Procurement with a conscience

In This Issue:
A student’s perspective on how and why procurement is the profession that can change the world

Social Responsibility on campus – the Taco Bell Case Study

Lorelei Meeker, C.P.M.
Indiana University
2007 - 2008 NAEP Board President
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Letter from the CEO

What Better Way to Lead Than to Volunteer?
Doreen Munner, CEO, NAEP
Volunteerism is stronger in America than in any other country, and yet it is on the decline. As an NAEP member, you can make the difference in correcting the trend.

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**Tier I Foundation**
(co-located with District II Regional Meeting)
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Volunteerism in America teeters at over 56%, the largest of any single country. Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts, church leaders, Kiwanis, Rotary, garden clubs, volunteer fire departments... are all woven into the fabric of our American society. Imagine America or your own community without the support of volunteers. America is also the home of "associations", and they are complete, viable enterprises (some as large as well-known Fortune 500s) governed and led by volunteers. Those volunteer association leaders have built organizations that became the defining embodiment of the groups they support – they are the true leaders in their community and in society.

Perhaps I see the importance of volunteerism more clearly not only because it is my career but also because it is my passion. Volunteerism is important and it has accountability. Over 40 higher education associations are governed by volunteers that support, educate, mentor, and advocate not only for our respective members but ultimately for the customers of higher education... students and their parents. As an association member, you rely on volunteers to help with your professional development and job enhancement. If you're a parent with a college-bound 17-year-old, like me, you rely on volunteers to educate and mentor their members to provide the best and safest environment for your child. So volunteerism carries accountability – ultimately to society. The ultimate accountability is to society. It is not by chance that the American Society of Association Executives uses "Associations Advance America" as their tagline. The volunteer work of associations DO, in fact, advance America.

Elections sometimes go unchallenged or there is considerable arm-twisting to convince a candidate to run. Committee structures have been converted to co-chairs and terms shortened, and sometimes even that hasn't helped with productivity. The challenge is that the success or failure of any association depends entirely on the performance of the volunteers.

There are many individuals who still find time to volunteer – and for this we are indebted. There just aren't enough of them.

The reasons for this shift are all too common. Round after round of budget cuts and reallocations resulted in more and more work with less and less resources. Technology that was supposed to increase capacity and efficiency has instead created higher expectations and even more work. The pressure continues at home and in our personal lives. How could there possibly be any time left to volunteer? This issue is not specific to our association, but is a sign of the times.

I believe we are at a crossroad with an opportunity to develop a knowledge-based association that leverages the talents of volunteers more effectively. Staff-driven products and services can relieve volunteer pressures. Although the cost would be higher, the benefits to the members would be significant. The association holds true to the mission and vision, and the volunteers have a meaningful leadership role. NAEP advances America, and volunteer leaders guiding professional staff will advance NAEP.

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AM I AN AGENT...
or an Agent of Change?

by Cory Harms
Iowa State University

At the risk of belaboring the obvious, I think everyone reading this will agree that Procurement has migrated – or is still moving (in a few cases, at a snail’s pace) – from a transactional- and paper-intensive process to a cluster of electronic and strategic systems. As technology evolves, the pace of our work ramps up.

In some cases, Procurement is leading and managing this change, and in other cases, Procurement is being led and managed by outside forces. Outside forces… sounds dark and ominous. Maybe it is. Sometimes if we allow forces outside Procurement to lead that change, they may not care what happens to Procurement along the way.

So…

May I suggest that to be a change agent we need to know the direction of our campus and then transform our systems, Web sites, processes, and training to move ourselves in that direction. How can we come to know that sense of direction? One of the most obvious tools is a customer survey to gauge what is and is not important, as well as to learn what changes users would like to see or to understand what they may find lacking within Procurement.

Focus groups are also a great tool to get feedback. They also offer a forum to show users the things that are available in your systems that they may not know about. Focus groups can also provide an opportunity to ask about what enhancements or system developments users would like to see.

Another option is to flowchart processes with users to see how things move within and outside Procurement, and to flush out and illustrate what steps can facilitate efficiency or eliminate wasted effort.

