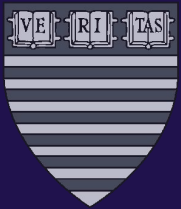


# U.S. Department of Treasury User Research

March 10, 2017

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Team members: Will Long, Maya Perl,  
Anna Ponting, Ni Xu, Cindy Yang



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# Team



**Will Long**

Computer science  
+ government  
concentrator;  
experience leading  
technical teams



**Maya Perl**

Strategy, operations  
+ project  
management;  
consultant to  
organizations large  
and small



**Anna Ponting**

Policy + digital  
initiatives in global  
cities; background  
in local +  
international  
government



**Ni Xu**

Software engineering  
+ business;  
background in  
start-up and  
established tech  
companies



**Cindy Yang**

Start-ups + finance;  
experience in  
business  
development, user  
research +  
regulation

# U.S. Treasury Department

## Mission

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Maintain a strong economy and create economic and job opportunities by promoting the conditions that enable economic growth and stability at home and abroad, strengthen national security by combating threats and protecting the integrity of the financial system, and **manage the U.S. Government's finances and resources effectively.**



# Opportunity

BOEING COMPANY, THE 0128	
- AMOUNTS	
Obligated Amount	\$2,200,000
Current Contract Value	\$2,200,000
- PURCHASER	
Major Agency	9700: Department of Defense
Major Funding Agency	9700: Department of Defense
Contracting Office Agency ID	5700: DEPT OF THE AIR FORCE
Contracting Office ID	FA8634: FA8634 AFLCMC WWOX
Funding Requesting Agency ID	5700: DEPT OF THE AIR FORCE
Funding Requesting Office ID	F4FDAG: ASC RAF
Foreign Funding	X
- CONTRACT INFORMATION	
Signed Date	11/6/2015
Effective Date	11/6/2015
Current Completion Date	3/31/2016
Ultimate Completion Date	3/31/2016
Award Type	C: DELIVERY ORDER
Reason For Modification	C: FUNDING ONLY ACTION
Type of Contract Pricing	U: COST PLUS FIXED FEE
Unidentified Action	X
Multi-Year Contract	N: NO
Performance Based Service Contract	X: NOT APPLICABLE
Contingency Humanitarian Peacekeeping Operation	X: NOT APPLICABLE
Contract Financing	Z: NOT APPLICABLE
Cost or Pricing Data	Y: Yes
Contract Description	F-15, TALON HATE, FUNDING OF COST OVERRUN
Purchase Card As Payment Method	N: NO
Number of Actions	1
National Interest Action Code	NONE: NONE
- CONTRACTOR INFORMATION	
Vendor Name	BOEING COMPANY, THE
Vendor DBA Name	BOEING
Address	6200 JS MCDONNELL BLVD
City	SAINT LOUIS
ZIP Code	63134



USAspending.gov

Explore the Data ▾

For Developers ▾

About ▾

Help

Q

Contract Summary

Award ID  
N0001914C0032

Parent Award ID  
N0001914C0000

In Progress

...

Awarding Agency

Funding Agency

Department of Defense

Awarding Sub-Tier Agency  
Department of the Navy

Awarding Office  
Naval Air Systems Command

Recipient

Boeing Company, The

Address  
United States  
6500 Jc McDonnell Blvd  
St. Louis, MO 63134-1939

DUNS  
149879157

Parent DUNS  
009256819

Business Type  
Corporate Not Tax Exempt,  
For Profit Organization,  
Manufacturer of Goods

Start Date  
6/30/2014  
Contract Start Date

Today

Current End Date  
6/30/2019  
Contract End Date

Potential End Date  
6/30/2019  
Option Exercise Date

Award Amounts

\$3,152,706,906  
Funding Obligated

99%

Sub Award Amount  
\$968,890,767

\$3,173,279,815  
Potential Award Ceiling  
(Base + Options)

Contract Details

Description  
Fusce dapibus, tellus fusce dapibus, tellus ac cursus commodo, tortor mauris condimentum nibh, ut fermentum massa justo sit amet risus. Nullam id dolor id nibh ultricies vehicula ut id  
[More](#)

Period of Performance  
6/30/14 - 6/30/19 (5 years)

Place of Performance  
St. Louis, MO 63134-1939

Contract Award Type  
Delivery Order

Contract Pricing Type  
Fixed Price Incentive

[See additional details](#)

