

PRICING

FOR CONTRACT AND GOVERNMENT PROFESSIONALS

December 2022

Speed to Contract. Speed to Market.

by Tim Templeton

What do Government Contractors Need to Know Moving into 2023?

by Katherine Zablonksi and Kean Reilly

Demystifying Pricing for Small Business in 2023

by Holly DeHesa

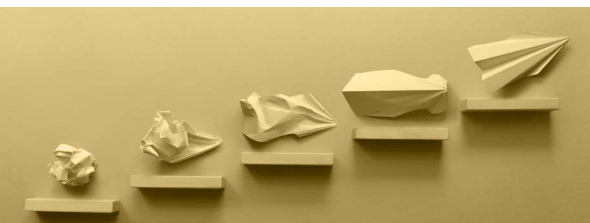
Six Steps to Create a Winning Negotiation Plan

by Shene Commodore



The
Look Ahead
Edition

Table of Contents



Feature Stories

20

**Speed to Contract.
Speed to Market.**

by Tim Templeton

36

**What do Government
Contractors Need to Know**

by Katherine Xablonski and Kean Reilly

12

**Demystifying Pricing for
Small Business in 2023**

by Holly DeHesa

26

**Six Steps to Create a
Winning Negotiation Plan**

by Shene Commodore

30

**Promoting a Culture
of Risk Taking**

by Kirk Donnan



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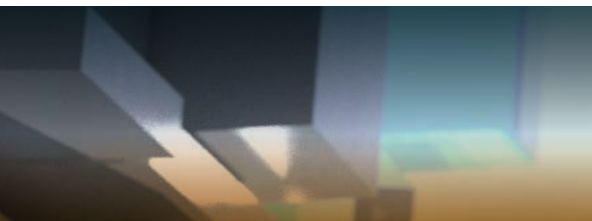
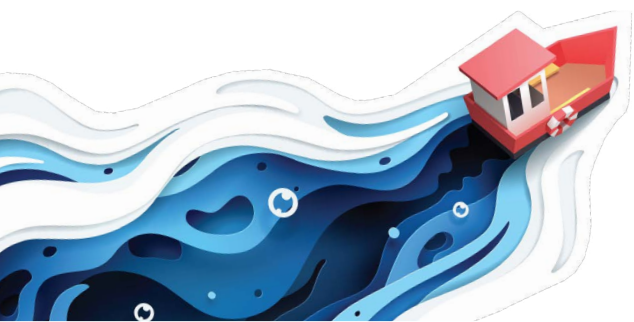


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Table of Contents



10

GovCon Speaks

Surveys and Polls from Around the Industry

42

The Art of Market Research

by Jeffery White

Updates from Around the Industry

14

Industry News

18

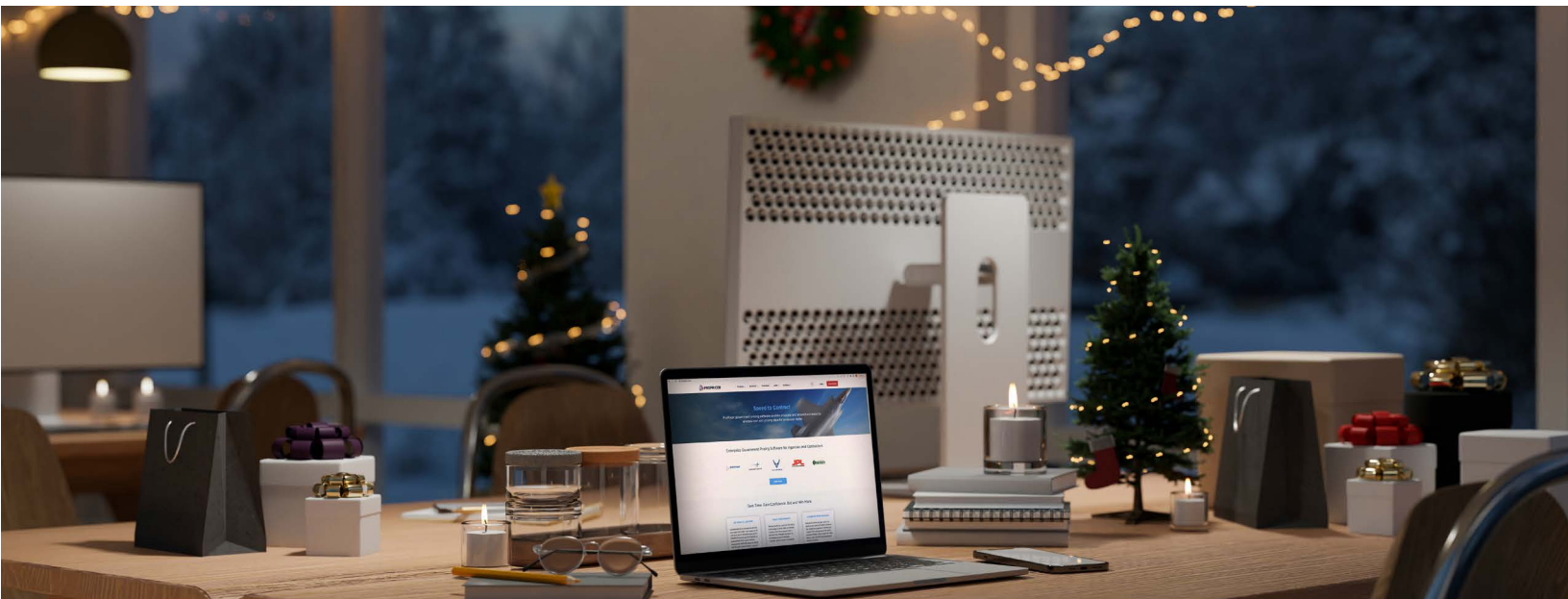
Industry Events




ProPricer Updates

35 ProPricer Partners

48 Final Words





Dear readers,

As we leave 2022 behind it is important to recognize the plethora of achievements and accomplishments, we have all worked towards and dedicated time to this year. The Pricing and Procurement Community is filled with hard-working, committed individuals all with the shared goal of making our Nation a better, safer, and more successful place.

Giving a look ahead to 2023, we have many upcoming innovations, ideas, and challenges to look forward to. Within our own company, we have made and plan to make positive improvements to serve our customers well and serve them even better than the previous year. With that said, we want to recognize and congratulate Holly DeHesa our VP of Marketing, for her promotion to our Customer Success Department. The needs within the industry of government pricing professionals are constantly evolving and ProPricer is always working towards being responsive and ahead of those needs in the best way possible.

This upcoming year is going to be the best yet, and ProPricer is so excited to share all that's to come with you, our valued customers. As always, we appreciate your continued support and dedication for our proposal pricing and cost analysis software. Thank you for being a part of this journey with us!

Sincerely,

Your ProPricer Team.

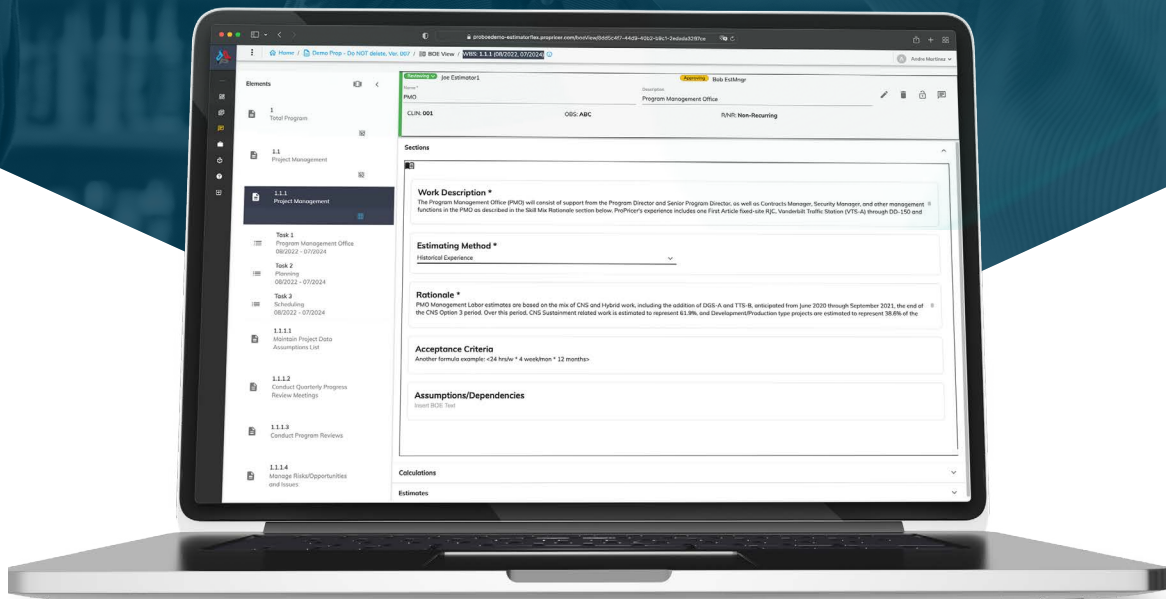
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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22ND, 2023
11 AM PT / 2 PM ET

CohnReznick

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26TH, 2023
11 AM PT / 2 PM ET

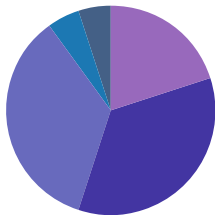
*Interested in contributing to
our webinar series?*



Pricing Development and Leadership Survey

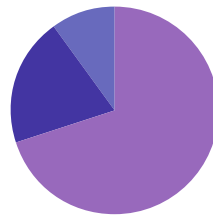


What is a top priority for you/and or your team in 2023?



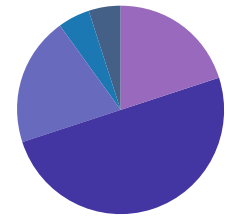
- 20%** Create Better Relationships with our Customers
- 35%** Increase Win Percentage
- 35%** Improve Pricing Strategies
- 5%** Better Understand Commercial and Market Based Pricing
- 5%** Other

Has your company felt the impact of supply chain issues?



