

2011 DOD NORTHEAST REGIONAL COUNCIL SMALL BUSINESS CONFERENCE AND  
MATCHMAKER EVENT  
SURVEY RESULTS

The purpose of this survey was to capture participant's thoughts on the overall effectiveness of the conference. This looked at aspects such as trainings, the matchmaker, the cost as well as their likelihood to attend again. All attendees were surveyed. Out of 440 total attendees, there were 52 respondents making a 12% return rate.

**Questions 1**

In question 1 rating their experience 1-5 (1 being poor)

- 48% gave it a 4
- 38% gave it a 5
- 2% rated their experience a 1.

**Question 2**

In question 2 we asked respondents about their expectations to capture if organizers were successful in setting reasonable expectation.

- 92% of respondents said the event met or exceeded their expectations.

**Question 3**

Question 3 was asked about the affordability of the conference.

- 94% of respondents thought that the event was affordable.

**Questions 4**

Question 4 was in regard to the SBLO.

- Respondents found the information in the SBLO training to be informative.
- There were some suggestions for an SBLO reviewer to help present the workshop.

**Question 5**

Question 5 was in regard to the Small Business Training.

- Small businesses that responded thought these were very helpful for first time attendees.
- Criticism of the Preparing for the Matchmaker workshop was that they would like to have more specific information about the SBLOs attending that specific event.
- Criticism of the Government Contracting workshop was that it tried to fit too much information into the time allotted.

**Question 6**

Question 6 asked if attendees were there for the first time.

- 58% of respondents answered this was their first time attending a matchmaker.

### **Question 7**

Question 7 asked if a respondent found the event to be a good value for their company 1-5 (1 being low value)

- 37% rated the value a 5
- 29% rated the value a 4
- 27% rated the value a 3
- No one rated the value a 1

### **Question 8**

Questions 8 asked if attendees would go to another DoD Northeast Regional Council Matchmaker.

- 92% of respondents said they would attend again.

### **Question 9**

Question 9 asked for feedback on positive experiences. These are a sample of answers;

- “I have been involved with tradeshow and various "events" for 25+ years within the electronics marketplace and this was one of the best events that I have been involved with- great job!”
- “One company has indicated they will be forwarding a quote in the future.”
- “A positive was meeting so many companies in such a short time. The 10 minute timer/clock that was displayed was very helpful.”
- “I believe we will see orders from this event. The quality of Primes was excellent.”
- “2 solid referrals - promotional materials and traffic engineering; 5-8 others added to our vendor database. No contracts yet - but likely.”
- “Very well organized. The training session on how to approach/plan for the MM was very useful. The breakout sessions during the MM were also very useful.”
- “I loved meeting other small businesses and collaborating. I believe that was as valuable as placing our company in front of primes and government agencies.”

### **Question 10**

Question 10 asked for suggestions on how to improve in the future. These are a sample of answers;

- “It would be nice to have this event more often. Twice a year would be great!”
- “Several of the companies that I signed up with didn't show up. Get rid of the sign up rush at the beginning, let us do it on-line before the event.”
- “I would suggest having the individuals who actually do the reviewing train the SBLOs. With having people from different companies train, it seemed as though we got conflicting information.”
- “Provide a copy of the Small Business attendee list with Matchmaker Prime packages so we can see who is coming.”
- “Provide prime/government needs prior to the event.”
- “Making registration to meet with an agency less of a cattle call would be a great thing. Yes, agency representatives sometimes do not show up. That is true whether they have shown up the day before or not. Getting them to commit will help. Then attendees could know ahead of time who they can expect to meet with so they can do the research to maximize that time. Given almost everyone has smart phones now their schedules could even be updated in real time.”

## **Results**

Overall there was a very positive response to the event. People seemed to have reasonable expectations of what they would get out of the event and were glad that they made the trip and will attend another matchmaker in the future. Out of all of the positive feedback I think we can infer that people like the opportunity to network with each other whether it be at the Matchmaker or at the reception the night before. The majority of the comments around areas of improvement were around the sign-up process and wanting a list of Agency/Prime needs prior to the event.

For this survey we did not capture a list of businesses that had “cashed the check” from this event. We had two reasons for this. One is that the survey was done 3 weeks after the event making it very unlikely that a contract and payment would have already gone through from the event. Secondly we tried to set up expectations that for many businesses the process of turning contacts into contracts takes some time, and asking that question on a survey done right after the event may lead small businesses to believe that by not leaving the Matchmaker with contract in hand, they were not successful.

Based on the Council’s interest, I would be happy to conduct a survey in the future that is aimed more at finding out who “cashed the check” from this event.