Additionally, we can invite new employees from both inside and outside Procurement to analyze and even question why we do things the way we do. Many times we get so ingrained in our processes that we forget to question why we do them. New employees don’t have that filter activated yet and are great at defeating the “that’s-how-we’ve-always-done-it” syndrome.

It is important that Procurement manages change. It is even more important that we become an agent of change at our institutions. I have noticed in my own University that we are making the change from the police and enforcer roles to a more educational and facilitative role. This doesn’t mean that we don’t care about policies and procedures or the transactions themselves, but as we move to delegate authority through Procurement cards, contracts, and other methods, it is more important that we educate our campus in the correct way to procure goods with those tools. We are also concentrating more on facilitating the process versus controlling it.

The most important thing we can do is to keep Procurement out there as a value-rich function. To do that, we must keep in touch with what our campus wants, finding ways to meet our challenge of getting the best value for our users. We must manage risk and protect our campus, but we must also be responsive and efficient in the way we do things.

Cory Harms is the associate director of purchasing at Iowa State University. He is first vice 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).

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University Purchasers: An Instrumental Position to Change the World

by Ashleigh Talberth
Graduating Senior, Business Economics Major
University of California, Santa Barbara

As a student for a campus named by Kaplan's College Guide for being the "hottest for surf-and-ski," I -- as baffling as it may appear -- have chosen to spend the last four years of college focusing on campus Procurement practices. I have been particularly drawn to Procurement because I see it as a unique opportunity to push the marketplace towards environmental and social sustainability. Sustainability, defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising those of future generations, is an inspirational way to meet some of the daunting struggles of our time: the scale and magnitude of global climate change, the extinction and the loss of biodiversity, the local environmental degradation, and the human conflicts that stem from environmental causes and resource use.

Basic and essential goods such as refrigerators, office supplies, computers, inks, and lab fume hoods may not seem like the "sexiest" way to confront these seemingly overwhelming problems. However, the collective purchasing power of institutions, like universities, drives business markets and impacts the environment. The University of California alone operates with purchasing power as large as some countries, giving it the unique ability to shift markets towards goods and services that sustain, restore, and improve our planet, making this world a better place for generations to come.

As a graduating Business Economics major at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), I became interested in Procurement policies upon joining a student-facilitated and faculty-advised group studies project (actually, my interest arose during my sophomore year). Offered through a student initiative known as the Education for Sustainable Living Program (ESLP), the project examined the role Purchasing could play in sustainability efforts on campus. This particular group project originated as the vision of another student, Scott MacKenzie, who went on to graduate from UCSB and who currently works as a Sustainability Coordinator for the Purchasing and Business Services department on campus.

I began investigating the carpet Procurement policies of the University of California (UC), an institution that purchases over a hundred miles of new commercial carpets each year. My research attempted to compare and evaluate various carpet manufacturers as well as the environmental implications of carpet use, transportation, packaging, and disposal. To the credit of the great staff at UCSB, I was able to collaborate and work with the Director of Facilities on our campus and other administrators involved with purchasing carpet.

The response I received from carpet vendors was stunning, opening my eyes to the immense purchasing power of institutions. My phone line became bombarded with offers from carpet manufacturers eager to fly me across the country and take me "out on the town" to convince me of the environmentally sustainable elements of their carpets. My roommates laughed as the stacks of carpet samples began accumulating in our apartment, as these vendors tried to use me as an "in" to get to the Director of Facilities.

I ultimately put together a compelling policy brief that recommended UCSB to switch carpet suppliers and products. I projected a short-term cost savings of $51,000, the diversion of 85,000 lbs. of carpet from local landfills, and the conservation of 260-plus barrels of oil as a benefit of the change. As a result, UCSB eagerly switched carpet suppliers.

This experience showed me firsthand how the purchasing power of Procurement staff can drive markets, as well as influence the type of products businesses choose to offer. Through my later work with UC staff on a Sustainable Purchasing Policy, I have come to realize that suppliers will often bend over backwards to gain market share. This puts major institutions, like universities, in unusually powerful positions to greatly influence how goods and services are supplied.

