

Applied Geo Technologies



Deltek GCS Premier® enables Native American 8(A) firm to penetrate prime government contracting market

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Shane Bone, Director of IT and Change Management for Applied Geo Technologies

THE CHALLENGE

Despite high-profile, multi-million dollar government contracts with NASA and the Department of Defense, Choctaw, Mississippi-based Applied Geo Technologies, Inc. (AGT) is a relative newcomer to the federal government contracting space. The tribally chartered 8(a), small disadvantaged, HUBZone1 company made the decision to become a prime contractor in late 2003, and just one year later the company was well on its way to becoming a leading provider of digital mapping, defense, aerospace and information technology services to the federal government. AGT is wholly owned by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians d/b/a Chahta Enterprise, one of the largest tribally owned manufacturing firms in the United States with more than \$80 million in annual sales and 1,500 employees.

In the early 2000s, Chahta Enterprise was primarily handling commercial manufacturing. Unfortunately, global pricing had already caused the company to send about 1000 of its manufacturing jobs to Mexico, requiring the company to diversify its business. Knowing that the federal contracting landscape held great fiscal promise, Chahta took responsibility for a struggling AGT in 2003 and consequently began its journey towards becoming a government contractor.

According to Shane Bone, Director of IT and Change Management for all of Chahta’s worldwide divisions, the transition was not an easy one. Even though AGT was in a three-year mentor protégé contract with Lockheed Martin, Bone said that he and his colleagues quickly discovered that being a prime contractor versus a subcontractor meant a whole new way of doing business.

“Becoming a prime contractor is a daunting task,” he said. “You really need to plan in order to succeed. If you are not proactive and persistent, then you may have trouble getting into government contracting, but you could have much more serious trouble remaining viable if you don’t know how to manage your contracts.”

Stats at a glance

Company Name

Applied Geo Technologies

Headquarters

Choctaw, MS

Employees

1,500

Primary Business

AGT is a tribally owned provider of aerospace and defense services. They have worked on a variety of projects for the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corp, U.S. Air Force, NASA Stennis Space Center and other government agencies.

URL

www.appliedgeotech.com

THE SOLUTION

AGT needed government accounting software in order to win new business, effectively manage contracts and stay current on FAR, CAS and other government-specific regulations unique to selling to the government. In late 2003, the company began exploring government accounting solutions to help them make their transition into prime federal contracting. AGT looked at five software packages during this evaluation process, including Deltek GCS Premier, a Windows-based accounting solution specifically geared towards companies selling to the federal government.

At the time, AGT was using a product-based MRP system that handled accounts payable and accounts receivable as well as the company's commercial projects. However, the system was not suitable for tracking or managing contracts, projects or tasks.

"We didn't have much choice but to purchase and install government contracting accounting software," Bone said. "We were very selective and cautious about making this investment. In the end, though, we found only one solution that had built its core competency around government contracting, and that was Deltek GCS Premier.

"Everyone kept telling me to select Deltek, saying that we wouldn't have a problem being ready to roll with DCAA using their solution," Bone continued. "In fact, it was very comforting to know that Deltek has people 2 dedicated to making sure their software stays in line with FAR, CAS and other requirements, so we'd be able to run our business and not worry about those things. Deltek can really talk the talk and walk the walk when it comes to government accounting."

What sealed the deal for AGT, though, was the level of support the company received from Deltek during the pre-sales process. In order to win AGT's first large prime contract with the federal government, the company was required

to submit a pre-award survey in order to determine its suitability and adequacy for the contract. AGT sent the survey to several competitors being considered for software selection, including Deltek. As Bone recalled, Deltek was the only company to respond to this day. "In five working days, we'd received all of Deltek's responses on the survey and pulled 90 sample reports based on those responses," he said. "Since we didn't have much experience in government contracting at the time, Deltek's personnel also helped us relate each response to the appropriate reports. The result was a 100-page electronic document that basically blew the DCAA auditors away and got us approved to quote the contract, without issue, in a day."

"GCS Premier has carried us through the early stages of being a prime contractor, and we anticipate it will easily carry us through our future growth as well," said Shane Bone.

After selecting GCS Premier, AGT had just one remaining task in order to complete their journey to becoming a government contractor. The company successfully pushed their three-year protégé contract with Lockheed Martin to just one year in August 2004. Now, they were ready for prime time.

THE BENEFITS

AGT went live with GCS Premier in September 2004, after a brief, two-month implementation process. The software immediately began addressing the company's core accounting requirements, including accounts payable, accounts receivable, general ledger, transactional accounting, contract and generic billing, 1034s and 1035s. In addition to these functions, AGT also began using GCS Premier's purchasing module for purchase orders, as well as the software's preprocessor for timekeeping, which automatically prepares man-hour

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information entered into GCS Premier for AGT's time and labor system.

According to Bone, implementing GCS Premier has made it possible to keep AGT's current staff—and therefore the company's costs—at a lower level. "If we'd waited a year to implement this software and gone prime before we installed it, we would've had to hire three or four people to help us not only manage our contracts but especially manage our contract costs," he said. "It's definitely worth at least a few staff positions."

Perhaps the greatest benefit of all was that growth for AGT would not have been possible without GCS Premier. "This is not the type of business you want to start and try to run without the appropriate accounting and contract management software, especially if you expect to remain in this business and grow," Bone said.

"Our situation changed and our software had to change with it," he continued. "GCS Premier has carried us through the early stages of being a prime contractor, and we anticipate it will easily carry us through our future growth as well."

THE FUTURE

Just a few months into using the product, AGT is pleased with the government-specific accounting features of GCS Premier. However, AGT plans to explore GCS Premier's budgeting functionality in more detail in the near future. The company has also purchased GCS Premier's Travel application to more easily track employee per diem while on official government travel.

Yet for Bone, the basics of GCS Premier continue to outperform his expectations month after month. "Even after all the good things I heard about Deltek, I was still flabbergasted at both the level of support during implementation and the quality of the product to this day," he said. "I've led other system implementation projects over the last 15 or 16 years, and GCS Premier really stands out as an exceptional product with excellent support."

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Deltek is a global leader dedicated to delivering enterprise management software that meets the unique needs of project-focused organizations. With over two decades of experience, Deltek enables companies to maximize profitability and productivity, integrating all aspects of their businesses. More than 11,000 customers worldwide rely on Deltek to streamline operations, improve performance and win more business.

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