

SELLING TO DEFENCE 2004



20 OCTOBER SAW THE SELLING TO DEFENCE EVENT TAKE PLACE IN CENTRAL LONDON. HERE WE REVIEW THE KEY TOPICS DISCUSSED.

Following the success of previous events, *Selling to Defence – Accessing Subcontractor Opportunities In Defence Prime Contractors*, organised by the publisher of *MoD Defence Contracts Bulletin (DCB)* BiP Solutions Ltd, was eagerly anticipated. Held at the London Marriott Grosvenor Square on 20 October 2004, the event aimed to provide delegates with an in-depth review of the opportunities presented by prime contractors within the defence marketplace.

Delegates benefited from hearing directly from a wide range of speakers, from both the UK MoD and private sector organisations. The subjects covered were diverse and provided a stimulating backdrop to the challenges of supplying both prime contractors and the MoD itself.

The event was chaired by Digby Barker, a member of BiP's Procurement Advice & Support Service (PASS) team and contributor to both *DCB* and *Government Opportunities* magazines. In his opening address Mr Barker underlined the value of MoD business in the UK, and stressed the important role that SMEs can play in not only providing services to prime contractors, but also in raising levels of innovation – themes that were reinforced throughout the day.

Phil Margerison, Head of the MoD's Defence Suppliers Service (DSS) provided the first presentation of the day; an informative guide to the size and scale of the defence marketplace (MoD placed 34,000 new contracts in 2002/03, of which 90% were valued at under £100,000) and the procedures that are involved in contracting. This was followed by a useful guide to sourcing subcontracting opportunities, not least through *MoD DCB*.

Next to present was Andrew Radcliffe, Commercial Manager, Future Aircraft Carrier Integrated Project Team (IPT). Mr Radcliffe gave a powerful insight into contracting from an IPT perspective, highlighting the complexity and lengthy timescales involved in large-scale projects, and the opportunities for project performance improvements offered by concepts such as alliancing (defined as being a cooperative relationship between client and contractors/suppliers formed

for the express purpose of delivering enhanced business results for all participants).

Also representing MoD were Grant Lovett, Senior Commercial Policy Advisor on e-business and Steve Power, Assistant Director, Procurement Policy, who jointly presented on how e-commerce has benefited suppliers to the MoD, both directly and indirectly. Neil Vicker, SEO Commercial Policy, Defence Estates also contributed a thought provoking presentation on the role of prime contractors in major initiatives such as the £1bn plus Project SLAM (Single Living Accommodation).

Moving to the supplier side, delegates heard first hand experience of working as a subcontractor from Dane Pepperday, Managing Director of PDM Training Solutions. His presentation focused on the attributes required by an SME to win business from prime contractors, and the quality of service required to retain it. The presentation, as you would expect from a training organisation, was full of useful advice and was well received by the delegates; as was the presentation that followed from David Bowles, Chief Executive of Northern Defence Industries.

Other presenters on the day included Bob Owen, who presented on the role of prime contractors in the supply chain and Stephen Gibson, Head of UK Standardization Development at the Defence Standardization Agency (DStan). Also speaking were consultants Bob Owen and Geoff Armstrong and Glenys Wolstenholme, Marketing Director of the Defence Diversification Agency (DDA). The event was rounded off by an informative and practical guide to contracting from Willy Hockin, Director Acquisition and Commercial at the Defence Manufacturers Association.

Throughout the day delegates had access to a wide range of exhibitors, representing both the private sector and the MoD – including the Defence Bills Agency, the DDA and DStan. Feedback from delegates was positive, and the number of questions asked after the presentations demonstrated a real thirst for knowledge in this marketplace. Further details on a future *Selling to Defence* event will be published in both *MoD DCB* and online at www.contracts.mod.uk.



GRAHAME STEED

MANAGING EDITOR
DEFENCE CONTRACTS
BULLETIN