



A Study of Placing Army Requirements on Contract

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A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

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A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

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A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

Abstract

Program Managers' responsibilities lie in effectively executing cost, performance, and schedule management of acquisition programs and services throughout the Army. Program managers cannot execute programs without the support and assistance of many stakeholders working with members of the program office in an integrated product team fashion under the leadership of the program manager. The U.S. Army contracting command is a key stakeholder in the execution of all Army acquisition programs.

The research provides insight on the planning and development of acquisition as bound by regulation, law, and guidelines then explores opinions of the acquisition workforce through a survey. The survey data reveals valuable information detailing the experiences acquisition personnel share working together as a team. The data shows many areas needing improvement in integrated product team contract planning and development. A disconnect exists in roles and responsibilities as well as early participation by all stakeholders. Integrated team members express a lack of empowerment, risk averse contracting officers, non-participating legal staffs, and diminishing accountability by many. Training under experienced personnel and over tasked workforce dynamics are other areas addressed by the research. The purpose of the research is to provide data derived from multiple Army organizations to explain challenges facing the acquisition workforce. The research provides insight for leadership to actively plan and develop process improvements aimed at alleviating these challenges. The research will promote more efficient contract planning and development in an age where the Army expects to do more with less.

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

Table of Contents

Abstract	4
A Study of Placing Army Requirements on Contract.....	7
Problem Statement	15
Literature Review	16
Research Methodology	17
Limitations of the Study	18
Findings	19
Conclusions	31
Recommendations	32
References	34
Appendix A – Glossary of Acronyms and Terms.....	36
Appendix B – Survey Questions	37
Appendix C – Comment Results to Survey Questions.....	45

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

List of Figures

Figure 1: The Services Acquisition Process	8
Figure 2: Forming the Team	10
Figure 3: Review Current Strategy	11
Figure 4: Market Research	12
Figure 5: Requirement Definition	13
Figure 6: Acquisition Strategy	15
Figure 7. Survey Participation by Location	19
Figure 8. Participant Age Groups	20
Figure 9. Participant Gender	20
Figure 10. Participant Acquisition Position Breakdown	21
Figure 11. Years of Experience in Current Acquisition Position	22
Figure 12. Participant Primary Career Field	23
Figure 13. Level of Certifications in All Career Fields	24
Figure 14. Personal Education	25
Figure 15. Participation in Contract Planning IPT	25
Figure 16. Internal Processes Between PM and IPT	26
Figure 17. Training and Development	27
Figure 18. Obstacles Within an IPT	28
Figure 19. Full IPT Participation	28
Figure 20. Lack of Motivation	29
Figure 21. Lengthy Policies in Contract Planning	30
Figure 22. Can Contracting Time be Shortened.....	30

