

The Executive

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*Association of Proposal Management Professionals

SELLING TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT TAKES A LOT OF GAS

BY PATRICIA WESTLEIN, ACS
STATE AND LOCAL SOLUTIONS

When your customers are state and local governments, diversity takes on new meaning for marketing and proposal professionals.

In the Association of Proposal Management Professionals (APMP) National Capital Area (NCA) Chapter, the focus is understandably on the federal marketplace. Federal procurements are released



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by the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, the military, and the quasi-government agencies like the Pension Benefit Guaranty Fund. When marketing to other governments, the shift from federal to local can be extreme for companies who work the states and their municipalities. While ACS State and Local Solutions' base is in Washington, DC, our customers go far beyond the nation's capitol. Getting to know the customer requires a lot of travel.

Since the fruits of federal procurement are plentiful, who cares about state and

local governments? Because federal contracts can be significantly larger in value than those generated by state governments, competition is fierce among companies vying for the same piece of the federal fiscal pie. Competition is typically narrowed among vendors selling to state, county, and city governments and contract values are smaller, but more opportunities exist.

A common ground for all governments today is the need to outsource services. As a leading business pro-

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P.O. Box 3063
McLean, VA 22103-3063
Web site:
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b.blakney@datatrac-dc.com

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kmrosen@aol.com

Lou Robinson

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jbender@acibiz.com

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Roundtable Coordinator
apmpdoubroff@aol.com

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rsmith@orgcom.com

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tharmon@autometric.com

Program Chair

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tporter255@aol.com

Newsletter Editor

Kate Rosengreen

kmrosen@aol.com

Freelance Graphic Design

Ralph Scherer

ralph@schererMedia.com
703-753-0880

President's Corner by Betsy Blakney

When I became a proposal professional, the furthest thing from my mind was the thought of war. In a proposal management training workshop, I remember the instructor recommending participants read Sun Tzu's "The Art of War." Not having taken a philosophy course in undergraduate or graduate school, I was intrigued at how ancient Chinese wisdom could be so applicable to life strategies for winning. Hence, I was determined to add the time-honored classic to my list of required reading.

In a former life (you didn't start out in the proposal world, did you?) I spent several years coaching high school and collegiate sports, so I was familiar with battle (game) plans, campaigns (county, regional and state tournaments) and engaging in tactics (skills and techniques) to beat the opponent. I fielded my best talent and molded them into successful teams to ensure winning. By being better prepared and smarter than our competition, our teams persevered. With momentum and a bit of luck, our efforts paid off. In one sport, one season, we went undefeated.

After the training, I came home and rummaged through my husband's Chinese source readings. He had majored in philosophy, so I had a wealth of texts to pour over. Confirming he had a copy of the original translation, I searched for *The Art of War*, but was unable to find Sun Tzu's writings. I did, however, come across the basic writings of *Han Fei Tzu* (translation by Berton Watson, Columbia University). I discovered that Han Fei, another early Chinese philosopher, studied under the eminent Confucian philosopher, Hsun Tzu. Unable to communicate without stuttering badly, Han Fei wrote to express his ideas. He perfected Legalism – a school of thought whose focus was on preserving and strengthening the state. "Its only goal was to teach the ruler...how to survive and prosper in the world of the present." If you subscribe to the proposal evaluation philosophy espoused by some in the profession, that it's all about not getting eliminated as opposed to winning, then this might be good bed-

time reading.

If you are unfamiliar with Sun Tzu, as I was, he wrote on a wide variety of topics to include politics, logic, ethics, and warfare to mention a few. Han Fei Tzu limited himself to politics. Both texts compel attention for they deal with the nature and use of power.

Operation IRAQI Freedom was the catalyst to begin the quest again for Sun Tzu's writings. I acquired one of the more recent translations, "Sun Tzu: The Art of War for Managers," by Gerald A. Michaelson. It applies Sun Tzu's strategic thought processes from around 400 to 320 B.C. to today's competitive environment. Based on military strategy and thinking, Michaelson's translation provides 50 rules/lessons and commentary to help solve a variety of problems in business. Whether you are attracted to Sun Tzu's sage advice or smitten by how other managers apply his principles to business, you will find yourself time and time again going back to Sun Tzu for inspiration.

