



Business Development Tips

Interacting with Potential Collaborators, Partners, and Funding Sources

Business development is not the same as sales – it is the art of finding and developing new opportunities and partnerships, and following through on their execution. The following best practices are designed to help you develop potential opportunities to grow your business.

Identify and know about potential collaborators, partners, and funding sources

- Understand their program needs and areas of interest (these are usually published).
- Learn how they engage with others.
- Identify key person(s) to hold discussions with regarding your technology/program.
- Know your Technology Readiness Level (TRL). A TRL of 5 or less supports discussions with federal S&T communities and commercial company R&D activities. A TRL of 6+ supports discussions in the acquisition and private financing communities, and could be of interest to licensees.

How, where, and when to connect and engage

- Develop a “call plan”. Aim to connect with Program Managers, technical, engineering and business development staff. Be proactive and reach out to your network.
- Prioritize your “call list” of whom has the available funds, pushing more effort on reaching out to them.
- Ask your DARPA PM and DARPA TCSP Team to make virtual introductions for you.
- Be timely in following up after a virtual introduction is made. Pitch your project, but also take time to listen to customer’s needs and interest areas. Additional resources: <https://www.gan.co/events/> and <https://medium.com/startup-grind/all-the-public-startup-pitch-decks-in-one-place-7d3ddff33bdc>
- Engage early and often; be persistent. It may take more than one call to connect.
- Attend DoD, other federal and commercial market trade shows and conferences and sign up for One-on-One meetings and networking events. For commercial markets, attend financing (Angel and Venture) and licensing opportunity events.
- Quickly determine if there is mutual interest in collaborating. Does your technology meet a need, requirement or fill a capability gap? If mutual interest, develop a specific plan on how you will work together. Plan should include roles and responsibilities, work share, schedule, budget, IP ownership, etc.

Tips for working with non-Government entities:

- Reasons to consider working with companies focused on the commercial market:
 - License technology and let someone else commercialize, market, sell, and support.
 - Work with another company to manufacture your product.
 - Work with another company to market, sell and support a product you manufacture.
- Large business Primes collaborate with small businesses through their Supplier Diversity Programs to bring new technologies and systems – including those developed under SBIR and STTR funding – to DoD, other federal and commercial markets. Primes may also license technology.
 - Join Primes’ collaboration and partnering networks.
 - Register with a Prime’s Small Business Supplier Registration system.
 - Attend federal solicitation Industry Days and meetings.

Resources to help understand customer needs

- Source of integrated information for DoD Science and Technology (S&T) planning, acquisition resources, funding and financial information - <https://defenseinnovationmarketplace.dtic.mil/>
- Federal research and development focused solicitations such as BAAs: System for Award Management (SAM) - <https://sam.gov> Grants.gov – www.Grants.gov, Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) - <http://www.aptac-us.org>
- Large business Prime’s websites list their current programs, core business areas, and small business programs’ points of contacts.