and the specific benefits you provide. Yes, what we do can "be fun", but more importantly, it serves to help men and women who protect this country from getting injured or worse. If you cannot explain the real-life benefits of what you do clearly and be willing to take the time to educate others, people will categorize you as "fun". And, unless you are in the entertainment business, fun is hard to purchase.

3. Be very picky and hire only the best. There are many different ways to define who may be the "best people to hire", but a common denominator for all definitions is "people who have a commitment to the customer." When you hire people who understand the customer and are committed to making sure the customer succeeds, everyone wins. Make sure your hiring practices include processes to understand how potential employees view the work that they do.

Could every business owner benefit from these best practices – of course! However, it is easy to be overlooked if you do not fit into the mainstream. In order to be taken seriously, you need to be clearer about what you do, what the benefits are, and how you and your team make a difference.



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