[See transaction history](#)

Financial Details

Sub-Awards

Contract Details

Existing

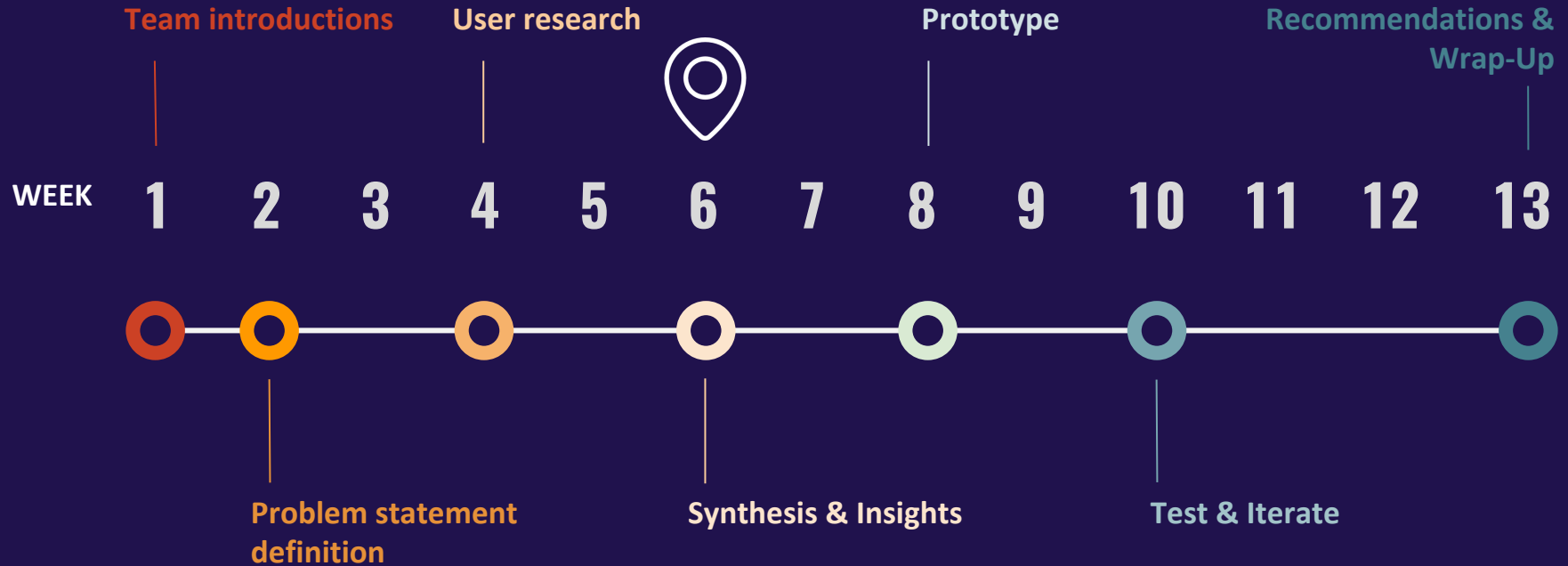
To Launch in May 2017

# Problem Statement



**What needs will Treasury's standardized and improved spending data fulfill and how will it help create economic value?**

# Timeline



# Starting Point: Defined User Groups



## **Government Vendors**

Companies that sell to products or services to any part of the government

Use Treasury data to improve odds of winning a contract, via market research on spending trends



## **Data Re-Purposers**

Companies that sell aggregated government insights to vendors

Use Treasury data as a data source



## **Researchers**

Journalists, NGO's, and academics investigating federal spending

Use Treasury data as an investigative source



## **Congressional Staffers**

Staffers seeking to publicize success in obtaining grants

Use Treasury data to track awards



## **State and Local Governments**

Recipients of federal funds seeking to improve budgeting

Use Treasury data to project future budget



# Hypothesis: Treasury Data Fulfills Procurement-Related User Needs

## PROCUREMENT

The process of finding, applying, and securing government contracts across agency, location, and industry



## VENDORS

Significant proportion of business may derive from selling products and services to the government



## RE-PURPOSERS

Synthesizing information from different data sources produces higher quality insights for vendors

# Select Questions: Would Treasury Data Fulfill Your Needs?



VENDORS

PROCUREMENT



RE-PURPOSERS

Small

- How do you hear about contracting / sub-contracting opportunities?
- Whom do you turn to when you know you want to sell to the government? Why?
- What has been most difficult?