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

A Study of Placing Army Requirements on Contract

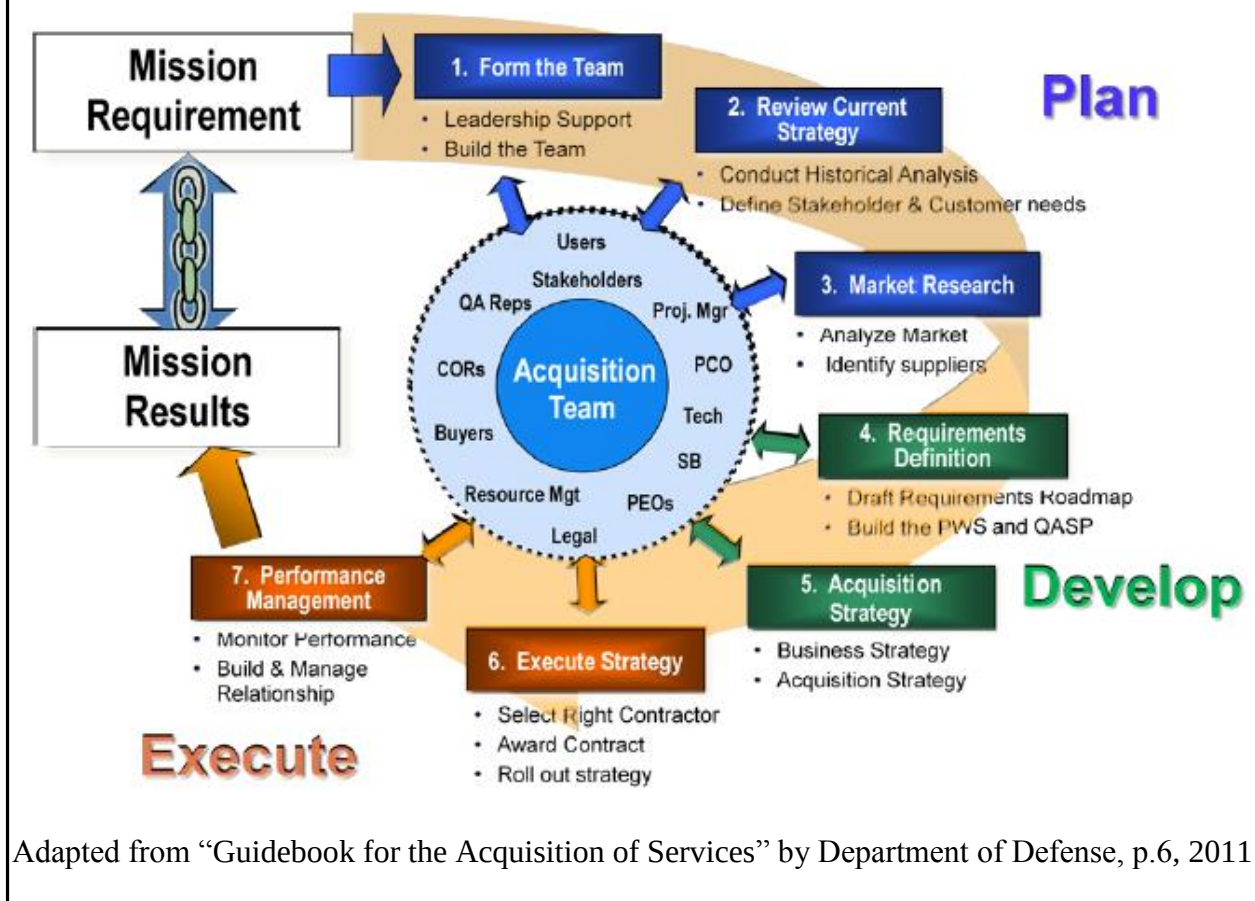
The Department of Defense (DoD) acquisition process is remarkably complex. Many layers of regulation, policy, and statutes govern it. “Acquisition includes design, engineering, test and evaluation, production, and operations and support of defense systems” (Brown, 2010, p. 1). “The primary objective of Defense acquisition is to acquire quality products that satisfy user needs with measurable improvements to mission capability and operational support, in a timely manner, and at a fair and reasonable price” (DoD, 2007, p. 3).

The acquisition process involves many stakeholders while the Program Management Office (PMO) ultimately has the materiel developer role. “The Program Manager (PM) is the designated individual with responsibility for and authority to accomplish program objectives for development, production, and sustainment to meet the user’s operational needs” (DoD, 2007, p. 4). Many other external stakeholders contribute to satisfy the acquisition of defense systems that requires close cooperation and coordination with the PM. “The PM, while perhaps being unable to control the external environment, has management authority over business and technical aspects of a specific program. The PM has one responsibility only—managing the program—and accountability is clear” (Brown, 2010, p. 16).

Acquisition either fits in one of two categories as goods or services both employing similar processes. The DoD acquisition process in general terms is shown in Figure 1.

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

Figure 1: The Services Acquisition Process



The services acquisition process revolves around the procurement of a service and is applicable whether the Government procures an end item or service. The diversity of stakeholders involved in the process is broad with each one responsible to separate lanes of authority. Relationships between these stakeholders and development of internal standard operating processes fall on the shoulders of the PM to manage. The research focuses on steps 1 through 5 where the Plan and Develop phases start the process and follow through to complete necessary efforts leading to a Request for Proposal (RFP).