- 70%** Yes
- 20%** No
- 10%** Not sure

How likely are you to commit to continuing education functions in 2023?



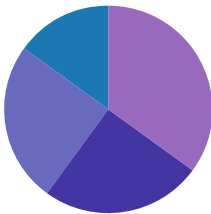
- 20%** Very likely
- 50%** Likely
- 20%** Neither
- 5%** Very unlikely
- 5%** Not sure

“Always deliver more than expected.”

LARRY PAGE,
Co-Founder of Google



Select your career level



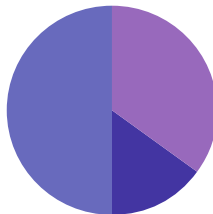
35 % Associate / Non-Management

25 % Manager / Lead

25 % Director

15 % C-Suite

Does your company have any A.I. initiatives or goals in 2023?

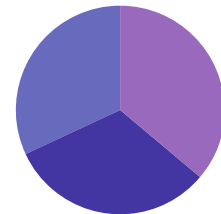


35 % Yes

15 % No

50 % Not sure

Do you plan to attend in-person events in 2023?



40 % Yes, can't wait!

35 % Hybrid, I plan to attend both in-person and virtual events

35 % Virtual Events Only

Demystifying Pricing for Small Business in 2023

by Holly DeHesa



Have you ever wondered, "why should small businesses want to do business with DoD?" If so, here is a breakdown of resources and clarifying tips on how (and why) small businesses can break into DoD contracts in 2023.

Being small doesn't prevent American businesses from having a major effect on warfighter readiness. In fact, according to Janice Muskopf, Director, Price, Cost, and Finance for the office of Defense Pricing and Contracting (DPC), within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), 'small businesses are essential to our national and economic security.'

Small business owners are often overwhelmed by the challenges of running a business. From finding funding to managing employees, it can be difficult to catch a break. Fortunately, there are plenty of practical reasons small businesses should consider doing business with the government, specifically the DoD.

- 1. The dollars:** In 2021, over \$80 billion dollars were awarded to small businesses. Those dollars do not even include the opportunities at the subcontract level.
- 2. Procurement:** Small business set-asides.
- 3. Cashflow advantages:** The government is bound to the Cashflow Payment Act. That means the government must pay within thirty days of the invoice.

Additionally, many government agencies are working towards providing resources that make things easier for small businesses to engage with government opportunities from a structure, engagement, and policy perspective.

1. Initiatives like the Small Business Innovation Research, or SBIR, and Small Business Technology Transfer, or STTR, programs — are both considered important vehicles for the military to bring in new vendors and disruptive technologies.
2. DoD established the Procurement Technical Assistance Program (PTAP), administered by the Defense Logistics Agency for the specific purpose of helping small businesses learn about doing business with DoD.
3. Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) provide aspiring entrepreneurs and one-on-one training in business plan development, finance, and marketing.
4. The Small Business Administration's Procurement Center Representatives (PCRs) help small businesses obtain federal contracts. They review to ensure that small businesses get their fair share of contracting opportunities.
5. Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA) can be used

as a resource to review companies accounting systems and help walk companies through specific forms and processes they must follow to ensure government compliance.

These initiatives come after many government officials have noticed some alarming trends over the past decade. Even with these opportunities within the government space, the number of small-business suppliers in the federal marketplace — specifically in the defense marketplace — has declined. If this decline continues at the current pace, the nation is at risk of losing key domestic capabilities.

To help support and curb this trend, the DoD is streamlining entry points in the defense marketplace for small businesses by making www.business.defense.gov a single-entry point for small businesses that want to learn how to do business with DOD and which small-business programs are available. In addition, the DoD's Office of Small Business Programs continues to guide efforts to attract more non-traditional companies, new entrants, and innovators.

DOD is also helping companies become ready to do business with the department by increasing the connectivity between Procurement Technical Assistance Centers. This supports companies pursuing and performing on DOD contracts with the acquisition workforce and provides cybersecurity resources to small businesses through Project Spectrum.

Efforts such as the Defense Innovation Unit are using flexible, commercial-style contracts to do business with the commercial marketplace to promote higher engagement with innovative commercial firms. There are companies in the commercial marketplace that have never done business with the DOD, yet these companies have the advanced technologies and capabilities needed to support missions in areas like additive manufacturing, robotics, and artificial intelligence.

There is more work to be done in the look ahead to strengthen and ensure a vibrant small-business industrial base. Opportunities for small businesses require the DOD to work closely with the private sector to enhance explorative innovation.

Small businesses do more with more, and their innovations, agility, and diversity are pivotal to DOD and national security. Moreover, small businesses remain vital for the nation to address today's myriad global challenges faced today.

Industry News

THE LOOK AHEAD: GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN TRENDS IN 2023

Since the global pandemic, shipping companies and ports have endured massive disruptions within the supply chain ecosystem. Then, layered into the mix are issues that have arisen from the Great Resignation that followed the pandemic, like rising wages, labor shortages, depleted inventory levels, logistics provider capacity issues, and inflation. So, how will all this affect the supply chain in 2023?

Although governments have attempted to assist the shipping industry by cracking down on shipping rules, they've instead been met with resistance. However, a report released in September from research and data firm IHS addressed the possibility of government intervention in the future, citing rising geopolitical events and staggering inflation.

The report states, "Supply chain is one of several converging global disruptions currently, which include the energy transition, geopolitical confrontation, and the resulting rising inflation and costs of living." One of the ways governments are starting to respond to the challenges this dynamic presents is to look more closely at supply chains and supply chain resilience from a national security perspective. This could mean more trade and sourcing mandates, even as the pandemic continues to fade. Other possible disruptors affecting the supply chain include:

- Russia—Ukraine War
- Extreme global weather
- Recession fears
- International politics

It will be essential that sourcing and distribution channels are diversified to assist in alleviating supply-chain stress. Moreover, higher interest rates alongside a seemingly imminent recession may also disrupt the supply/demand equilibrium, potentially causing a long-term recovery with fewer market players.

In their November Analysis: From War to Weather, Bloomberg Law supported this analysis saying, "Next year will continue to see supply-chain disruptions, albeit from different causes than in 2020 and 2021. The 2023 disruptions could be more subtle and geographically dispersed than the collapse brought on by Covid-19, but the key will be to build flexibility into supply-chain structures. Buyers will want the flexibility to modulate quantity in response to demand changes, and sellers will require price protection in the face of rising costs. Challenges will abound."

However, there is also good news for



the outlook of 2023. According to a report from Sea-Intelligence, a supply chain research and analysis firm, there has been an improvement in the schedule reliability of the shipping industry, and the pace of recovery is also improving. They report that 50 percent of congestion from last year has been resolved and they estimate a complete return to normal in March 2023. The labor market is not expected to see improvement as workers seek pay increases to keep up with inflation. As it stands, it appears we will continue to see more supply chain disruptors throughout 2023, but there are some causes for optimism.

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90799235/6-trends-global-supply-chain-2023>

https://cdn.ihsmarket.com/www/prot/pdf/0922/646180941_0822_SK_ECR_Supply-Chain-Annual-Survey_Report_SPGI_U3_LORES.pdf

<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/bloomberg-law-analysis/analysis-from-war-to-weather-2023s-top-supply-chain-disruptors>

THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION SET TO LAUNCH “ENERGY STAR FOR CYBER” INITIATIVE

Beginning in 2023, The Biden administration plans to institute a cybersecurity labeling program for consumer Internet of Things (IoT) devices, to protect Americans from “significant national security risks.” The White House described this program as “Energy Star for cyber,” and said it will help Americans to recognize whether their devices meet basic FTC (Federal Trade Commission) and NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology).

Energy Star, the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy’s labeling program to promote

energy efficiency serves as the inspiration for the new program. The White House plans to roll out its IoT labeling program to the “highest-risk” devices starting next year, according to a senior Biden administration official.

Last year in the U.K., parliament introduced an IoT security bill that required device manufacturers, importers, and distributors to meet specific cybersecurity standards. The U.S. is following suit to strengthen weak security postures and mitigate the opportunity for hackers to target IoT devices and get into a victim’s network, allowing them to launch cyberattacks or plant malware from the inside.

Educating the American public about security risks will be an essential cybersecurity initiative in 2023 as more and more Americans stock their homes with devices like routers and smart speakers, internet-connected door locks, and security cameras. The program will utilize labels, which will


be "globally recognized" and debut on devices such as routers and home cameras. In addition, labels would take the form of a "barcode" that users can scan using their smartphone rather than a static paper label. The scanned barcode will link to information based on standards, such as software updating policies, data encryption, and vulnerability remediation according to the administration.

<https://techcrunch.com/2022/10/19/us-cyber-label-routers-smart-speakers/>

SPACE FORCE PARTNERS WITH JOHNS HOPKINS FOR FIRST EVER GRADUATE SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Deputy Chief of Space Operations for Human Capital, Katharine Kelley, said in a November news release that developing superior space capabilities requires Guardians—Space Force personnel—to think strategically and act and fight with a deep understanding of the space ecosystem. Instead of creating a new war college, Space Force announced Johns Hopkins University as its first graduate and postgraduate military program for cadets. Historically, military branches have offered college courses for senior military officers and Department of Defense civilians at service-run schools like the U.S. Naval War College, West Point, and Annapolis Naval Academy.

Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, D.C., will offer a master's degree program in International Public Policy in 2023 at their new campus for appointed officers, civilians, and other military members. Head of Space Training and Readiness Command, Maj. Gen. Shawn Bratton said in a news release that Guardians would have opportunities to access electives in science, math, technology, expanded laboratory research, and chances to work with the commercial space sector.



