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Do you remember the tale of the tortoise and the hare? When it comes to technology, we’re all running the race as fast as we can. In the race for technology, however, it doesn’t matter whether you’re the tortoise or the hare — just keep moving and get across that finish line!

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Correction: In the Summer 2012 issue, the following information was excluded in error from the feature article “Sleeping Bear or Caffeinated Squirrel?” by Cory Harms: Contributors to this article were: Cathy Beckman, Purchasing Agent, Iowa State University Jodi Essex, Purchasing Agent, Iowa State University Kelly J. Olden, Facilities & Capital Procurement Mgr., James Madison University
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LETTER
FROM THE CEO

Racing Toward Technology

Doreen Murner
CEO, NAEP

Do you remember the tale of the tortoise and the hare? When it comes to technology, plenty of industries—healthcare, energy, and communications, for instance—run the race like hares, as fast as they possibly can. Others, like the tortoise, are slow. Sluggish, even. Because of the recent economic downturn, budget constraints and a general lack of resources, our departments may look more like the tortoise.

It’s ironic, because of all the places that technology sows its seeds, college campuses are among the most prolific. Consider data released last year by the Pew Internet Project, which confirms what everyone already knows: College students are more tech-savvy than the rest of us. According to Pew, undergraduates are more likely than the general adult population to use the Internet (98 percent versus 75 percent), have broadband access at home (93 percent versus 66 percent) and access the web via mobile devices (92 percent versus 57 percent). They’re also more likely to social networking sites (86 percent versus 60 percent) and to own a cellphone (96 percent versus 82 percent), laptop computer (88 percent versus 52 percent), and mp3 player (84 percent versus 45 percent).

Although students are technological sprinters, enabled by their experience of growing up with technology and universities making current technology readily available to them, we often might lag behind. Like the tortoise, however—who eventually won the race—there are signs that we are picking up the pace. Many NAEPers have implemented significant technological advances beginning with Pcard programs right up to sophisticated eprocurement systems and spend and contract management systems.

We are moving in the right direction, as evidenced in this technology-themed issue of the Educational Procurement Journal—which examines eprocurement (p. 10), universities’ iPad policies (p. 13) and epayables (p. 9), among other hot tech topics. New systems and software continually help procurement officers realize greater efficiencies, promote increased accountability, and save valuable time and money.

Because it’s enhancing your profession, NAEP feels strongly that technology also should enhance your Association. This year, therefore, we have already made several technological investments on Members’ behalf. At the Annual Meeting in April, for instance, we introduced QR codes and text messaging that delivered event information straight to your smartphone. In June, we launched a redesigned, redeployed, and reimagined website at NAEPnet.org.

Hosted on a completely new server infrastructure that promises improved stability and performance, the new website already is delivering an enriched Member experience through its Members-only portal, my.NAEPnet.org, which features an on-demand document library with downloadable RFPs, forms, manuals, and job descriptions; an on-demand library of webinars, research white papers, and benchmarks where junior and senior procurement professionals can access current metrics; and a board-specific forum, where the NAEP Board can collaborate virtually in service of NAEP Members.

The public-facing website has similarly been revamped with a new design and layout, a news section featuring Association and industry updates, and search engine optimization (SEO)—all of which will improve NAEP’s visibility and branding, allowing us to attract new Members and, in turn, develop new products and services to help you do your job.

Now 91 years old, NAEP is proof: In the race for technology, it doesn’t matter if you’re the tortoise or the hare—as long as you cross the finish line. Run, jog or walk, therefore, it’s time to start moving.

Doreen Murner
Making the Move to ePayables

by Cory Harms, M.S.
Iowa State University

If you have a procurement card (Pcard) program, have recently bid out or renewed your program, or have been to a conference where banks or card providers are around, then you may have been approached about looking into electronic payments, or ePayables. As card programs mature, many institutions naturally look to find more ways to utilize card programs to gain efficiencies, reduce the cost of processing payments, and increase rebates.

ePayables can take many forms—from simple ghost card arrangements all the way up to complete programs by which the bank receives, scans and processes invoices and then pays with card, automated clearing house (ACH), wire, or check. There are also many choices in between. The best model for any university depends on how easy it is to integrate, the accounts payable philosophy, and how financially viable the proposed solutions may be.

If you are considering any form of ePayments, a good starting point is to take time to review your invoice process and determine how you want to use an ePayment solution to improve the process or create efficiencies. Are there steps that can be eliminated or improved? Are there processes that you want to maintain? What does it cost you to process a payment of all types (check, ACH, wire, etc.)? Is your accounts payable staff supportive of the changes? These questions will help you determine the scope of what you want to accomplish. It may point you to a program where you use only cards for payments and retain your invoice approval process, or it may point to an overall solution, or to anywhere in between. The important step is determining your costs and processes and where an ePayment solution might fit in.

