

ICF Enterprise Cyber & Resiliency Division Turnaround

ICF International

VALUE / SCOPE \$69.8M to \$103.3M (48% growth), 700+ FTEs

SITUATION

When I assumed the role of SVP and General Manager for ICF's Federal Business Unit, the organization faced several significant challenges. Corporate bidding practices were conservative, team leadership was not consistently aggressive, past performance was underutilized in proposals, and client engagement was limited, with few opportunities beyond existing contracts. The qualified federal pipeline was modest, and growth, while steady, was uninspiring. Leadership tasked me with transforming the business development approach, driving strategic wins, expanding client engagement, and delivering measurable growth while fostering a culture of proactive capture and execution.

TASK

My task priority was to develop a clear, division-wide strategy and mission that aligned the team around shared objectives and created focus on high-value opportunities in the federal market. This effort required cultivating a more aggressive and proactive approach across the organization, shifting the mindset from reactive to strategically assertive. To strengthen our positioning with clients, I emphasized leveraging past performance in all pursuits, ensuring my proposal teams highlighted ICF's prior successes and unique capabilities. I also increased market awareness and established thought leadership by publishing insights on coordinated mission assurance strategies and cross-agency collaboration, which positioned the firm as a trusted advisor for complex federal missions and was featured in industry outlets such as ExecutiveBiz and FCW. Recognition of these efforts included being named one of WashingtonExec's Top 25 Cyber Executives to Watch in 2020, which further reinforced credibility with federal clients and internal stakeholders alike.

ACTION

In parallel, I led initiatives to expand the qualified federal pipeline and align capture priorities with growth targets. I implemented structured pipeline management, rigorous opportunity assessments, and cross-functional collaboration to ensure proposals were client-aligned, technically sound, and leveraged past performance to strengthen credibility. I also recruited and hired key leadership, including new Line of Business leaders and a dedicated Business Development leader, to strengthen operational capacity and drive high-value capture efforts. Additionally, I worked to increase engagement across both existing and new federal clients, broadening relationships and uncovering additional avenues for contract growth. Operationally, I streamlined resource allocation, established performance metrics, and monitored P&L; results to ensure that growth efforts were profitable and sustainable.

Under this disciplined structure, P&L; performance reflected consistent and significant improvement. In 2018, the division achieved gross revenue of \$84.8 million on a \$69.8 million target and an operating margin of \$20.7 million—exceeding goals by over \$3.2 million. By 2019, gross revenue increased to \$103.3 million, marking a 17% year-over-year gain, with an operating margin of \$26.8 million. In 2020, the organization executed against aggressive P&L; targets, achieving gross revenue of \$173 million, service revenue of \$133 million, and an operating margin exceeding \$41 million, supported by a 90.5% utilization rate across 800 personnel and a controllable expense budget under \$2 million. These results demonstrated disciplined financial stewardship and operational excellence.

RESULT

These efforts produced measurable enterprise-wide outcomes. Over three years, the qualified federal pipeline expanded from approximately \$200 million to \$2.8 billion more than tenfold increase, providing access to substantially larger opportunities. Gross revenue more than doubled from \$70 million to \$173 million, achieving a 210% growth plan. The business achieved an average CPARS rating of 4.6 out of 5 across major programs, reflecting exceptional program delivery and client satisfaction. ICF realized a recompetes win rate of 90% and a new business win rate of 33%, validating the effectiveness of our growth and retention strategy across homeland security, defense, civil, and state markets. Among the high-value strategic wins during this period were Air Force Combat Command (approximately \$70 million) and Army DCO (approximately \$180 million), resulting in a combined total contract value of roughly \$250 million.

Through these combined efforts, I transformed a conservative, under-engaged business unit into a proactive, growth-oriented organization capable of competing for and winning complex, high-value federal opportunities. The business not only realized substantial revenue and pipeline growth but also gained enhanced credibility and visibility in the federal cybersecurity and defense markets. The division-wide strategy, heightened market awareness, strengthened client relationships, measurable P&L; performance, and strategic addition of leadership created a sustainable platform for continued success—demonstrating the ability to lead teams, influence the market, and deliver measurable results under complex and competitive conditions.

randy.l.james@gmail.com

(703) 909-7546

[linkedin.com/in/randyjamescybernetops](https://www.linkedin.com/in/randyjamescybernetops)