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Watch [www.naepnet.org](http://www.naepnet.org) for more information on exciting programs that are coming this year!

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If you attended the Annual Meeting in San Antonio, you saw our closing keynote session with Donna Brazile and Cal Thomas, who discussed both the Democratic and Republican versions of the current presidential candidates running for the RNC or DNC nominations. As you can imagine, the conversation was quite lively, humorous and, at times, reflective.

Maybe, just maybe, our current contentious, even combative, political environment of “us versus them,” which has created a wave of populist anger, could take a few notes from higher education’s shared-governance model. A recent article (A Voice, a Vote, Or A Veto, June 2016) by Howard Teibel, in the NACUBO’s Business Officer Magazine, takes an in-depth look at how the shared-governance model can bring decision-makers together to create collaborative, innovative strategies for both the academy and administration.

How do we work together more effectively to create broader buy-in and creative innovation? Shared governance, the human dynamic of practicing collaboration. According to the article, we have to move to a more collaborative decision-making process. Bringing together the various stakeholders to include not only the “agree-ers but also the disagree-ers” will help with uncovering hidden agendas between the groups. If collaboration works well, buy-in for the decision will become more apparent and desired. It’s not about politics and power.

According to Teibel, we also have to look at three principles that underlie shared governance:

• Consultation: the opportunity to express one’s views;
• Communication: the opportunity to be updated and informed; and
• Explanation: convey the rationale behind the decisions.

In a recent media interview with Oprah Winfrey, she stated everyone has a basic underlying need to be “heard” (which was right up there with the basic need to be “loved”). So, giving time to the process of consulting yields immeasurable returns in collaboration. Communicating and Explaining the rationale behind the decision creates a productive, healthy outcome—where everyone is on the same page and feels that they were participative in the outcome, they were a part of the solution.

While shared governance typically refers to academics, administration, and the board, there are lessons learned that can apply to your own department. The three principles of governance—consultation, communication and explanation—are a good place to start.

We should also remember to focus on the journey, not the destination; it is the diversity of thought and people-to-people engagement that creates opportunities. No one is left out in higher education’s shared-governance model.

It seems apparent that our own country’s current political/governance process might benefit from a look at higher education’s shared-governance process? I know the answer is not that easy, and I know it will take the will and desire of the elected officials to make any collaboration happen. The good news is we, too, have a voice in this process! It is our vote! On November 8, exercise your part of the “shared governance model.” Get out and VOTE. As Donna and Cal reminded us in San Antonio, our votes put our current politicians into office, so if we want a different outcome, get out and VOTE!
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Tips for Successfully Navigating the RFP Journey: An Action Plan for Working with Your Customers

by Raymond Hsu and Kerry Kahl
University of Washington–Seattle

Procurement and our campus customers share a goal of achieving the best value for the institution when inviting competitive proposals. The request for proposal (RFP) process is a journey. For some, it is a new experience, while for others, it is familiar road well-traveled. But each RFP trip is unique, and having your guidebook and maps in hand will make that journey go more smoothly.

Continuing the theme of 2016 NAEP Annual Meeting—Mapping Procurement’s Future—we offer an RFP travel guide for you and your campus customers. (Authors Note: Except as noted, all quotes are from an anonymous survey of NAEP members conducted in early 2016. We thank our colleagues who shared their ideas.)

Roles and Responsibilities: What could possibly go wrong?

“We conducted a very technical RFP: the client came back after one day, ready to award. A consultant provided guidance without evaluating the proposals.”

“Clients may use unfair scoring methods, such as: not calculating total cost, generalized criteria causing bias in scoring, unfair requirements, or limited vendor list.”

Since each RFP trip can have challenges, it is good for your travelers to know what is expected of them.

Checklist for Your Customer: What They Need To Do for Success

- Develop reasonable specifications and requirements.
- Set relevant evaluation criteria and scoring factors.
- Direct vendors to Procurement, before and during the process.
- Ensure evaluators are impartial.
- Evaluate proposals fairly.

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“By aligning our goals . . . [we] grow into becoming partners with our internal customers. . . . And the best part is that when our customers meet their goals, we meet ours, too.”

And as the tour guide, you need to double check your own to do list.

**Checklist for Procurement:** Be Your Customer’s “Trusted Advisor”

☐ Foster ongoing relationship with campus clients – be part of the planning process for major procurement projects.

☐ Collaborate and guide the RFP process and evaluation model.

☐ Coordinate vendor communications and information.

☐ Advise on ethical or legal questions.

☐ Use your best judgment.

**Checklist for All of Us:** Mutual and Shared for Achieving Results

☐ Understand key goals and project objectives.

☐ Protect and promote best interests of your institution.

☐ Follow legal requirements and ethical conduct.

☐ Ensure a fair and open competitive process.

☐ Prepare everyone for success, and obtain the best value for your institution.

**A Good Reminder About Roles:**

“Our internal customers have their own goals that are less about prices and more about getting grant funding, increasing market presence, or developing prestigious academic programs.”

“By aligning our goals . . . [we] grow into becoming partners with our internal customers. . . . And the best part is that when our customers meet their goals, we meet ours, too.” (Finesha Colton-Lee and Roy Anderson, “Aligning Procurement with Customer Goals,” *NAEP Educational Procurement Journal*, Spring 2016)

**Three Legs to Our RFP Journey.** Everyone is briefed on their responsibilities; now it’s time to get the journey going.

1. **Preparation and Packing Your Bags:** Communication and Education

   Start by working with your clients to put the RFP together, and with vendors to communicate the rules of the process.

   “I try to provide education up front with my internal clients as to expectations, what they can and cannot do and how we will be evaluating responses. I am involved in the purchasing...” (Continued on page 14)
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“To try and keep vendors from going through the end user instead of coming to purchasing. I host a pre-proposal meeting and state in the meeting that all communication must come through purchasing.”

“Ex parte communication (i.e. communication between the RFP respondents and the client, but not going through the procurement office) is a fairly common problem. Major vendors often don’t know the rules, or ignore them, and will try to influence the process by emailing chancellors, etc.”

2. On The Road: Preparing Evaluation Team for Whatever Comes
Set up your evaluation team, helping them understand the rules and expectations for their work during the whole RFP process.

“We involve cross functional teams; most acquisitions involve a number of departments, directly or indirectly—this is the best way to obtain benefits of collaboration, and help mitigate ‘preferred vendor’ syndrome of the user department.”

