

## Firstmark Begins BTG Mail Effort

By Melissa Campanelli

Firstmark Inc. started a mail campaign this month to introduce its mailing list and database management services to its rapidly growing business-to-government client segment.

One thousand department and command heads in the Department of Defense were sent one of two postcards May 14 promoting the company's products and services, said Karin L. Pomerantz, director of new business at Firstmark, Campton, NH. Firstmark manages more than 250 databases containing 15 million businesses, 100,000 variables and 20 million names. The company will do

a second round of mailings in June to other segments in the Defense Department.

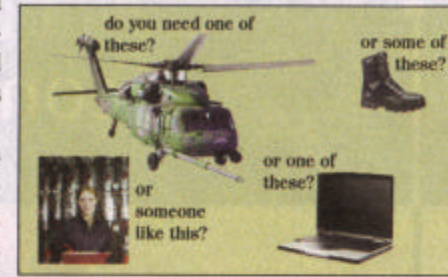
Pomerantz said she began the campaign partly because of client requests and also because she knew the government procurement process requires significant effort and taxpayer dollars to locate and obtain necessary resources — and she knew Firstmark could offer a better solution.

For example, when a department is looking for an item and trying to identify firms that produce such an item, before issuing an actual proposal it generally does a "request for information" or a "sources sought" on a government purchasing Web site. When ven-

dors see the listings and have the item a department seeks, they have to devise a mini-proposal and then wait as government employees read through the proposals before proceeding.

"It is extremely time consuming," Pomerantz said. "Firstmark, however, can get in underneath there and have the federal government come directly to us and say, 'Here's what we are looking for. Can you find us companies that make this particular product or have this particular service?'"

A key reason Firstmark can bypass the federal government's formal procurement system and do the campaign, she said, is because the lists that government employees typically rent cost less than \$2,500, and "a purchase under \$2,500 does not have to be approved [under government rules]. So for a 10-minute phone call and \$600, you've got all the work that would



**Lists that government employees rent usually cost less than \$2,500.**

have taken you three weeks to do."

Pomerantz said Firstmark's databases and lists can "help government contractors shorten the timelines between idea generation and purchase and minimize the costs associated with locating specific products, services, suppliers, distributors or personnel."

Pictures of a helicopter, a combat boot, a laptop and a consultant are on the front of the postcard, with phrases "do you need one of these? or some of these? or one of these, or someone like this?" beside each picture. Firstmark makes its pitch on the flip side: "Just leave it to us. How many sources sought proposals do you really want to read? At Firstmark, we have the information you want."

In June, it will send the same postcards to 1,000 procurement professionals as well as small business liaisons within every command.

"The small business liaisons are especially important because we are a small, woman-owned business, and the federal government has requirements for using small, woman-owned businesses," Pomerantz said. ■