After reaching an appropriate understanding, many UC administrators have expanded the criteria of their contracts and Requests For Proposals (RFPs) to include terms and conditions that achieve sustainability and Environmentally Preferred Purchasing (EPP). Student efforts have encouraged and supported UC administrators to include energy efficiency, green chemicals, recycled content, manufacturer take-back disposal, and e-waste recycling – along with price – into solicitations, allowing for fuller consideration of the total cost of ownership. There is also a great deal of cost savings opportunities to be realized.

I started my own "UC Sustainable Purchasing" ESLP course during my junior year in which I guided eight other UCSB students towards similar research projects. My students' tasks included working with the UC conference administrators to reduce the environmental implications of conferences. One important criterion required that conference guests stay at socially and environmentally responsible hotels. Perhaps one of my most rewarding experiences as
a student facilitator occurred when the UCSB bookstore director commented that she always tried to recycle and reduce her ecological footprint at home, but that it hadn't occurred to her that she could apply these principles to her workplace. The bookstore now displays informational signs directing students to "green" options.

As many Purchasing administrators are overworked with little time to research sustainable purchasing options, student involvement in ESLP is generally well-received. Who would turn down an eager student willing to voluntarily research ways that could save money and improve the environment? While giving presentations at the UC Office of the President, I was often approached by Purchasing directors from various campuses requesting this kind of help. While unfortunately not all university campuses have students knocking on their doors, there are easy ways to access this information. The State of California has developed an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing “Best Practices Manual” and database at www.green.ca.gov/EP/default.htm. UCSB is also constructing a Web site to cover Purchasing topics at http://geog.ucsb.edu/sustainability/purchasing/index.php.

We are standing at the threshold of an important portal in time, when choosing environmentally preferred options is not expensive. Rather, it is a unique opportunity to tip the market more and more towards neutrally affecting the environment. By increasing demand for sustainable products, Procurement officials at large institutions can secure reduced prices of these products, making them increasingly competitive as well as increasingly sustainable. I encourage you to join customers and Procurement officials across the country in this effort. As was notably suggested by the great Mahatma Gandhi, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." 

Ashleigh Talberth is a graduating Business Economics major at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She plans to pursue a career working to blur the lines between profitable business and preserving the natural environment.

e-Mail: aktalberth@umail.ucsb.edu.
Being Socially Responsible –
What Is Your Campus Doing?
What Are You Doing?

by Valerie Rhodes-Sorrelle, C.P.M., A.P.P.
Grand Valley State University

What is and isn’t fair will always be debated. But the answer to the question “How can a few voices be heard?” can be quite clear.

The Students Against Sweatshops (SAS) at Grand Valley State University (GVSU) didn’t know what kind of impact they would have in a national situation with a large corporation, but they wanted to try. They wanted to make their voices heard and make a difference in any way possible. They, along with supporting student organizations, saw an area where they felt a group of workers were not — in their opinion — being treated fairly in regard to wages... And here is where the story begins.

Taco Bell & Workers’ Rights: The problem and how was it solved.

An organization called the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) was instrumental in leading a national boycott in 2001 against Taco Bell. CIW’s goal is to modernize labor relations in Florida’s fields, improve wages and working conditions for its members, and eliminate what they consider modern-day slavery.

Taco Bell was targeted because it consists of several restaurant chains that use very large amounts of tomatoes daily. The chains include Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut, Long John Silver’s, and A&W Restaurants.

The CIW and other organizations with similar goals pushed to get large corporations that buy Florida tomatoes to take hard looks at the pay that farm workers were receiving, as well as to examine the working conditions. The CIW claimed that the workers were paid between $0.40 and $0.50 for every 32-pound bucket of tomatoes picked. After investigating, the CIW found that this pay rate was approximately 22 years old. The CIW also found that workers received no health insurance, no sick leave, no paid holidays, no vacation, and no pension.

The CIW requested Taco Bell to increase the picking rate. Believe it or not, the response was to increase the rate by just one penny, with the suggestion that this be passed on to the consumer. The CIW also asked Taco Bell to consider other labor rights such as overtime and organizing without fear of retaliation.

Because of the reasons discussed above, the GVSU chapter of the Students Against Sweatshops, along with chapters from other colleges and universities, called for the removal of the Taco Bell Restaurant chains from campus. Through protests and articles, GVSU ultimately got the administrators on their side. School executives agreed with the students regarding the need for fair wages and acceptable working conditions.