Continued from page 12

Continued on page 16

project as much as possible from start to finish including participating in the evaluation sessions, questioning questionable scores and generally ensuring fairness in scoring.”

Working with your customers:
- Collaborate on developing specifications and requirements. Go to NAEP and other associations to get copies of similar RFPs.
- Pick an unusual group of words or statement from client drafted specifications, and Google it to see if information came from another source.
- When citing one vendor’s product as specification for RFP, do it in an “or approved equal” methodology.
- Working with your vendors:
  - Procurement contacts vendors in advance of RFP being issued to give a high level overview, summary of key dates, and review of the process.
  - Host a pre-proposal meeting, and state both in the RFP and in the meeting that all communication must come through purchasing.

“To try and keep vendors from going through the end user instead of coming to purchasing. I host a pre-proposal meeting and state in the meeting that all communication must come through purchasing.

“We involve cross functional teams; most acquisitions involve a number of departments, directly or indirectly—this is the best way to obtain benefits of collaboration, and help mitigate ‘preferred vendor’ syndrome of the user department.”

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“One important component of the initial meeting is to agree on a timeline and stick to it. I try to explain that letting it slip could negatively impact their goal. I am surprised that in most cases they have no idea how long the process takes and why it could take that long. Setting the expectations is very important.”

“We have found it very beneficial to bring in a top administrator on an evaluation team, and let them experience the entire RFP process. They get a better understanding of the complexities, and then they can become an advocate for the process on future RFPs.”

- Develop guidelines for evaluation team members. Make sure they understand why and what might happen if there is a vendor protest.
- Provide rules for the process; transfer any vendor contacts to procurement immediately. That gets the clients off the hook in dealing with the vendors.
- Meet face to face with the committee, explain the process and roles and responsibilities, and answer any questions they may have.

“One important component of the initial meeting is to agree on a timeline and stick to it. I try to explain that letting it slip could negatively impact their goal. I am surprised that in most cases they have no idea how long the process takes and why it could take that long. Setting the expectations is very important.”

□ Consider having each evaluation team member sign confidentiality statements, or a memorandum of understanding about the process and their responsibilities.

“We try to have strict guidelines and conflict of interest statements for evaluators in RFP situations. This process relies very heavily on people’s integrity and honesty; which can leave some room for inappropriate behavior or conversations between the university and the vendors. This is especially important when the evaluation team is large and/or the subject matter is sensitive.”

“T here have been a few occasions where a client may provide a particular respondent/bidder/proposer information that may not be shared with other potential respondents. In most cases, we find that it was not an intentional act on the part of the client, but merely the client’s perception of assisting in the process and not realizing that the information should be shared with all.”

3. Wrapping It Up and Coming Home: Evaluation Process and Results

□ Conduct the evaluations in a thorough and balanced manner, to determine the best value for your institution.

□ Participate in the process; guide the team in achieving an objective analysis.

□ Complete all of the evaluation steps as outlined in the RFP, including checking references and conducting interviews with finalists. Taking an hour to talk with each of the top proposers is like getting free consulting from them: Your evaluation team will hear other perspectives that may be valuable for working with whichever firm is selected as the successful proposal.

□ Require a summary evaluation that the committee agrees on; include short assessments for each proposing company, observations from references and interviews.

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Submission Compliance—
Are You Using the Mad Hatter Strategy?

by Dave Robertson
Infinite Source Systems

I
n Louis Carroll's *Alice In Wonderland*, the Mad Hatter hosts an unending tea party where everyone is always changing seats, nonsense is spoken, and it's always 6:00 pm. It is a good metaphor for the RF(x) process used by some procurement organizations.

If you've ever run an RF(x) event, requesting and managing bids or proposals, you have probably received some unexpected submissions—submissions that did not meet expectations or comply with requirements. They may have been late. They may have omitted required information. They may have been based on an obsolete version of the requirements. Or they may have had some other irregularity rendering them non-responsive.

While the problem is sometimes due to an error by the respondent, most of the time the problem is a result of the process, or lack of one, used by the requester. When your objective is to run a fair and equitable event, the process you use really matters.

The consequences of a poor process and/or unclear documentation can be expensive and time consuming. These consequences go beyond the obvious potential for protests and lawsuits. Your credibility can be damaged. We've all heard stories in which the best bid was disqualified over an error, costing the requesting organization and respondents thousands of dollars.

One of the most egregious cases in which a poor process resulted in damaged credibility and a lawsuit, (and the origin of the Mad Hatter metaphor), is Laboratory Corp. of America v. United States (2012 U.S. Claims LEXIS 1741). The facts revolve around whether a bid submission was actually late based upon the actions of an employee of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). In the judgement, the court describes the VA's actions as “…worthy of the Mad Hatter.…”. The concluding statement reads: “Unlike someone on good terms with the Mad Hatter’s Time, the officials at the VA could not whisper a hint to Time and make the clock on this procurement go round, in a twinkling, to a time different than that listed in the solicitation. There is nothing on this side of the looking glass to support the VA's rejection of plaintiff’s offer. It is time, via an injunction, for defendant to return to reality.” An excellent synopsis of this case and others like it can be found on the blog of the law firm Albo & Oblon LLP (www.albo-oblon.com/2013/01/16/bid-protest-incorrect-deadline/).

Every day, bidders are faced with the challenge of deciding which opportunities are worth pursuing. Preparing submissions can cost thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours. It is not a decision many bidders take lightly. If
your process is onerous, if your requirements are unclear, or if your decisions to award are inconsistent with the bid documents, you face many potential challenges.

Whether you use an online bid event management platform or a paper-based system, here are five best practices to ensure that it is effective and credible. If you are thinking about moving to an electronic solution, you can use these practices to help you evaluate the systems you are considering.

**Five RF(x) Best Practices**

1. **Post your solicitation documents in one location only.** There are many examples of situations where a bidder was unsuccessful or disqualified because he relied on information from a secondary site that was incomplete or incorrect. While it is important to get broad exposure to increase competition, there should only be one official site of record. Listings and advertisements on all other sites should clearly state the location of the official site of record, along with any other statements or directions needed to guide potential bidders.

2. **Use templates to avoid drafting errors.** The annals of procurement are filled with instances of solicitations that contain inconsistencies between the advertisement, the Instructions to bidders and the specifications. This leads to disqualified responses, unhappy respondents, protests, claims, lawsuits, and a bad reputation. You can avoid this by:
   - Reviewing your standard solicitation documents for consistency; and
   - to the extent practical, using non-editable templates to ensure the correct language and references are used.