Medium/ Large

- How do you identify procurement opportunities
- What questions/ market research are you hoping to answer?

Small Business Advisors

- What do small business owners come to you for?
  - How do they hear of you? Why you?
- How do you currently help them?
- What resources do you use? Why?

Business Insights Technology Companies

- What do your customers come to you for?
- Which of your products are most popular/ most often used?
- How would you want to improve it?

# 20+ User Interviews, With More to Go



● Completed

○ Scheduled

# Diving Deeper into the User Groups

## Revealed sub-segments



Shared frustration in obscure Procurement process & relative in-actionability of USASpending.gov



Yet, different goals

- Immediate vs Long-term Revenue
- Knowledge & Staffing
- Resources



Creating different user needs



A photograph of four people in a meeting room. A man in a dark shirt stands on the left, looking at a whiteboard. Three women are standing in front of the whiteboard, which is covered with many yellow and orange sticky notes. One woman in a white shirt is pointing at a note, and another woman in a yellow shirt is reaching up to place a note. A round analog clock is on the wall to the left of the whiteboard. The scene is dimly lit, and the overall tone is professional and collaborative.

# User Research: Our Insights

Our biggest takeaway:

**USAspending.gov is not actionable**

# Insight #1

## UX design is not a solution

- ❖ Users of government data feel that the new USAspending.gov design is an improvement, but that the data still does not solve a problem for them
  - Large Vendors typically utilize a Re-Purposer for business intelligence purposes and not access USAspending.gov directly
  - Vendors and Re-Purposers who access the data prefer the new design and appreciate the data enhancements but find them insufficient to drive adoption

EASY-TO-  
UNDERSTAND  
INTERFACE  
(INFO PRESENTED  
SIMPLY)

# Insight #2

## Forward-looking data is key

- ❖ Users are interested in past federal spending data in order to predict future demand
  - Business Intelligence Firms are interested in finding correlations between expenditures and budget conditions in order to train their algorithms
  - Small Business Owners that cannot afford business intelligence services want to see trends directly
- ❖ Users want current procurement opportunities alongside historic data
- ❖ Many users would like to link historical data to the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS)

historic data  
→ future facing



# Insight #3

## Full contracting data tells a bigger story

- ❖ Users want information linking past expenditures to underlying contract documentation
  - Both Vendors and Re-Purposers need granular data about project specifics
- ❖ Users are interested in viewing Requests For Proposal, losing bids and winning proposals in order to understand the procurement selection process
  - Users understand the potential sensitivities but feel even partial data would be beneficial

Tie to documents  
for procurement

# Insight #4

## Primary data sources are the most trustworthy

- ❖ Because it is an aggregator of other agencies' data, users perceive USAspending.gov as lower quality in terms of granularity and latency
  - When the need arises, many users prefer to directly access the relevant agency database, which they view as the most up-to-date
- ❖ Sophisticated Business Intelligence users feel that the re-launch data standardization process jeopardized integrity in favor of consistency
  - Users feel that some fields may not be accurately captured

Accuracy  
&  
Latency

# Insight #5

## For existing user-base, USAspending.gov is one piece of many

- ❖ Small Business Advisors and Vendors that use USAspending.gov today view it as one step in larger process
  - When the need arises, these users will access the data to get a high level sense of past spending in their industry or location
  - However, USAspending.gov is never the main source of information these users leverage in their work

pull down  
from multiple  
sources.





# Journey Maps

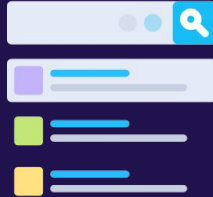
1. Procurement for Medium/Large Vendors
2. Procurement for Small Vendor

# Procurement Supposed To Be Easy



## Plan

Consider your business readiness to sell to government.



## Search

Use government sources to identify appropriate requests for services or products.



## Submit Bid

Craft your bid, keeping in mind both quality and price.



## Present

Deliver an oral presentation of your bid, if requested.