To become a Guardian, selected cadets first attend and complete course curriculum at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado. Cadets are then commissioned as Air Force or Space Force officers upon graduation. In 2021, USAFA sent 115 graduates to the Space Force, while the Class of 2022 commissioned roughly 10 percent, or 96 Guardians, into the Space Force.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2022/11/07/space-force-chooses-private-university-its-first-war-college.html>

BEYOND 2023: SPACE FORCE SEEKS BUDGET BOOST TO COMBAT CHINA'S COUNTER-SPACE WEAPONS

In October, Tim Ryan, Senior Fellow for Spacepower Studies at the Mitchell Institute, said "The comparative military advantage the United States held against China has deteriorated significantly both quantitatively and qualitatively over the last 30 years... they intend to use space the way they have watched us use it for decades, in addition to building a whole suite of counter-space weapons to deny us."

To combat China's rapid advances in its space program, U.S. Vice Chief of Space Operations, Gen. David "DT" Thompson, said the Biden

administration understands the Space Force's need for more resources to build a resilient space system to meet the U.S. military's demand for satellite-based communications and other data.

"Our national leadership understands ... that we need to get after all these missions, the pivot that we have to do to more resilient architectures, and the missions that we didn't do a decade ago, that we now need to do to defend and protect our interests," said Gen. Thompson at a Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies event in Arlington, Virginia, in October.

Thompson stressed the incredible pace at which China's military can leverage its growing network of satellites while attempting to disrupt U.S. satellite communications using sophisticated

technological weapons. He added that China's growing capabilities have allowed them to deploy 260 imaging satellites and roughly 50 navigation satellites in five years. A threat and challenge that he argued U.S. forces must be trained and prepared for.

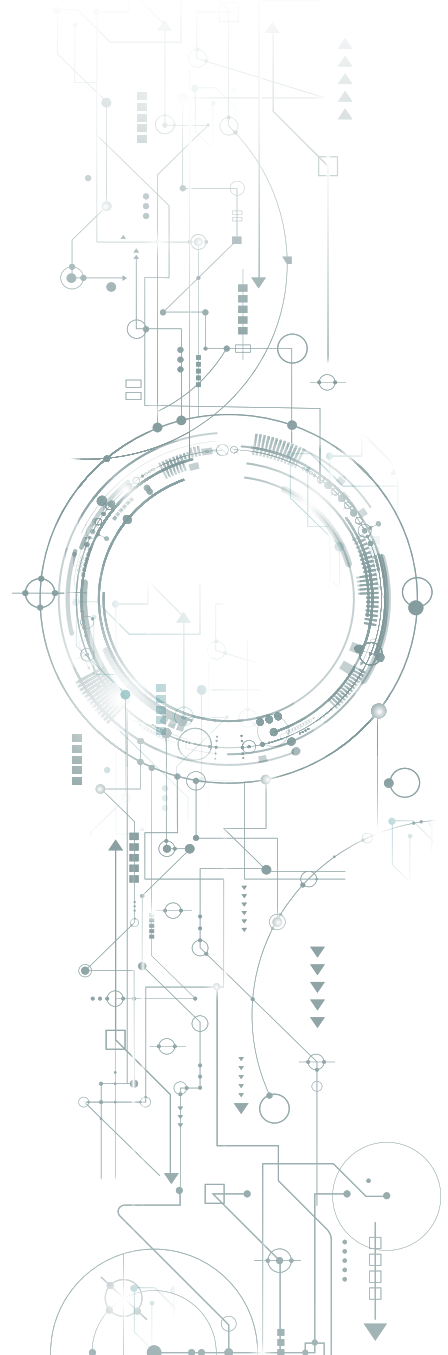
A Mitchell Institute report warns "Warfighting in the space domain will determine the outcome of future conflicts. The reason is simple: success in war will go to the side that possesses superior battlespace knowledge, makes better decisions, directs forces more effectively, and closes kill chains faster. Technologies in orbit are pivotal in securing this advantage, especially when it comes to sensors and connectivity.

President Biden's fiscal year 2023 record-breaking \$773 billion budget request for the Defense Department included \$24.5 billion for the U.S. Space Force and the Space Development Agency. This is a significant increase from the \$18.05 billion for the Space Force and \$1.5 billion for the Space Development Agency that Congress appropriated in 2022. The proposed 2023 Space Force budget also included \$1 billion transferred from the Air Force to the Space Force's military personnel account. However, analysts warned earlier this year that military space growth might not be sustainable due to rising inflation and current economic conditions.

<https://spacenews.com/space-force-to-look-for-budget-boost-beyond-2023-chinas-capabilities-are-close-to-ours/>

<https://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/articles/2021/11/22/china-space-tech-rapidly-catching-up-with-us>

https://mitchellaerospacepower.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Space_Role_JADC2_Policy_Paper_39-Print.pdf



Industry Events

- ▶ Cactusforce
- ▶ IDGA Homeland Security Week
- ▶ Esri Federal GIS Conference
- ▶ SANS San Diego
- ▶ SCCE's Aerospace, Defense & Government Contracting Compliance & Ethics Conference
- ▶ WiCyS Conference
- ▶ Baker Tilly's Fraud Summit 2023
- ▶ Space Symposium
- ▶ GHX Summit
- ▶ Deltek ProjectCon
- ▶ Government Contract Pricing Summit
- ▶ NCMA World Congress
- ▶ National Homeland Security Conference
- ▶ GMIS Meets Conference
- ▶ Air, Space, and Cyber Conference
- ▶ Dreamforce
- ▶ FutureCon CyberSecurity Conference
- ▶ Pricing & Contracting Fall Training Series
- ▶ FutureCon CyberSecurity Conference

Jan 19, 2023	In Person / Virtual
Jan 24, 2023	In Person
Feb 7, 2023	In Person
Feb 13, 2023	In Person / Virtual
Feb 21, 2023	Virtual
Mar 16, 2023	In Person
Mar 28, 2023	Virtual
Apr 17, 2023	In Person / Virtual
May 9, 2023	In Person
Jun 7, 2023	In Person / Virtual
Jun 20, 2023	In Person / Virtual
Jul 23, 2023	In Person / Virtual
Jul 24, 2023	In Person
Aug 20, 2023	In Person
Sep 11, 2023	In Person / Virtual
Sep 12, 2023	In Person / Virtual
Oct 18, 2023	In Person / Virtual
Nov 2, 2023	Virtual
Dec 6, 2023	In Person / Virtual



SPEED
to Contract.
SPEED
to Market.

by Tim Templeton, ProPricer Chairman

KNOW THE THREAT
TO OUR NATIONAL
SECURITY AND WHAT
IT TAKES TO IMPLEMENT
SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS
IN CONTRACT EFFICIENCIES.

During her keynote address at the 2022 Government Contract Pricing (GCP) Summit, Joy White, Executive Director for Space Systems Command, stated, “Our US military is the strongest, best trained, and most equipped in the world for the heavily contested space domain. Space Systems Command leads a team of roughly 10,000 US space force members, guardians, airmen, and civilians who are on duty 24-7 and laser-focused on providing joint warfighters with the capabilities required to protect this nation and its allied partners from adversaries like China and Russia—who control an entire spectrum of very real threats to our space infrastructure.”

THE IMMINENT 2027 THREAT

Major General Cameron Holt (retired), also a keynote speaker at the 2022 GCP Summit, and Ms. White both stated that the consensus of US military leadership is that a threat to US national security is imminent and will likely happen by 2027. While neither specified an exact threat, both detailed potential areas of significant concern.

Ms. White stated that one set of threat-based space infrastructure assets is the four US satellites in geosynchronous orbit 22,000 miles above the earth. These satellites give the US enormous advantages over its adversaries regarding intel and communication ability in peace and wartime. Ms. White’s visual presentation stated that between 2019 and 2021, China and Russia’s combined operational space fleets grew by approximately 70%. She further elaborated that both governments are aggressively pursuing space as their next frontier, with a desire to win through space counter-warfare capabilities, including sophisticated anti-satellite weapons that can put our assets at risk.

THE SILENT WAR AND DETERRENTS TO WAR

In addition to keynoting at the 2022 GPC Summit, General Holt was the lead guest on the **Speed to Contract Podcast**, where he spoke from his 32 years of military experience on the topics of acquisition, working with vendors, and competition involving the DoD and Congress, as well as what he has dubbed The Silent War with China.

“Where it all starts, for me, is the threat. Is the US still a great nation? There’s been a lot of doubt about that created internally in our own country and, frankly, by the Chinese Communist Party. The Party continuously inserts doubting messages into our social media platforms using bots or other automation.

For China, it’s not an ethical issue to create negativity or break their commitments. Nor is it an ethical issue to steal intellectual property. The country truly believes that anything made on the planet is theirs by definition—and other world governments exist with their temporary permission.

They are a determined, patient, and very sophisticated adversary that has literally been at war with our way of life for decades. I have dubbed this The Silent War.

The Party knows how to dismantle us from the inside out, using our systems and fractures against us. And they do it without triggering an overt act that would coalesce us as a unified people.

They don’t need to capture our territory or destroy anything. They don’t need to activate explosions to achieve their objective of ensuring that all the world’s government leaders, business leaders, and even individuals are compliant and loyal to the Chinese Communist Party.”

THE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

“For years, there’s been a progressive technology transfer from the United States to China. Some of that, of course, has been through espionage.

But frankly, a lot has happened voluntarily through our open economic system that China has taken advantage of. The Party lists false technology companies on our stock exchanges and watches Americans invest. Still, doing business in China is very attractive for many of our technology business leaders: The country boasts 1.5 billion people that live in a growing, spending-power economy.”

COERCION IN THE ECONOMIC SPACE

“To be able to participate in the Chinese economy, you must follow Chinese communist law, which clearly states that any company doing business inside or outside of China must support the intelligence and national security needs of the nation-state—even if that means spying on your home country. So as we look at how exposed we are to illegal coercion in the economic space, we understand that this war is not just about military force.”

SHIFT THE US GOVERNMENT’S ACQUISITION STANCE

“We need to put our acquisition system on a wartime footing. I believe that if we can move faster than China in shifting one generation of military technology after another into our

combat theaters—as quickly as American ingenuity would allow us—that increase in capability would have enormous deterrent value. Both militarily and otherwise.”

