

# FEDSIM<sup>®</sup> InForum

August 2007

A Newsletter for FEDSIM Clients

E-dition #5

***“I take great pride in FEDSIM’s acquisition excellence and firmly believe we are the Government leader. Acquisition excellence is achieved by focusing on people, processes, and outcomes.”***



## Acquisition Excellence

### FEDSIM Director's Forum

**Lisa Akers**

I take great pride in FEDSIM's acquisition excellence and firmly believe we are the Government leader. Acquisition excellence is achieved by focusing on people, processes, and outcomes. So in this e-dition we illustrate our excellence by examining those three areas. Our acquisition professionals are at the heart of our excellence. This e-dition offers some evidence that our acquisition experts are second to none. Other indicators of contracting expertise and acquisition excellence are reviews and recognition by industry and peers. There were no substantive findings from FEDSIM's most recent reviews by the GSA IG, the GAO, and a GSA Procurement Management Review. FEDSIM acquisition experts received the GSA Governmentwide Excellence in Performance-Based Service Acquisition Award; two FEDSIM experts were recognized as Federal Computer Week "Rising Stars"; two received awards from the Government Information Technology Executive Council; and in June a Department of Energy/FEDSIM team won DOE's Federal Small Business Innovation Award. That's why I say FEDSIM = Acquisition Excellence! 🙌



## The Risk Reducing Diet

### Healthy Contract Results from the Contract Review Panel Diet

**Ann Williams, Quality Assurance Manager**

Since November 2004, the FEDSIM Contract Review Panel (CRP) has been an acquisition best practice that ensures high quality and reduced risk for FEDSIM



contract actions. The objectives of the CRP are to develop strategies for meeting client requirements and to resolve problems; to ensure consistent quality of all acquisition packages; and ensure that acquisitions are in compliance with established laws, regulations, policies, procedures and directives. The CRP assists FEDSIM management in recognizing and acting on

problems in all phases of a contract from planning to post-award management. This assessment can then be used to improve the contracting process by ensuring that all elements work together to provide the best contracting support to the client while meeting acquisition schedules.

A repeatable process is the result of a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) document addressing areas such as roles and responsibilities, what actions need review, documents required for each action, and the CRP process itself. 🙌

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***“The CRP is vital to FEDSIM’s ability to reduce acquisition risk. The collaborative atmosphere of the CRP allows FEDSIM to come up with sound strategies and resolve issues earlier so they do not develop into significant problems.”***

The CRP members have an in-depth knowledge of current acquisition policy and regulations as well as recent changes or decisions that impact the federal acquisition community. The FEDSIM Quality Assurance (QA) Manager attends the CRP since she advises on issues of SOP compliance, templates, and most importantly captures best practices and lessons learned. Best practices, lessons learned, and the latest templates are then disseminated throughout FEDSIM.

When their contract is being reviewed, the Integrated Project Team (IPT) participates, too. The IPT includes the FEDSIM Project Manager, Group Manager, Contracting Officer, Contracting Specialist, and Acquisition Project Manager if involved.

CRP advisory sessions are also available to leverage the CRP’s acquisition and legal expertise. Meeting weekly, the advisory sessions are a valuable resource for IPT teams to receive feedback without impacting the schedule. Examples of advisory sessions include reviewing requirements and market research; assisting in contract vehicle selection; verifying performance-based contracting methods; and providing advice on the proposed acquisition schedule.

The CRP is vital to FEDSIM’s ability to reduce acquisition risk. The collaborative atmosphere of the CRP allows FEDSIM to come up with sound strategies and resolve issues earlier so they do not develop into significant problems. 

## A Unique Acquisition Talent

### The FEDSIM Acquisition Project Manager

#### Howard Grizzle, Special Projects Officer




With a reduced in-house staff and budget, and the trend to do more performance-based acquisitions, it is no surprise that many successful Government managers have turned to FEDSIM for turnkey acquisition and post-award management. As one client stated, “My job is to save the lives of warfighters, and I need specialists who can help me translate my requirements into finding the right industry partner who can help me do that, and...keep me out of trouble.” Ensuring that industry partners have sufficient information to prepare responsive proposals and working closely with FEDSIM

contracting staff to conduct timely and proper acquisitions are just some responsibilities of the FEDSIM Acquisition Project Manager, or “APM.”

To be an APM requires a rare mix of equal parts of acquisition expert, technical writer, requirements gatherer, and facilitator/coach. The APM partners with the FEDSIM Project Manager (PM), and client, to ensure that an acquisition promotes fair opportunity, remains on-schedule, and results in a successful task order award. FEDSIM APMs are well respected among their FEDSIM peers and FEDSIM’s clients. By having an APM dedicated to a project, FEDSIM clients are assured they have an experienced acquisition partner, with PM expertise that can prepare even the most complex acquisition documentation. Since there are a limited number of FEDSIM APMs, they are reserved for the most challenging acquisition projects.

The APM:

- Develops the solicitation’s Technical Evaluation Plan and Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE); 

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## DID YOU KNOW ?