In business as in war, good intelligence is paramount to winning. And to win without fighting requires discipline and planning. A "masterpiece of simplicity," Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* provides a fundamental platform for exploring the analogy between the world of business and that of the battlefield. Not a novel idea, its key concepts can be applied to the pursuit of new business whether you are responsible for capture planning, proposal development or project implementation. Their application will help contribute to your personal and organization's continued success.

—Betsy Blakney

The articles presented in this newsletter are for information purposes only.

Roundtable Announcement

The Integrated Acquisition Environment: E-Gov Is Not Just Putting Acquisition Forms On-Line

E-Gov does not mean putting scores of government forms on the Internet. It is about using technology to its fullest to provide services and information that is centered around citizen groups. Well, the APMP is composed of citizens, and we want to know how eGov will impact our professional lives. On May 21, APMP/NCA will feature a presentation by Earl Warrington, Deputy Program Manager of the Integrated Acquisition Environment eGov initiative. Mr. Warrington will provide a synopsis of the President's eGov strategy and an overview of the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE) initiative. IAE is designed to create a secure business environment that will facilitate and support cost-effective acquisition of goods and services by agencies, while eliminating inefficiencies in the current acquisition landscape. Through the initiative, common acquisition functions that can benefit all agencies, such as the maintenance of information about suppliers (e.g., capabilities, past performance histories) will be managed as a shared service.

Pre-event Homework

To familiarize yourselves with eGov, please visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/egov/>. To learn about the Integrated Acquisition Environment, please visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/egov/internal/acquisition.htm>.

The Speaker

Earl Warrington is the Deputy Program Manager for the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE), one of the President's

eGov initiatives assigned to GSA for management. He is responsible for defining the current Federal acquisition environment model in preparation for implementing a new strategy that will transform the Federal acquisition process through the use of digital technologies and shared services.

Prior to his eGov work, Mr. Warrington served as the Acquisition Executive and later as the eBusiness Director for the Public Buildings Service (PBS), GSA. During his tenure, he was a significant force behind the transformation of PBS electronic business capabilities. He successfully consolidated and streamlined PBS eAcquisition operations, business processes, enterprise wide communication, human resources, and policy making.

Mr. Warrington has been with General Services Administration for over 19 years. He received a Bachelor of Science Degree from University of Maryland.

Who May Attend?

Anyone interested in the topic is invited to attend. You do not have to be an APMP member to attend an NCA roundtable. You don't even have to be a proposal specialist. If you are interested in proposals, business development, or are looking for networking and professional development opportunities, we'd like for you to join us! Please refer anyone else in your organization that might be interested and encourage them to attend.

Location:

Tyson's Corner Holiday Inn on International Drive in McLean, Virginia

Agenda:

5:30pm Networking

6:30pm Buffet Dinner

7:15pm Announcements, Featured Presentation

Cost: \$35 - Payment received in advance

\$55 - Pay at the door.

IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND...

Please RSVP to Dennis Doubroff via email at apmp-doubroff@aol.com and mail your check to: APMP-NCA, PO Box 3063, McLean, VA 22103-3063. To confirm attendance, checks must be postmarked by Friday, May 16.

Calendar of Events

The purpose of the calendar is to apprise NCA members of upcoming events of interest to proposal professionals.

For information on board activities or to become involved call Lou Robinson at 703-533-2102.

MAY	21	APMP Roundtable	• Earl Warrington, Integrated Acquisition Environment
JUNE	3	APMP-NCA Board Meeting	• Advantage Consulting
JULY	1	APMP-NCA Board Meeting	• Teleconference

Selling to Local Government ▼

... Continued from page 1

cessing and information technology (IT) services provider, ACS, a Fortune 500 company, sells services to both federal and state and local governments. In fact, ACS combined revenue tallies federal 23 percent, commercial 31 percent, and state and local 46 percent—the largest sector. Companies selling to the latter are encouraged by market research that predicted state and local spending would grow from \$44.4 billion in 2002 to \$56.4 billion in 2005 according to *Washington Technology* (Feb. 18, 2002).