3. **Get a confirmation of receipt from bidders that they received addenda or amendments.** Problems occur when a bidder misses an addendum. While it is simpler to take a passive approach and make it the

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responsibility of the bidder, it also creates a break, a vulnerability, in your process. If a respondent misses an addendum, the bid is most likely non-responsive and has to be disqualified; everyone loses. By getting and tracking confirmations, you can ensure, and prove, that everyone gets everything. Getting confirmations is a better use of time and energy than rejecting non-compliant bids or dealing with complaints and legal actions. Simply mailing an addendum or amendment, posting it a website, or sending an email, is not sufficient. If you are posting to a website, use one that requires the bidders to acknowledge receipt and have it recorded in the audit trail (see below). If you do a mailing, include a return postcard and require that it be signed and returned. If you send an email, require that the receiver reply back to you.

4. Maintain a complete and accurate audit trail. A log of all activities is essential in avoiding and resolving issues. Know exactly who saw what and when it happened. While this is time consuming for paper systems, modern e-bid solutions offer the functionality and require little effort to implement. At a minimum capture:
   • When bid documents were received;
   • When addenda and amendments were received; and
   • When questions were asked and by whom, the answers, to whom they were sent, and when the answers were received.

5. If you have the capability to receive submissions online, do not run a parallel paper based process. Run one process only. There is little to support the need for running both paper and electronic systems. The costs and risks of a dual process are considerable, chief of which are duplication and reconciliation.

Process Matters
Submission compliance is essential to maintaining credibility with your contractors and suppliers, as well as supporting your efforts towards efficient and effective contracting practices. The basis of a compliant RF(x) event is a clear, well thought out, transparent process. Whether you are using paper or an online platform, getting the process right is up to you. With a paper system, you have to design and implement the entire process. The benefit to this is that you know exactly how your system works. Online platforms have a process built-in. The challenge here is to thoroughly understand it to ensure that it covers everything you need, and that it matches the process you want to use.

Remember, only you can prevent another Mad Hatter’s tea party.

Dave Robertson is the CEO of Infinite Source Systems, a software development firm that develops solutions for procurement professionals. His career spans almost 40 years with experience as a bidder and builder of major public infrastructure, 10 years as the key spokesperson for the construction industry in British Columbia, Canada, and 16 years leading Infinite Source Systems. Email: drobertson@infinitesource.ca.
The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Part 200), AKA Uniform Guidance or UG, has a two-part implementation structure. This article explores those procurement provisions in effect after December 26, 2014 (most entities’ FY 15), and the Procurement Standards (2 CFR Part 200.317 thru 200.326), which will take effect after December 26, 2018 (most entities’ FY 19).

As a result of recent negotiations between the Council on Governmental Relations (COGR), The Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the Council on Financial Assistance Reform (COFAR), the deadline for converting to the Procurement Standards has been extended another year to December 26, 2018. OMB will also invite comments specific to 2 CFR 200.320(a), Procurement by micro-purchases, which should appear in the Federal

Uniform Guidance Tool Kit
Options and suggestions for handling the more demanding aspects of the UG

by Al Brooks
Iowa State University
Register sometime in September or October 2016. This latest update was provided through the COGR listerv July 12, 2016.

The purpose of the UG (Uniform Guidance) is “. . . improving performance and outcomes while ensuring the financial integrity of taxpayer dollars in partnership with non-Federal stakeholders. . . . OMB guidance will reduce administrative burden for non-Federal entities receiving Federal awards while reducing the risk of waste, fraud and abuse.” As we begin implementation of the UG, we should keep these goals in mind. When I reference the word “recipient” below, it means the recipient institution.

FY 15 Provisions That May Have an Impact on Procurement

§200.111 English language: Requires all grant-related documents to be written in English, with English being the governing language. It also requires translation be made available to staff or vendors working on projects who do not speak English. Based on my experience with international contracting, this provision could prove problematic. Many foreign governments have similar requirements and usually want their own language version to prevail. It may require extra time to negotiate English as the prevailing language. There are several companies available who offer certified translation for a fee. A quick notation in your flow down terms would cover you in respect to providing notice.

§200.112 Conflict of interest: This provision requires recipients to establish a policy governing conflicts of interest in Federal awards. The recipient must disclose in writing any potential conflicts of interest to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity. Since the policy must be specific to Federal awards, it must incorporate the conditions that create a conflict of interest as defined in 2 CFR 200.318 (c)(1) and (2), as well as those addressed in §200.430.

§200.302 Financial Management: Requires the recipient to have a computer or other system(s) in place: sufficient to permit the preparation of reports required by general and program-specific terms and conditions; and the tracing of funds to a level of expenditures adequate to establish that such funds have been used according to the Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award. It basically implies that Federal funds must be tracked down to transaction level. This provision could affect procurement systems that cannot identify expenditures at the item detail level and directly link necessary approvals, quotes, etc. to a transaction. See Basic Considerations UG 2CFR 200.402 – 411.

§200.330 Subrecipient and contractor determinations: This section stipulates that the recipient must make case-by-case determination whether each agreement is either a sub-recipient or contractor. The recipient’s financial staff must consider the substance of the relationship when making a determination. Past audits have indicated transactions were placed under the wrong category. Simple activities normally processed as contracts have been let to other universities and colleges as sub-awards. Examples would be consulting, testing services, data compilation, and editing. Your procurement process should incorporate some mechanism for review of pending transactions with grants or sponsored programs office. Definitions of sub-recipient and contractor can be found on 2 CFR 200.330 (a) and (b), as well as 200.22 and 200.93.

§200.404 Reasonable costs: There has been a new section added to the A-21 version. It is intended to dissuade recipients from making exceptions to its own policies in respect to federal awards. The policy requires us to consider: Whether the non-Federal entity significantly deviates from its established practices and policies regarding the incurrence of costs, which may unjustifiably increase the Federal award’s cost. Institutions should review their procurement policies and insure practices are consistent across all fund types. Exceptions made for Federal funds should require some form of approval.

FY 19 Procurement Standards Provisions that Have Been Identified as Problematic

During the last two years, Members of NAEP and other associations have been discussing the potential challenges we face in implementing the UG. Chief among these were implementing conflict of interest policies, bidding thresholds, and sole source requirements. The good thing is most of us have two years to get solutions in place.

