

# MATCHMAKING TIPS AND FAQ'S

## What are MatchMaking Meetings?

MatchMaking Meetings are face to face meetings that are invaluable in forging alliances between small businesses and government agencies and/or prime contractors. Each meeting opens up endless business opportunities by providing small business owners with one-on-one exposure to potential procurement officials/buyers. We like to think of MatchMaking Meetings as “ Business Speed Dating”! Just like a first date you have a short amount of time to get acquainted and make a memorable first impression. A certain amount of courting is involved. Dinner, flowers and chocolate are not required but professionalism, patience and persistence are.

## Who Hosts a MatchMaking Meeting?

MatchMaking Meetings are hosted by procurement specialists and sometimes buyers from local state and federal Government Agencies, Prime Contractors and Major Corporations. MatchMaking Meetings are **NOT** hosted by small businesses.

## How do I prepare for my MatchMaking Meetings prior to arriving on-site?

- Step one is to REGISTER as soon as an Alliance Event opens or as close to that as possible. MatchMaking Meetings are scheduled on a first-come-first-serve basis and by date of registration.
- **DON'T JUST SHOW UP. DO YOUR HOMEWORK!** Research the Agencies and Primes. VISIT THEIR WEBSITES. Try to determine if the agency or prime you're your product on a larger contract. If they do, you may not want to take the time to meet. Target agencies that may have a need for your product or service. If the host has told us what they are looking to contract; we have listed it on our website. We also encourage each host to tell us what they are **NOT** looking for. No agency buys everything! Know that you are bringing the host a product or service they can use! If you have something that the host does not buy do **NOT** schedule a meeting. Don't waste your time or the MatchMaking host's time. The more you know about each agency and each opportunity, the better chance you have of building a relationship with the agency.
- Prepare a line card. (an 8-1/2" x 11" page) Highlight your company's qualifications and unique product or service. Emphasize your niche. Show a track record of outstanding service. Make sure you list any certifications on the top of the page. (i.e. 8(a), Service Disabled, etc.)

## Who schedules my MatchMaking Meetings?

- As a Small Business Attendee **YOU** will schedule your own MatchMaking Meetings but you must be registered first. Scheduling priority will be based on the date of your registration. Approximately two weeks before each Alliance Event, you will receive an email reminder to schedule you meetings.

## How do I schedule my MatchMaking Meetings?

- Register first.
- Check the event schedule for any workshops you may want to attend. If they are scheduled at the same time as the MatchMaking meetings you will need to schedule you meetings around the workshops.

- After doing your homework. Log in using your UserName and Password.
- When your company information pops up click “MatchMaker Maintenance” near the top center of the page.
- When the scheduling grid pops up. Pick a time you would like to meet with an agency. Click on any white box and place a check mark within the box. (Any blue boxes are already taken.)
- Save the information at the bottom of the page.

### **What can I expect from a MatchMaking Meeting?**

- Expect to get your questions answered. Expect to discover if your product or service is of value to the agency or prime. Expect to find out whom to talk to.
- Do NOT expect to get a contract or to meet the decision maker on-site. There is no possibility of every buyer being on-site.

### **What do I do to prepare for my ON-SITE MatchMaking Meeting?**

- DO NOT come unprepared! Write down any questions you have after doing your homework.
- Be on time and dress appropriately.
- Bring the right person that can answer any questions the procurement officer may have.
- Each meeting will be approximately 15 minutes. **SELL YOURSELF!** Present your line card and business card. A brochure will work as well. Spend the first few minutes introducing your company overview. Include any certifications. Spend a few minutes describing your products and services and your unique niches. Spend a few minutes on your track record and successes. The rest of the meeting can be spent on interacting with the buyer to find out about opportunities, what the next step is and how you plan to follow up.
- Tell the Host “This is how my company can help you.”

### **What do I do after my MatchMaking Meeting and the show is over?**

- Have an advance plan for following up and then DO IT.
- Be Pro-Active. The agency or prime contractor will not come knocking on your door. No matter how many T’s you have crossed an I’s you have dotted you won’t have a chance of getting a contract if you don’t build a relationship. Make the connection with the right person. Remind them of who you are, your track record, solutions you have to problems they have, the prices you charge etc.
- Be patient and be persistent.