



What a Rare Bird!

By Ken Beecher, Dynanet Director, IT Solutions

Ok, so if you've been keeping up with my blog (and if you haven't, this is my third post; please read the last two and provide some feedback), you know by now that I had a successful career at IBM, where I spent 17 years before deciding to join the executive team at Dynanet. When I was at IBM it was easy, or shall I say different, being a "Goliath" in the sales arena. IBM had proven, documented processes and abundant resources in the services, software, and hardware areas. But even though I had these resources at my fingertips, we still had to supplement our team with partners to fill the gaps – staffing, expertise, experience, etc. In addition, Federal agencies are required to support small business growth. Thus, in many cases we had to team with small companies to complete a small business plan. While at IBM, my colleagues, and quite frankly myself, would evaluate a potential small business and negotiate a teaming agreement based predominantly on their customer knowledge and intimacy. However, now that I'm on the other side of the table representing my small business on these opportunities, I see another aspect for a large business to investigate: Is the small business you are working with "business savvy", "technically savvy", or is it the **rare bird** with both?

Small businesses that have the business savvy gene have many of the following characteristics:

- Have an MBA or a CPA on the executive team
- Know the intricacies of their federal contracts, for example, when it is best to recommend using the GSA Alliant, GSA Schedule 70, or NIH CIOSP3 Contract Vehicles
- Can articulate clearly the differences between a LLC and a S Corp and discuss the tax implications of each
- Leverage their network for sole source work
- Can articulate clearly the client's mission and objectives in functional terms
- Keep overhead costs to a minimum initially but then invests for growth, whether to address operational efficiencies, achieve CMMI and ISO certifications, lease nicely furnished office space that impresses, or go to market with eye popping marketing and collateral including a dazzling new website

Almost conversely, small businesses that have the technically savvy gene have many of these characteristics:

- Have an executive team member with a Computer Science degree, who rose through the trenches from coding applications, performing network operations (aka "keeping the lights on"), or managing complex information technology projects

ABOUT DYNANET

Dynanet Corporation has a long history of successfully assisting federal and state governments in accomplishment of their missions. The proof of our success is in the numerous accommodations and awards we have been given and the list of partners who choose Dynanet as a business team member. Our talented and certified professionals are led by a highly experienced and senior leadership team with both private sector and federal experience.

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- Can look at a technical issue and create a Concept of Operations (ConOps), complete with a Target Enterprise Architecture including Business, Application, Information, and Technology Architecture diagrams
- Can recommend a “software stack” that not only meets the customer requirements but also understands the strengths and weaknesses of the software
- Can speak “engineer” and have the technical success stories to back it
- Hire excellent resources to quickly address technical gaps
- Have an inert ability to identify future solutions that will be needed in the market place

Obviously, this is not an exhaustive list of business and technically savvy characteristics but just some things that come very quickly to my mind. Further, I know I’m missing the intangibles of companies such as the charisma of the leaders, executive leadership style, employee morale, etc. that define the success of an organization; but I also know that there are excellent books in the market place that address this, and two of my favorites are “Who Says Elephants Can’t Dance?” and “Good to Great”.

But I digress . . . the point is how many of the small companies you either work with or work for have both the business and technical acumen to succeed? Here at Dynanet, we have assembled an executive team of MBAs, CPAs, Technical Engineers, Network Operators, System Coders, and Certified Project Management Professionals, ITIL, and Agile Scrum Masters that understand the challenges of the Federal Market Place. Additionally, we stress and practice collaboration. For example, on “sales calls” you will normally see two Dynanet people: one that hears the pain points that affect the agency’s mission and the other that understands their technological challenges and focuses on the solution. After the meeting, we caucus, compare notes, discuss what we think we heard, and bounce ideas off of each other. At Dynanet, we have married the business and technical genes, which makes us that rare bird. If you want to become that rare bird too, throw away the ego and understand what gene you have whether it be business or technical savvy and embrace where your strength lies but then spread your wings over the gene you don’t currently have and fill that gap!

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