§200.318 General procurement standards. Standards of Conduct: New to Codes
of Conduct from A-110, the UG has added a requirement to consider tangible personal benefits from a firm considered for a contract as a conflict of interest in the new Standards of Conduct. Unpaid board or similar advisory positions should now be disclosed. In the past, we could purchase from companies that had our employees as unpaid board members or in advisory capacities. However, depending on the firm, board appointments can be considered prestigious and could be considered a tangible personal benefit. Once written into policy, the best practice is to mitigate any apparent conflict of interest before procurement activity takes place. By doing so, there is nothing to report and no disciplinary action required. COFAR commentators speculated that most conflicts of interest will arise during the acquisition process. Therefore, purchasing agents should have access to databases containing faculty/staff disclosures. It is also helpful to establish a standing committee to review and mitigate apparent conflicts of interest. COGR has a pamphlet on managing conflicts of interest at: www.cogr.edu/COGR/files/ccLibraryFiles/Filename/000000000067/Recognizing_and_Managing_Personal_Conflicts_of_Interest.pdf.

§200.320 Methods of procurement to be followed. Micro Purchases: As stated earlier, this provision will be up for comment in September. The last revision stipulated a level of $3,500 to match the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR). After comments are taken, there will be some minimum threshold, likely in the $5,000 to $10,000 range. You can substantially mitigate the workload involved by using or creating contracts for equipment, supplies or services. Consider using competitively bid consortia contracts which is allowed under the UG. Consortia like NAEP (www.naepnet.org), E&I (www.eandi.org), WSCA-NASPO (www.wasca-naspo.org), U.S. Communities (www.uscommunities.org), and NJPA (www.njpacoop.org/cooperative-purchasing), offer a wide variety of products using competitively bid contracts. If you have access to the Federal grant award number, you can use GSA (www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100611). Many states also have contracts available for use by non-profit entities.

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Brody™ WorkLounge

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§200.323 Contract cost and price. Independent cost estimates: This section requires the recipient to “make independent estimates before receiving bids or proposals” as part of the cost and price analysis process. Note the estimate is only required before you receive bids. At Iowa State University, we typically have the departments submit a vendor’s quote for the equipment or supplies they want to purchase. This preliminary quote stays in our procurement files as part of the permanent record. When no quotes are supplied, we will call or email companies we believe can provide the product (or service) and ask for budgetary quote. We may also search our files for the last time a similar product was purchased and adjust for inflation. NAEP has an excellent web forum so we can also ask colleagues if they have sources they can share. And, if you don’t mind paying for it, there are products like the Advisory Board Company’s cohort price database that can get you historical pricing for a reasonable array of products. (www.advisory.com).

§200.323 Contract cost and price. Negotiation of profit: This is one of the most contentious parts of the UG. It requires recipients to “negotiate profit as a separate element of the price for each contract in which there is no price competition and in all cases where cost analysis is performed.” The quick solution is to bid these items when you can, even if you believe there may be only one compliant response. The time required to negotiate profit will likely be more than conducting a bid. Once you have the bids, you can use all price data, even that from non-compliant sources, in a price analysis.

There are occasions when a purchase must be handled as a sole source. In those cases, information from the FAR or other Federal publications may help. FAR Part 31 Contract Cost Principles and Procedures (www.acquisition.gov/?q=/browse/far/31) provides guidelines for determining cost. Part 15 Contracting by Negotiation, in section 15.404-4 discusses the amount of allowable profit on a Federal contract, which is 10% unless the contractors takes financial risks (www.acquisition.gov/?q=/browse/far/15).

Since the UG provision does not state what specific commodities are identified by the term “each contract,” we should assume it applies to all. FAR 15.404-1(c)(1) indicates

“NAEP HAS AN EXCELLENT WEB FORUM so we can also ask colleagues if they have sources they can share. And, if you don’t mind paying for it, there are products like the Advisory Board Company’s cohort price database that can get you historical pricing for a reasonable array of products.”

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Part One – Vendor Risk Management: The Good, the Bad, and the Very, Very Ugly

by Ruth S. Rauluk, MBA, ARM, CPSM, C.P.M.
Point Park University

Author’s Note: The following article is one of three in a series of articles that will explain the concept of vendor risk management and provide a practical guide (and tools) to effectively implement Vendor Risk Management (VRM) at your institution.

Warren Buffet writes, “Risk comes from not knowing what you are doing.” For those of us routinely engaged in outsourcing services and acquiring products, risk truly comes from not knowing what our vendors are doing, or more importantly, not knowing their underlying operational environments. Operational environment is one of the key drivers of vendor risk.

Vendor risk refers to the operational risks associated with outsourcing products and/or services to a third party. For instance, many of us, as a standard practice, hire charter bus companies to transport our athletes. There are risks associ-
ated with the company selected, the vehicle used, and the individual driver. The company may not adequately screen applicants (criminal records, traffic violations, drugs) in the hiring process. Drivers may not receive appropriate training or be subject to routine drug testing. Buses may not receive required maintenance or be subject to pre-trip safety reviews. These internal process fails by the vendor could lead to an accident, vehicle malfunction, student assault, or worse.

These fails also illustrate one of the five key drivers of vendor risk: the maturity and effectiveness of the vendor’s internal policies, procedures, and processes, also known as the vendor’s operational environment. In the example above, the vendor’s internal processes and policies (e.g., screening practices, employment practices, maintenance policies, and safety policies) strongly correlate with the degree of risk associated with the vendor/institution relationship. The operational environment is entirely controlled by each vendor and as such represents the most compelling threat to effective vendor risk management. For this reason, procurement (and our institutions) must make every effort to understand the intricacies of the operational environment in order to mitigate the threat to the extent possible. Fortunately, the remaining four drivers of vendor risk can be controlled in some fashion by the institution.

A driver is a factor that can positively affect risk by reducing its impact or negatively affect risk by increasing its impact. Procurement professionals can direct the driver by employing sound vendor risk management practices.

The second driver of vendor risk relates to the inherent nature of the services or goods provided, meaning that some services or goods are intrinsically more prone to create risk than others (Yacura, 2013). Consider the charter bus example above and the multiple variables that could create a liability for your institution (distracted drivers, faulty safety equipment, inadequate training, poorly-maintained vehicles, etc.). Compare this with the inherent risk associated with a contractor hired to plant and maintain flowers and shrubs at your facility. There’s a material difference in the inherent risks posed by each service provider relationship, which impact the next three drivers of vendor risk and ultimately the resources you’ll allocate to assess and mitigate associated risks.

