

**FAQ's**  
**U.S. Commercial Service (CS) Corporate Partnership Program.**

**What exactly are these marketing partnerships?**

The CS has entered into a no cost contract or “partnership” with selected corporate partners in which the partner will market CS and CS programs and services. The contract authorizations are for the partners to market the CS programs only; CS is not authorized to market any partner or a partners products.

**The marketing partnerships may include the following activities:**

1. Data mining/target marketing: utilize the partner's client database to effectively target middle market companies with the appropriate export message and resources.
2. Seminars: export education and opportunity meetings sponsored by CS and partners. Topics include export basics or industry, market or opportunity specific such as FTA information.
3. Webinars: Internet-based seminars that allow attendees to participate without leaving their office. Topics could include export controls, IPR, China, and/or India
4. Internet Marketing: Internet based marketing campaigns promoting CS, or CS products and services.
5. Knowledge Sharing: to educate corporate partner's sales and marketing personnel about CS export promotion resources available to enhance partner client sales and marketing efforts to generate international sales.
6. Trade Publications/Newsletters: enables partner to provide an important informational resource to existing or potential new customers utilizing CS content.
7. Dissemination of Articles to internal and external audiences: enables partner to provide export promotion and opportunity information materials to new and existing audiences
8. Client Referral Program: enables corporate partners to leverage CS expertise in their sales cycle and provides an additional source of new CS clients.

**How and why are partners selected?**

Partners are chosen via an open competition procurement process posted on the U.S. Government's official procurement web site located at <http://www.fedbizopps.gov/>

In the fall of 2003, CS issued the first Request for Proposal (RFP) for marketing partnerships. Subsequent RFP's were issued in June 2005 and August 2006. Proposal evaluation criteria included the following:

- Compatibility of proposed company mission with the CS.
- Proposing company widely recognized by U.S. firms as having expertise in various elements essential to exporting.
- Demonstrated success in the development and operation of Internet-based services
- Company proposal consistent with CS Statutory Mandate.
- Company demonstrated sustained operation for at least ten years.

### **Why is CS partnering with the private sector?**

These partnerships are in line with the Department of Commerce and International Trade Administration's 2007 – 2012 Strategic Plan that calls for CS to Broaden and Deepen the U.S. exporter base – in part by strengthening and deepening public-private partnerships.

### **How long do the partnership's contracts last?**

The partnership contracts are for a maximum of five (5) years. They are not renewable after five years. Any subsequent partnership contract must be re-competed.

### **Can CS endorse our corporate partners?**

No. CS cannot endorse a specific service provider.

### **Can corporate partners sponsor CS events?**

Under the contract, corporate partners are not required to sponsor CS events and programs. The corporate partners can sponsor its own or 3<sup>rd</sup> party events and subsequently promote CS at those events, including inviting CS to speak, but the corporate partners cannot provide direct funding to CS under the contract.

### **Can corporate partner personnel invite CS personnel on partner client visits?**

Yes.

### **Can CS personnel invite corporate partner personnel on CS client visits?**

As a taxpayer funded agency, CS cannot favor one U.S. company over another U.S. company. If a CS client requests CS assistance in identifying a private sector service provider in connection with exporting, CS may provide a list of service providers. If a CS client self selects one of the service providers and requests a CS introduction, CS can facilitate a meeting.

### **If CS is not endorsing a CS corporate partner, by entering into this partnership isn't CS showing favoritism towards one service provider over others?**

The selection of any corporate partner for this project was done as a procurement (in this case, a "no-cost" procurement) for the very purpose of ensuring that such selection was handled in a transparent way which avoided the appearance of, or actual, favoritism. As the procurement process involved, among other requirements, public notice of the partnership opportunity and of the criteria according to which the partner would be selected, companies that were interested in such a project with CS had the same opportunity as current CS corporate partners to bid on the contract.

### **Can CS accept sponsorship payments from corporate partners?**

Corporate partners/contractors may co-sponsor events and jointly organize events with CS, provided those events are within the marketing activities described on pg. 1.

What CS cannot accept from our corporate partners/contractors is a direct monetary payment.

As part of the co-sponsorship, the partners/contractors can provide in-kind items - for example the corporate partner can cover the cost of a meeting facility for an event whereas the corporate partner pays the meeting facility vendor directly.