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

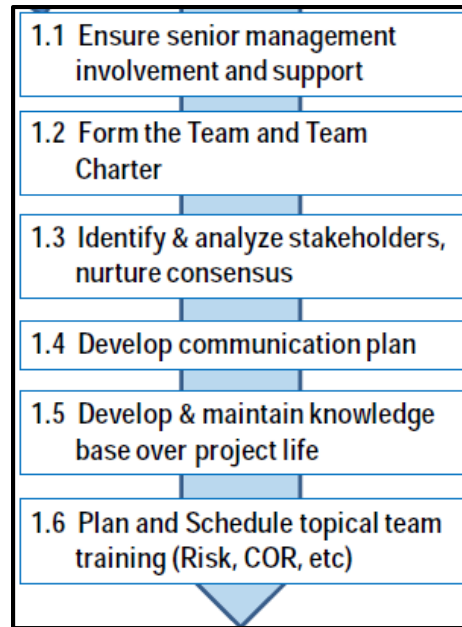
Plan Phase (Form the Team, Review Current Strategy, Market Research). Although there are many stakeholders, one of many key relationships within the Army acquisition process resides between the PMO and the Army Contracting Command (ACC). The PM cannot execute or manage a program without the ability to establish contracts with private industry. Therefore, the PMO and ACC must work closely to define valid requirements to get on contract in a respectable timeframe. The procurement process starts with the client (Program Executive Officer, Program/Project Manager, Requiring Activity), contracting professionals must reach out and partner with these clients to help manage a complex acquisition process in an environment of constrained budgets and growing demands and expectations (Mapping the Acquisition and Procurement Process, 2015). The PM should include the contracting professionals early in the acquisition process, and ideally, as soon as the requirement process solidifies with the user community. The Procurement Contracting Officer (PCO) is the only one who maintains the authority legally binding the Government in contract with private industry. The PM must build the relationship with the ACC to ensure complete unambiguous communication exists between the PM and the ACC. Contracting officers should always learn about any technical and contractual history of a new procurement to make informed and accurate decisions that may affect the acquisition (ACC-Contracting Note 15-10, 2015).

The PM utilizes the Integrated Product Team (IPT) approach as directed by Secretary of Defense, William J. Perry on May 10, 1995 in the DoD Guide to Integrated Product and Process Development. The IPT method involves all the stakeholders and builds effective communication to organize tasks while acquiring products and services. The IPT at a minimum consists of the PM, user representative, contracting officer, contracting specialist, resource management,

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

technical management, legal, and a Contracting Officer Representative (COR). Figure 2 describes the sub-elements that comprise Forming the Team.

Figure 2: Forming the Team

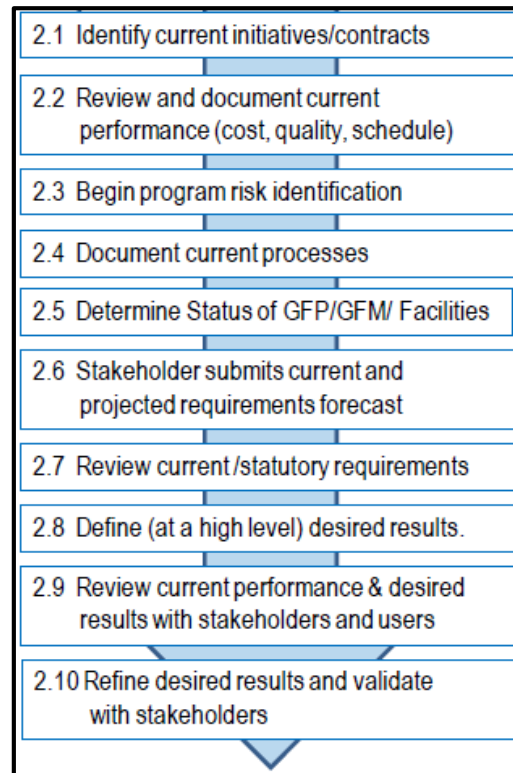


Adapted from “Guidebook for the Acquisition of Services” by Department of Defense, p.11, 2011. Image has been altered.

The IPT begins working together to review current strategy by documenting performance measures, forecasting requirements, identifying risk, and defining desired results to name a few. “It sets the stage for crafting an acquisition in which the performance goals of the contractor and the government are in sync” (DoD, Guidebook for the Acquisition of Services, 2011, p. 16). Reviewing the current strategy is important because this begins the foundation on which the acquisition strategy builds. Measures determine performance along current and newly created processes. Discussions on Government Furnished Materials/Property and even facilities happen at this phase in the process. Figure 3 describes the sub-elements that comprise Review Current Strategy.