AN OVERLY COMPLEX CONTRACT AND GO-TO-MARKET PROCESS

“The US government contracting process is complicated, and more rules add to the already-established pile over time. But, of course, these laws must also become regulations. The bureaucracy that ensues is enormous. Unfortunately, this same affliction affects other parts of the process that prevent us from operating in what I would call ‘speed to market’—moving as fast as possible to deploy new generations of military technology and divest ourselves of old.

It starts with where we as a government assess current intelligence and decide our future. Then, where are the critical capability gaps between our adversaries and the US that we must solve through material or non-material solutions?

If it's going to be a material solution, that always has to gain approval at high levels in the Department of Defense.”

ARCHAIC PLANNING, PROGRAMMING, BUDGETING, AND EXECUTION

“Once the approvals happen, we move into the planning, programming, budgeting, and execution systems—and the execution piece is one of our most arcane. Robert McNamara created it in 1961, and it's still the process we're using in the 21st century to fight adversaries leveraging our economics against us at the speed of light.”

MOVING MONEY IN MINUTES VS. YEARS

“The Chinese Communist Party can move money in our markets in less than 20 minutes. Yet the congressional oversight required for our financial transactions, which we all take as a given today, has left us doggedly slow.

The way technology accelerates today, do we still have time to place a budget process on funds so we can't put them to use for another two or three years?”

OUR CURRENT SYSTEM AND ITS UNINTENDED RESULTS

“Few people understand that almost every portion of investment dollars—research, development, evaluation, test, and production—has a program name on it from statute down. Moreover, the program elements in the statute are so narrow that even within a program, a manager can't move money between its phases.

And companies that offer an emergent, game-changing technology? We can't say “yes” to them in the same year, as it would be illegal.

The way that Congress measures spending accountability in the execution year is, through the Continuing Resolution Process, to advise spending all the money as fast as one can in the narrow stovepipes that the appropriators say to spend it in. There needs to be a measure of effectiveness and an incentive to optimize spending.

I will tell you there is no other process I have seen in my 32 years of military service—except for End of Fiscal Year spending of expiring funds—where more fraud, waste, and abuse results than in the Continuing Resolution Process.

The reality is a pattern that delays all new starts. That's an enormous waste of resources, yet no one seems overly concerned about it. The process is more effective at delaying our combat power to the field than any adversary could hope to.”



DOD ACQUISITION REGULATION

“Now we come to the Department of Defense Acquisition Regulation for large systems. This regulation has expanded to include information technology services, not just major defense acquisition programs.

By its very nature, this regulation pulls all authority out of the field and organizes the acquisition into long, arching timeframes marked by milestone decisions. If we were truly on a wartime footing, we could move much faster on many of the needed capabilities. Likewise, we could move even more quickly if we were more interested in the effects and outcomes than the process.”

NATURAL AND UNNATURAL BARRIERS FOR NEW TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES

“Many tech companies that are fast or know they can make a difference if they're trying to get into contracting can only accept a contract over a million dollars if they have an approved accounting system. And for a company to appease the government with an approved system—that's an enormous decision. A considerable investment, frankly.

On the other hand, if you're in the defense industrial base and have potent trade organizations to keep barriers high for new contractor entry, then implementing the regulations becomes a type of profit center. It's currently a protected marketplace, serving about eight big primes.

The lifeblood of the defense industry has become IP vendor lock. Now, I've got no problem with protecting intellectual property, but it is done at such a scale now that it's almost a religion.”

CHANGE THE BUSINESS MODEL FROM IP VENDOR LOCK TO SPEED TO MARKET

“IP vendor lock has become the sole means for many companies to sustain profitability and competitive advantage. Yet if you juxtapose that against what's happened in the commercial tech industry, the number one means to sustain the profitability and valuation of a company is speed to market. And that's where we need to be, on a national security scale.”

COMPETITIVE ACQUISITIONS SYSTEMS ARE A DETERRENT TO WAR

“Military deterrents lay in competitive acquisition systems: Which system is faster? Which is cheaper? Which can achieve? I believe it's important to underwrite these instruments of national power with military power. And I do think there is a deterrent value to it.”

We need the freedom to maneuver and strategically overmatch in airspace and cyberspace. And I would add undersea to that. These have the highest deterrent value against war with China than any other of the joint force capabilities. I'm not suggesting that we don't need other capabilities to win a war, but in terms of deterrence, these functions keep our adversaries up at night—the idea that we could operate with impunity without their knowledge or permission inside their borders in those domains. And I think the lack of understanding about what we can execute provides tremendous deterrent value against war. If that deterrent picture looked good, we could also prevent their activities that would grow into active 21st-century warfare, whether you are talking about kinetic or territorial-gain types of war.”

RIGHTS OF A GOVERNMENT ARE NOT MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE RIGHTS OF ITS PEOPLE

“The Chinese government believes our system is in decline, and the idea of unalienable rights—now 246 years old—pales against the viewpoints created by a 10,000-year Chinese regime. China believes the concept of unalienable rights is a temporary idea and that the rights of the collective and the government are more important to protect than the rights of the individual.





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When our forefathers read the Declaration of Independence for the first time at the Boston statehouse to a small crowd, I would argue it was the first time in the world that a system of government established the idea that, pre-government, every person is created with these unalienable rights that no government has the right to give or take away. In fact, the responsibility of the government is to protect those rights.

It is essential to understand: This view does not necessarily mean territorial gains or losses are in play; we can lose these unalienable rights without any property loss. We are not ahead in that regard. Owning the high ground is vital to getting ahead.”

WHAT MATTERS MOST FOR OUR CHILDREN’S CHILDREN

There is much at stake for the international system, the world, and our children. And, while we are not perfect as a nation, we are the greatest ideal to live up to that has ever been created in the world. And, as I sit here in uniform, you can tell that I think it's an idea worth giving your life for.”

GENERAL HOLT’S CHALLENGE

After outlining his views at the GCP Summit, General Holt challenged the audience to rise to the occasion by stating, “And so, I think we ought to be paying attention. Our nation's motto is E Pluribus Unum (one from many parts), and I believe it is time for us to come together as Americans—industry and government, capital markets, innovators in the commercial marketplace, and innovators in the defense marketplace. I think it's time to lock the voices of division out and start understanding who we are as Americans. And that it is not something to apologize for but something to celebrate. The things that bind us together are much more potent than those that separate us. And the time for recognizing this fact is now. “

THE SPEED TO CONTRACT PODCAST

The Speed to Contract Podcast was born from General Holt’s motivating, patriotic challenge to the audience at the GCP Summit 2022 to stand up and make a difference.

ProPricer’s Board of Directors wanted to help meet this challenge. So, it approved an investment in the Speed to Contract initiative, knowing ProPricer’s reputation, client base, industry contacts, and 34 years of service in the Defense community could make a difference.

Those ProPricer assets have given the Speed to Contract Podcast team the ability to assemble a diverse number of influential leaders as podcast guests who can collectively significantly move the needle on acquisition improvement.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO MAKE EFFECTIVE CHANGE

As you listen to each guest share their insights, please take note of a throughline: Effective change takes input from all stakeholders; to that end, change does take a village. For this reason, the Podcast team has assembled an impressive, diverse list of guests from the military, contractor, agency, and congressional expert spheres to share their best insights into affecting acquisition change.

THE BEST OF THE BEST TO SHARE AT GCP SUMMIT 2023

The Speed to Contract Podcast team will soon assemble the best leaders and their collective ideas to create effective acquisition change at the **GCP Summit 2023 in San Diego, CA.**

For any questions or comments regarding the ‘Speed to Contract’ Project, please contact Tim Templeton at ttempleton@propricer.com

Sources

1. [GCP Summit 2022: Joy White, Keynote](#)
2. [GCP Summit 2022: Major General Holt, Keynote](#)



6 STEPS TO CREATE A WINNING NEGOTIATION PLAN

About the author:



Ms. Shene' Commodore, CPCM, Fellow is CEO & Founder of Commodore Consulting. Ms. Commodore has over 30 years of procurement experience. Commodore Consulting provides contract management, strategic planning, proposal writing, GSA services, & training. She also works with government agencies to provide program management, acquisition support, and IT services.



When you spend time preparing for negotiation discussions, you increase the likelihood of winning projects at a fair price with a realistic project schedule and reasonable expectation. The experts at Commodore Consulting, LLC. created a six-step workbook for teams to use as a developmental guide to help understand how to prepare for winning negotiations that are mutually beneficial to you and your potential customer.

Preparing for Successful Negotiations – Things to Remember:

- Create your objectives – Identify your customers priorities. What are your goals? Understand your obstacles and risks, as well as your strengths and competitive advantage.
- Define Your Role
- Understand Your Value
- Stakeholder Management – Who are you negotiating with? Who makes decisions? Who influences decisions? What's important to the stakeholders, organization? Research your environment.



Do your homework - what do you know about the customer?

- What is the purpose of the negotiation? (Include a project description)
- What do you know about the customer's needs, preferences, likes/dislikes, similar programs or projects, likes/dislikes?
- What is most important to the customer?
- Who are the stakeholders? (List names, roles, interest, level of authority or influence.)



Conduct an assessment.

- What are the key tasks, milestones, deliverables, desired outcomes?
- Why is this important to the customer? Write down what they value.
- What are your SWOTs in meeting the requirements?



Describe how you will deliver services.

- Review/Write down each step
- Pick most needed resources and results
- How does price effect the requirement and proposes solutions?



Identify the value of your offer.

- What is your competitive advantage?
- What is your value proposition? (When will they recognize value?)
- How do you mitigate / avoid risks?



Uncover the measurable transformation - help your customer see the Big Picture.

- What problems does the customer need to resolve?
- What is the benefit of your solution? (Be S.M.A.R.T.)
- Create your Before & After



Create your negotiation objectives. Review the first 5 steps.

