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Capitol Integration - helps Companies Attempting to Sell to The Government Achieve Dramatic Outcomes



Gene Moran, PhD
President

Capitol Integration
<https://www.genemoran.com/>

Contact:
Gene Moran
(703) 895-2761
gene@capitolintegration.com

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Interview conducted by:
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor
CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: *Dr. Moran, what is the idea behind Capitol Integration?*

Dr. Moran: Capitol Integration helps companies who are attempting to sell to the government. We help companies achieve dramatic outcomes. We're able to achieve those outcomes because most companies do not really know how complex that environment is when they step into it.

CEOCFO: *Are there particular types of companies, industries, sizes, or locations that use your services?*

Dr. Moran: I focus on companies of all sizes; small, medium, and large. It can be domestic US companies, or international companies that have a US presence, and they are trying to sell into the federal market.

Where I differentiate myself is that I focus on the process into which they are selling. Ironically, the same process for a startup company working out of a garage applies to a 5-billion-dollar multinational company.

CEOCFO: *Do many companies recognize the need for help, or is it often after they tried and find it so daunting they will turn to Capitol Integration?*

Dr. Moran: It is a great question. I use the description of the blind men feeling for the elephant and now knowing exactly what they are grabbing onto. It is a daunting process. I say that it is a complex process, but it is not a complicated process. My PhD research in public policy focused on defense executives and their perceptions of how to communicate with Congress, which is a key part of the federal process. It turns out, in my research, I identified that most executives lack awareness of how the process actually works. Therefore, they try to figure it out by using their networks and connections, which will ultimately prove to be too narrow.

They need a broader base of support. They need a broader understanding of process in order to be truly effective, and the most successful companies know how to engage with, what I call, the three rings of the circus: industry, agency, and Congress. That is not a pejorative term. It is meant to describe many things in relative motion as in a circus. The most successful companies recognize that understanding how these things interrelate; industry, agency, and congress, is essential to success in federal sales. If you are a company new to this environment, and you attempt to just go it alone, you will likely struggle, potentially for years.

CEOCFO: *What do you understand about working with the government that would be done differently than in private industry, that most people do not recognize?*

Dr. Moran: The speed of government is not fast. The speed of commercial is quite fast, and when commercial companies attempt to move quickly in government sales, they quickly get frustrated because the process in government is meant to unfold over multiple years, not multiple months. That is one. Speed is a problem.

CEOCFO: *Are you surprised that everyone does not realize that, or is it just they overlook that, not taking what they have learned in real life about the government with the business side?*

Dr. Moran: I say that the school of hard knocks has expensive tuition, and many companies learn how to do this through on-the-job training. That is probably the least efficient way to learn how to do it. The problem is that there is not one school that someone can go to, to learn how to succeed in federal sales. We can learn about contracting. We can learn about how the large budget works. We might fundamentally understand that relationships are important, but how we synthesize that truly requires a level of expertise that is challenging to develop.

If you are looking at it from the perspective of a single company you are not getting enough exposure across the three rings of the circus, in order to effectively increase your learning. Therefore, I have found that it is often easiest for a company to hire some outside support, and then recognize where they might have gaps with their internal team. By using external support, you can come to recognize exactly what sort of inside help you might need, and it will help you to hire the right kind of people to do some of these required activities full time.

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CEOCFO: *Do you find that a change in administration leads to change in some of the processes, or certainly a change in philosophy? Does it matter who is in power?*

Dr. Moran: Surprisingly, the administration does not make that much difference. It tends to affect the margins, although some of the headlines would have you believe otherwise. The process is exactly the same, no matter who is in power. The budget request process takes 2 to 3 years, there are multiple budgets in motion at once, the acquisition process is the same, it is grounded in law, and those things do not change from administration to administration. Some of the high-level policies do, and sometimes policies get put in place that may be in conflict from one agency to another, but those could be addressed.

It may surprise some that even when the government shuts down, there are still government functions taking place. We put billions of dollars per week on contract. It happens, not quite like clockwork, but it does happen perpetually. Therefore, you have to be engaged.

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about the different types and levels of services you offer?*

Dr. Moran: Companies come to me looking for support with federal funding. They might be trying to get into the budget. They might be trying to increase a budget line that might favor their product or capability. They might be looking for support with a policy. I will use an example of software acquisition right now. Our government policy is troubled and there are policies in place regarding cyber security, that cannot keep up with the pace of change of that technology. Therefore, we are constantly having to help policy makers get the policy right. When the policy is right, it tends to allow for funding opportunities to evolve.

The third thing that companies look for from me is ongoing advisement, so I can be a sherpa or a guide through this process. Not two scenarios are exactly alike in terms of what a company is trying to accomplish, but the process into which they are attempting to maneuver does stay pretty much the same, and I can help them move more efficiently through that process.

CEOCFO: *What do you look at when you are taking on a client? What do you need to know? What do you need them to recognize, or understand with a government contract?*

Dr. Moran: With my focus on defense and security, I am trying to make sure what they are proposing, in terms of a capability or a service, is something that matters to the warfighter. Is this something that is solving the need for which the government wants or should want a solution. There are times when the government does not recognize that it is a new capability that could perform a function better or satisfy an operational need better.

It is possible that a company is bringing something new forward. Often, they are bringing an improvement forward. Therefore, I want to make sure that it is a viable capability, that the company can actually deliver it, and that they are at a position of corporate sustainment, that they understand that this may take a little while.