The next step might be a bid or negotiation process to find solutions that will fit the model you are seeking. It is a good practice to ask for all options, even if you are not considering a complete payment-process handled outside your university. It is helpful to understand the costs and potential advantages that are offered at each stage of the solution. This might help you justify keeping current processes or help you plan for future changes to any solution you implement. This process will include asking questions about system integration and data transmission, available methods of payment, payment screening processes, vendor enablement, system training, costs, and available rebates.

System integration is a key component on which to focus when considering a solution. You will need to understand what data you need to provide to the payment-vendor and what they are going to provide to you. You will also need to identify how data is sent in each direction and how often. This may also be important if you choose to use ghost cards in a payment-only option.

Another area to review is the types of payment methods (check, card, ACH, wire, etc.) that are available, the cost of each method and whether any screening of payees is performed. Most card-based payments have no transactional cost to the university and should create some rebate potential. Other methods will have minor costs but may create administrative savings and opportunities to receive early pay or convenience discounts from vendors. Screening can also be a benefit with some systems. The payment system may be able to perform checks of payees against federal lists to ensure that debarred, suspended or other federally restricted vendors are not paid without review.

Other aspects that may create value are the vendor enablement process that the payment provider uses and any system training that is provided to the institution. If the payment provider has a robust system, many vendors may already be a part of its network. A list of the existing network vendors is a good way to assess how quickly you can implement with your vendor base. It is also helpful to understand what the payment provider does to bring more of your vendors onboard and how those vendors interface with the payment system. It is important to understand the system training that the university will receive, who can attend and how it is conducted.

ePayment systems have much to offer and can be tailored to a variety of needs. The key to success lies in understanding your own processes and finding the vendor or system that best fits the model of your campus.

Cory Harms, M.S., is Associate Director of Purchasing at Iowa State University. He serves on the NAEP Board of Directors as First Vice President. He is a Past President of the MINK (Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska and Kansas) Region and serves on the NAEP Editorial Board. He has presented at both regional and national NAEP meetings and has spoken for the Missouri Association of Public Purchasing (MAPP). Email: charms@iastate.edu.
eProcurement: Is It Still Innovative?

by Ken Baushke, C.P.M.
Western Kentucky University

Back in the 1970s, some large manufacturing organizations were transmitting orders and receiving invoices to and from their suppliers through a process called Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). By the 1990s, as the worldwide web expanded exponentially, eProcurement firms came into existence, and they have seen steady growth ever since. Some of the largest universities, state governments, and Fortune 500 corporations recognized the potential benefits and adopted eProcurement fairly quickly. During the past 15 to 20 years, an ever-increasing number of colleges and universities are also recognizing the potential benefits and are implementing a variety of software-based processes to become more productive.

eProcurement is a term that broadly covers software productivity tools that benefit us procurement professionals, and ultimately the customers and organizations we serve. This article focuses on how eProcurement can provide great financial benefits to our organizations, and simultaneously simplify and enhance the process of requesting and ordering the products and services necessary for the day-to-day operations of our colleges and universities.

Our college and university purchasing departments can be more productive by increasing the financial benefits we bring to our organizations, while at the same time improving service to our internal and external customers. Our mission is to get the best possible long-term value for the products and services we acquire. These software systems are evolving in ways that help us accomplish that mission. Although pricing is only one element of our purpose for being, it is the most visible and recognizable by the people we support and serve. Better pricing can be achieved by directing more spend to fewer and better suppliers, but—paradoxically at the same time increasing the number and quality of suppliers we evaluate. Other financial benefits can come from increased rebates, early payment discounts, and improved communications with our suppliers. Additional potential benefits of these eProcurement systems include improved reporting, better accountability, ease of use for our internal customers, faster delivery of products, and more socially responsible purchasing. These systems can help us do a better job of attaining these goals, with the added benefit of better quality data that can easily and accurately measure our purchasing department’s performance.

Strategic sourcing could be defined as the process of directing the largest possible percentage of spend to the best suppliers, ultimately resulting in purchases with the best overall value. It can be accomplished by aggregating purchases within our own organization and/or working cooperatively with other colleges and universities, either through cooperatives, group purchasing organizations (GPOs), or systems made for collaborative efforts. Before those aggregated purchases can happen, we need to do a good job of sourcing. After, or at the time of those purchases, we need to be able to pay invoices on time and accurately.