The third driver is the due diligence used in vendor selection (Yacura, 2013). Examples of due diligence are contacting references, obtaining audited financial statements, reviewing SOC reports, making site visits, and checking third party websites such as the Better Business Bureau or Dun & Bradstreet. The greater the associated inherent risk, the more emphasis you should place on due diligence and documentation of your efforts.

The fourth driver of vendor risk is the holistic contracting and negotiation process (Yacura, 2013). Each institution should have a standard set of contract templates that cover a variety of purchase and service requirements. When a vendor has been appropriately vetted, the vendor’s proposal (minus any unfavorable or conflicting terms and conditions) can be used as an exhibit to the contract template.

Today’s graduates will likely have an average of 8 different careers over their lifetime, and it’s estimated that 65% of today’s elementary students will have careers not yet invented. Graduates must have a strong grasp of basic skills aligned with the ability to apply learning in practical situations, to create and innovate, and to communicate clearly. They must become life-long learners, motivated to adapt and create in areas of interest as well as in areas that will change and evolve in ways we cannot predict.
Vendor Risk Management policies and processes. Many of us are already engaged in VRM to some degree although we may not have implemented a formal process. Before developing this process, it would be helpful to review two definitions of VRM.

Vendor Risk Management can be defined as “a formal way to evaluate, track and measure third-party risk; to assess its impact on all aspects of your business; and to develop compensating controls or other forms of mitigation to lessen the impact on your business if something should happen” (ProcessUnity, 2016). Another definition states that VRM is “. . . a rigorous, analytical process to identify, measure, monitor, and establish controls to manage the risks associated with third-party relationships” (OCC, 2013).

Based on these definitions, VRM provides us the opportunity to obtain detailed information regarding critical supplier risk; to use this information to mitigate risk to the extent possible; and to potentially lessen or avoid the negative impact of risks that ultimately become reality.

Considering the potential impact if we don’t strive to manage vendor risk (e.g., damage to property, physical harm or death; financial harm; reputational damage; and liability for acts or omissions of vendors, to name a few), a proposal to implement VRM should rise to the level of your executive management team for their approval and support.

VRM, while challenging, represents an opportunity for procurement to further elevate its profile by demonstrating significant value to the organization. As procurement professionals, we are uniquely positioned to manage vendor risk and to work in concert with our institutional end users and risk management team to adequately mitigate vendor risk.

In my next article, I will provide a practical and doable guide to implementing a VRM program on your campus. You can be a risk manager. You already are!

**References**


**Congratulations!**

Cornell University congratulates the winners of the fifth annual Supplier Recognition Awards for outstanding performance during fiscal year 2016 in five key categories: product and service quality, pricing/cost, order fulfillment/delivery, customer satisfaction/support, and social responsibility.

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**June 8, 2016**

**F R O N T  R O W  –  L E F T  t o  R I G H T :**

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- Mike Lovaglia – Verizon Wireless
- John Godwin – Dell
- Dean Feole – W.B. Mason Co. Inc.
- Nathan Kashdan – Cornell Procurement Services Intern
- Ming Dong – Cornell Procurement Services Intern
- John Gale – Casella Waste Management of NY Inc.

**S E C O N D  R O W  –  L E F T  t o  R I G H T :**

- Mary Stazi – The Computing Center
- Michelle Alphonse – Krackler Scientific
- Victor Echandy – Krackler Scientific
- Peter LoConti – Airgas USA LLC
- Tom Carol – Dell
- Mike Makuszak – Verizon Wireless
- Tex Schmits – Eastern Managed Print Network
- Justin Jones – Sedgwick Business Interiors LLC
- Harper Watters – Associate Vice President and Cornell University Treasurer

**T H I R D  R O W  –  L E F T  t o  R I G H T :**

- Brenda Pinette – Eagle Envelope Company
- Sharon Meleca – Laboratory Product Sales Inc.
- Ronnie Smith – W.W. Grainger
- Ryan Jensen – W.W. Grainger
- Jonathan Williams – CDW LLC
- Doug Sedgwick – Sedgwick Business Interiors LLC
- Dave Martin – Eagle Envelope Company
- Claire Sedgwick – Sedgwick Business Interiors LLC

**F O U R T H  R O W  –  L E F T  t o  R I G H T :**

- Rolanda Schoemaker – Hill & Markes Inc.
- Frank Meleca – Laboratory Product Sales Inc.
- Jeff Jack – Vasco Brands Inc.
- Craig Garland – W.B. Mason Co. Inc.
- Mike Winters – Cornell Procurement Services Intern
- Scott Otey – Cornell Procurement Services
- Jay Porter – Cornell Procurement Services
- Bill Gage – Eastern Managed Print Network

**F I F T H  R O W  –  L E F T  t o  R I G H T :**

- Mike Schoemaker – Hill & Markes Inc.
- Benny Teitelbaum – Friedman Electric Supply Co. Inc.
- Emily Dillon – VWR International LLC
- Dan Frank – VWR International LLC
- Tom Romantic – Cornell Procurement Services
- Jan Nyrop – Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

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Ruth Rauluk, MBA, ARM, CPSM, C.P.M., is procurement and risk management professional who began her higher education career by establishing Point Park University’s first centralized procurement operation. Today her role has expanded to managing the university’s risk management program, including the Enterprise Risk Management initiative. Ruth earned an MBA from Point Park University and a B.A. in Public Administration from the University of Pittsburgh. She is Co-Chair of University Risk Management and Insurance Association’s Professional Development Committee and has served on annual conference committees in varying capacities. View Ruth’s LinkedIn profile at: www.linkedin.com/in/ruthsutterrauluk. Email: rrauluk@pointpark.edu.
The Purchasing Profession’s “To Do” List

by Kelly Kozisek
Oregon State University
NAEP Board President, 2016-2017

Recently, my colleague Neil Markee, Editor in Chief of Purchasing Link, posed these questions to me:

Markee: Based on your experience on your own campus and via contact with NAEP Members around the country, where is our branch of the purchasing profession headed? What will NAEP have to provide to most effectively support Members?

To answer those questions, one has to look in two directions at once—into the past and into the future. So, here’s my answer, based on my nearly three decades of purchasing industry experience and my vision for the years ahead.

