Here are some essentials you need to know as you enter government marketing or prepare to take the next step up.

1. Missions and Organization
   - Unlike commercial enterprises, government agencies are driven by their missions. Ultimately, agencies buy things from companies to perform their missions better, faster, or more efficiently.
   - Missions are usually pretty clearly stated on agency websites. Each agency typically publishes a strategic plan, which can be found on their website also.
   - The government is commonly divided into the following segments:
     - Defense
     - Civilian Agencies
     - Intelligence Community

2. Federal Budget
   - Know that the Government Fiscal year begins October 1 and ends September 30 of the following year. Federal funds must be spent by September 30 of each year and cannot be carried over. August and September are particularly crazy months as money shifts as government leaders try to spend their budgets. You will hear talk about “busy season” and this is the time leading up to end of federal fiscal year of September 30th.
   - Follow the money – and spending trends in government. Congress can’t fund everything and certain programs and agencies may fall in or out of favor. Cybersecurity, cloud and data analytics have been trending up for several years. We are now seeing strong government focus and budget for Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning.

3. Federal Government Buying
   - Generally speaking, to sell anything to the Federal Government, your product or service must be available through a Government Contract Vehicle. Know the difference between a GSA schedule, multiple award contracts, and proprietary contracts. Know that certain programs may be “set aside” for special preference groups such as small businesses, women-owned businesses, disabled veteran-owned businesses, HUB-zone businesses, etc.

4. Government Ethics
   - Government employees must comply with their agency’s code of ethics. It’s important to know the following when you organize campaigns and events targeting federal employees.
   - Government employees may accept:
     - Gifts of $20 or less per occasion, not to exceed $50 in a year from one source. This exception does not apply to gift cards, certificates and promotional codes that function as cash, although it does apply to those redeemable only at limited places, for example only at one store or at a group of affiliated stores such as those in a particular shopping center.
     - Free attendance, food, refreshments and materials provided at a conference or widely attended gathering or certain other social events which an employee attends in his official capacity.

5. Resources
   - Here are some additional sources of information you should be familiar with.
• Listen online or at 1500 AM to Federal News Radio (https://federalnewsradio.com)

• Be familiar with leading associations that bring together industry and government. You can attend meetings and understand their priorities and challenges they facing
  - DOD
    » Armed Forces Communications and Electronic Association - AFCEA www.afcea.org
    » National Defense Industrial Association – NDIA www.ndia.org
  - Intelligence – Intelligence and National Security Alliance - INSA www.insaonline.com
  - Civilian – ACT-IAC https://www.actiac.org
  - AFFIRM (https://affirm.org)

• Find out more about the media consumption habits of government by reviewing Market Connections Federal Media & Marketing Study, an annual study. https://www.marketconnectionsinc.com/fmms2018study/

• Get a deeper understanding of agency pain points by reading Inspectors General reports or reports issued by the GAO (General Accountability Office) www.gao.gov

• Know where to go for deeper, more comprehensive information about government contracting activity, including org charts. GovWin and Bloomberg Government are good resources to use (paid subscriptions).

• Know what government events are taking place by signing up for GovEvents, a strategic Government Marketing University partner. www.govevents.com