Some companies provide systems that are designed to help us collaborate within our organization, as well as with other universities. A company named IonWave, for example, offers a demand-aggregation tool. It is used to poll departments on campus to find out who may be thinking of ordering a certain product. The aggregated quantity is combined in a bid to obtain a larger discount from potential bidders. This can also be used on a larger scale with a consortium of universities or with a state system. Other companies, such as SciQuest, Unimarket, and ESM Solutions have solicitation tools (sometimes called “RFx” or “Request For x” where “x” can mean “Proposal,” “Information,” etc.) to help groups of universities collaborate. Several groups of universities and government entities have implemented eProcurement in a manner that allows them to collaborate on bids and contracts and then use shared catalogs and punch-outs. The Inter-University Council of Ohio has seven member-universities that have implemented SciQuest eProcurement. The council has current plans to share 30 contract catalogs. Those shared catalogs will be hosted by Ohio University.

In New Hampshire, a group of five universities is implementing Unimarket eProcurement and eSourcing systems. These schools are using Ellucian SGHE (SunGuard Higher Education) Banner for their enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems. They are working with Unimarket to automate the vendor data entry and maintenance process. There will be a process for the vendor to enter its own address, contact, and W-9 information, as well as information about minority-owned or woman-owned status. The process will also include periodic automatic notification to vendors to check and update information so that it is kept current at all times. Unimarket also has expense-reporting capabilities with its system.

The electronic contract catalogs mentioned above increase spend to our best suppliers and reduce our supplier base. These eCatalogs are
one of the modules of Procure-to-Pay (P2P) systems. Some universities or other organizations may not have the resources to implement a full-blown P2P system, so they have taken a step in that direction by establishing the electronic catalogs. The catalogs have specific products and pricing in an easy-to-access system. It reduces maverick purchases and increases the number of transactions going to those best suppliers.

E&I Cooperative has a contract with ESM Solutions, a P2P company, so that members can access several E&I contracts without paying for and developing their own individual catalogs. They currently have about 16 contracts available in eProcurement-accessible catalogs. U.S. Communities, a GPO, launched an eCommerce site in August 2010 that currently has 12 contracts available online. Members do not need a P2P system to use this eCommerce site; they can shop with a procurement card in a manner similar to any other Web store and get the U.S. Communities contract prices. They are working with members who already have eProcurement systems to allow their eCommerce site to be used as a punch-out.

In addition to identifying potential suppliers, sourcing includes the competitive process that can be accomplished with reverse auctions, electronic RFx's and Invitations to Bid. Reverse auctions work well for large-dollar items (e.g., greater than $50,000) when active competition is prevalent. A recommended process would be to pre-qualify bidders prior to the auction event. An online Request-for-Information tool works well to do the pre-qualification. On-line RFx systems can be used to collaborate with end-users to create the solicitation document, post it online, and collaborate on the final selection-process. These online systems can post comparative data from different bidders in a spreadsheet. Bid Bridge, Procurex, and Zycus are examples of companies that compete in the sourcing software business. One supplier of these systems indicated that there could be up to a 61 percent labor savings in bid and RFx preparation time. These companies also help increase the pool of bidders—a very good thing.

In many cases, P2P systems provide us the capability to integrate a large proportion of our procurement card transactions, as well as many new opportunities for automated payment via procurement cards. Often, this has resulted in a significant increase in procurement card rebates. In some cases, this increased revenue or return on investment can pay for the eProcurement system. Additionally, since P2P automates the process of electronically receiving invoices directly into our payment systems, we are much better prepared to make on-time payments and take advantage of early payment discounts.

eProcurement systems can provide other benefits in addition to those discussed above. Making

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the process of procuring goods and services easier for our end-users, so they can devote more time to their academic or other responsibilities, is a goal we should all strive for. The electronic exchange of data also improves delivery time of the products we order; it provides better-quality data, making it easier for us to analyze where and how we spend our funds. Because the creators of these systems understand the importance of social responsibility, they have built in features to help advance sustainability.

Back in the 1970s, when manufacturers were using EDI, and some of us were paying $12 dollars per credit-hour for our paper-based educations, we could only imagine how productive computerized systems could make us.

The Information Technology world is always developing, changing and improving at a rapid pace. Some people compare it to the Wild West; it is exciting, adventurous and a little dangerous. Although many of these systems have been available for several years, none of them look or function like they did back then. eProcurement is innovative and it probably will remain that way for a long time.