The outcome from all that happened was that students and other supporting organizations — not only on our campus, but across the country — made a difference by pulling together. Taco Bell remains and sales continue to be strong, but Taco Bell is paying more now for their tomatoes... which GVSU students and administrators hope will make a difference in the lives of those affected farm workers.

That’s just one good example of making the effort to be socially responsible!

What can we do as Purchasing professionals facing similar or related situations?

We need to be aware and have some knowledge of what we are purchasing. We should have some kind of idea from whom we are purchasing and where they are located. Two good resources are our departments and our suppliers. It will definitely make a difference in our decisions as we execute our responsibilities to obtain quality products at the best possible cost, quality, delivery, and terms.

When we hold departments and our suppliers accountable we, in turn, become more mindful, accountable, and socially responsible.
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As Procurement professionals, we are in positions that allow us to make important decisions for our institutions. Do we allow our personal values, whatever they are, to govern? Are our institutional values represented in our contracts? Should we be cognizant of all of the issues related to a particular purchase before our student newspapers point them out?

Some of us must wait for signals from executive administration before taking action on social issues within the Procurement decision-making process. Many of us are not able to make Procurement decisions outside of the "best
with a Conscience?

and lowest price” requirements of our institutions. But certainly there are actions we can take within our own spheres of influence. We are all able to educate ourselves about the issues. We are all able to propose options and alternatives with our peers. To paraphrase our colleague, John Riley at Arizona State University, “Just because it is not a topic on your campus now does not mean it will not be tomorrow.”

Personal Action

What Procurement decisions can be controlled within your immediate environment? Your own department’s purchases can be made with sensitivity to conservation, the environment, human rights, and opportunities for historically underused businesses.

If you have a Web site, you can include activities your office undertakes to recycle goods such as redistributing furniture or computers on your campus. You can ensure that your office buys only compact fluorescent bulbs for its lamps. You can work with your licensing department to see if any of your promotional goods suppliers rely on sweatshop-generated products. If you have a newsletter, you can spotlight a minority supplier.

You may also personally become involved in committee opportunities. Not only do you become exposed to problem/solution identification but you also increase your visibility as a proactive member of your campus. For example, NAEP has ad hoc committees for Sustainability as well as Supplier Diversity. If you do not wish to volunteer for a committee, you could ask for the resources and time off to attend a workshop or institute. You might attend sessions focusing on these topics at the NAEP Annual Meeting or ask that such a session be offered at your regional meeting.

Involving Others

More aggressive action can involve making contact with other units on campus. Perhaps your custodial service is willing to discuss using environmentally safe cleaning products or to establish a recycling program. Would your campus departments be willing to use recycled paper? One or two actions might lead to a cascading effect of other actions your community might embrace.

We live in a complex world. Not every decision we make will change another person’s life halfway around the globe or reduce the campus’s CO2 emissions. But are we prepared for the conversation? How will we respond when social and environmental issues are tied to our professional activities and decisions?

Lorelei Meeker is the university director of purchasing at Indiana University. Lorelei is the 2007-2008 president of the NAEP Board and has also served on the Editorial Board, the benchmarking committee, and as the Indiana chapter president during her 14 years in the Procurement industry.

Resources

There are many resources available to us to learn more about the myriad controversies on our campuses. The Chronicle of Higher Education, University Business, NAEP Journal, and NACUBO’s Business Officer are just a few publications that regularly cover topics discussed on our campuses. This year, NAEP is offering a Sustainability Institute as well as hosting a Supplier Diversity Conference. Other professional organizations offer sessions as well, although they may not be specifically directed to those in educational Procurement.

While I am not promoting any particular view on a topic in this article, I strongly believe that we do ourselves and our institutions a disservice if we do not educate ourselves about the issues. The links listed below are intended merely as starting points. My inclusion of a link is not an endorsement of the organization (except, of course, NAEP) or of the views and opinions expressed.
This past March the San Jose Convention Center was host to the largest gathering of higher education procurement professionals, thought leaders and supply side intelligence under one roof! NAEP members found the fuel they needed to ignite their own success on the exposition floor, and in general sessions, workshops and institutes.

And the votes are in...

"Another outstanding conference. Thanks for making it all about me."