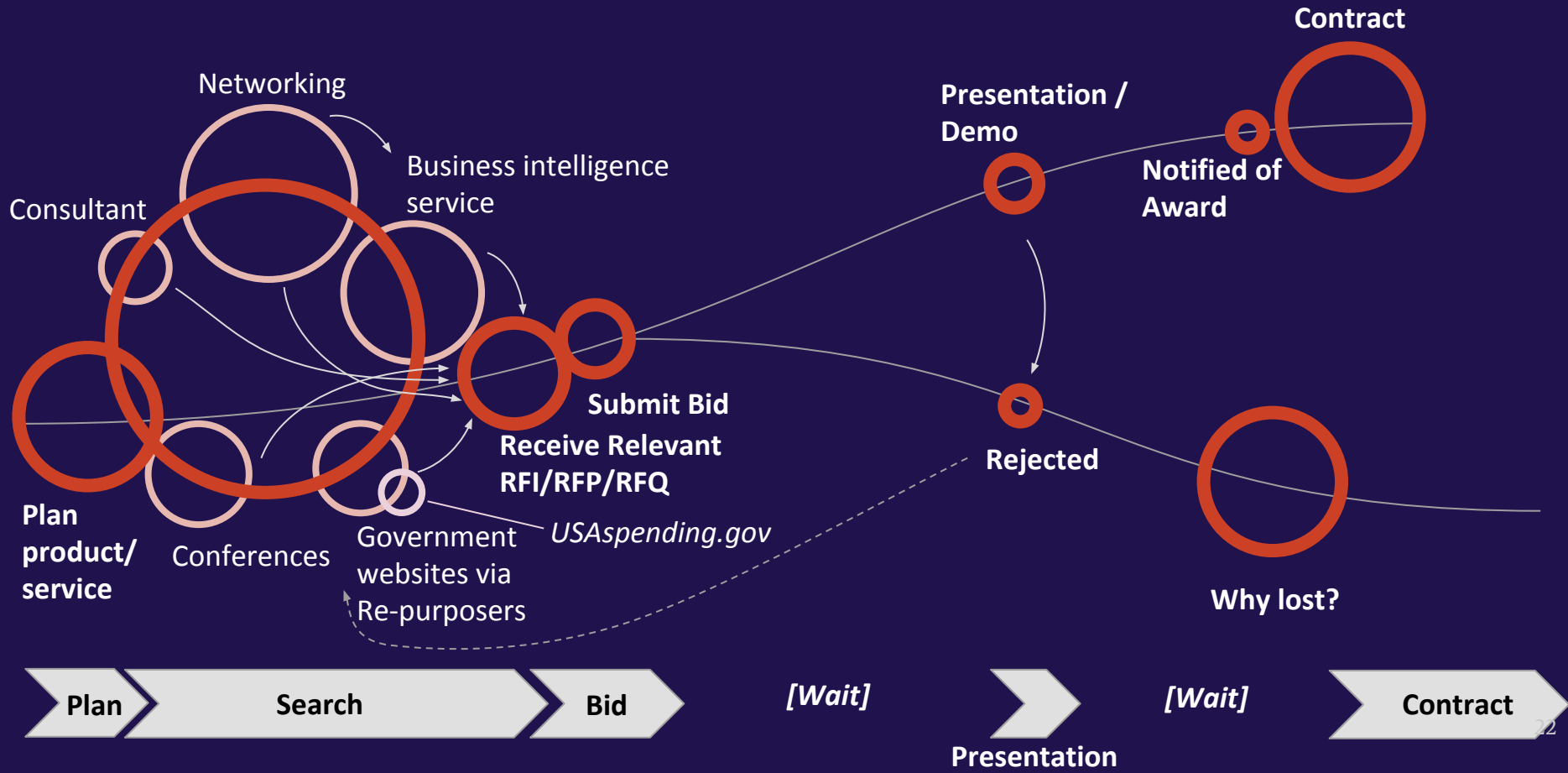


## Contract

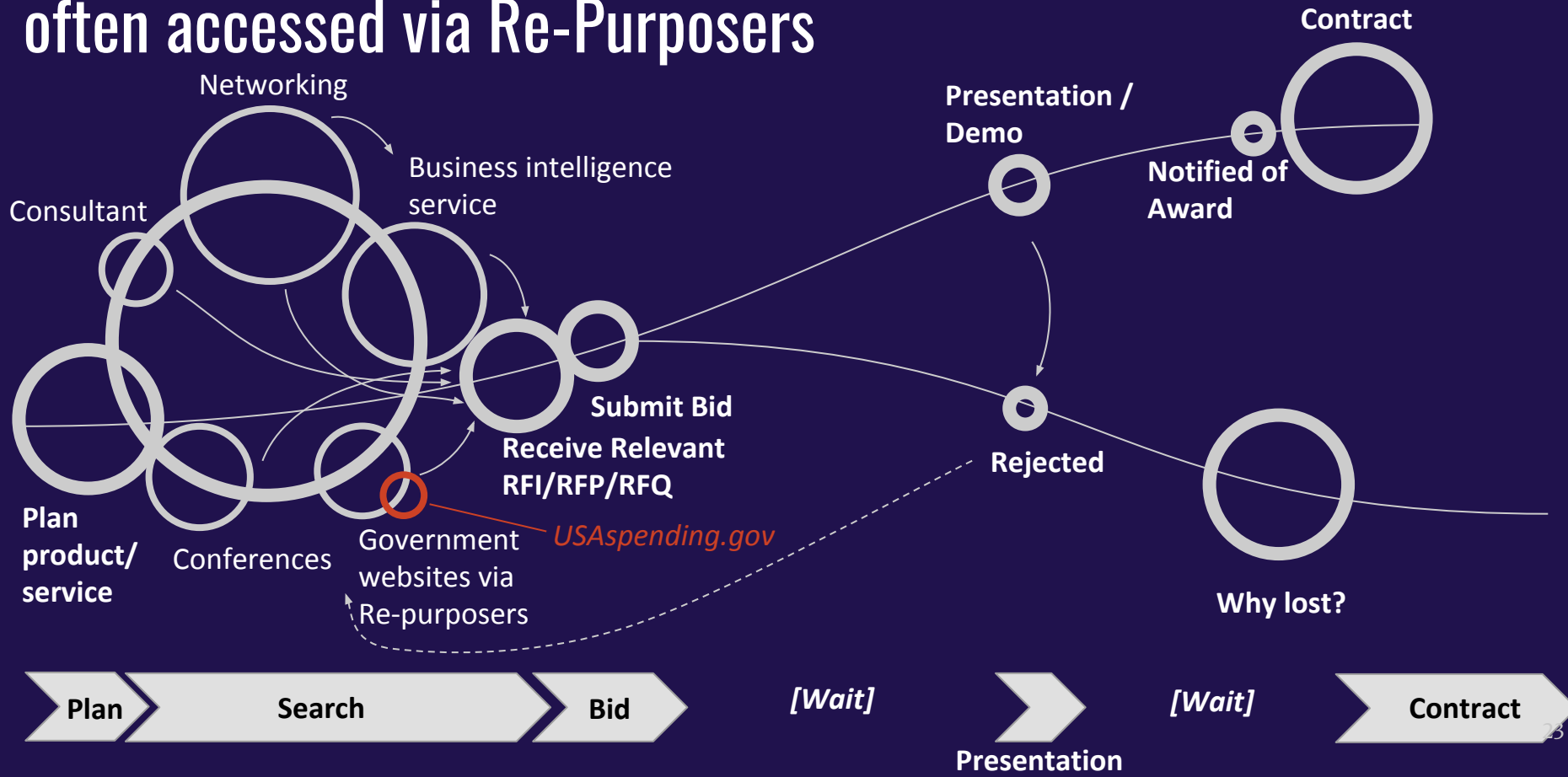
The agency will make a decision and award the contract.