- What does the customer want to happen?
- What information do you need clarity on?
- What are your 'must haves'?
- What are you approved trade-offs?
- Who is responsible for approving changes?
- What does your team need to accomplish during negotiations?



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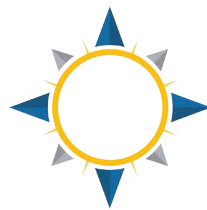
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SHARPER STRATEGY—MORE FUNDING

PROMOTING A CULTURE OF RISK TAKING



By Kirk Donnan with contribution from Soraya Correa,
Department of Homeland Security

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Procurement Innovation Lab (PIL) is an entity grounded in risk. But intelligent risk. Risk with boundaries, if you will.

Team members, who are usually former contracting officers, consistently ask one another: “Can you envision truly getting more out this innovative technique than what could be the quantified waste if you failed?” The answer is more often than not, “yes.”

But as we’ll see, failure can also be a huge part of success.

Relatively new within the DHS, the Innovation Lab seeks to inject a spirit of creativity into the Homeland Security’s procurement processes, both on the agency and industry sides.

(No small feat in a division known for a highly conservative, regimented approach to protecting our nation’s well-being.) In this report, we’ll:

- Discuss the inception, makeup, and mission of the PIL.
- Look at an agency’s role in leveraging the PIL as an “innovation consultant.”
- Study some of the most creative procurement techniques at play today.
- Discuss now why the Lab enjoys such a stunning success rate.
- Look at the PIL’s culture of transparency—that also benefits contractors.
- See why the PIL is becoming the model for all government procurement.

SETTING A MISSION OF CALCULATED DISCOVERY FOR DHS AGENCIES

As do most government agencies, DHS agencies tend to consistently bend towards fulfilling compliance requirements—first and foremost—during its various proposal processes.

“When I came into this position back in 2015, I was very familiar with the criticisms agencies often hear when we decide to innovate,” says Soraya Correa, DHS Principal and Director of the Procurement Innovation. “I’d been a contracting officer throughout my career.”

But Correa is determined to promote a culture of risk-taking in the DHS, both then and now. She wants to bring out



think differently and more expansively. From those early days, the lab has grown to a staff of hundreds. Staff members meet continuously with procurement teams, typically made up of a Contracting Officer, a program official, and an attorney, to rally their efforts and offer progressive thinking or to inspire unique takes on standard approaches, depending on the nature of a procurement.

The objective? To understand a procurement action inside and out, then work with the Agency team to realize its goal in the most effective and efficient way possible.

THE CHALLENGE: SHIFTING A TIME-HONORED LEGACY TIDE

Can you actually use the words “acquisition” and “innovation” in the same sentence? It sounds like a melodramatic question, but during her early days, Correa and her people had to be careful of how they would phrase the language around their efforts.

“You also didn’t used to hear a word like ‘failure’ coming from anyone in an agency,” says Correa. “I couldn’t see why. It’s simply a situation where you try a procurement approach and it doesn’t work. So you try another. This is the only way to truly innovate.”

Embracing the concept that the Lab had to be willing to fail in order to succeed didn’t come naturally to the people who worked with Correa. But they’ve since acclimated. “I’ve always been willing to work with my programs to find new ways to do something, but this isn’t always a natural inclination in government,” Correa admits.

“Yes, sometimes we or people we’re coaching fail and there are ramifications. But we encourage leadership support around this at the highest levels.” It’s the only way to a new, better path forward.

In promoting a culture of innovation, there must be top-level backing. And that means someone like Correa has to

stand up and say to her team, “We’re going to do this. And if you succeed, you’re going get all the credit. And if you fail, it’s on me. I’ll take responsibility for that.”

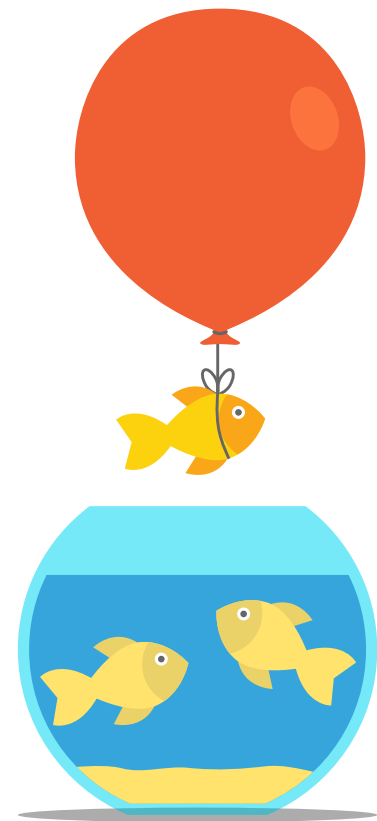
It’s an important management message to send to a staff. Yet one of Correa’s additional challenges was persuading colleagues that her support and that from other leaders is, in fact, real.

Seventy-six percent of her workforce claimed that fear and cultural resistance were the biggest reasons why they weren’t initially more innovative in their procurement methods. Why they weren’t willing to challenge the status quo.

the best thinking of all members of a procurement team. “DHS deserves that, so it can find and foster ways to do things better, faster, and more efficiently.” All to create better procurement outcomes.

“I stood up the Procurement Innovation Lab to show my support for fostering procurement innovation,” continues Correa “where smart risk-taking enables the DHS’s mission.” “Smart” is the operative word here.

Let’s be clear: The Lab itself isn’t designed to do procurement; it acts in an advisory capacity to DHS agencies. It started out as one person, Correa, who worked to encourage those who actually execute procurement. She launched the practice of coaching DHS procurement pros on how to



“We are in a fishbowl,” continues Correa. “When you work for the federal government, your procurements are constantly under scrutiny by a multitude of stakeholders. Not to mention our own internal oversight.”

The risk of negative, non-constructive feedback. The fear of losing protests. The dread of reading that article in the press that claims an award didn't go to the best offeror. These are a few obstacles to approaching procurement coaching with the creativity that Correa now requires of her training staff. Creativity for which she's prepared to take the fall if things go sideways.

On the flipside, the Lab also helps agency buyers understand that there's nothing wrong if they're adamant about not trying something new during a proposal process—innovation can't really be forced. The opportunity for it is either organically visible in a procurement situation, or it's not. But Lab members see it as their job to differentiate between these scenarios early in an acquisition.

INNOVATION MUST STILL FALL WITHIN FAR GUIDELINES

Once tested, all procurement techniques have to fall within the four corners of the FAR. True to how a government segment has to operate, the Lab doesn't encourage an agency procurement team to change any rules, nor any regulations.

"We're using the flexibilities within the FAR to our advantage," muses Correa. "What we're sometimes doing is interpreting the FAR in new ways."

"We're making sure that we understand what the FAR is telling us, what case law tells us, and then we're often putting—let's call it a 'hybrid interpretation'—into practice."

CONTRACTOR FEEDBACK HELPS SHAPE FUTURE RFPS AND PROPOSALS

The Lab solicits constant feedback from its internal, agency, and contracting audiences. Here are some examples of feedback from offerors:

On the oral presentation technique. Vendors like it because "it puts us in front of the government." Contractors

are all about having that face time. They prefer to directly engage in dialogue with government officials, as these conversations help level-set competition. And it makes contractors more likely to pursue an opportunity if it's a good fit.

On learning early if candidates are viable enough to compete. Frankly, Lab processes allow candidates to learn early if they are competitive enough to continue pursuing an opportunity.

If they're not, the process conserves their proposal resources for pre-solicitation phases on other contracts.



"Many contractors have actually thanked us," realizes Correa, "as making a quick decision pre-contract allows them to either double-down on the current proposal's focus, or course-correct and move to other procurements that are coming up."

Correa continues: "They appreciate not having to spend money that wouldn't have an ROI. It also gives them better opportunity to plan."

On submitting YouTube videos. This technique is one that contractors have a hard time with. Many want to submit high-production-value videos, with scripted voiceovers, elaborate B-roll film setups, and sophisticated graphics. "We want nothing of the sort," admits Correa. "We prefer to

see someone walking around their workspace, talking to their iPhone as it films. We want to see how and where they work, the other people in the background of their environment, and how they act every day. These kinds of things tell us a lot more about a candidate than a slick, rehearsed production."

EVERY PIL PROJECT HAS BEEN PROFITABLE IN TERMS OF CONDENSING TIMEFRAMES

It's not an exaggeration. Generally, what the PIL recommends to agencies is able to save huge chunks of time, which translates to budget.

With the Lab's involvement, the Evaluation Phase of a contract goes much faster. And condensing that evaluation time is crucial for Lab evaluators. Says Correa: "The longer the timeframe my program officials have to sit in a room evaluating a proposal, for consecutive proposals, the more likely we could lose them."

Of course she wants to keep talented people in order to create a cohesive, consistent team. And when her staff isn't spending a lot of time reading superfluous material, they're more focused and alert, and tend to work more efficiently, condensing the Lab's timeframes, as well.

PIL PROJECTS CONSERVE AGENCY FUNDS, BUT NOT IN THE WAY YOU MIGHT THINK

Obviously, agency officials are very focused on the best response to their current requirement; they're always on the lookout for the proposal that's going to give them the ideal solution.

And as mentioned, with the Lab's help, officials often receive three or more ideal proposals. Choosing any one of them will result in a successful transaction.

Competition will always give agencies a low-price leader. But more and more, immediate cost savings

isn't what agencies are looking for. They're looking for the right solution at a reasonable price that will help them achieve success on the final deliverable.

Reflects Correa: "What I mean by cost savings here is the opportunity value. No one measures the administrative cost incurred by the teams of people that are working a proposal. A successful win in a condensed amount of time helps absorb this cost, creating incremental agency savings from contract to contract."

THE LAB RECOMMENDS SOME OF THE LATEST IN TECH

The Lab is also focused on recommending technology for its client agencies. Another question Lab people pose to themselves nearly each day is: Are we helping our program colleagues use technology wisely?

"One of the big tech initiatives we have going through the Procurement Lab," continues Correa, "involves working in partnership with the Office of Federal Procurement Policy and other federal agencies to improve our contractor past-performance assessment reporting system."

