

SoliciDate Cheat Sheet

Real Advice for Small Businesses Who Are Tired of Being
Ghosted by Federal Agencies



Brought to you by [J. Edward Salzer Consulting](#)
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Why I Wrote This (And What It Isn't)

SoliciDate started as a joke—but this is the serious version.

Over the past 12 years, I've talked with thousands of small business owners. Most weren't doing anything “wrong”—they just didn't know where to start or who to trust.

I'm not here to walk you through SAM registration.

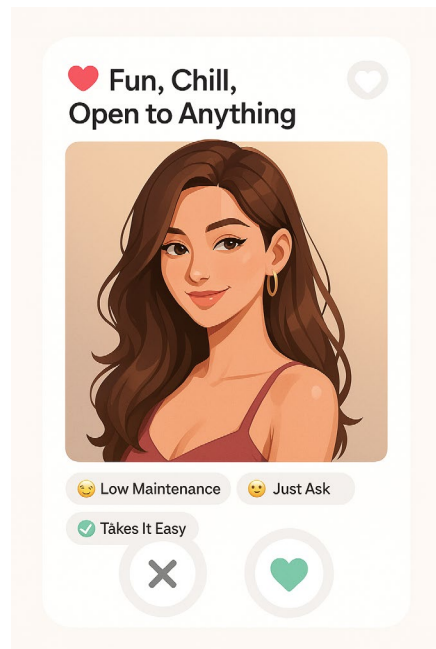
That's what SBA, APEX Accelerators, and SBDCs are for—and they do it well.

If you're not in SAM yet, start there.

This cheat sheet is for those of you who are **in the system**, frustrated, and ready to be smarter about it.

I'm here to give you straight answers, clear strategy, and a few dating metaphors to make it stick.

Because you don't need a million-dollar tech stack to compete—you need clarity, judgment, and some off-the-shelf tools that actually work.



♥ 1. “Fun, Chill, Open to Anything”

Translation: I have no idea who I am.

That might get a swipe on Tinder, but in business—and especially federal contracting—it’s a red flag.

Before you even think about bidding, you need to know:

- What problem you solve
- Who needs it
- How you deliver it profitably and reliably

If you can’t answer that clearly, you're not ready to chase contracts—because you’re not offering a solution, you’re just hoping someone will “like” you.

Treat your business like someone you’d want to date: know who you are, what you bring, and what you’re looking for.

♥ I Run Ultramarathons,
Speak 3 Languages, and
Also Do Yoga



😊 Loves a Challenge

🌍 World Traveler

✓ Great Listener



2. “I Run Ultramarathons, Speak 3 Languages, and Also Do Yoga”

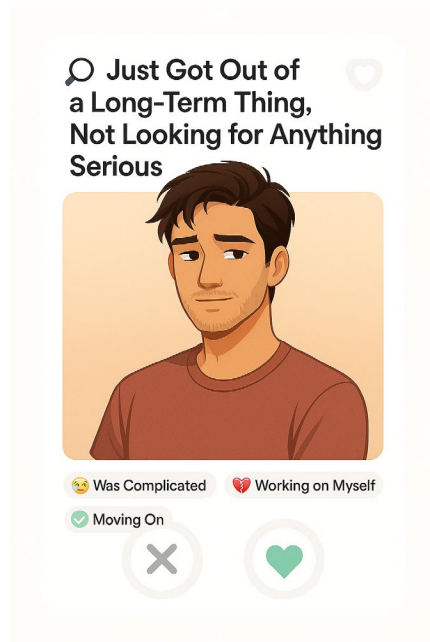
Sounds impressive—until someone asks you to prove it.

When it comes to NAICS codes, don’t try to impress everyone.

You can technically perform under any code a contracting officer thinks you’re qualified for—but if your profile says “I do everything,” they won’t trust you to do anything.

- Pick codes that reflect what you *actually* do
- Skip the laundry list—focus on your strongest services
- You can always add more later, when your business evolves
- If you wouldn’t list yoga on your dating profile, don’t list a NAICS you don’t serve

NAICS is how you get matched. Don’t catfish.



3. “Just Got Out of a Long-Term Thing, Not Looking for Anything Serious”

They say they want something new—but they keep going back to their ex.

That’s how some agencies treat vendors.

Before you fall in love with a solicitation, check the agency’s **procurement history**.

Just because they posted an opportunity doesn’t mean they’re open to new relationships.

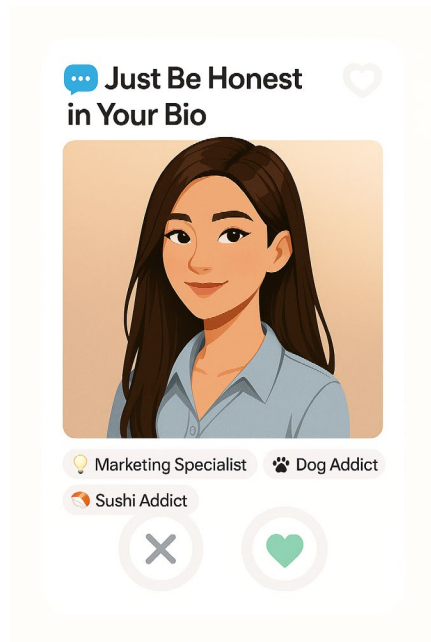
Use tools like:

- **USAspending.gov**
- **SAM.gov Award History**
- Agency-specific dashboards

Look for:

- Repeat awards to the same vendor
- Patterns that show they’re not really giving new firms a chance
- Small business set-asides that magically never get awarded to small businesses

Don’t waste time on agencies that flirt with small businesses but never follow through.