**But In Reality...**

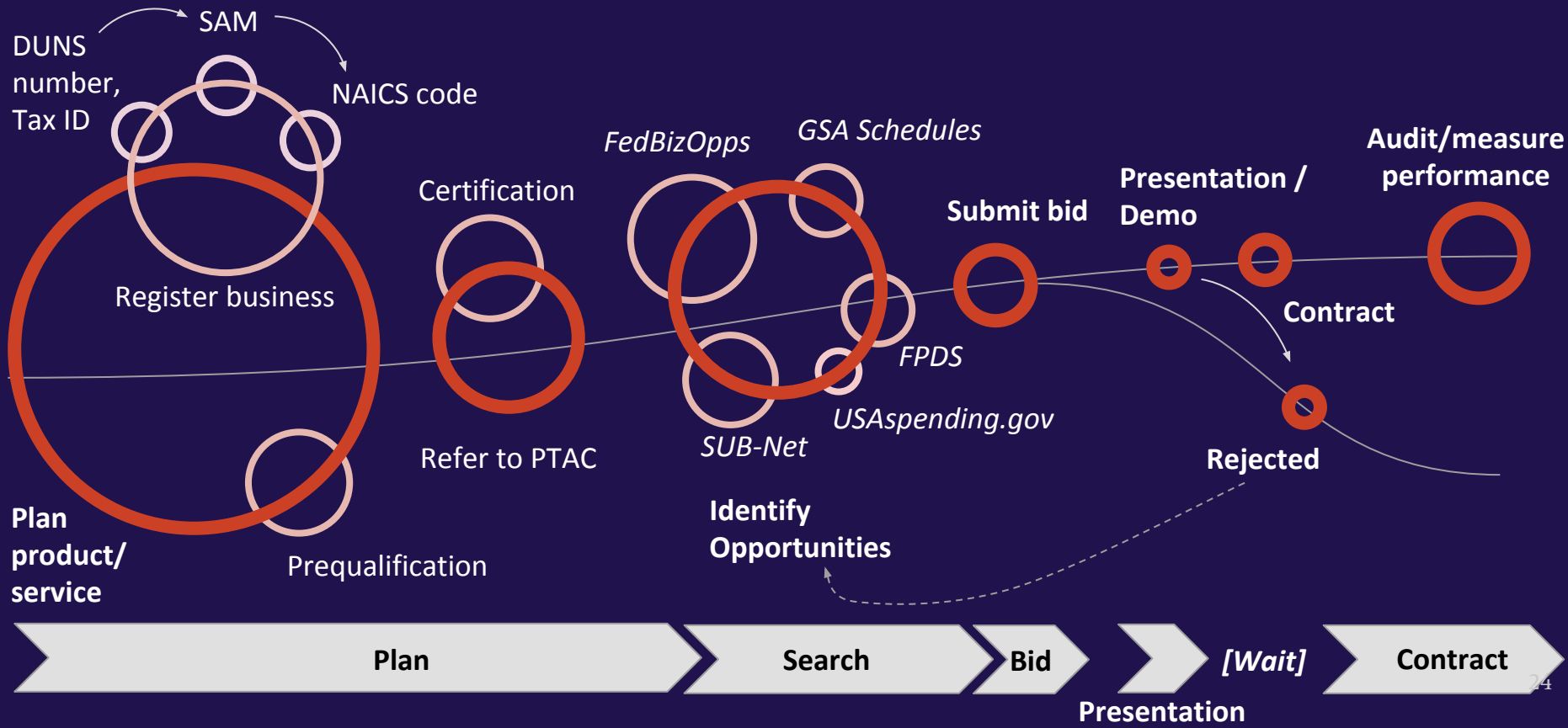
# Journey Map: Medium/Large Vendors aided by Re-Purposers