"A very well run event across the board... and one that I will certainly attend again in the future."

"This is the one conference I look forward to each year. Worth every penny."

"Susan Taylor was inspiring and what a nice way to start the day."

"Stan Slap hit a home run with me."

"Sunday evening get together was awesome."

"Once again NAEP delivered the best sessions, networking opportunities and exhibit hall experience for everyone in higher ed procurement. I highly recommend this event."

"The exhibit hall was dynamic. I always discover new suppliers and new solutions."

But as they say, a picture is worth a thousand words...

Incoming Board 2007 – 2008 President Lorelei Meeker, C.P.M., Indiana University, with Immediate Past President William R. Hardiman, C.P.M., George Mason University, as he accepts his award for his dedication and hard work as 2006 – 2007 NAEP Board President.

Ray T. Jensen, C.P.M., Arizona State University, pictured here with NAEP Chief Executive Officer Doreen Murner and NAEP Board Senior Vice President Nancy S. Brooks, Iowa State University, as he accepts the prestigious Bert C. Ahrens award. This award recognizes a former or present member who has made outstanding contributions to NAEP and the Procurement profession over an extended period of time. This award is the highest form of recognition offered by our Association. Well done, Ray, and congratulations!

Stan Slap, closing keynote speaker, captivates the audience with his presentation "Bury My Heart at Conference Room B."
NAEP volunteers make it all possible—and these members from District IV helped move members through registration with a smile!

Golfers power up their carts and get ready to take on the Los Lagos Golf Course at the Gerald F. Evans Golf Classic.

Attendees peruse the amazing items on the silent auction table—all proceeds from that event go to the William E. Haas Scholarship Fund.

Keynote Speaker Susan L. Taylor, editorial director of Essence magazine, stops to chat with NAEP members Julia McIlroy University of Idaho and Craig Passey Brigham Young University.

Big ideas are partnered with compelling solutions as NAEP members connect with over 120 exhibitors in the exposition hall. Focusing on the unique needs of higher education, these companies were on hand to share supply-side intelligence, new products and services, and best practices during the two-day exhibit.

Mike Thueson of Brigham Young University in Idaho, one of 84 winners in our Completely Puzzling iPod Giveaway, poses for a photo in the joint NAEP / E&I booth after winning his iPod. These prizes were all provided by the exhibitors at the 2007 Annual Meeting. Now, winners—get ready to DOWNLOAD THOSE PODCASTS!!

NAEP Annual Meeting attendees enjoy good food, libations, and great conversation with their peers at the Welcome Reception.

...And, as our happy attendee here illustrates, a good time was had by all!
C.P.M. NEWS
Ready? Shift!

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

My local grocery store installed a self-checkout lane where I now scan, bag, and pay for my groceries, all without standing in a long line. A clerk is handy just in case the technologically challenged — for example, me — have problems working the system. Recently, upon checking out, I mentioned to the clerk that I was euphoric about not having to stand in line, rely on someone else to verify my discount credits, etc. To my surprise, she ventured that, as a result of the new technology, the store "downsized" two checkers... with more to follow. I looked at her and said, "Shift happens."

Recently, when my Norelco electric shaver needed repairs, I called the local shaver repair store and found that the minimum service charge was more than the cost of a new razor. They lamented that it was driving them out of business. I responded, "Shift happens."

Now ISM has announced that the C.P.M. (Certified Purchasing Manager) professional certification designation is being replaced by the CPSM (Certified Professional in Supply Management). They say that this is because, worldwide, the "tactical" emphasis on "Purchasing" is being transitioned to an emphasis on the "strategic" role of "Supply Management." In other words, the days of Purchasing professionals being mere order-takers have been replaced by Supply Chain Management in which Purchasing is an integral link. ISM is emphasizing that our role has been elevated and that we are expected not only to get "a seat at the table," but to contribute heavily when we get there. "Shift happens."