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Awards for top recognition were granted to Airgas East, Inc.; Hill & Markes; Krackeler Scientific; Maines Paper and Food Service; Sedgwick Business Interiors; Staples Business Advantage; Verizon Wireless; VWR International; and W.W. Grainger. Suppliers receiving honorable mention were Casella Waste Management, Fisher Scientific Company, The Computing Center, and Vasco Brands, Inc.

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Since the various kinds, models, and capabilities of mobile technology seem to be changing daily, I was curious how those of us in higher-education procurement are handling it. I also wondered how we are keeping track of the equipment and the applications being used on them. When I refer to mobile technology here, I mean smartphones and tablet computers; I am not referring to regular cell phones, as they are dropping out of use.

Here at the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC), we allow our executives to have smartphones, since they have to be reachable at all times, even when they are traveling for business. Smartphones allow them to be reached by e-mail, and then they can respond in kind. Some IT personnel are issued smartphones so that they can be reached at any time while they are at work, because they may have to solve various IT-related problems.

We have started buying Apple iPads, but not everyone can get one. They, so far, have been limited to certain executives and employees on a case-by-case basis. iPads do not cost enough for us to track and account for them as assets, but our Help Desk is keeping track of each one purchased. They are definitely considered the property of LSAC because they are purchased with company funds. The Help Desk does not officially support iPads, although they will try to help solve any issues if they can.

I inquired to see what other NAEP institutions were doing about this. Most are tagging and keeping track of all equipment, especially tablet computers. The equipment is considered to be the property of the school, since it was paid for using school funds. If an employee leaves the school, either voluntarily or at the school’s request, he or she must return the equipment before he or she leaves.

In most cases, the equipment is funded from each department’s budget, and it is the department that makes the decision regarding who gets which kind of equipment. Most schools do not allow tablet computers to be purchased using a purchasing card; a requisition must be processed. This centralizes the purchases of tablet computers, facilitating the inventorying of the items. The smartphones and tablets are usually purchased through the purchasing department, but the IT departments track the tablets. There probably is not a lot of shopping for price in regard to iPads because Apple doesn’t allow much, if any, leeway in pricing.

Some schools pay for data and phone service for tablets, but some do not. Eastern Kentucky University does not provide cellular service for iPads. It seems that most schools that provide smartphones also pay for the phone and data service, but the employee must use only the service with which the school has contracted.

A big issue is the number of applications (or apps) that can be used on these devices. There are thousands of them and many have nothing to do with business. They can be easily downloaded, and it can be very hard, if not impossible, to keep track of all the apps being used by employees. At LSAC, we do not have a formal policy regarding apps, but the company will pay only for those that are business-related.

From my inquiries, I have discovered that schools handle the app issue differently. Some only allow the use of approved apps and software, while some, such as Wentworth Institute of Technology, won’t pay for any apps that don’t come with the phone. Central Community College in Nebraska requires employees to complete a requisition for the purchase of any apps. Once the codes for apps are received, the IT Department performs the actual installation.

At Austin Community College District, software and hosted applications are purchased through an online account. These are only authorized to be used on district-owned equipment under a district account. Applications or software

Continued on page 14
licenses downloaded to any personal devices are canceled, uninstalled, and terminated (along with the offending human 😊). DePaul University requires employees to purchase their own apps and then submit the receipts for reimbursement. Employees may use the purchasing card to buy apps only if the purchase is pre-approved by the Purchasing Department.

It seems that many schools still do not have a system to keep track of apps used on the school’s mobile devices. That is becoming a more important topic since the use of these devices is becoming more common. I think that our institutions will have to have their employees sign some sort of waiver to protect the school from any problems caused by non-approved or non-business-related apps. Viruses can be spread by someone going to the wrong website and then sending the same link to someone else at the college.

Obviously, this technology is something we all have to deal with in educational procurement. I think we would all be interested to learn about other methods being used to address this issue. Please feel free to let me know if you have any other ideas. In the meantime, try not to get caught playing Angry Birds, watching the baseball game on MLB.com, or watching a cat play the piano on YouTube. 😊

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Michael A. Chmielewski, C.P.M., is Purchasing Agent and Project Manager for the Law School Admission Council (LSAC) in Newtown, Pennsylvania, where he has worked in purchasing for 24 years. He received his B.S. in Accounting from Drexel University in 1994. Mike has been involved with NAEP for many years, serving as President of the DE/PA/WV Region and as an active Member of that region’s Host Committee. Currently, Mike is Co-Chair of the NAEP Editorial Board. Email: mchmielewski@lsac.org.