**FEDSIM's Project Manager Corey Nickens and Group Manager Chris Hamm received Federal Computer Week's "Rising Star Award". The award recognizes younger Government IT community future leaders.**

**"The FEDSIM Contracting Officer and Project Manager have proven themselves invaluable in helping us frame and achieve our objectives in our current contract; I have come to place immeasurable value on their advice and counsel."**

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*A Unique Acquisition Talent continued from page 2*

- Participates in the Contract Review Panel (CRP) process;
- Works with FEDSIM Contracting to ensure the solicitation meets all acquisition regulations, and offers a fair opportunity for bidder consideration; and
- Serves as the Technical Evaluation Board (TEB) Chairperson, leading and facilitating the TEB evaluation, writing the consensus report, and providing technical input to the Contracting Officer during offeror debriefings.

When time permits, APMs also provide ad-hoc consulting support to both FEDSIM PMs and their clients. APMs use this opportunity to transfer their knowledge gained to other FEDSIM PMs and future APMs. If it is not obvious, the APM is a unique and valuable asset that sets FEDSIM apart from others. 🙌

## Our "User Group" Comments

### Recent Experiences with FEDSIM's Procurement Professionals



Everyone likes to compare notes with someone in a similar situation as themselves. So let us introduce to you some of your fellow Federal IT decision makers, your "users group" so to speak, discussing their recent experiences with FEDSIM's procurement professionals.

#### **A Chief for the Air Force Chief of Staff says:**

*My sincere appreciation to the outstanding team FEDSIM put together to help my organization award an ERP Support contract. I was truly impressed with the team's professionalism throughout the process. I could feel their mission urgency in providing expertise from inception to contract award.*

*The personal efforts of the Contracting Officer, FEDSIM Project Manager, and Acquisition PM were exceptional, but their efforts as a holistic team provided a team synergy that was greater than the sum of the individual parts.*

#### **A civilian agency OCIO Program Manager indicates:**

*As a Government employee who participated in many acquisitions, and as the project leader for implementing the best practices for Software Acquisition Capability Maturity Model (SA-CMM) practices, this Enterprise-wide acquisition was one of the best and it was a great pleasure to be a part of a world-class team.*

*The practice of acquisition evaluation was excellent and gave all the team members an exceptional level of comfort in a fair selection of a contractor with the required skills, knowledge and understanding of our agency's requirements to implement the tasks with minimum risk and best value to the Government.*

#### **A Colonel at Marine Corps Headquarters comments:**

*We operate in a challenging, and in this instance, unfamiliar environment. The FEDSIM Contracting Officer and Project Manager have proven themselves invaluable in helping us frame and achieve our objectives in our current contract; I have come to place immeasurable value on their advice and counsel.*

#### **A Systems Engineering Director in a civilian agency OCIO office notes:**

*The first class support we received from the FEDSIM Integrated Project Team during the Technical Evaluation Panel is clearly the result of planning, preparation, knowledge, and professionalism. Their knowledge and impeccable application of procurement regulations ensured the integrity of the process.*

FEDSIM thanks everyone for the kind words. 🙌

# CASE STUDY

by **Connie Ciccolella & Mike Feeney, Senior Project Managers**

## FEDSIM Provides the Heat, Energy Sees the Light

Because of FEDSIM's expertise in successfully managing complex, large-scale acquisitions, the Department of Energy (DOE) requested FEDSIM assist in a recompetition of its Technical Services mission critical requirements. The legacy contract was not providing optimal solutions for the user community, and the contract's cost, schedule, and performance were not advantageous to DOE. Also the contract's award process was arduous and access to contractors best suited to meet DOE's requirements was inefficient. Compounding the challenge the DOE contract was to expire soon after FEDSIM became involved in the project. Several aspects of this recompetition made it complex:

- DOE had a preference for multiple small business awards;
- Successful offerors had to be capable of responding quickly to surge requirements, critical needs, and the immediate award of initial task orders;
- Multiple security requirements were required;
- DOE needed prompt assistance to mitigate the risk of a break in service of expiring task orders; and
- This initiative was defined as Strategic Sourcing due to the enterprise-wide solution, so many stakeholders involved.

FEDSIM tackled this complex acquisition by dedicating an experienced, proven, determined Integrated Project Team (IPT). Many project issues were coordinated with other parts of GSA, including higher level GSA management, to ensure the acquisition was being handled appropriately and comprehensively. Rapid yet extensive market research and acquisition planning led the FEDSIM IPT to conclude the GSA MOBIS contract vehicle was the most appropriate strategy to satisfy all DOE requirements. FEDSIM awarded a multiple-award Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) ahead of schedule and under budget. The award enabled a best value solution, multiple small business awards, no disruption of services, access to highly qualified awardees capable of managing the requirements, and competition at both the contract and task order levels. Within the BPA's first 60 days \$99,443,458 in services were transferred from large to small businesses. In June, the Department of Energy announced the DOE/FEDSIM team responsible had won DOE's Federal Small Business Innovation Award. This acquisition was so successful that DOE has asked FEDSIM to manage another large scale acquisition similar in nature. 🙌

***“Within the BPA’s first 60 days \$99,443,458 in services were transferred from large to small businesses. In June, the Department of Energy announced the DOE/FEDSIM team responsible had won DOE’s Federal Small Business Innovation Award.”***



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## By The Numbers

Measuring FEDSIM's Contracting Expertise

**15.4**

The average number of years of contracting experience of FEDSIM Acquisition professionals.

**95% & 32%**

The percent of FEDSIM Acquisition professionals who have Bachelors and Masters degrees.