

Case Study 2 – Help (Not) Wanted

Sally has a retail store where she sells all sorts of men's and women's hats. Her product line includes everything from ball caps to floppy hats, from women's stylish wide brim hats to men's fancy fedoras.

When Sally began her business 15 years ago, she bought all of her hats from manufacturers across the United States. In recent years however, she began importing her hats from China to create a greater profit margin for her business.

Last week, Sally attended an evening business workshop where she learned how to register in a government database for \$1,995 so she could receive government contracts. The workshop leader, who sold Sally a book for \$100 at the conclusion of the workshop, told her in a follow-up phone call yesterday that the military buys all sorts of hats, every day of the week, and once he receives her registration fee, he will start sending her the contract information.

Last night, Sally went on the internet to see what information might be posted there about government contracting. She's a savvy businesswoman and believes in doing her homework before making any commitments. She found a lot of helpful information on many websites, including the website operated by the company who sponsored the informative business workshop that she recently attended. Sally also saw a link to a website operated by a local organization called a procurement technical assistance center. The website said that the PTAC's services are free.

Sally believes that "you get what you pay for," therefore is dubious of the PTAC. But the next morning she takes a chance and calls the PTAC's phone number. You are a PTAC Counselor, and you answer the phone. During your conversation with her, you learn everything described above. At one point, Sally pauses and says to you: "I'm confident I'm on the right path. I'm going to send the company the registration fee, so all I'm looking from you is to confirm that it's a good idea."

[Answer the questions on the next page.]

- How do you reply to Sally?

- What specific advice do you give her?