# Journey Map: For Medium/Large Vendor, USASpending.gov often accessed via Re-Purposers

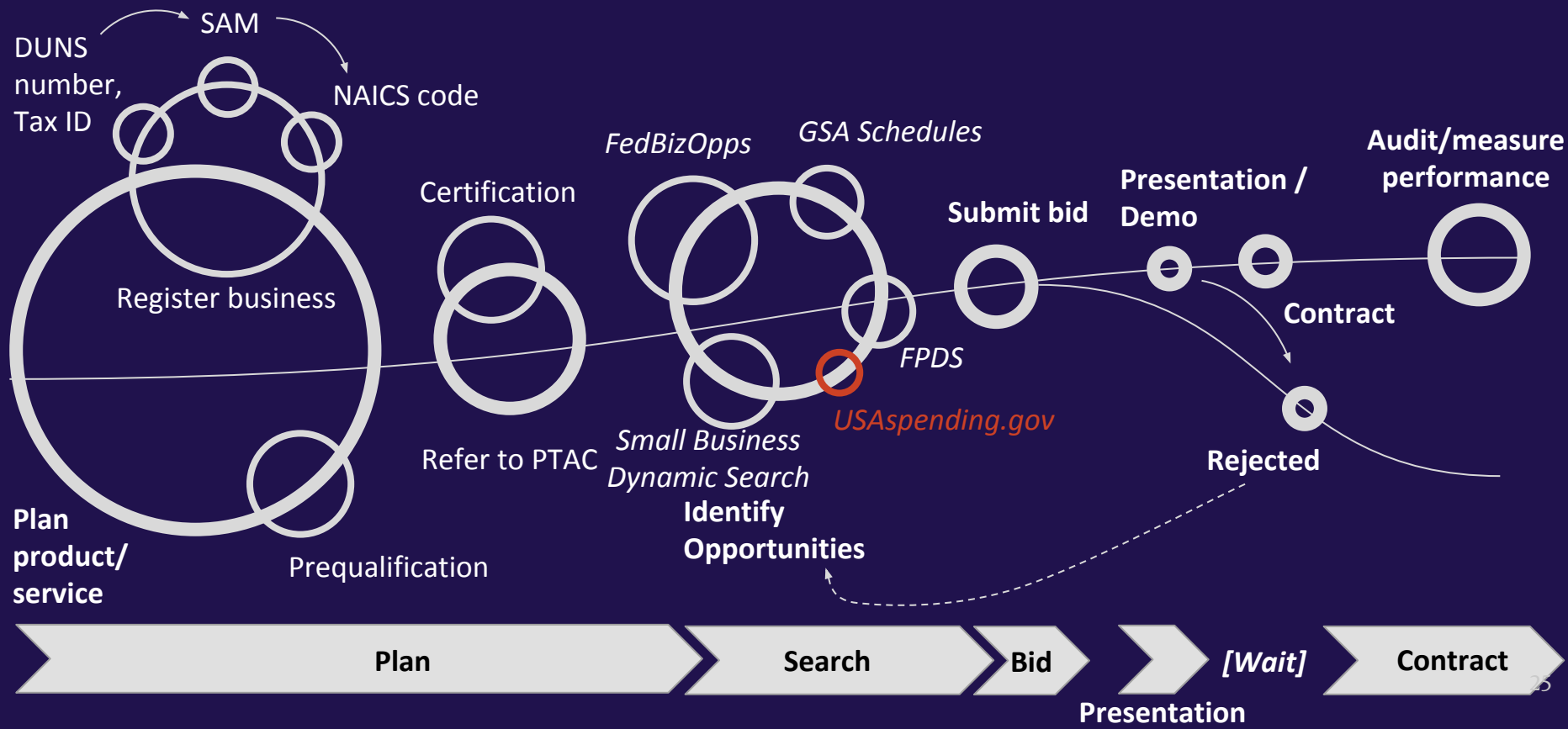


# Journey Map: For a Small Business Owner, Daunting Multi-Step Process to Navigate Alone





# Journey Map: For a Small Business Owner, USASpending.gov Is a Minor Book-End of a Journey




# Example: For Small Business Owners, Each Step Is Challenging

1

gle

small business dynamic search



All

News

Shopping

Videos

Images

More

Settings

Tools

About 15,700,000 results (0.63 seconds)

Dynamic Small Business Search - (DSBS) for Federal Contractors

Ad [www.uscontractorregistration.com/GOV/DSBS](http://www.uscontractorregistration.com/GOV/DSBS)

USFCR Makes your Company Easily Found by Purchasing Officers by Keyword Searches

65k+ Satisfied Clients · SBA Business Registration · DSBS Search Keywords

Contract Search

SAM New Registration

SAM Migration

Contracting Officers

Federal Contracting Resources for Small Businesses | The U.S. Small ...

<https://www.sba.gov/contracting/finding.../contracting-resources-small-businesses>

database. As a small business registers in the System for Award ...

SBA - Could Not Set Session Cookies

[dsbs.sba.gov/dsbs/search/dsp\\_dsbs.cfm?CleaningPass=Cookies](https://dsbs.sba.gov/dsbs/search/dsp_dsbs.cfm?CleaningPass=Cookies)

Your attempt to go to [http://dsbs.sba.gov/dsbs/search/dsp\\_dsbs.cfm](http://dsbs.sba.gov/dsbs/search/dsp_dsbs.cfm) failed. Usually this is because your browser does not have "Session Cookies" enabled.

## Small Business Dynamic Search

2

SBA - Could Not Set Session Cookies

Your attempt to go to [http://dsbs.sba.gov/dsbs/search/dsp\\_dsbs.cfm](http://dsbs.sba.gov/dsbs/search/dsp_dsbs.cfm) failed. Usually this is because your browser does not have "Session Cookies" enabled. It can also occur if you have set your browser to prompt you, and you've chosen to disallow the cookie(s) requested. In either case, you must allow the SBA to set Session Cookies to use SBA applications.

Please enable Session Cookies, then try again using the hotlink above.