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Recycling at the University of Maryland

by William Guididas, C.P.M.
University of Maryland

The University of Maryland, College Park Campus, has had a recycling program for almost 40 years. What began as a student-led, grassroots effort has become a formal program managed by the University's Facilities Management Department. The students' efforts of collecting aluminum cans and office paper has evolved into a collection program that encompasses every building and activity on campus.

Our recycling services include collection stations in all buildings for paper, bottles, and cans. Wood, metal, concrete, and brush are collected at a drop-off center or by delivering dumpsters to jobsites. We also recycle carpets, mattresses, batteries, ballasts, ink cartridges, and electronics. Food waste and soiled paper products collected from the dining halls are composted. Through the Terrapin Trader, our surplus-items retail store, we are able to accomplish reuse by selling used furniture, computers and surplus equipment. Our diversion rate in 2011 was 64 percent, and we continue to look for innovative ways to keep materials from ending up in our landfills.

The University operates its own fleet of refuse trucks for emptying dumpsters, and roll-off trucks for pick up and delivery of open-top containers. All recyclable materials are delivered to off-campus recyclers for processing. While we used to sort and bale on site, we’ve found that there are enough recyclers for processing. While we used to sort recyclable materials are delivered to off-campus recyclers for processing. Our current processor is a large volume, single-stream (that is, the individual doesn’t have to do the sorting, the service does) Material Recovery Facility owned by Prince George’s County, where the College Park Campus is located.

We’re currently receiving revenue for these materials and enjoy the convenience of leaving the sorting and baling to the professionals. Our contract pricing is adjusted monthly and is based on the Official Board Markets (OBM) Yellow Sheet. The OBM is published after the first Saturday of the month and lists various paper commodity prices by geographic region. Specifically, we use the value of #6 news, southeast high side minus a processing fee. If the monthly index for #6 news goes up or down, our rebate per ton follows accordingly. Commercial recycling processors and many municipal recycling contracts use some form of index pricing, but the OBM is an industry standard. Our bid for processing was issued with the index set by us and the bidders named their processing fee, which is applied to the monthly OBM.

Construction and Demolition Debris
Construction and demolition debris (C&D) including wood and brush represented 3,500 tons in 2011. We collect wood, scrap metal, concrete, and brush at a convenience center that is available to all trades and departments on campus. For large-volume collection, we deliver dumpsters to jobsites on campus. Our disposal contract is bid-based on annual volume of each material type. There are enough processors in the area to stimulate competitive pricing. We are currently exploring the feasibility of chipping and composting wood-waste on site. Scrap metal is delivered to a local dealer who pays based on commodity price in effect. We usually net $0.05 per pound for metals.

Composting
Dining Services has led the charge in composting. Food scraps, soiled paper, and biodegradable trays are collected in stationary compactors and delivered to a compost facility via University roll-off trucks. Additionally, an on-site pulper and dehydrator system utilizes heat and pressure to reduce food scraps to a leafy substance that can be used to enrich soil.

Batteries
A recent addition to our program is battery recycling. We purchased one-gallon pails with lids and handles and had our sign shop create labels instructing people that all battery types except lead acid batteries can be placed in the bin. The bins have been distributed to more than 100 buildings on campus. Our recycling crew sorts the batteries by type, and our vendor picks up full drums. We have contracted with a local company to recycle them. They share a portion of the revenue generated when the batteries are sold to the smelter for final processing.

Mindful Moveout
“Mindful Moveout” is our slogan for recycling as students vacate campus. We collect refrigerators, electronics scrap, and carpets on pallets next to the many open-top dumpsters placed at the dorms during move-out. In 2012, we collected 18 tons of carpet, truckloads of electronics scrap, and dozens of refrigerators. Reusable items such as furniture, clothing, and televisions were also collected and were donated to local charities.

Used-mattress recycling is accomplished by providing a roll-off container to the Residential Facilities crews. Our processor delivers a 50-yard closed container for the materials. The overall cost is comparable to our tip fee (the charge by a processing facility for a given quantity of waste) at the local solid waste transfer station.
Ultimately, the mattresses are broken down into wood for mulch, metal scrap, and fluff, which is sold to horse farms as stall bedding.

University Projects and Programs

The University of Maryland has an excellent surplus materials marketing and distribution group called the Terrapin Trader. Last year, this group facilitated the reuse of 250 tons of surplus materials including computers, gym equipment, and furniture.