Higher education procurement professionals must always be looking ahead towards industry trends and changes in Federal and state regulations, all while maintaining strong relationships with their customers, colleagues, leadership, and suppliers. It’s the relationship aspect that is a key component in helping procurement professionals stay abreast of what’s ahead for our profession. Cloud computing, changes in governance, joint ventures, major supplier-mergers, managing the risk associated with protected information, electronic commerce, and Internet-based retailers are just a few of the issues where procurement professionals are challenged to find solutions related to their university procurement governance and campus culture. We must constantly remain cognizant of new trends and emerging changes in key industries and markets and develop ways to factor them into our procurement policies and procedures.

Higher educational procurement is at a critical point—where the need for strong succession planning and the growing higher educational offerings can come together to create solutions for identifying and developing talent for future leaders. The pool of talent is diverse, and leaders must understand how best to attract and develop procurement professionals so that they are the best possible fit for their institutions.

Editorial Note

By Neil Markee
Editor in Chief, Purchasing Link

NAEP’s Annual Meeting (April 22-25, 2016 in San Antonio, Texas) was very forward-looking this year. It seemed that many workshop presenters were focused on trying to see, or maybe divine, what was going on further on down the road. What’s ahead is obviously important to higher education, its purchasing professionals, and NAEP. Once upon a time, when long-range planning was on the table, I heard that the purchasing function was not involved with long-range planning on campus. That responsibility had been assigned to those above our pay grade. Our role was to be able to react quickly and effectively to whatever the end-user needed. I didn’t buy the argument for not taking part in the planning process then, and I haven’t heard the sentiment expressed recently.

At the San Antonio meeting, Kelly Kozisek, Chief Procurement Officer at Oregon State University, was handed the gavel and became the new NAEP President. When I asked for her input and posed a question, she agreed to share her thoughts on the future role of purchasing in support of higher education and what Members will need from NAEP.
NAEP can continue to support our Members by offering accessible and affordable professional development on important topics through the institutes, academies, conferences, webinars, and new offerings. Through volunteer and professional development opportunities, the Association can facilitate networking and relationship building among its Members and strategic partners. The larger and more diverse the Membership, the greater the opportunity for relationship building, so it’s important that NAEP focus on maintaining and growing the Membership through the strategic objective of defining its value and delivering that message to target audiences. NAEP can also continue to develop relationships with strategic partners, as we have done with NACUBO and Spikes Cavell, to develop the spend analytics tool. The Innovators Forum is another example of strategic partners coming together to provide valuable tools for the Members. Just recently, Oregon State University received faculty governance approval to provide an undergraduate degree program in Supply Chain and Logistics. I can envision partnerships between universities that offer such programs and NAEP—coming together to provide opportunities for individuals interested in joining the procurement profession or advancing their careers, and thereby building the pool of talent that our profession needs now and in the future.

Markee: What are the key skill-sets a chief procurement officer will need to possess to prosper at a medium to large public or private institution, and what services should NAEP offer?

Chief procurement officers (CPO) must have a solid foundation in understanding and utilizing clear and inclusive communication, procurement processes, interpreting rules, technical writing, effective negotiation, and analysis. Beyond that, they must be able to develop and maintain strong relationships with their constituents, executive leaders, staff, and suppliers. Universities have richly diverse communities, so it’s important that CPOs have a high level of understanding of the culture at their university and know how to best engage and communicate effectively within that community.

Fulfilling the objectives supporting NAEP’s strategic goal of being “…recognized as the authority and provider of vital resources for innovative business solutions for its member institutions” is important in supporting higher educational procurement leaders to be successful. Increasing educational opportunities and thought-leadership assets, and expanding business solutions, are all objectives that support this goal.

Through the active pursuit of fulfilling the strategic plan and the strength of a robust and involved Membership, I’m confident that NAEP will continue to strongly support its Members toward success in their roles as higher educational procurement professionals.

Kelly Kozisek, CPPB, CPPO, is the Chief Procurement Officer at Oregon State University. Currently the Department Head for Procurement, Contracts and Materials Management, Kelly has almost 29 years of experience in higher education procurement. She served as the Chairperson for the NAEP 2016 Program Committee and has presented at the District VI and annual meetings. Kelly received her B.S. in Business Administration at Western Oregon University. She took office at NAEP President in May 2016. Email: kelly.kozisek@oregonstate.edu.
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Oops,
I Made a Mistake

by Bob Ashby, C.P.M., CPCM
University of Nevada, Las Vegas (retired)

History is replete with examples of those in authority missing opportunities to be on the leading edge of innovation. Since many in decision-making roles don’t always seem to be the sharpest knives in the drawer, that may not come as a surprise. It should likewise not be a surprise that this lack of foresight is not isolated to any particular industry or profession.

For instance, in 1943, Thomas Watson, Chairman of IBM said, “I think there is a world market for maybe five computers.” Not to be outdone, in 1972, Ken Olson, President, Chairman and Founder of Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC), in a talk to the World Future Society, said, “There is no reason for an individual to have a computer in his home.”

They were not alone. In 1876, Western Union, when approached about implementing the telephone into its business, replied, “This ‘telephone’ has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us.” Sir William Preece, Chief Engineer, British Post Office, shared this view in 1878 when he said, “The Americans may have need of the telephone but we do not. We have plenty of messenger boys.” Think of that smartphone in your pocket and be grateful that more forward-thinking people prevailed.

Other examples include Napoleon Bonaparte, in the 1800s, decrying the value of the steamboat; a Boeing engineer, after the 1933 maiden flight of the twin-engined, 10-passenger 247, saying a bigger plane would never be built; an aide-de-camp to Field Marshal Haig, after watching a 1918 demonstration of tank warfare, saying “iron coaches” could never replace the cavalry; and Dr. Dionysis Lardner in 1830 saying that...
“Rail travel at high speed is not possible because passengers, unable to breathe, would die of asphyxia.” Today we look back at such rejections and laugh, but are grateful that these stalwarts of creativity continued their quests.

These “Oops, I made a mistake” moments aren’t isolated to the above-mentioned industries. Lord Kelvin, President of the Royal Society, a Fellowship of the world’s most eminent scientists, said in 1883 that “x-rays will prove to be a hoax.” Equally hard to believe is that W.C. Heuper of the National Cancer Institute said in 1954, “If excessive smoking actually plays a role in the production of lung cancer, it seems to be a minor one.” Again, thank goodness others did not accept such short-sighted opinions.