This system is where the government stores past-performance data about its contractors. The Lab is conducting a study using commercial vendors to develop a solution that leverages Artificial Intelligence (AI) to better extract data from reports in the system. The goal is to make it easier for contracting officers to search the support system and extract past-performance data to use as part of their candidate evaluations for current contracts.

"It's a fantastic program," says Correa. "I'm excited because in the past it's been very difficult for contracting officers to get helpful data on contractors, that would enable analysis of candidate past-performance to inform projects we're working on now."

When the Lab flipped to a totally virtual environment as the pandemic hit in 2020, it had just launched an electronic contract filing system. This system feeds information into an entire agency, makes it easier to answer FAR requests, and instantly transfers files when agency evaluators are ready to conduct candidate reviews.

THE LAB AS MODEL FOR ALL GOVERNMENT ACQUISITION MOTIONS

"The Lab is already the model for other government sectors. I've been working with federal Agencies who may want to stand up a similar program," says Correa. Not bad for a government initiative that's only been around for six years.

"We've tried to be as transparent as possible with what we're doing, and to share what we learn, not just across the DHS, but with other federal agencies. It's because I believe in good government," states Correa.

Correa sits on the Chief Acquisition Officers Council as one of the senior procurement executives in government, and also works with the Office of Federal Procurement Policy. She consistently shares the Innovation Lab concept with other agencies. As a result, the Lab consults with agencies outside the DHS on their in-motion projects.

The Lab helps to develop people—called Acquisition Innovation Advocates—within those agencies, to assist their colleagues in creating, identifying, and using innovative techniques.

There's more: The Lab teaches PIL Bootcamps, which used to be one-day training sessions, that are now held online. Each is a 4-hour virtual event, where the PIL trains new recruits and also people from other agencies.

"We use these Boot Camps as inhouse trainings, but also to train people from other agencies on how to be innovative

around pricing and procurement."

This year, the Lab kicked off an Innovation Coaches Training Program "because we believe our coaches can teach others in various agencies how to be excellent procurement professionals," says Correa. "These de-facto coaches can then regularly mentor their colleagues."

THE LAB AS MODEL FOR INDUSTRY CONTRACTORS

"We teach Industry our innovative techniques, because I think it's important for contracting companies to understand what we're doing, how we're doing it, and why we're doing it," says Correa.

The thinking here is that Industry can give the Labs insight on how agencies can write better solicitations, improve on requirements, and even better assess proposals. "Much of what we buy in government, industry buys from itself," concludes Correa. "Since contractors buy from one another, they can teach us additional tricks of the trade."

PROCUREMENT INNOVATION CAN BE EVERYWHERE

The PIL is all about sharing its wealth of knowledge. "How can we put our innovation processes into every procurement environment, so that all are coming up with the best solutions in the most expedient manner?" Adds Correa: "We're all here to serve our mission, but it's not just about the DHS. It's about, eventually, making sure procurement is done right throughout the government."

Read more from Soraya Correa; learn what it takes to become a successful Innovation coach, and see how coaching influences DHS agencies and others.

Access here.





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WHAT DO
GOVERNMENT
CONTRACTORS
NEED TO KNOW
MOVING INTO
2023?

HERE IS A FIVE POINT INSPECTION LIST

Since March 2020, the world has changed drastically, including how companies operate, manage employees, and approach strategy and business plans for Government customers. As a result, we offer a five-point inspection for Government Contractors to consider to remain successful in the changing landscape of the 2023 fiscal year. These five points cover the lifecycle of a government award. They will give contractors critical things to keep in mind as they continually redefine their approach to serving their customers.

POINT #1: WHAT PROGRAMS DO I WANT TO PURSUE? (STEERING WHEEL)

Organizations pursuing government contracts should first consider their bid and proposal strategies. There are many instances where companies will attempt to bid on several opportunities at one time in hopes of winning that “one big award” which changes the future of their business. With that, as a company grows, so does the business plan. The company’s strategic plan should mirror its business plan, and both should be routinely monitored and updated to reflect the most up-to-date business strategy plans. Government contractors should consider asking themselves:

- How achievable is our capture strategy?
- What is the competitive landscape?
- Are we pursuing contracts that will help further our business objectives?
- Have we assessed risk and appropriately priced it into our proposals?
- What is our value proposition and what differentiates us from our competition?
- What contract types are we equipped to perform on?

To provide context to these questions, government contractors can obtain the following information:

- Spending history in various agencies
- Government program data
- Customer buying history
- Independent Government Cost estimate data

By obtaining these data, a Government Contractor can start to solidify the overall pricing strategy for now and into the future.

Other considerations in the contracting lifecycle are

commercial item determinations (CID) and preparing for graduation out of Small Business Designations (SBD). Government Contractors should think through strategic ways to leverage commercial item determinations. By using the CID method, it allows the Government Contractor to lessen the administrative burdens related to the monitoring and managing of pricing and cost. Another consideration would be for Government Contractors who are on the cusp of growing out of SBD. SBD graduates should begin planning for what the removal of that designation means for them. What are the implications in the ability to win new awards? How do I plan for the future? These types of questions are generally considered and discussed during the business planning phase to inform future growth and opportunity identification.

POINT #2: WHAT TYPES OF REQUIREMENTS WILL APPLY? (OWNER’S MANUAL)

Compliance with cost regulation is arguably one of the most important areas for consideration for all Government Contractors. Government Contractors should be prepared in several key areas including, Cost Accounting Practices, Provisional Bill / Forward Pricing Rates, Incurred Cost Submission (ICS) Readiness, and other considerations.

Cost Accounting Practices. At fiscal/calendar year-end, this is a great opportunity to assess the actual indirect rate structure, and accounting policy and procedures to help ensure alignment with applicable criteria such as Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS), Cost Accounting Standards (CAS), Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200), and other required criteria. The questions that should be asked in this instance would be:

- Is the company cost structure scalable for future growth?
- Is the company recovering all costs that are allowable or leaving allowable cost on the table?
- Are my actual processes in line with my written policies and procedures?
- Are there any weaknesses or deficiencies in the contractor’s internal control matrix?

Provisional Bill / Forward Pricing Rates. Establish Provisional Billing Rates to approximate the contractor’s final year-end rates, as adjusted for any unallowable costs. These rates are used for interim purposes until settlement is reached on the final indirect rates for the Contractor’s fiscal year. December is a great time to finalize the overall company budget and move these figures into a provisional

rate proposal and submit to the government. Another area to consider as part of your budgeting and estimating procedures is to update the forward pricing rates which are long-term projected cost rates used to price multi-year contracts. The company will want to evaluate both the near- and long-term business strategy to understand what is needed to remain competitive and understand that growth comes with additional challenges. Also, this will allow the assessment of headcount and what is needed to meet the scope of work in the future to reach certain revenue targets.

Incurred Cost Submission. Government Contractors should begin to prepare elements of their incurred cost submissions, prior to year-end when the clause at FAR 52.216-7 Allowable Cost and Payment is present for Cost-Reimbursement Contracts. This allows for significant lead time for necessary reviews and internal adequacy determinations to take place, prior to the annual deadline. A final verification will need to be done once the accounting books and records have been closed and finalized with no additional adjustments needed.

Other considerations. Subsequently, Government Contractors should begin to evaluate or further develop areas that may now become applicable to the Contractor due to the SBD graduation or revised strategy business plans to go after certain contracts with cost compliance provisions. Contractors will need to start considering areas, such as:

- CAS triggers (i.e., no longer exempt from CAS due to SBD graduation)
- Requirements for Disclosure Statements of Cost Accounting Practices (as applicable)
- Other regulatory reporting requirements, such as SCA, 2 CFR 200
- Subcontract Monitoring: Government Contractors, who have requirements to do so in their contracts, should have adequate subcontractor monitoring policies and procedures to reduce the subcontract monitoring risk

POINT #3: WHAT TYPES OF BUSINESS SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES WILL I NEED? (ENGINE)

The government views contractor business systems as vital in the delivery of accurate data for monitoring and enforcement. Government Contractors are subject to business system requirements when the applicable CFR 252.242-7005 clauses are present in contracts and are otherwise not subject to any Cost Accounting Standards (CAS) exemptions.

There are six different business systems that Government Contractors may need to understand as they become

applicable to them. Below is a description of the six different types of business systems:

- Accounting
- Earned Value Management (EVM)
- Estimating
- Material Management Accounting
- Property
- Purchasing

Business systems, and the compliance therein, extend beyond just a physical software “system”. The “system” includes several areas:

- Policies and Procedures: Well-documented policies and procedures are imperative to the success of a compliant business system. Government Contractors should ask themselves: “Do the current policies and procedures cover the requisite level of details that is expected from Government Auditors?”
- Training: Generally, training should be performed on an annual basis and should be based, and/or targeted, on the individual’s roles and responsibilities (R&Rs) within the organization.
- Files and Documentation: The files, and the process to review the files, is part of the artifact capture within the business system. The files should demonstrate:
 1. i. Compliance with current policies and procedures; and
 2. ii. The knowledge and capability of personnel who are performing tasks applicable to their role and responsibilities
- Internal Reviews: Finally, Contractors are expected to perform self-assessments to ensure compliance with their own policies and procedures, and that files and/or documentation support are accurate, complete, and following policy.

So, keeping up with these standards, regardless of the actual requirement, strongly benefit the Contractor. Contractors should be ready for the assessments and start planning now. In order to prepare for 2023, Contractors can begin now by:

- Reviewing policies and procedures, and ensuring they are updated, accurate, and complete with current practices
- Implementing effective training based on individuals’ R&R’s within the organization
- Performing mock audits (i.e., accounting, purchasing,

estimating, floor check, etc.), documenting the outcome, preparing recommendations for improvement against the related business system criteria, and implementing those improvements immediately

POINT #4: HOW SHOULD I SECURE MY DATA? (SAFETY SYSTEMS)

One of the increasingly hot topics in Government Contracting moving into 2023 is cyber assessments and regulations. The most notable regulation being the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC). In 2019, the Department of Defense announced the creation of the CMMC. The establishment of CMMC was intended to transition from a model where organizations self-attested on their compliance with NIST SP-800-171 set of cybersecurity controls to a model involving more active audit and oversight. However, there are other regulations applicable to Federal awards that require cyber oversight and preparation such as NIST's Federal Information Processing Standards. Government Contractors should be on high alert with the ever-changing criteria and what applies to their organizations. We recommend as the first step in this assessment process to review applicable frameworks to understand the mechanics to comply with the level of maturity desired.