Feed the Turtle, a program named for our school mascot, is the recycling campaign for home football games. The tailgaters generate plenty of recyclables as they picnic and get in the school spirit. We purchased 130 sets of trash and recycling Clear Stream portable collection bins. The Clear Stream sets are distributed around the parking lots about five hours before kickoff. Our crew empties full bins and hands out recycling bags as needed. After the first quarter, we begin collection using pickup trucks and golf carts to gather and haul bagged recyclables to open-top roll off containers. The crews break down the Clear Stream frames and move them to box containers, and making sure that wherever there is a trash can, there is a recycling bin.

As we grow our programs, we focus on improving the collection infrastructure to make it as easy as possible to recycle. We’re looking for new items to recycle and ways to boost revenues from commodities that have value. Our goal is to minimize the volume of waste that we send to landfills and make the campus a greener place to live and work.

William Guididas, C.P.M., has been in the recycling industry for 10 years, as plant manager of a large-volume, municipal, single-stream processing plant and, most recently, as Recycling and Solid Waste Coordinator for the University of Maryland, College Park Campus. Prior to his recycling career, he was Purchasing Manager for Merck Pharmaceutical Corp. and Materials Manager for Reliant Energy. Email: wguidida@fm.umd.edu.
Become One Soon!

by Brian K. Yeoman
NAEP

It is finally happening. The first week of May 2012, I saw what I believe to be the first job advertisement that clearly embraces a concept first articulated in the following article, “An Open Letter from the Future,” authored by myself and John C. McKee. The article first appeared in the Summer 2000 issue of the NAEP Journal.

The concept hypothesized is as follows: The notion of procurement officially died last year, 2009. It was a failure. We chose to do things right and never considered doing the right things. We let the Newtonian physics model, as well as our focus on over-specialized management, conspire against what we knew was right from our studies of biophilia (an appreciation of the living world) and biomicro (the examination of Nature in pursuit of solving human problems). However, the first costs were always considered too high to overcome. Now, the pressure in the U.S. is to implement bioliving systems.

“We are a very fortunate group of new habitat leaders. We are absolutely committed to doing the right thing: to reduce our dependence on materials from deep within the earth’s crust, the most glaring example being fossil fuels. Secondly, we have to avoid the use of persistent man-made chemicals in all of our processes. This use is something we once did with impunity. Third, we have to begin to restore the biodiversity and the capacity of habitats in our communities. And finally, we have to be tremendously more efficient and fair in our use of resources—some say by a factor of ten.

This last point implies that we have to be much fairer in our utilization of every resource. This is critical to our survival, as there are now seven billion human beings on this planet. We in the U.S. have no special claim to a continuing disproportionate share of the resources of the world. People of color are in desperate need of being fully included in the dialog, and the new Hispanic President has done an excellent job of integrating African-Americans into her cabinet. Thanks must go to the women of the U.S. for forestalling the war over oil that was so near in 2008, when the previous administration refused to consider the ratification of the Kyoto Accord. We are all looking forward to the normalization of relations with the world as we lead the way to a more responsible and sustainable America.”

Just what did I see? I saw a job posting for a Sustainability and Sourcing Coordinator at Yale University. In the listing of key responsibilities: “Under the direction of the Director, Supply Chain and Sustainability prepare and execute formal and informal bid requests, RFPs and RFIs, track responses and follow up on all related communications.”

Tying compensation to sustainability performance is going to become routine, and procurement professionals will play a central role in the process.

Oh, no! Thinking, then realizing, it cannot be the first such dramatic job shift because there is (at Yale) a Director of Supply Chain and Sustainability. This was enough to make an old man cry out of pure joy. It is akin to a child coming of age. This is most encouraging and it fits well into my topic for the cycle, which will put forth the notion that there is an increasing demand in both the higher education environment and the private sector for two critical things. First, sustainability training is in great demand. The giant Hitachi Consulting’s Environmental Sustainability Solutions Practice. “Our Environmental Sustainability practice has already gained momentum and industry recognition.”

Hitachi now has a route into a wide range of clients, particularly in the public sector, where a lot of higher education is located. In a world fraught with huge economic risk because of climate change, water scarcity, poor labor conditions and other environmental and social threats, it is time for us in the procurement profession to seize the moment.

In the private sector, major companies are already linking pay to sustainability performance—to a company’s progress toward...
achieving environmental and social goals that improve long-term viability and create value. Tying compensation to sustainability performance is going to become routine, and procurement professionals will play a central role in the process.