Although it may take a little while, when you get one or two wins under your belt, you can begin to build this bedrock of federal business that will ultimately build on itself. However, a company has to have that mature vision of what their future state might look like, and we would agree on the objectives that we might want to achieve before we ever start.

CEOCFO: *Do companies turn to you on a recurring basis? Do you work with them after they have engaged with the government or received the contract?*

Dr. Moran: Ideally, when a company comes to me, they have some federal business in hand, and that is an indicator to me that they understand that this requires a little bit of resilience and some wherewithal to endure the process. Companies that are looking for help are often looking for help because they recognize that competitors are out-maneuvering them, but they do not know how or why. They are told by a government buyer, "Hey, you were number 4 on the list, but we are only going to fund 3, so you just missed it." They get frustrated by that, so they might come to me looking for assistance.

It could be that they are working with someone else on another project that I had not been a part of. Perhaps it was another client I worked with, or someone who knew of me, and I will be referred to that; "You ought to talk to Gene at Capitol Integration." Referral is the most often used lead generation tool at a company like mine, where the support is so personalized and direct.

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about the Capitol Currency book and the Capitol Currency Workbook?*

Dr. Moran: Thank you for asking that. In my support of companies who are mature in the federal process, I have come to recognize that many companies hold themselves back, because they do not think they are ready for external support like mine. They kick the tires, and they recognize that, "Okay, this may take longer than I thought." However, I work based on a retainer relationship that is a very modest retainer, that is disassociated from the whatever the value of the outcome is. That is a legal requirement.

For companies that are not ready to make that leap, I offer Capitol currency as an introductory way to learn about my methods, better understand this process, appreciate the three rings of the circus, and be aware of some of the considerations in working with the federal customer and with me. They can learn through watching videos of me presenting or interacting with people or conducting mock interviews with people. They can listen to me being interviewed. They can download templates of documents that I use when presenting to any part of government. They can download questions that they will be expected to answer when they approach the federal government, and as you mentioned at the beginning, there is a booklet.

Capitol currency also includes access to my online forum, The Big Top. That is a small community of like-minded people pursuing federal business, and it includes limited access to me in the first 60 days, so that people who want to get their feet wet can do so at essentially no risk. All wrapped up in a bow, Capitol Currency is a lifetime membership to my world of support.

CEOCFO: *You have a long background of working with government. You also have a military background. What did you learn from the military in what to do and what not to do in a business capacity?*

Dr. Moran: In the Navy they say, "You are at sea or in DC." Although I served in six ships and commanded two, my DC jobs were focused on the federal budget, the appropriations process, and interaction with Congress. I represented the

Navy to Congress in a number of positions. My final role in the Navy was leading the Navy Senate office, where I was resident on Capitol Hill.

What I learned was that those in the know in industry, know how to communicate with Congress. They participate fully in the process, because when the federal government develops a budget, they do not always get the right answer. Therefore, Congress makes some changes to the budget before it goes back to where the acquisition system takes over, and the funds get put on contract. The most successful companies know how to maneuver the entire spectrum. I learned that while I was on active duty. That was reinforced after I spent a few years as a corporate lobbyist at a headquarters of a major defense company.

True business acumen is learned by working with the companies. You can go to school, and I also have a degree in financial management. However, that does not directly apply to how the government spends money, or how business decisions need to be made regarding government funding and government spending.

To answer the question more directly, my resilience and ability to synthesize a complex array of information from multiple sources stems directly from my military background.

CEOFCO: *What have you learned since you have started to work with businesses and helping them get the foot in the door? What might have changed in your approach?*

Dr. Moran: I am not sure that my approach has changed all that much. Unfortunately, I recognize that leaders of companies often try to just figure it out. Their ego gets in the way, or an unacknowledged fear gets in the way, to admit that they might need some help. Therefore, I try to educate when I have opportunities to do so. I speak throughout the years at various settings, where I am not selling, but I am exposing people to this opportunity that they may not recognize.

When I speak to a prospect, and they have just been referred to me, I am often testing for their level of knowledge and level of understanding of the process. I will gently quiz them and probe to make sure that I see where they are, and then I will meet them where they are. I have not always had that ability, but it is something that I have learned over time.

I recognize that interacting with corporate leaders requires that gentle executive touch, and then a little bit of tough love and firmness to say, "Maybe you are not ready, or maybe you see something that I do not see as someone who works in this space all the time." The ability to have those conversations is something that has evolved.

CEOFCO: *Are most of your clients from referrals? Do you do outreach at all?*

Dr. Moran: The overwhelming percentage comes from referral. What is the first thing someone does when they are referred? If you refer a mechanic, they are going to try to look up what there is in the public square about this person. They will look online. They will look for reviews.

I maintain a public presence. I have a social media presence. I write articles. I have been recognized for several awards for my work, some through a blind review, which I am particularly proud of. I have to put those things out there, so that when a referral is made, people can do their own homework.

It is a demonstrated fact that 30% to 40% of the buying decision is made before I ever have the first conversation with somebody, and that is true in most sales. Therefore, I have to be present in the public square, but ultimately, the work comes through referral.

CEOFCO: *Why choose Capitol Integration?*

Dr. Moran: If you are working to sell to the federal government and you want to achieve significant outcomes, I call them dramatic outcomes, either increases in funding or adaptation of policy to make funding more possible, you likely need help. You can get help in many places, but first you have to acknowledge that you need help.

I work with companies across that spectrum, from start to finish of the budget, and that includes interacting with agencies, interacting with industry partners, trade associations, Congress. It is difficult to find somebody who has got experience and expertise of working all three of those frames. That is what I do.