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

Figure 3: Review Current Strategy

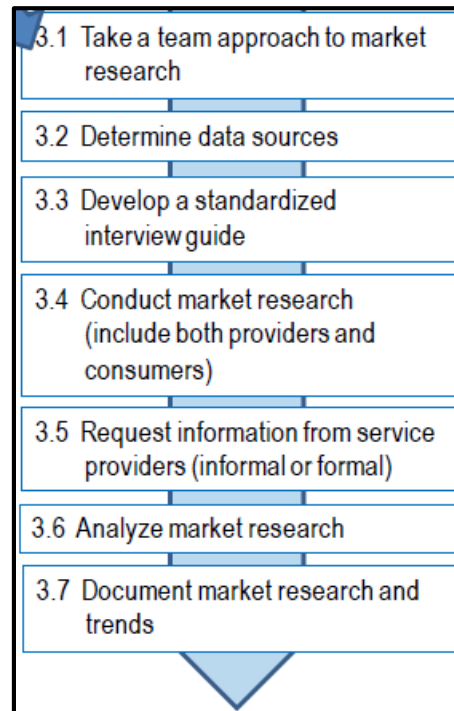


Adapted from “Guidebook for the Acquisition of Services” by Department of Defense, p.16, 2011. Image has been altered.

Market research is the last element of the planning phase addressing both business and technical considerations. The acquisition team equips themselves with cost drivers, known advantages, and provides optimization for developing the acquisition strategy. Market research requires the active participation of all acquisition team members as appropriate (DoD, Guidebook for the Acquisition of Services, 2011). The technical staff focuses on the marketplace from a much different perspective than the contracting staff. Government meetings with industry are a best practice. The market research report is the final product utilizing documented findings and supports the business strategy (DoD, Guidebook for the Acquisition of Services, 2011). Figure 4 describes the sub-elements of Market Research.

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

Figure 4: Market Research



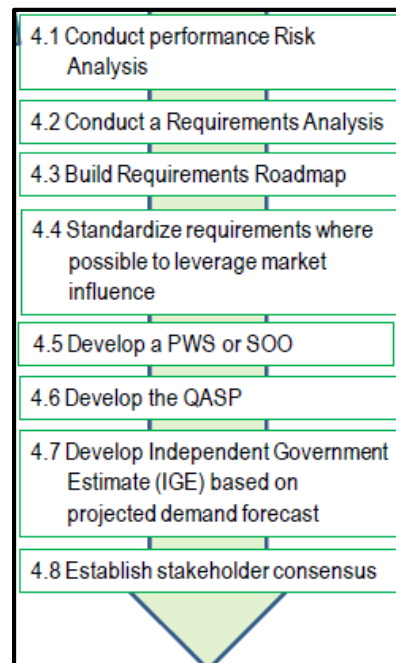
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Development Phase (Requirements Definition, Acquisition Strategy). During the development phase, all data acquired by the acquisition team becomes the foundation in defining the requirements and beginning the acquisition strategy. Requirements definition is an extremely important process where the acquisition team analyzes risk, conducts requirement analysis, builds a requirements roadmap, ascertains appropriate performance standards to reflect minimum needs, and pinpoints acceptable quality levels. The Performance Work Statement (PWS) comprises the “heart” of any service acquisition and the success or failure of a contract is greatly dependent on the quality of the PWS (DoD, Guidebook for the Acquisition of Services, 2011). Although there is no mandatory template, the PWS reflects the requirements roadmap and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) provides guidelines. The PWS influences the

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

performance of work to meet requirements. The review of the PWS is extensive because all tasks beyond the PWS hinge on completeness such as the Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP) and Independent Government Estimate (IGE). The QASP details the surveillance executed by the COR post contract award and throughout contract completion (DoD, Guidebook for the Acquisition of Services, 2011). The IGE provides a forecast for the Government of the cost expected from the contractor during proposal. Figure 5 describes Requirement Definition.