While formulating my thoughts on this topic, I saw an e-mail blast to our members from Ray Jenson, C.P.M., Associate VP of Business Services at Arizona State University (ASU) and NAEP Past President. He wrote about the American College and University Presidents Climate Change Commitment, how this issue was going to be discussed at the Sustainability Institute at ASU in late April, and how we needed to get on board on with this subject. No, he didn't say "Shift happens," but that is what he meant when he said we should adopt Wayne Gretzky's path to success by skating to where the puck is going to be, not where it is. Ray's comment that "this is an example of good strategic thinking" is equivalent to ISM's warning that the Supply Managers of tomorrow must adapt. Ray then asked many of the questions all of us must ask ourselves if we plan to stay on the leading edge of our profession, including:

"How do we get a seat at the table?"

"What can we do now proactively to address these leading-edge issues when the opportunity is upon us?" and

"Will we be counted among the leaders or will we be part of the pack that scrambles to catch up?"

Ray had it right with the Wayne Gretzky analogy. Skate to where the puck is going to be. Why? "Shift happens."

At the NAEP National Conference in San Jose, David Buck, C.P.M., Director of Purchasing Services, Idaho State University; Andee Alexander, C.P.M., Senior Buyer at Saddleback Valley Unified School District; and I led a lively discussion at our workshop. One man noted correctly that the CPSM will be the certification to have in the future. We agreed but noted that the certifications to have today — the ones most recognized by our profession — are the C.P.M. and the CPPO for those in public sector procurement. We also noted that, more and more, we need the certification just to get the promotion or a job interview. To get ahead today, we maintained that the C.P.M., CPPO, or similar recognized certification is still a necessity.

To stay ahead of the curve, should you abandon your goal of obtaining a C.P.M. or CPPO, and, instead, go after your CPSM in 2009? To borrow from the Gretzky analogy, I would say that puck isn't in play yet. There is still plenty of time to "score" in this game.

So...

Be on the leading edge. Obtain your professional certification now. Want more information on how to start, how to prepare, how to test? Write me at askybob@sbcglobal.net, David Buck at buckdavi@isu.edu, or Andee Alexander at Alexander@svusd.k12.ca.us.

Bob Ashby, C.P.M., CPCM, recently retired from his position as the Director of Purchasing and Contracts for the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV), where he also served as an adjunct professor in the Management Department. Bob has been active in NAEP for 9 years and in 2006 was given NAEP's Distinguished Service Award. eMail: askybob@sbcglobal.net
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House-Buying Primer
BE PREPARED!

by Brian Yeoman
NAEP

So, you are about to buy a new house. Maybe this is your first house, or your first house since green became something other than a cool color, and you are wondering what you should look for in a house intended to be as climate-neutral as possible. And by the way, I understand that cost is a consideration. Both purchase price and ongoing costs definitely matter.

If you evaluate potential houses based on construction quality rather than cost per square foot, you are much more likely to buy a house that is both more energy-efficient and less expensive to own. The house is likely to be a more comfortable place to live in and will probably prove to be a superior investment long term.

The three most important considerations may well be location, location, and location, but in this case we are talking about buying a house suited to its location in terms of the weather likely to be encountered. A house well-suited for Panama City, Florida, will not fare well in Durham, New Hampshire.

Find a “buildable” lot. In this case, I’m not concerned about local zoning, minimum lot size requirements, or a clear title. You need a lot that will allow the long axes of the house to be oriented along an east-west axis to minimize solar radiation heating in the southern summer and maximize heat gain in the northern winter.

The glazed-window-to-wall-area ratio, quality of the glazing, and provisions for shade all matter. You don’t want to live in a green house in Panama City or in a cave in Durham. Quality double-glazed windows and shading from trees, roof overhang, and awnings on windows facing south or west will all reduce heating and cooling costs.

Roof quality is very important. A huge variety of roofing materials is available, and none are ideal for all locations. Select a roof material and design that suit your geographic location. Much the same can be said for insulation. How much, what type, and how well installed all matter. The Department of Energy has booklets that will help you decide what approach is best for your house.

Obviously you should look for high-efficiency HVAC and hot water heating equipment. And just as important are the computerized controls that allow you to avoid unnecessary heating and cooling costs without sacrificing comfort. A tankless hot water system and well-sealed AC ducting (mastic and duct tape) are indications of quality construction. Efficiency in this area has a direct effect on the long-term cost of owning the house. Half the energy you buy will go for heating and cooling. However, appliances are major energy-users too, and like HVAC equipment, each one in your house should carry the EnergyStar® label.