The news is not always rosy. The fiscal crisis facing almost every state—the worst in at least 50 years—will play a key role in shrinking state government, as reported in the *New York Times* (Apr. 27, 2003). Like constraints imposed on federal government agencies, system integrators for state and local clients have realized noteworthy changes in e-government. Budgets have been squeezed significantly since the dot-com bust and the September 2001 tragedy has shifted IT initiatives largely to Homeland Security. The state budget situation continues to worsen. At the end of 2002, 43 states reported revenue shortfalls, according to Denver-based National Conference of Legislators.

While the red ink flows freely in federal government and significantly impacts companies who conduct business with these agencies, state and local government contractors are challenged by 50 states, consisting of more than 3,100 counties and 2,600 large cities based on U.S. Census (1995) data. Municipalities within states and counties exist far beyond this number, but often are too small to be tracked and included in the Census count.

Differences in federal and state and local government procurements can be significant. Services and system providers are bound by rigid rules of the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) in responding to federal procurements. Regardless of the agency size, the same procurement rules typically apply. In the state and local arena, system integrators respond to procurements run by state code—count 50 of them. Over and



above these, counties and cities, too, often have unique laws. Keep in mind a county, like Los Angeles, California, has a larger constituent base than some states; and in this state, the Board of Supervisors, is more powerful than the governor.

Even with a single state, difference may abound. For example, uniqueness varies among local Maryland governments. One, Rockville operates as a city government, but is also within Montgomery County's jurisdiction. Two, the

city of Baltimore, large and densely populated is not under the purview of any county. Laws vary far and wide among municipalities, as exemplified by Montgomery County—holding the dubious distinction as making hard alcohol available only through county-run dispensaries. The liquor store staff, often polite, may even offer to carry the case of beer to your car.

Unlike federal agencies forced to contend with large-scale public issues, states and municipalities constantly face constituent concerns and public scrutiny that hound programs such as red light photo enforcement, E-ZPass, and child support payment systems. States are further constrained by programs like child support payment systems, electronic benefits transfer, and eChildcare, which are forced to comply with federal mandates to secure crucial funding support. In January of this year at an APMP roundtable, one presentation addressed federal performance-based contracting. This type of contract is typically not an option for state governments because agencies cannot afford this incentive, especially without federal aid.

Not all is different between federal and local government procurements and the processes companies use to respond.

Like federal procurements, response

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times after release of the state and local RFPs is usually based on the complexity of the requested services. For large, statewide systems we have 45 to 90 days to respond. Smaller city or county efforts offer 30 days or less. And, like our federal counterparts, if the RFP blindsides vendors that can mean that the agency was disorganized or that the firm had little influence on the procurement.

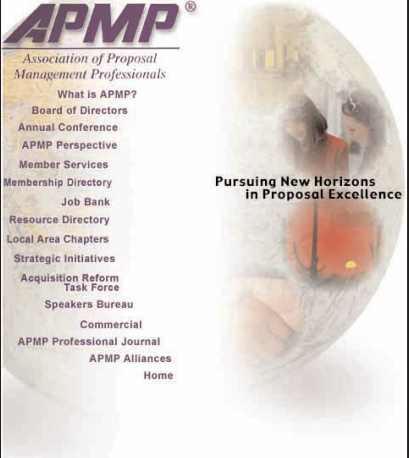
In order to serve many states and municipalities, state and local vendors have many more and smaller databases, coordinated by bid desk personnel. Business process outsourcing companies with federal customers often select companies like Federal Sources, Inc. to track competitive, forthcoming opportunities. Because of the sheer number of states, counties, and cities, companies like ACS cannot possibly track all bids and must rely on marketers within each of our six lines of business to notify us of new releases.