3

Skip Navigation Accessibility Options

SBA

DSBS

Mobile View

Print

Exit

Help

DSBS

Quick Market Search

TM OnLine

Ready

Welcome to the Dynamic Small Business Search

All search form hotlinks open a new browser window.  
All form fields that require typing in data have "tooltips" with data format information.

**NEW FEATURES FOR MOBILE USERS:**  
Phone number hotlinks can be used to dial the number on mobile phones.  
Address hotlinks can be used to show the address in Google Maps.

**This is generally a self-certifying database. The SBA does not make any representation as to the accuracy of any of the data included, other than certifications relating to 8(a) Business Development, HUBZone or Small Disadvantaged Business status. The SBA strongly recommends that contracting officers diligently review a bidder's small business self-certification before awarding a contract.**

Location of Profile

States:  
(any state)  
AL - Alabama  
AK - Alaska  
AA - American Atlantic (APO/FPO)  
AE - American Europe (APO/FPO)  
AP - American Pacific (APO/FPO)  
AS - American Samoa  
AZ - Arizona  
AR - Arkansas  
CA - California  
(How to make multiple selections.)

Searching within a State:  
(Requires exactly one state from the State list at left.)  
  
Congressional District: [Help](#)  
County:  Select 1 State, then press Lookup [Lookup](#) [Help](#)  
Area Code or Phone Number Initial Fragment

Last modified: 07/13/2004 12:00:00 AM

[FirstGov](#) [E-Gov](#) [Regulations.gov](#) [White House](#)  
[Privacy & Security](#) [Information Quality](#) [FOIA](#) [No Fear Act](#) [ADA](#)

SBA Processing: 0.093 seconds Version: SBSS 8.1.1  
Session timeout in 59 minutes

A photograph of two kittens, one long-haired and one short-haired, looking at each other through a wire mesh fence. The image is dimly lit with a purple tint. The text "Empathizing With Users" is overlaid in the center.

# Empathizing With Users

# Large Vendors Feel Informed and Confident

## DOING

Visiting familiar government websites, calling connections and peers, instructing support staff to fill out RFP

## SAYING

“I saw on my analytics platform that the Department of Health and Human Services is likely to buy new hospital beds soon. I should call my friend Barbara at the Department.”

## THINKING & FEELING

Excited about the potential revenue opportunity and implications for personal compensation



## SEEING

Company standardized software for submission of government bids

# Business Intelligence Firms Have Sophisticated Practice

## DOING

Pulling data from multiple sources, cleansing aggregated data, using technology to generate trends and predict future spending

## SAYING

“Our data is always up to date and accurate. We offer insight no one else can in this industry. 90% of top government contractors are our loyal customers.”

## THINKING & FEELING

Confident that their technology and processes are top of the line and add enormous values to their clients



## SEEING

Fragmented data sources, inconsistent format, and unstructured data created business opportunities for them

# Small Vendors Are Confused, yet Opportunistic

## DOING

- Managing day-to-day operations
- Negotiating with suppliers
- Finding/ managing employees
- Speaking with peers
- Researching competitors/ new business opportunities

## SAYING

“I can’t dedicate staff to government sales and don’t want to pay for industry conventions that may (or may not) yield new business. I rely on word of mouth from other business owners, free resources, and government websites to get information”

## THINKING & FEELING

Unaware of the complexity involved in winning a government contract (e.g., certifications, RFP/ RFI process, research)

## SEEING

Multiple confusing, poorly-designed government websites (see Small Business Dynamic Search)



# Small Business Advisors are Determined, Yet “Only One Piece”

## DOING

- Pre-qualify small business owners
- Share process ‘roadmap’
- Refer to procurement specialists
- Conduct research via USASpending.gov & Small Business Dynamic Search

## SAYING

“Before we can even help a business owner, we pre-qualify them. Are they well-established? Are they certified? Can their operations scale? Only afterwards, do we prepare them for the rest of the process.”

## THINKING & FEELING

Mission-oriented determination to help small business owner, yet cognizant of limitations being ‘only one piece’ of a larger puzzle

## SEEING

- Optimistic small business owners
- Disparate government resources, both online and in-person



## Next Steps



# Our Team Has Two Go-Forward Options

1. Design an intervention that involves other data in addition to Treasury's
2. Explore additional user sub-segments that we previously disqualified

Economists



Investment  
managers



Others?



**Thank you!**