

10 Biggest Unforced Errors

1. Assuming that you can score points by cleverly describing your quals
2. Lack of a “game plan” to address your shortcomings
3. Reliance on a JV, MP, or sub to score points on procurements that are prime only
4. Confusing a good past performance with a high scoring past performance
5. Underestimating the time and complexity of pulling, highlighting, and assembling the required info
6. Overlooking the importance of clear, explicit SOW language to score points
7. Not getting an objective third-party assessment of how you will score months before RFP issuance
8. Relying on exaggeration and/or tailoring of experience to demonstrate relevance
9. Starting late, especially on gating items (e.g., cost accounting system)
10. Lack of involvement in industry groups that shape the scoring factors

“Adapt or Die” – Billy Beane on Scorecards

- 🐾 Prepare for the game; companies often don’t pay attention to criteria until it is too late to fix them; the time to warm up is now
- 🐾 If your score is lacking, fill that missing roster slot with the proven past performance that will push the team over the threshold
- 🐾 Subcontracting work is considered as qualified project experience, but prime experience is a scoring category for most F&O GWACs
- 🐾 Third-party scoring assessments can be great “spring training” to get ahead of the game and find areas for improvement
- 🐾 Start preparation early; gathering materials required can be more time consuming than you think, so start sooner rather than later
- 🐾 Work directly with agencies and industry groups to offer feedback to maximize your chances of success

Executing a Smart Game Plan

The first step toward winning the World Series is coming up with a solid, executable game plan. Sometimes, especially with scorecards, it is best to work backwards. Since you can typically get an idea of requirements many months before the RFP is released (getting involved with industry groups can be key here) – use that knowledge to your advantage. Be honest with yourself in identifying weak points and areas where you can improve your score. From there, you need to develop your capture strategy. Weak points can be mitigated through teaming, talking to the customer, or developing a new product. Remember, you need to put in your best batter for the pitcher (the government scoring criteria in this case). You may have some good qualifications, but if they don’t score points, then they are irrelevant to your chances of winning.

Avoiding Tommy John

A “pop” in a pitcher’s elbow is never good, and likely a sign that he will join the ~25% of MLB pitchers who will undergo Tommy John surgery, sidelining them for 1-2 years. Nobody wants to watch from the sidelines as fellow contractors cash in on the newest GWAC. To avoid such a fate, start your health checks early. Pay attention to early warning signs and sign up with a third-party consultant to see if they can provide an early diagnosis. Third-party scoring assessments can be a great way to

Alliant 2 and OASIS Scoreboard

CONTRACTORS:		NEXT ON							
1	4	Polaris	CIO-SP4						
9	6	OASIS+	Alliant 3						
FISCAL YEAR	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
ALLIANT 2 (\$B)	0	0	0	0	<1	1	2	4	4
OASIS (\$B)	<1	1	2	3	6	8	9	10	8

Based on success from Alliant 2 and OASIS, the government continues to rely more on the objective scorecard method to identify qualified contractors for Polaris, CIO-SP4, OASIS+, and Alliant 3.

see how you stack up against the competition. Be sure to have your health history (CPARs) ready to go, including official amendments to add any work performed, but not outlined in the initial scope, that might boost your score. The government will not “take your word for it.” Ailments (such as a non-compliant accounting system) need to be treated early.

What’s Your Market Value?

In the open trade market, value is determined by both player potential and past performance. The government, however, needs to win now. They need players with proven past performance who can come in and contribute right away. As your stats flow into Billy Beane’s scoring algorithm, it is essential to know what is considered or ignored – are minor league (subcontracting) stats taken into account? What about past performance with a joint venture? For the upcoming OASIS+ and Polaris GWACs, GSA’s algorithm does allow subcontract and joint venture work to be scored as “qualified project experience.” Just be ready to show direct evidence of the award and relevant scope completed. Unlike Polaris, however, OASIS+ includes a scoring category based on prime contracting experience, so you better be able to prove you can perform in the majors.

Working the Umps

Government execs from the three agencies that issue and administer the 10 GWACs are committed to early and constructive engagement with industry. Bidders can and should actively offer feedback directly and through the industry groups that have formed to offer feedback and recommendations. While the umps (government execs and evaluators) are open to feedback and dialog prior to RFP issuance, they are working diligently on moving from subjective assessment of proposal responses to objective, fact-based scoring akin to MLB’s upcoming move to robotic umps calling balls and strikes for consistency and accuracy (the government does not want to be perceived as the Angel Hernandez of federal procurements). So it’s okay to work the umps to improve your chances...but after the RFP has been issued, bidders need to complete their scorecards. Play ball!