

Attachment 6:
Challenges and Suggestions

Challenges	Examples	Suggestions
Concerning Winning Contracts		
Lack of Thoroughness in Reading <u>Contracts</u> ; Not Paying Attention to Details	Invoicing Contracts Division instead of Accounts Payable; Inaccuracies due to not reading details	Read contract more than once. Know the specifics. Be accurate in order to prevent delays.
Lack of Thoroughness in Submitting <u>Proposals</u>	Not including necessary documents and contact information; Informal language	Read the contract more than once. Create a checklist of items to be submitted and check off as items are completed. Pay attention to detail.
Not Realizing <u>Capabilities/Limits</u>	Bidding on contracts that are too big to bond; Not employing enough personnel to complete a contract satisfactorily	Bid on smaller dollar amount contracts. Be a subcontractor to an ORNL contractor first. <i>Promise only what you can deliver.</i>
<u>Attitude</u>	Having high expectations due to the business status (Women-Owned Small Business, Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business, Small Disadvantaged Business, etc.); "You need me to help meet your goals" attitude	Emphasize competitive edge over other companies. Small Business Goals are in place as a support system - they should not be the #1 selling point.
No Prior <u>Experience</u> with ORNL	No proven track record with ORNL; Losing contracts to contractors with more experience with ORNL	Be a subcontractor for an ORNL contractor first to build a track record.
Lack of <u>Business Knowledge</u>	Being very technically skilled but lacking understanding of the business side; Signing contracts without understanding the details; Not understanding the importance of timeliness in submitting necessary documents	Educate yourself on the business side as well as on the technical side; Take online tutorials on business (check out the Small Business Programs Office website - http://www.ornl.gov/adm/smallbusiness/index.shtml for online tutorials in Small Business University)
Inadequate <u>Breakdown of Cost Proposal</u>	Quoting prices as a lump sum rather than a rate	Itemize all costs associated with the contract (including direct labor, other direct costs, overhead, etc.). Quote prices in a rate/hour so that buyers can gauge the reasonableness of the price.
<u>Impatience</u>	Lack of understanding that awarding contracts takes time	Know procurement opportunities before contacting the Contracts Division. Be patient and keep trying.
Poor Tracking of Deliverables; Not <u>Tracking Deliverables</u> of Subcontractors	Submitting information such as insurance, payroll, etc. to Contracts Division late or not at all; Not obtaining deliverables from subcontractors	Keep a tracking list (such as an Excel spreadsheet) with the necessary deliverables and their due dates. Follow the tracking list and submit deliverables to the Contracts Division on time. Call the Contracts Division if a deliverable will be late. Take initiative and let the Contracts Division know you are on top of things.

Challenges	Examples	Suggestions
Concerning Performing Contracts		
<u>Communication</u>	Not communicating with the customer enough about the progress and details of the contracts; Not setting up a debriefing meeting	Check in with your customer often. Have a reliable point of contact. When not performing a contract, periodically touch base with them so they keep you in mind for future opportunities. Be professional and helpful. Set up a debriefing meeting to receive feedback on performance.
Inadequate <u>Project Management</u>	Not managing subcontractors effectively; Falling behind schedule; Being reactionary	Be proactive. Follow up with customers for informal feedback and correct problems ahead of time. Turn contracts around as quickly as possible. Choose subcontractors wisely.
Poor <u>Infrastructure/Accounting</u> System	Insufficient cash flows; Needing payment before the standard 30 day period ends; Inadequate book-keeping	Install an accounting software that can be understood and used correctly. (It does not have to be complex.) Keep better track of cash flows using the software.
Damaging or Destroying <u>Relationships with ORNL Staff</u>	Burning bridges with ORNL staff; Losing a contract and complaining about it; Leaving a bad taste with customers	Foster relationships with ORNL staff. Be positive and gracious - make the customers want you to perform contracts for them.
Gradually Adhering to <u>Safety</u> Standards	Not following on-site safety rules immediately; Not following protocol	Know all safety standards <i>before</i> reporting to the job site. Comply with safety rules <i>immediately</i> . Educate your staff and subcontractors on ORNL safety standards or require them to participate in ORNL safety training sessions.
<u>Subcontractor Agreements</u>	Not having a defined agreement with subcontractors about the details and responsibilities of the contract	If you are "teaming" with subcontractors, create a defined set of terms during the solicitation phase in the event you are awarded the contract. Determine who will be responsible for what ahead of time to avoid problems in the future, during performance of the contract.
<u>Inflexibility</u>	Not adapting to modifications in the contract	Be open to modifications. Recognize that changes are likely to happen, especially in long-term contracts.