Secondly, Government Contractors should then begin to prepare for the oversight obligations (i.e. CMMC), by taking the following actions:

- Confirm that IT policies, standards, and procedures are up-to-date and meet the CMMC requirements
- Confirm that their System Security Plan (SSP) is up-to-date and documents all 110 controls
- Confirm that all assets are known and categorized correctly either as:
 3. o Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) Assets
 4. o Security Protection Assets
 5. o Contractor Risk Managed Assets
 6. o Specialized Assets
 7. o Conduct a self-assessment and calculate their risk score using the Supplier Performance Risk System (SPRS) scoring mechanism
- Remediate any issues by implementing compliant with regulation practices
- Deploy technical solutions where needed

By reviewing applicable frameworks, and completing these verifications before mandatory clauses are incorporated, the

company will be set up for not only compliance, but also success in safeguarding the data and information within the organization.

POINT #5: WILL I BE AUDITED? (SAFETY INSPECTIONS/CRASH TEST)

Contractors should conduct a thorough review of contracts to identify applicable audit requirements and clauses. This will allow Contractors to understand the oversight which will be applied to their contracts and allow them to best prepare for the types of audits and reviews they are likely to experience. Should they be audited, following the inspection points noted above will help Government Contractors be better prepared and help result in limited to no issues noted by the auditors.

For example, in business systems, Government Contractors should be prepared that the system criteria outlined in the DFARS are often used as a standard for government audits of contractor business systems even if the DFARS does not expressly apply. Given the DOD's work to establish guidelines for systems accuracy and integrity, many agencies consider the DFARS criteria a reasonable standard; therefore, Government Contractors should consider these standards to help ensure acceptance and regularly verify compliance even if they are not contracting with the DOD.

CONCLUSION

While the Government Contracting landscape has changed due to the pandemic and recent economic changes, it has also remained a stable and lucrative industry with large and stable business opportunities for those contractors willing to maintain the systems required for performance. Now that we are coming out on the other side of the global pandemic, this is the perfect opportunity for Government Contractors to perform their "Five Point Inspection" and prepare their business for:

- Growth and strategy changes
- Updating their policies and procedures to match their growth and strategy changes
- Prepare themselves for new and exciting contract vehicles, regulations, and changes in the Government Contracting arena

It is never too early to get started, and it's always a good idea to stay ahead of the curve to prepare your business for great success!



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Katherine Zablonksi, MBA, is a Manager in the CohnReznick's Global Consulting Solutions practice, focusing on the Government Contracting industry. She has more than eleven years of combined experience in Government Contracting, Finance and Accounting Operations Management, Financial Compliance and Controls, Travel and Expense Financial Management, Forensic Accounting, Government Due Diligence, Human Capital, and Recruiting. Throughout her career, Katherine has been a strategic consultant to C-Level executives providing the data and analysis to aid in both strategic and tactical decision-making.

With her experience covering many areas, she has a strong understanding of preparation and review of incurred cost submissions, government contractors policies and procedures documentation, government invoicing, disaster recovery support for government contractors, compliance in government travel and expense financial management, supporting government contractors through government audits, including major government business systems, assistance in forensic reviews litigation support for witness testimony, revenue recognition for 606 compliance, and government compliance for due diligence efforts.

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With more than 12 years of government experience in the Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA) and Inspector General (IG) offices, Kean has built strong understanding of the processes, procedures, and fundamentals of government contracting practices.

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THE ART

OF MARKET RESEARCH:

Focus on Innovated Techniques Used

INTRODUCTION

Each day, I am simply amazed at the volume, depth, and quality of the data available to industry professionals as it relates to evaluating the fair and reasonableness of a subcontractor's proposal. If given enough time, and with an acumen towards market resources, one can readily obtain price comparison data on a vast amount of products and services. The true challenge we face is how can we take the data that we obtain by way of market research, discern whether it adds value to our analysis, and apply it as the source of market-based intelligence. My goal in this article is to provide a few innovated techniques that I use to leverage market research when conducting price analyses, specifically as it related to subcontracting.



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BACKGROUND

Let's set the stage: the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) is very clear regarding this topic. According to FAR 15.404-3(b), "the prime contractor or subcontractor shall (1) Conduct appropriate cost or price analyses to establish the reasonableness of proposed subcontract prices," and it describes price analysis as "the process of examining and evaluating a price without evaluating its separate cost elements and proposed profit."

Furthermore, FAR Part 10 addresses market research, the requirements for it, and the techniques typically used by the government when conducting market research. The government oversight environment focuses contractors to conduct market research and price analysis within the confines of the regulations and internal government norms, but our current operational environment does not often lend itself to these approaches. The challenge is: how do we apply the intent of FAR to real-world sources of market research and buying situations?



CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

While discussing the comparative analysis techniques for determining price reasonableness, FAR indicates that the comparison of prices obtained through market research for the same or similar items is an acceptable technique for determining price reasonableness (FAR 15.404-1(b)(2)(vi)). However, one quickly realizes that market research is not only a price analysis technique, but it is a foundational process behind every price analysis technique. In other words, before any type of price analysis is conducted, the subcontract administrator conducts some form of market research. This research ranges from searching for competitive sources to researching price lists, to reviewing historical analytics related to market spend.

We are used to conducting market research, but we tend to use the same approach time and time again. It's time to add some innovation to our price analysis process.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATION

Now that we understand that market research is a fundamental tool for determining price reasonableness, let us review some innovative market research techniques.

Pre-Solicitation and Solicitation Tools

If the underlying intent of market research is to obtain data and knowledge about the marketplace, in my opinion, some of the most overlooked and underappreciated market research tools are those we use daily. Most subcontract administrators and buyers use requests for information, requests for quotations, and requests for proposals simply for their titled purposes: to obtain information, quotations, and proposals. These tools should be reevaluated and revitalized to become more proactively focused on obtaining market research information that will help a buyer establish market parameters regarding fair and reasonable pricing.

For example, instead of asking for prices for the exact quantities required by your organization, consider structuring the request for quotation so that pricing can be obtained for various quantities, lot pricing, price and quantity discounts, economic production quantities, etc. During the pre-solicitation and solicitation phases, potential subcontractors are more likely to provide market research information as opposed to similar requests for market research information made by the buyer after quotes or proposals have been received.

The key point to remember here is that potential subcontractors will only be interested in providing information to a buyer if they view it as beneficial to their organization. Therefore, as a buyer, make sure that you structure your pre-solicitation and solicitation documents in such a way that it's easy for the potential respondents to provide you the information you desire, in the format that you desire it.

Historical Pricing Data as Sources of Market Research

Although certainly not a new concept, using historical datasets as a basis for establishing fair and reasonableness of current prices should be considered as a vital market research technique. Whether the historical dataset comes from in-hours or external spend analytics, buyers can build historical pricing models that track the pricing trends of, for example, rates paid for a specific labor category, in specific geographical regions, and over specific periods of time.

Because of the capabilities of the enterprise systems most contractors use, collecting historical datasets is relatively easy. The opportunity for innovation presents itself in the analysis of the data. For example, since we understand that the past is often a good predictor of future pricing behavior, we can build historical pricing models whereby we analyze the most recent behavior over time—normally monthly, quarterly, bi-annually, or annually—depending on the type of product or service.

A buyer should consider the use of a Moving Average Analysis, or Mean Analysis, in building these models. This is a fairly simple, yet useful, historical pricing model whereby a buyer collects pricing datasets over three or more periods, and calculates the mean for each period. This calculation is done by summing the datasets, then dividing by the number of time periods. That average then becomes a forecast for future time periods. As the model goes further in the future, datasets from new time periods are added, and in turn, datasets from earlier time periods are removed from the calculation of the mean.

Once a database of moving averages has been developed, a buyer can apply a graphic analysis process to plot the data and inspect for visual trends in the datasets. Of course, this is just a starting point. Once moving averages are modeled, buyers can apply several analytical techniques to measure the pricing behavior over time, such as regression analyses, improvement curves, etc.

Leveraging Sources of Market Research

The “Internet of Everything” holds a wealth of data that can be easily leveraged when conducting a price analysis. Let’s explore some of the data that can really help drive innovation when we are conducting subcontractor price analyses.

- **U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)**

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) operates as a unit of the United States Department of Labor. It is the principal fact-finding agency for the government in the broad field of labor economics and statistics. The BLS is a government statistical agency that collects, processes, analyzes, and disseminates essential statistical data to the American public, the U.S. Congress, other federal agencies, state and local governments, businesses, and labor representatives. As such, much of the data used by third-party suppliers of market research data utilizes the BLS datasets as one, and in some cases, it is their only source of data.

One of the most popular datasets provided by BLS is the BLS Wage Data by Area and Occupation, which provides data for over 800 occupations classified by Standard Occupational Classifications. It also includes data by job characteristics and covers over 400 industries tracked by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes.

- **Compensation Surveys**

There are several companies and state governments that provide Human Resources-based salary and compensation information that can assist buyers in their price analyses. These datasets are based on actual data obtained from companies participating in targeted surveys or reports required by state governments.

- **Price Comparison Websites and Search Engines**

The amount of national and international-based price comparison websites and apps that provide market research data on both products and services is on the rise. Whether you are performing a comparative analysis of travel costs or researching prices for electronic components, you will find numerous sites that provide actual pricing data that can be used in your determination of price reasonableness.