Similarities in government procurements exist too and can be compared by the various stages of the process. State

and municipal agencies, like federal, release request for proposals (RFPs), requests for qualification (RFQs), and requests for information (RFIs) to name three. State and local governments hold pre-bidders conferences, which are often mandatory. They may require oral presentations and interviews with bidders that have been short-listed. Companies may be invited to submit best and final offers (BAFOs)—and, yes, like their federal counterparts, they cancel procurements too, even after the proposal has been submitted.

These are but a few of the differences and similarities that exist between federal and state and local governments. Beyond the federal government, we are talking about many agencies—50 states, 3,000-plus counties, and many more cities. If state and local governments are your customers, fuel up your car and purchase your eTickets...you have many places to market in these United States. ■

Patricia Westlein is the Senior Proposal Manager for ACS State and Local Solutions located in Washington, DC. She can be contacted at patricia.westlein@acs-inc.com.



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Integrated Acquisition Environment— Unifying and Simplifying the Acquisition Process Through Shared Services

BY LISA CLIFF

Proposal professionals are familiar with the effort to streamline the federal acquisition process starting with FASA in 1994. A new and important movement to further streamline procurement is now taking place. It is called the “Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE).” Whereas the efforts of the 1990s mostly focused on processes *within* individual agencies, IAE focuses on integrating processes *across* different agencies.

The IAE initiative is a part of the President’s well known Management Agenda, which includes “expanding E-Government” to make it more responsive and efficient. Overall, the president’s agenda aims to accelerate government response times from weeks down to minutes and save billions of dollars now spent to operate paperwork-intensive processes.

The outcome will transform how business is done internally and how the government interacts with its citizens and suppliers.

The vision of the IAE initiative is to develop an environment that enhances the capability of agencies to perform common acquisition functions. This includes things like searching for suppliers, and managing them as shared services. By addressing these functions as *government-wide shared services*, existing acquisition capabilities within agencies can be leveraged, and the acquisition lifecycle will become a more streamlined business process.

The Integrated Acquisition Environment is being developed under the management of the GSA. Providing the hands-on work are five cross-agency teams from more than 21 agencies. Their intent is to develop uniform methods of acquisition, develop cross-agency standards, and build bridges between existing islands of automation. Further, they plan to eliminate duplication, enable exchange of data, and maximize

use of existing capacity.

The ultimate goal of IAE is to bring about a revolution in acquisition procedures. When the new environment is implemented, multiple methods of acquisition will be replaced with uniform methods of acquisition. Thus many of the processes used will be the same or similar, across agencies, for thousands of procurements involving millions of different products and services.

Five modules make up the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE):

- Business Partner Network (BPN)
- Intra-governmental Transactions (IGT)
- Federal Procurement Data System-Next (FPDS-NG)
- eCatalogs
- Standard e-Transactions

A separate project team is working on each module. Once the work is finalized, it will be integrated into one acquisition environment.

The Business Partner Network (BPN)

The BPN will provide a web-enabled capability for identifying federal and industry trading partners (www.bpn.gov). It will create a single source of information for buyers and sellers including Equal Employment Opportunity compliance checks, size status, the Excluded Parties List information, past performance evaluations, Small Business Administration’s ProNet, and Department of Defense’s (DoD) Central Contractor Registration (CCR). The BPN will include grantees, federal entities, and companies seeking to do business with the Federal government.

There will be changes to the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) in the upcoming months that will mandate the use of the BPN for (1) registration of vendors, (2) on-line representations and certifications, and (3) electronic funds transfer data source. Each agency will be required to determine the best method to

integrate BPN data into existing procurement, financial and program systems.

By January 31, 2003, all Federal agencies that engage in buying and selling with other Federal agencies were required by OMB to be registered in the BPN. The registration was a step toward the future full electronic commerce capability. Every agency has a designated Agency Registration Official who is responsible for the registration process. This effort will consolidate and standardize detailed information about an agency’s true trading partners that now resides in many different locations. DoD, Treasury, NASA, Department of the Interior, and OPM are already using an early adopter’s version of the BPN.