One of the early and best performers is Intel, the computer chip maker. Intel sets sustainability goals, measures its progress, and publicly discloses its results. It is also tying pay to sustainability performance, even including the leadership. Since 2008, Intel has linked the compensation of the CEO and top executives to the company’s achievement of such sustainability goals as the energy efficiency of its products, reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and energy use, and improvements in environmental leadership reputation. Rank-and-file employee bonuses also are tied to these goals. According to Michael Jacobson, Intel’s director of corporate responsibility, the key is to invest every employee in sustainability by tying pay to performance.

America has an army of more than one million lawyers in practice, with an additional 45,000 graduates added to their ranks each year. By comparison, there are about 10,000 professionally trained ecologists in the United States. A growing but still small number of sustainability specialists are also graduating with green MBAs and degrees in industrial ecology and sustainable management.

Our priorities need to be realigned. We need to promote a balance between ecology graduates and lawyers. Indeed, David Bainbridge says, “I can envision a day where 30,000 ecologists and sustainability specialists will graduate each year—and only 100 lawyers. This sounds outrageous, I know, but unraveling the complexities of America’s many varied ecosystems and developing cradle-to-cradle industrial ecosystems that will be good for people and the environment could easily absorb this many greentech specialists and scientists.” Yes, it is change and yes, it may appear radical but as a very famous ecologist said a long time ago:

“The outstanding scientific discovery of the twentieth century is not television, or radio, but rather the complexity of the land organism. Only those who know the most about it can appreciate how little we know about it…. If the biota, in the course of eons, has built something we like but do not understand, then who but a fool would discard seemingly useless parts? To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering.” (Aldo Leopold in The Round River [1953] Oxford University Press.)

Isn’t this the sort of argument we made more than 10 years ago and is it not the case that the trend is apparent? Then what is holding you back? Become a sustainability expert now. Be on the leading edge. Make a contribution to your campus, community, and family that makes a difference, builds a legacy, and clearly adds value each and every day. Remember that you do can do great things!
That’s A Clown Question, Bro

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

From the end of summer to the end of fall, we are blessed with great sports moments. Three come to mind: the Olympics; the World Series; and the start of college and professional football.

The opening day of the 2012 Summer Olympics started with the invincible Michael Phelps—arguably the best swimmer of all time, the winner of six gold medals in the 2004 Olympics and eight more in the 2008 Olympics—not only losing his first race but coming in fourth. He lost the 400-meter individual medley to Ryan Lochte, a younger, hungrier racer who might become the new face of Olympic swimming. Michael learned what all professionals (whether in sports or in business) learn: There is always someone younger and hungrier looking to move up and take over.

More great sports moments will follow now that football season has started. The University of Alabama, last year’s NCAA champions, have to wonder if they are the Michael Phelps of college football, and if so, who is the Ryan Lochte that will be trying to dethrone them. Nick Saban, Alabama’s coach, can just look to other great coaches to remind his players that they have to keep improving to keep the new guy from knocking them off their throne.

One great former coach, Paul “Bear” Bryant, who led an earlier University of Alabama team to a national championship, said: “You’re still going to win with preparation and dedication and plain old desire. But if you don’t have desire, you won’t be dedicated enough to prepare properly.” He also said, “It’s not the will to win, but the will to prepare to win that makes the difference.”

Vince Lombardi, another great coach, who commanded an earlier Green Bay Packers team to a Super Bowl win, added, “The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will.”

Lou Holtz, who coached Notre Dame University to a national championship, echoed that when he offered, “If what you did yesterday seems big, you haven’t done anything today.” Then he summarized what many other successful coaches teach their players:

- It’s the person who has done nothing who is sure that nothing can be done;
- Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there;
- The best place to find a helping hand is at the end of your arm;
- Your attitude determines your altitude;
- They don’t pay off on effort, they pay off on results;
- We are judged by what we finish, not by what we start;
- If you want to be the leader of the pack, you have to stick your neck out in front of others; and
- Of all our human resources, the most precious is the desire to improve.

Other great sports moments this time of the year come from Major League baseball. One of the great sports stories of this year come from watching Bryce Harper of the Washington Nationals. Bryce is the Ryan Lochte of this year’s pro baseball season. Two years ago, he skipped his senior year of high school, obtained his G.E.D. so he could go directly to the College of Southern Nevada to play on its World Series-winning Junior College team. He then skipped the rest of college and was taken first in that year’s pro draft. Two years later, at the age of 19, he is starting for the Washington Nationals and was chosen to play in the 2012 All Star game.