Lest you think these misses were made only by second-tier, non-innovative types, think again! Even the brilliant Albert Einstein missed when in 1932 he said, “There is not the slightest indication that nuclear energy will ever be obtainable. It would mean the atom would have to be shattered at will.”

What do all of these “oops” moments have to do with us in the supply management? I, for one, had to work around, not with my boss at University of Nevada, Las Vegas to introduce purchasing cards, long-term contracts for goods and services, and other standard ways of doing business in our profession. Feedback from my various workshops indicates that many of you likewise have bosses who thwart your efforts at making it easier for your departments to get their jobs done.

What do I see as an upcoming hurdle we need to address before it is imposed on us? Many states have increased the minimum wage. In response to these legislative mandates, what is McDonalds doing to keep costs of business down so it can remain competitive? It’s testing automation of the counter where orders are placed. You, the user, if not now then soon, will give your order to a robot instead of a live body. Yes, they’re eliminating the minimally difficult jobs and keeping only those with higher skills.

Since that happens to be a fact of life in today’s environment, what would you do if your university decided to automate the minimally difficult functions of supply management? Would your qualifications cast you as one of the expendables? Or would your education and certification make you one of the keepers? Will you be on the leading edge and retain your job, or will you be the one saying, “Oops, I made a mistake?”

Contact me at ashbybob@embarqmail.com and let me help you avoid “Oops.”

Bob Ashby, C.P.M., CPCM, is retired from his position as Director of Purchasing and Contracts for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he also served as an Adjunct Professor in the Management Department. Bob has been active in NAEP since 1997. In 2006, he received NAEP’s Distinguished Service Award, and in 2008, he won the newly established Mentor of the Year Award. NAEP renamed the award in his honor to the Bob Ashby Mentor of the Year Award in 2009. Email: ashbybob@embarqmail.com.
Building a Fund of Sustainability Knowledge, One Book at a Time — Part Four

by Brian K. Yeoman

I introduced a series of book reviews in previous issues of the Journal. This is the fourth installment. Hopefully, they are informative and useful. Hopefully, you are learning and enjoying. Partake of them. If you are interested in purchasing any of the books, I’ve provided the ISBN number with each review. Remember: it’s all about the journey, not the destination.

The Limits to Growth
By Donella H. Meadows, Jorgen Randers, Dennis Meadows, and William Behrens III
Published October 31, 1972
ISBN 0-87663-165-0

Without doubt, this is one of the seminal books on sustainable development. This is a must-read for those of us beginning the study of climate change and its role in sustainable development. The book has had two major revisions since publication, the last being a 30-year reanalysis. I will only refer to those later editions in a glancing manner and suggest the original as the starting point. The book had a huge impact on the early thinking about sustainable development. Forty-plus years later the premise of the book remains intact and the criticisms against it remain largely unsubstantiated. There was considerable controversy—which remains today—about the book and its thesis. The criticism comes from those who feel that the book does not allow enough benefit to technological innovation and to the marvel that the free hand in marketplace development brings to bear.

The Limits to Growth was the result of an MIT study funded by the Club of Rome and led by Dennis Meadows. The premise was that one could model flows, sinks, and stocks to predict worldwide consumption for the year 2100, and thus outcomes. There are six main components of the model: population; industrial capital; non-renewable resources; industrial output; pollution; and agricultural production. As can be imagined, there is feedback between the components, resulting in delays and creating complexity and non-linear behavior between them. Because the model is one of systems dynamics, it wasn’t well understood in 1972, but the results were amazingly accurate.

The model suggests that extracting a resource becomes much more expensive as it grows scarcer, and the amount of energy involved climbs sharply. It further suggests that the quality of the remaining resources declines as the quantity of key resources also wanes. The authors conclude that industrial capital and non-renewable resources combine to create industrial output, which in turn creates persistent pollution. This then reduces food production, causing capital to be diverted from industrial production to agricultural, resulting in the decline of industrial output.

The authors developed 10 scenarios representing alternate paths and informed random assumptions about population growth and industrial output. The most common outcome, after thousands of runs of the model, is “overshoot and collapse,” with industrial output declining in the 2020s and population beginning to dwindle in the 2030s. This does not mean that collapse is inevitable. Why? We already have overshoot, with the human footprint far exceeding the earth’s resources, but we have not yet destroyed the planet and its systems.

This important and lost message is that growth does not inevitably lead to collapse. Rather, it depends on how humans organize the growth. The concept of sustainable development was to be defined later in 1972 in Stockholm for the very first time. It remains possible, even now in 2015, to have “overshoot and oscillation,” by which production and consumption can be re-stabilized within the carrying capacities of the planet’s ecosystems. The delicate trick is that the system needs to retain enough capacity to repair itself. In part, the authors conclude in later analysis the facts we now accept: There are substantial complexities that could not have been understood in 1972, and there are feedback mechanisms that we are still discovering. Fortunately this affords us a little more time to improve our response. In conclusion: “If the present growth trends in world population, industrialization, pollution, food production, and resource depletion continue unchanged, the limits to growth will be reached sometime within the next 100 years. This most probably will result in rather sudden and uncontrollable decline in both population and industrial capacity.” Further, “It is possible to alter these growth trends and to establish a condition of ecological and economic stability that is sustainable far into the future.” And finally, “If the world’s people decide to strive for this second outcome rather than the first, the sooner they begin working to attain it, the greater will be their chances of success.” In short, “the earth is finite.”

I met Donella and Dennis on two occasions in
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course), newspaper, t-shirts, shoes, a hamburger, an automobile, and similar products. The average person does not question where newspaper paper comes from, where the trees are located and the ecosystem services provided by those trees. She does not consider the logging roads built to carry the equipment to the trees to be harvested or to carry the logs to the mill. People do not consider the fuel it takes to run the chainsaws, the skidders, the loaders, or the trucks to haul the logs or the newspaper, nor do they think about the process to create a pulp to then turn that into paper not the massive use of chemicals and water in the process. People do not consider the constituents (the hydrocarbons) of the inks used in the paper, nor about the additional fossil fuels used to create the delivery bag, the fuel used to transport the paper from the presses to front doors, or how those constituents impact the paper recycling process. The sheer amount of energy and environmental impact behind the average newspaper is impressive, especially considering the fleeting amount of time each newspaper is used.

