



propel LLC

Forward Thinking.

How to Grow your Business using the SBIR Program

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Beyond Phase II Conference

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About Propel LLC

- **Providing textile driven product innovation for the military and fire service industries**
- **Highly experienced textile engineering and design team**
 - Founded in 2006
 - 10+ years of R&D to commercialization
- **On-going work**
 - Stitchless Technology
 - Fire Resistant Combat Textiles
 - Electronically Enabled (Smart) Textiles
 - Particulate Protection
- **Unique rapid prototyping capability for stitchless garments and 3D Knitting**
- **DOD SBIR History** 4 x Phase I 2 x Phase II 1 x Phase III



Propel's First SBIR - 2012

- **Key Innovations**

- Stitchless Technology Design and Engineering “Toolbox” to Replace Needle and Thread
- No stitch holes
- Significant weight and bulk reductions

LEGACY 34 oz



PROTOTYPE 24 oz



**US Navy Prototype
Stitchless Seam Jacket**
Courtesy of Propel LLC

30% WEIGHT REDUCTION

Phase III awarded during Phase I – Prototype Nominated by NAVSEA for Secretary of Navy Innovation Award 2017



Phase II Success BUT.....

- **Navy decided not to exercise Phase II Option**
 - Almost a financial disaster for Propel
- **What did Propel learn?**
 - TPOC enthusiasm does not mean further funding
 - You (the SBIR company) are in charge of your destiny
 - It is up to you to “sell” forward your technology
 - Find parallel opportunities - “Sell the Success” to others
 - Take every opportunity to “sell” that you can – e.g. Navy STP Program; one-on-one meetings
 - Start “selling” the moment you get the Phase I
 - Messaging is important
- **What did Propel do?**
 - Hired a Business Development person
 - Went to other services with the same need
 - Currently anticipating 2 follow on “reach back” Phase IIs that will be 4x the missed Navy Phase II Option



Phase III Steam Suit
Courtesy of US Navy



What Else?

- **Read the Contract**
 - Every SBIR Contract is Different
 - Don't assume the contract is correct
 - Get good advice – a good lawyer now is worth a lot of money later; a retired DoD Contracting expert is worth their weight in gold
- **Every SBIR program is run differently across the DOD**
 - Try to find this out in advance as can impact your proposal
- **Learn to do Teaming Agreements and Subcontracts properly**
 - Can be outsourced but understand why you need these
 - If a sub behaves badly take action
- **Educate yourself about Phase III contracting**
 - Phase III rules are antithetical to Contracting Officers so know what to say and do
 - Phase III Handbooks (Navy; Air Force) are your friend
 - Be visual - Do a Technology Tree
- **Lastly - Is that SBIR Topic a good business fit or just really interesting?**