Most 19-year-old kids have not matured sufficiently to see the future and figure out how to prepare for it. They are still trying to learn what those above referenced coaches were talking about. Re-read the above coaches’ comments and you will see that Bryce has proved that he has the necessary level of maturity. He first defined his goal: Play Major League baseball. He then found a way around the hurdles that would keep him from reaching that goal: He completed his high school education via the G.E.D. He then found a way to obtain the proper credentials: He signed with the most successful Junior College baseball program in the nation. That allowed him to obtain the additional knowledge he needed: He learned from the best coach in the area. He showed that he has the desire, the will to prepare, and the dedication necessary to bring it all together. It has been fun watching this.

After a recent game in Toronto, Canada, in which Bryce homered, a reporter, instead of asking him a baseball-related question, asked if he was going to celebrate by drinking a Canadian beer since the legal drinking age there was 19. Bryce answered, “That’s a clown question, bro.”

Bryce wants recognition that he has the desire, the will, the dedication, and the training to reach his goals. He does not want clown questions.

What does this have to do with our efforts to become better supply management professionals? As we look for a promotion, a better job,
or just to keep our job during these tough times, we must keep in mind it is results, not promises that count. It is action, not words. If you ask me why you are being left behind while the Ryan Lochtes and Bryce Harpers of supply management pass you by, I’ll tell you, “That’s a clown question, bro.”

But if you have the desire, determination and dedication to improve and push yourself to accomplish your goals, if you are serious about positioning yourself for the next career opportunity, if you are ready to pay the price to obtain your professional certification or college degree, I will point you in the right direction and help you get started. Make up your mind now to make this a goal—then dedicate yourself to accomplishing it.

Questions? Contact Bob Ashby, C.P.M., CPCM at ashbybob@embarqmail.com.

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.
Wrong Number

by Craig Passey, C.P.M.
Brigham Young University

When I began my purchasing career, sending a message was limited to three methods: written letters and memos, analog phones lines, and face-to-face conversations. Fewer methods meant fewer communication mistakes. As technology evolved, I sent a purchase order to the wrong vendor by mis-dialing a fax number. I looked for other methods when a student employee put a sign on our fax machine, which read: “This is how old people used to communicate with each other.” I don’t fax anymore, so I don’t accidentally select copy mode and begin printing out a truckload of unintended copies in a large, 10-digit-number quantity beginning with another state’s area code!

Our screw-ups have moved on to “replying to all” when we didn’t mean to. Or, when silencing our phone, we unintentionally leave it open to the caller. I never imagined today’s environment, with so many ways to embarrass oneself. Nevertheless, misdialing of similar phone numbers continues to be a source of anguish or amusement.

After waiting several years, I was finally able to secure a university phone number ending in 7000. I loved the pseudo-importance when asked if I had an extension and responding, “No. That’s direct to me.”

Big mistake! At least three times a week, some outside caller dials my number expecting to reach a university information operator. “Are you providing transportation to the election polls for the elderly?” I’m asked. “Where can I purchase a back issue of the journal on skunk research?”

(I actually knew the correct answer to that one!)

Years ago, my phone number was one number different from Patient Care Information for a large local hospital. “Has Mary McMurty had her baby yet?” the caller inquired. Swiveling around in my new chair, I looked around my office and replied nonchalantly, “I don’t see it here anywhere.”

In each case, my mind raced with insensitive, but personally amusing responses—too inappropriate to list here. Surely, by now, you are recalling your own experiences.

One additional anecdote to make a point for your consideration: When I first moved to Utah, I was startled out of a deep slumber by a late-night phone call, asking if we were still open and could they get a pick-up order for sweet and sour pork? I soon discovered that our number, with two-digits transposed, was the number of a local Chinese restaurant. Calls came so frequently, it was easier to memorize the menu and hours of operation (and quickly answer the question) than to explain the caller’s error.

After several years of reluctantly representing the café, I went there and ordered a meal. As I was leaving, the owner was manning the register. I announced, “You ought to give me this meal for free!” Looking puzzled, he said, “Why? Was there something wrong with the food?” “No,” I responded, “but I have been answering your phone for years.”

I explained the circumstances. Soberly, in a voice lacking any hint of empathy he inquired, “Do you have a teenage son named Carson?” “Yeah. Why?” Looking me straight in the eye, he said emphatically, “We’re even!”

It never occurred to me that when we receive someone else’s calls by mistake, they are receiving ours.

Well, time to conclude this article and call the hospital for my messages!

Craig Passey, C.P.M., has enjoyed a 30-year career in purchasing and travel for Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, and for the LDS Church in Salt Lake City. His writing and teaching include assignments in both international and domestic procurement. He has a B.S. in financial planning and counseling, with a minor in international relations from BYU. Email: craig_passey@byu.edu.
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