Let your Realtor® know that energy-efficiency is a key consideration for you, a deal-breaker. If the one you have encountered can’t answer many of the questions suggested below, you might want to find one who can.

- Is the house EnergyStar-certified?
- Is the house certified by any green building program such as LEED for Homes or GBI (The Green Building Initiative NAHB)?
- Are the materials used throughout the house safe, e.g., non-off-gassing and contain no formaldehyde or phenol?
- Do the paints, varnishes, and stains contain low or no volatile organic compounds (VOCs)?
- Are the water fixtures low-flow?
- Are native plantings evident which require less watering?
- What are the floor coverings? Avoid carpet at all cost.
- If you can avoid the use of PVC in its entirety, do it.
- What is the AFUE rating of the furnace?
- What is the SEER rating of the air conditioner?
- Is every light fixture a fluorescent? (Either a CFL or T-5?)
- Is the roofing membrane one that has high emissivity and high reflectance?
- What is the recycled content of any steel or aluminum used in the structure?
- Is the wood Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified?
- What is the lightning protection?
- Are the windows low-e, double-paned, and possessed with a shading coefficient of .27 or lower?

The entire much more detailed article with sources of information is available on the NAEP Web site.

Be Prepared! NAEPC

Brian K. Yeoman,
Director of Education and Development at NAEP, is the retired Associate Vice President for Facilities Planning and Campus Development at the University Texas Health Science Center at Houston.

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Be Careful What You Wish For
Pcard Heaven?

by Victoria (Tory) R. Windley
University of Delaware, and
Martha (Marty) Newman, CPPB
University of Maryland-College Park

Do you remember the days when all the talk around the NAEP virtual water cooler was about how to get our folks to use their percards more, or at all? We invented all sorts of marketing campaigns, printed up indestructible Tyvek envelopes with our logos for the cards, included sales pitches in our mandatory training sessions. Well, you know how your mother told you to be careful what you wish for? Some of us are experiencing that now. Percards, for some people, have become a status symbol of sorts—who knew? Don't mess with their privileges—or is it rights?

Whoever could have imagined someone using their percard to pay the entrance fee to a 5K race at a conference?

Or how about the people who are so thrilled about having a card that they let everyone in their department use theirs—instead of getting individual cards? Does it matter that policy is very clear about this? Evidently not.

One of our favorites is the day a contractor showed up in Purchasing holding the credit card of a person in the Art Department who had given him the card with the directions to "go buy what you need for the project and just charge it to my percard."

A few years ago, we received an audit note asserting that some of our purchasing card monthly credit limits were excessive. During one of our first reviews, we had a $25,000-limit cardholder who never spent more than $7,500 in any given month for a period of two years. We got approval from his supervisor to reduce his limit to $10,000. The cardholder had a fit, insisting that he spent up to $25,000 each month (ok, so let's pretend that we can't see his monthly logs and statements) and that his supervisor would never approve of the reduction because he often commented, "It's a good thing you have a $25,000 limit because you spend that much every month."

The next month the cardholder quickly reached his $10,000 limit. He sent an e-mail, copying the world, stating that because of his reduced limit he was not able to pay an invoice that the State required to be paid within two days (let's also pretend that State law does not mandate Net 30 Day payment terms) and that the late payment would result in contract breach.

In following up, we found that he paid all transactions that had previously been paid on the purchasing cards of his two employees, which is how he reached the $10,000 limit.

So, we have new things to talk about in the percard world now, and instead of hoping for greater acceptance by our customers, we can spend some time talking about the good old days.

Marty Newman is the Assistant Director - Delegated Procurement at the University of Maryland College Park. Her responsibilities include managing the purchasing card program, small order program, and working with University units having delegated purchasing authority. She is an active member of NAEP, serving as the DC/MDD/VA Regional President in 2000, and currently serving on the Editorial Board and the Supplier Diversity Committee.

E-Mail: menewman@umd.edu

Victoria (Tory) R. Windley is the Director of Procurement Services at the University of Delaware. She is a regular contributor to NAEP’s Journal and Purchasing Link, is past faculty for NAEP’s Procurement Academy and past District II Board representative. Tory currently serves on the Board of E&I Cooperative.

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