*Stuff* impressed upon me that we can rarely know the full impact of our actions on the global economy. The shoes I am wearing were likely made with hydrocarbons from the Middle East, leather from Texas that was tanned in Korea, and labor in the Philippines. These countries do not have regulations (regarding labor, the environment, etc.) as strict as those employed in the U.S., thus the social and environmental impacts might be disproportionately large compared to the economic impact (recall the three-legged stool of sustainability: economy, equity, and environment). Inexpensive shoes come at a high cost that is not always obvious to or even considered by the average consumer. The book’s purpose is not to convince the reader to do without things, but to equip individuals to make more informed choices about what they buy and how those things are used. The climate linkage is there loud and clear for readers to draw their own conclusions about the consequences of their spending decisions.

For many years when I spoke on the consequences of climate change, many people asked, “What can I do? I am just one small individual in a massive crowd. I don’t control much of anything. Why are you not talking to the big corporations? They can make a difference.” I understood the plight of the individual but also understood that a sand dune is built one grain of sand at a time, and it takes time to develop. So I adopted *Stuff* as my universal bait for meeting attendees. I give away copies for early attendance, class participation, quiz scores, and small-group role-playing.

This became a popular and successful tactic. You would be surprised at the effect this knowledge can have to cause people to take action. So try it! You might just like it. I guarantee you will have fun, and you will learn things you did not know. And perhaps you will figure out what great things you can do.

Brian K. Yeoman is Director of Sustainable Leadership at NAEP and is the retired Associate Vice President for Facilities Planning and Campus Development at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. Email: byeoman@c40.org.
“We require our client/user to write a committee summary for the RFP file. The summary must state 2-3 sentences on each proposing company, saying what was good and not as good with their proposal. This summary is appreciated by the vendors when they review the closed RFP file and gives them some ideas why they were not selected.”

A final rule of thumb to keep in mind: Communicate upfront, during, and after the process. Gear it towards your audience, covering the basics with new customers, providing refreshers and reminders for even the most experienced partners on your campus.

You set the tone for the competitive acquisition, and best demonstrate by your own actions how to professionally represent your institution to the vendor community. Whether you are new to leading an RFP process, or well experienced with the challenges it can bring, be aware that there are often minor irregularities and other situations that need you to use your judgment to determine what is fair and balanced, and serves the best interests of your institution.

“Overall, we have done several RFPs where the client had already made up their mind on who to award to prior to starting the process. During the process, we have said that we need to be open minded. Ask the client to consider interviews with the top responses. Just by following the process, we have had several awards to completely different vendors, and the clients have been thrilled.”

And always consult with your colleagues! As demonstrated by the good ideas they shared with us on this topic, NAEP Members are a great resource to turn to for any of your questions.

§200.319 Competition. Prohibition against geographical preference: This section may put many schools in a bind by requiring them to abandon state or local policies for regional selection of vendors. However, most states will yield to Federal policies taking preference over their own. At ISU, our bid systems post on the Internet, which is considered national advertising. So we can still send specific invitations to regional bidders (the intent of state law) knowing we are not prohibiting out of state bidders from participating (thereby complying with the UG).

The next few months will be interesting for all of us as the comment period ends and the micro-threshold is negotiated with OMB. For current news and workshops concerning the UG, visit the COGR (www.cogr.edu) and COFAR (www.cfo.gov/cofar) websites.

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cost analysis is to be conducted for “offers and contractors.”

Profit is figured into the sales price of manufactured goods, usually as a percentage over manufacturing/handling costs. Service providers, contractors, and consultants tend to calculate profit margins against labor costs with equipment or supply pricing fixed at their cost. I have not had any trouble with manufactures disclosing their profit in terms of a percentage. Many have an advertised floor below which they will not sell a product in order to maintain profitability. I can’t say for sure how I would handle service providers at this point, but once the requests start coming vendors, will likely provide a general profit statement in order to keep working on federal grants.

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Get Out of the Bunker!

by Ryan Holliday, J.D.
University of Tennessee

Procurement is a fast-paced, stressful field. Pulling back to find the time to look at the big picture is often difficult. If you’re anything like me, you have days (pretty frequently!) when you feel as though the only thing you accomplished was keeping up with an endless barrage of emails and phone calls. Combine that with PO deadlines, dealing with the bid process, and managing troublesome suppliers and you often feel like you don’t have time to do anything other than lock yourself in the procurement bunker and not leave until you’re 100 percent finished.

But that feeling is a trap. Don’t fall for it! I’ve learned you’re never going to be completely finished. You’ll never check off every item on your to-do list before you new ones appear. Your Outlook inbox won’t stay empty. Your phone won’t stop ringing. Some emergency will always come up at the last possible second. There’s always something you need to do right now and there always will be. If you’re waiting until your to-do list is complete, you’ll never get there.

Rather than fighting fires all day, set aside some time to pull back and discuss the big picture with the stakeholders at your institution. I’ve found that if you can get outside of the day-to-day concerns temporarily and have some thoughtful discussions about strategy, you’ll have a deeper understanding of what you’re working on every day. You’ll gain a much better idea of how you can improve your processes. So, take a deep breath, open the door, and step out of the procurement bunker. Get out and talk to the departments you support!

It’s easy to lose sight of our customers’ goals when we’re just trying to put out fires as they flare up. If I’ve got my head down when I see an email from a department business manager requesting an RFP, my instinct is to start pushing the paperwork through. But if I’m sitting in that manager’s office, chatting about the department’s goals and procurement needs over the long term, my instinct is different. We’ll have a completely altered conversation because we’re talking about strategy and how to get the department where it needs to go, rather than trying to patch together a solution to an emergency.

We can also discuss end goals instead of blindly launching into a process simply because the department thinks it’s required. Departments don’t want to bid if they don’t have to, and we don’t want to make them if they don’t need to. Maybe they don’t need an RFP. Maybe there’s a suitable supplier accessible through a cooperative. Perhaps there’s another department on campus that could provide the service. Or maybe, if we can pull back and look at their long-term goals, the department still needs an RFP but the solicitation will be for something completely different from what they first thought.

So get out of the bunker! You can’t stay out forever, of course. Bids and suppliers and emails and phone calls are still going to be part of your workday. But every once in a while, just get outside and talk. Your departments will be happier; you’ll feel better knowing the bigger picture; and you just might be able to head off a few emergencies.

Plus, I’ve heard it’s nice out there. There’s sunlight, and people who will talk to you about something other than policies and bids.
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