4. “Just Be Honest in Your Bio”

If they can’t figure out what you do from your profile, they’re moving on.

That’s exactly how contracting officers treat the **Dynamic Small Business Search (DSBS)**.

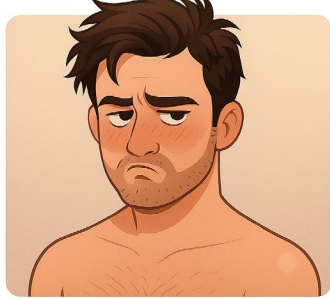
Your DSBS profile gets pulled from your SAM.gov registration—but that doesn’t mean it explains anything well by default.

You have to:

- Add plain-English keywords
- Highlight specific services and past performance
- Skip the buzzwords—no one’s searching for “synergistic solutions”

Think of DSBS like your dating app bio: Be clear, be specific, and don’t oversell. You’re not the only one they’re reading.

📎 Don't Be That Person. You Know the One.



😬 Shooting My Shot 🙄 No Filter



🧠 5. “Don’t Be That Person. You Know the One.”

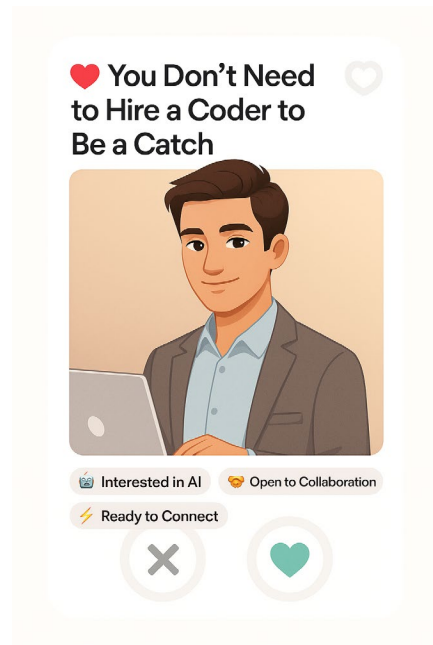
Sending a random pic to a stranger isn’t a good first impression—and neither is blasting your capability statement to everyone with a .gov email.

Capability statements are like your business’s profile pic:

Necessary, valuable—but only when used with context and respect.

- Keep it to **one page**
- Include the essentials: core competencies, differentiators, NAICS codes, UEI/CAGE, contact info
- Customize it when possible (just like you wouldn’t send the same message to every match)
- Reference a forecasted opportunity, agency event, or award that makes your outreach relevant

Don’t just drop your file and hope for a response. Lead with insight, not desperation. Don’t be that person.



6. “You Don’t Need to Hire a Coder to Be a Catch”

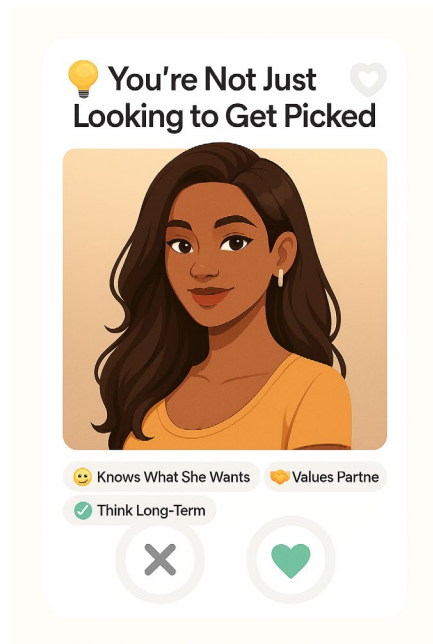
Looking polished and performing well doesn’t require a custom-built solution.

AI isn’t just for tech companies or giant contractors. Smart small businesses are using **off-the-shelf tools** right now to save time, win proposals, and stay competitive.

- Tools like **ChatGPT**, smart CRMs, proposal automation, and AI-based document parsing

- AI can help you draft, review, compare solicitations, and clean up past performance blurbs
- You don’t need a team of engineers—you need clear processes and a willingness to learn

Think of it like dating app filters: AI doesn’t make you someone else—it just helps you show up better, faster, and more confidently.



💡 7. “You’re Not Just Looking to Get Picked.”

You’re building a relationship—with expectations, accountability, and real outcomes.

Federal contracting isn’t about being “chosen.” It’s about being ready, reliable, and easy to work with.

- Know who you are
- Know what you’re looking for
- Show up with value
- Deliver every time

You don’t need to chase everything.

You don’t need to wait around hoping for approval.

You need a strategy, consistency, and the ability to spot a good match when it shows up.

SoliciDate is the joke.

This is the playbook.

What to Do Next



- Follow me here on LinkedIn for more real-world insight and occasional satire
- DM me if you're already in SAM and ready for strategy, not hand-holding
- Visit jesconsulting.com to learn more about what I do.
- Leave me feedback—what landed, what didn't, what you wish someone had told you sooner

What to Do Next

If this helped you see federal contracting a little more clearly—or at least made you laugh:

- ◆ **Follow me here on LinkedIn** for more real-world insight and occasional satire
 - ◆ **DM me** if you're already in SAM and ready for strategy, not hand-holding
 - ◆ **Visit jesconsulting.com** to learn more about what I do.
 - ◆ **Leave me feedback**—what landed, what didn't, what you wish someone had told you sooner
- ◆ Or **share it with someone** still asking if they “just need to get certified”

This approach won't be right for everyone.

But if it made things click for you, it's doing exactly what I hoped.