

A man with glasses and a light blue shirt is standing and speaking to a group of people in a modern office. He is gesturing with his hands. In the foreground, the back of a woman's head and shoulders is visible, looking towards the speaker. Another woman is visible in the background, looking at the speaker. The office has large windows and a clean, professional atmosphere.

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An Anticipatory Approach for the NextGen

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EBA Engineering's foundations go back to the early 1950s, and the firm has experienced steady growth since it opened its doors. In 1982, the firm became an MBE business, allowing new opportunities not previously available to them. In the years that followed, they extended their service offerings, acquired other companies, and opened new offices. However, as the second decade of the twentieth century drew to a close, they faced a critical issue that would fundamentally alter their business model. Because of both their size (ENR 500 design firm) and length of time holding various MBE certifications, they would soon be graduating from those set-aside programs. This in turn meant that current clients would soon become competitors as EBA pursues unrestricted (non-set-aside) work as a prime professional. However, the firm's business development infrastructure was not geared toward this competitive reality, with minimal use of seller-doers and no dedicated business developers on staff.

Scott Butcher was retained to help EBA plan and deliver a full-day strategic business development retreat, incorporating elements of seller-doer training with facilitation of the difficult conversations that needed to take place. More than 40 EBA employees attended the offsite program. The retreat began with a review of the current situation facing EBA, including effective/ineffective BD practices, based upon an attendee survey.

Scott then facilitated a conversation about moving to a proactive BD structure: What should it look like? Who should be involved? Who would have authority? Group discussion followed, with attendees broken into service lines (current corporate structure) to review top clients and prospects, then forecast future work. The full group then reconvened for high-level business development and seller-doer training – trends, approaches, common models. The retreat concluded with a facilitated discussion of the most appropriate business development approaches for each of the service lines, and consensus on next steps to take to create a formal business development plan to move the company forward and better position the firm to graduate into a more competitive landscape.



As a result of the retreat, EBA took steps to implement a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, based upon weaknesses identified during the retreat. Furthermore, they created a new director of business development position within the organization to orchestrate the BD program, implement strategy, manage the new CRM, and coordinate with the newly-assigned seller-doers.