One of the essential systems that is linked to the BPN is the Federal Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS). This is a shared data warehouse of review evaluations of vendor performance on current or completed contracts that is used in source selection.

Intra-governmental Transactions (IGT)

This team supporting this component of IAE is redesigning the process for reconciling inter-departmental transactions within Federal agencies for the consolidated U.S. Government Financial Statement. IGT straddles the line between finance and procurement. Standard procedures and common reference numbers will be required for storing data regarding ordering, acceptance, and payment that will result in fewer problems with eliminations. For example, when bills are paid by Treasury, common data elements stored in a central repository will make it easier to determine what account it goes to, who received it, and was it received, etc. The goal is to eliminate the stovepiped ordering process that exists now between agencies.

Federal Procurement Data System-Next Generation (FPDS-NG)

The next generation of Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) is one of the modules of the Integrated Acquisition Environment. The existing FPDS, which provides the central repository of statistical and management information related to government acquisitions, was

built in 1978. FPDS processes, summarizes, and correlates information on transactions, such as the product or service purchased, the dollar amount, the contractor's name and address, whether the award was competitive or not, where the item was manufactured or the service was performed, the government contracting office and much more. The system database contains information on more than 5 million transactions with a cumulative dollar value exceeding \$2.1 trillion and dates back to Fiscal Year 1979. In April 2003, the General Services Administration awarded the contract for development and operations of FPDS-NG. The contractor is Global Computer Enterprises, Inc. (GCE) of Gaithersburg, MD (www.gce2000.com). GCE is a small business that has been supporting business systems (including procurement data systems) for the US Coast Guard.

eCatalogs

Another massive undertaking in the procurement process involves searching through current contracts to determine if there is a suitable existing federal con-

tract that can satisfy a buyer's needs. The eCatalogs module is developing an electronic directory of Government Wide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs), Multiple Agency Contracts, and any other procurement instrument intended for use by multiple agencies, to provide program managers and buyers information on existing contracts available for government-wide use. The goal of this Inter-agency Contract Directory (ICD) is to help acquaint potential customers with possible options through organized and faster access to basic information about these vehicles. Presently there is no single place where this information resides. In the near future a rule change to the FAR will be issued to mandate the population of the ICD for existing and newly awarded multiple agency contracts and to encourage the use of this directory as part of acquisition planning. On May 6, 2003 a memorandum from OFPP (OMB's Office of Federal Procurement Policy), announced the roll-out of the ICD in order to prepare agencies that manage inter-agency contracts to start populating the database.

Standard e-Transactions

Standard eTransactions is the foundation of the Integrated Acquisition Environment. The eTransactions Team modeled the acquisition process to identify activities and information exchanges. Agencies are validating these modules to ensure that all possible data interfaces are included. All data elements will be examined to ensure that they have the same meaning and convey the same information. A standard glossary is being developed to facilitate exchange of data between and within agencies. From this module will come the interfaces that will be used by all Federal agencies and vendors to successfully operate in the Integrated Acquisition Environment.

The Integrated Acquisition Environment will be linked by several cross-cutting initiatives:

The eAuthentication initiative will build and enable mutual trust to support the widespread use of electronic interactions between the public and government, and among government agencies, by providing common solutions to establish the identity of the user. It ensures

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transport data between applications.

A portal is under development to provide transaction based access to the IAE environment via an integration broker that will provide search capability across the shared system web sites.

The Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE) provides a huge opportunity to leverage the government's investment in IT as well as in human capital. The Federal government is going to meet its business needs using existing technology as well as acquiring new. ■

Lisa Cliff is the Communications Specialist for IAE. For more information, email her at integrated_acquisition.gsa.gov

that only appropriately authenticated parties will be able to access multiple eGov applications.

A message broker is under development that will manage the complex system-to-system interactions and will

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