RingCentral Federal Sector Business Plan

RingCentral

VALUE / SCOPE **FedRAMP expansion strategy**

SITUATION

When I was hired by RingCentral, the company had no federal revenue, contract vehicles, or established federal partnerships. The Image Application Development was largely performed offshore, with no FedRAMP, CMMC, or federal regulatory compliance beyond what was required for SLED and commercial markets. Leadership recognized the potential of the federal market but lacked both a strategy and an understanding of what compliance, security, and certification requirements would be necessary to compete. I was brought in to define a Federal Go-to-Market (GTM) strategy, lead FedRAMP readiness, and develop a business case for executive buy-in.

TASK

My task was to conduct a comprehensive assessment of RingCentral's technical, operational, and compliance posture and then develop a detailed roadmap to achieve FedRAMP readiness and position the company to sell into the federal marketplace. This meant standing up a formal program office, hiring qualified experts, establishing a FedRAMP sponsorship, identifying critical compliance gaps, and building a pipeline of federal partners and customers—all while proving to the executive team that the investment would have a measurable ROI.

ACTION

The first step was establishing a FedRAMP Program Management Office (PMO) to coordinate compliance and authorization efforts. I hired Coalfire, a certified Third-Party Assessment Organization (3PAO), to perform a FedRAMP and CMMC readiness assessment. Together, we developed a detailed project plan that included deep-dive technical reviews, weekly progress meetings, and milestone-based deliverables.

We began by conducting a FedRAMP Readiness Assessment Report (RAR) to identify control gaps between RingCentral's architecture and the NIST 800-53 Rev 5 Moderate baseline. This assessment revealed significant gaps in areas such as access control, incident response, configuration management, and audit logging. I led workshops with engineering and operations teams to document how we could close these gaps and built a comprehensive System Security Plan (SSP)—a key FedRAMP requirement that exceeds 600 pages and details every implemented control.

Recognizing that many development processes were offshore, I directed all development for the federal environment to be performed onshore by U.S. persons to meet FedRAMP's data sovereignty and FISMA requirements. I oversaw implementation of encryption-at-rest, multi-factor authentication, vulnerability management, and boundary protection controls.

In parallel, I pursued and secured ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives) as our FedRAMP sponsoring agency—a significant milestone that validated our seriousness in pursuing federal compliance.

Beyond compliance, I also built a federal market foundation. I established a partnership with Four Inc., leveraging their existing contract vehicles to accelerate federal sales, and initiated GTM discussions with SAIC and GDIT for potential joint pursuits. To raise visibility, I represented RingCentral at AFCEA TechNet and Billington Cybersecurity Summit, building relationships with agency cybersecurity leaders and showcasing RingCentral's roadmap to compliance.

Finally, I created a ROI and milestone-based plan demonstrating how FedRAMP authorization could open a recurring revenue stream across federal civilian and defense agencies, with projected revenue growth starting in Year 2 post-authorization.

RESULT

After nine months, we achieved multiple tangible outcomes:

- Secured ATF as a FedRAMP sponsor—a key milestone few commercial SaaS companies achieve.
- Completed a FedRAMP readiness assessment, System Security Plan, and remediation plan.
- Closed several compliance gaps, including encryption, access control, and logging improvements.
- Built a federal GTM plan with key partners and participation in federal cybersecurity conferences.

However, the executive team ultimately chose not to proceed further due to concerns about long ROI timelines, perceived funding volatility in the federal sector, and limited short-term revenue visibility. Although the program did not advance to full authorization, the initiative laid the groundwork for future readiness, educated leadership on federal market dynamics, and improved RingCentral's overall cybersecurity posture.

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