Some price comparison tools require you to scan the barcode, while others allow you to type in the product name to find your product. The price comparison tools then show you a list of retailers who are selling the same product, and how much they are selling it for.

- **Government Tools**

Let us not forget the fact that the U.S. Government maintains arguably the largest dataset of pricing information. That data includes previous prices paid by the government and prices agreed upon between the government and contractors. Following is a list of sources for obtaining this type of information.

GSA Schedules (gsa.gov)

GSA schedules are long-term contracts which show prices agreed-upon between the GSA and contractors.

The Contract-Awarded Labor Category (CALC) (calc.gsa.gov) tool is designed to assist federal contracting officers and others, including industry, in finding awarded prices and rates to use in negotiations for labor contracts. It offers ceiling prices, fully burdened costs, services data, and worldwide rates.

General Schedule (GS) Salary Calculator (General Schedule (GS) Salary Calculator (opm.gov) is an Office of Personnel Management tool that can be used to obtain GS salary data.

GSA Pricing Estimation Tool (PET) ASSIST - Assisted Services Shared Information System (gsa.gov)
GSA's OASIS Price Estimating Tool assists federal agencies in developing the labor portion of the independent government cost estimate (IGCE) for OASIS task orders. Users can conduct a wage comparison across different occupations, experience and qualifications levels, indirect rate levels, and metropolitan statistical areas. The power of PET lies in its ability to index pricing to approximately 640 precise geographic locations.

The estimating tool captures:

- Every labor occupation in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) System.
- The BLS database of wage statistics for the SOC occupations across the nation and several territories like Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. These statistics are determined with surveys conducted by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).
- Precise performance locations defined as Metropolitan Statistical Areas by the BLS.
- The lowest, average, and highest indirect costs associated with the OASIS contracts.



FINAL THOUGHTS

There is no exact process, prescribed format, or magical solutions for conducting market research relative to subcontractors' proposals. In my experience, the extent to which your price analysis is considered adequate by a government auditor relies heavily on three things:

1. The sources of your information.
2. The extent to which you relied on the information used during the analysis.
3. The extent to which you documented your research, analysis, and judgements.

With that in mind, my final thoughts to you are regarding the latter point of documentation. Regardless of how innovative the technique is, documentation is the key to supporting your determination of fair and reasonableness.

Price analysis is clearly a subjective evaluation. As such, using different market research techniques and datasets will certainly yield different results. Because innovative techniques push the norm and may not be widely understood or considered part of the conventional wisdom, I encourage you to take the time to document your market research approaches and results, so that others, such as auditors, can understand how you reached your conclusion.



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The Look Ahead

WHAT CAN BE DONE IN 2023 TO PUSH THE PATH FORWARD TO CONTRACT SUCCESS? FOR GOVERNMENT CONTRACTORS IT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER TO FUEL ONGOING AND REGULAR CONVERSATIONS CENTERED ON NEW WAYS TO SUPPORT THE FUTURE OF PRICING. THE LOOK AHEAD PROMISES UNCERTAINTIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE PRICING LEADERS TO RECOGNIZE CHALLENGES BEFORE THEY OCCUR TO STAY AHEAD OF AN ANTIQUATED PROCUREMENT LANDSCAPE.

Dear Reader,

Over the past year, there has continued to be a strong emphasis on the serious threats our nation faces – both intellectual and military. The value of your daily contributions is immeasurable. Thank you for being dedicated to the security of our nation. Domestic unrest and global uncertainty demand experts with your skills, sharpened through years of personal and professional development. You selflessly and tirelessly give each day. Again, we thank you.

Our goal for this publication has always been to be a platform of communication and collaboration to help breakdown silo walls between government and industry. We have been delighted to see many individuals from our pricing community come forward with ideas and solutions to break down barriers and streamline delivery from all contracting areas. However, to enact change, we all must continue to keep these topics relevant in order to have a clear vision of the developments that are still needed within our industry.

The planning for 2023 is underway, and we want to hear from you. By sharing your interest, competencies, and desired growth areas, you will help our pricing community become stronger. If you are interested in contributing to our pipeline of the future, please reach out to our Marketing team at marketing@propricer.com.

I am honored to have played a part in another year's content creation. I invite you to raise your hand in this effort to build our leadership talent pool, increasing our chances of continued success. As always, thank you for being part of this journey with us, and here's to a successful and exciting 2023.



Holly DeHesa

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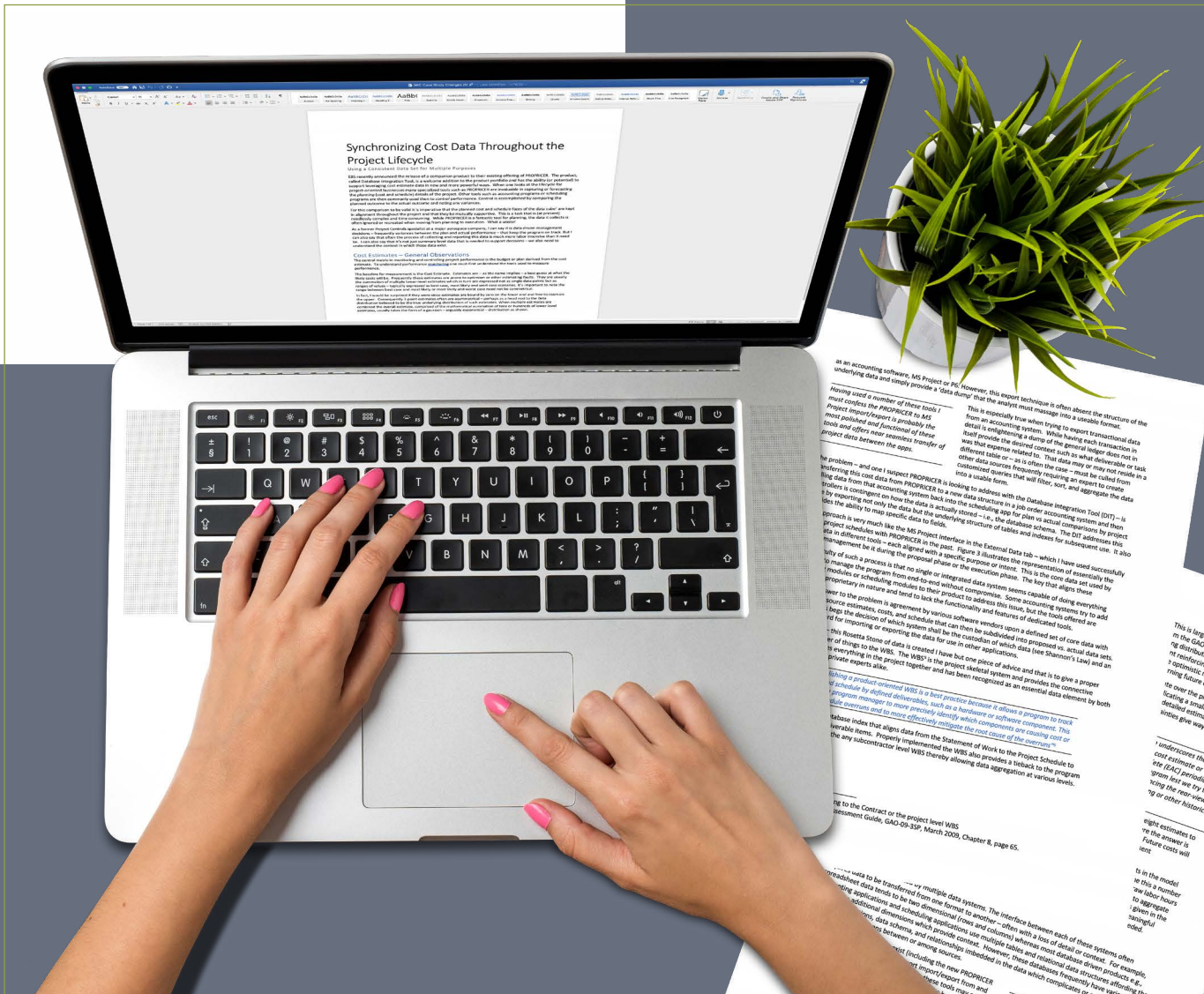
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Future Issues of Pricing Magazine for 2023

- June 2023
- December, 2023



Synchronizing Cost Data Throughout the Project Lifecycle

Using a Connected Data Set for Multiple Purposes

Cost data is a critical component of project pricing and is often used for multiple purposes. The most common use is for estimating project costs, but it can also be used for budgeting, forecasting, and analyzing project performance. This article discusses the challenges of synchronizing cost data throughout the project lifecycle and provides a framework for addressing these challenges.

Cost Estimation - General Observations

Cost estimation is a complex process that involves identifying and quantifying the resources required to complete a project. It is a key component of project pricing and is often used to determine the project's budget and to identify potential cost overruns. This article discusses the challenges of cost estimation and provides a framework for addressing these challenges.

in an accounting system, MS Project or Primavera, this report technique is often absent the structure of the underlying data and simply provide a 'data dump' that the analyst must massage into a useable format.

Having used a number of these tools I must confess the PROPRICER to MS Project export is probably the most polished and functional of these project data between the apps.

The problem - and one I suspect PROPRICER is looking to address with the Database Integration Tool (DIT) - is that by exporting cost data into the scheduling app for plan vs actual comparison by project data in different tools - each aligned with the underlying structure of rates and indexes for subsequent use. It also may be that the PROPRICER interface in the External Data tab - which I have used successfully to manage the program from end-to-end without compromise. This is the core data set used by the proprietary nature and tend to lack the functionality and features of dedicated tools.

lower to the problem is agreement by various software vendors upon a defined set of core data with or without the WBS. The WBS is the project skeletal system and provides the connective tissue for importing or exporting the data for use in other applications.

the Rosetta Stone of data is created I have but one piece of advice and that is to give a proper assessment guide, GAO-09-53P, March 2009, Chapter 8, page 65.

ing to the Contract or the project level WBS assessment guide, GAO-09-53P, March 2009, Chapter 8, page 65.

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