Figure 5: Requirement Definition



Adapted from “Guidebook for the Acquisition of Services” by Department of Defense, p.23, 2011. Image has been altered.

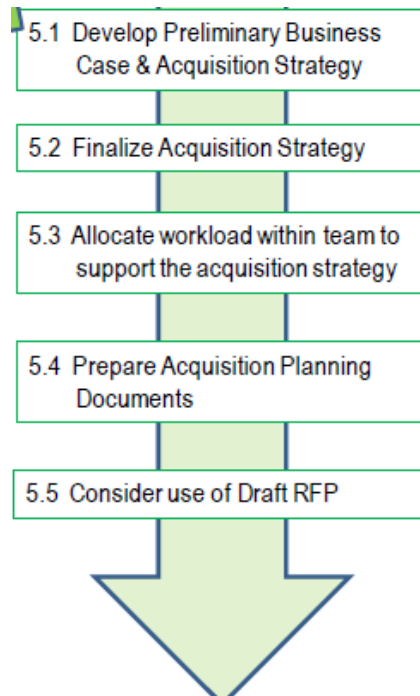
The acquisition strategy is the final stage of the development phase of the acquisition process and includes business case analysis, contract type, incentive strategy if applicable, and method of contractor selection all driven to achieve the mission requirement. The selection of contract type must be reflective of the nature of the requirement and risks associated with performance (DoD, Guidebook for the Acquisition of Services, 2011). Contract types consist of

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

fixed price and cost reimbursable with the option of applying incentives to motivate the contractor and drive behavior. Important to note that while the FAR provides for the use of Time and Materials (T&M) contracts under part 12 commercial contracts, DoD policy discourages its use and therefore T&M should only be used in rare, justifiable circumstances (DoD, Guidebook for the Acquisition of Services, 2011). The two methods for contractor selection is Low Price Technically Acceptable (LPTA) and trade-off method. The contractor meeting the minimal technical criteria and the lowest price determines LPTA. Trade-off method offers the opportunity to represent best value by considering past performance, technical feasibility, and cost factors. The Government can then trade technical performance with price. Final preparation of the acquisition plan, acquisition strategy, and source selection plan allows for the construction of the draft RFP. Figure 6 describes the sub-elements of Acquisition Strategy.

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

Figure 6: Acquisition Strategy



Adapted from “Guidebook for the Acquisition of Services” by Department of Defense, p.37, 2011. Image has been altered.

Problem Statement

The primary purpose of the DoDI 5000.02 Defense Acquisition Management System (DAMS) is to combine service Warfighter capability requirements into a cradle to grave life-cycle acquisition management process. The research addresses the problem of how unwieldy, complex and time consuming the acquisition process is due to policy, regulation, and uncoordinated teaming. Training for all acquisition professionals and a complete understanding of the DAMS process across all services is extremely important to the vital success of timely acquisition. The acquisition process is more important than ever to the Army’s performance and the Army has not valued the skill and experience required to perform those processes (Urgent Reform Required: Army Expeditionary Contracting, 2007).

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

The DAMS affect acquisition professionals within both the Army contracting career field and the program management career field. Research shows too many instances occur where Army acquisition teams do not agree on interpretation of this process and streamlining does not occur. Commanders and contractors have to deal with multiple Heads of Contracting Activities (HCAs) and Principal Assistants Responsible for Contracting where these multiple interactions can result in varying policy interpretations and poor operations (Urgent Reform Required: Army Expeditionary Contracting, 2007).

The purpose of the research is to provide data to all acquisition professionals throughout the Army community on how both PMO and ACC personnel, at a minimum, work together to accomplish acquisition and sustainment of Army systems. The research addresses the problem statement in answering the research question, How do differences in integrated contract planning across various ACC's and the PMO's they support drive contract award timelines?

Literature Review

The literature review identifies information that documents the acquisition process from planning to development, acknowledges the key players associated with the process, and emphasizes the importance of teamwork among the acquisition team, with emphasis placed specifically on the Army program management offices and the ACC. The literature review covers the timeframe between 2006 and 2015.

The Guidebook for DoD Acquisition of Services reveals a baseline to illustrate the fundamental steps of acquisition associated with services. The guidebook defines the standardized functions associated with getting requirements on contract and the contract execution. Applying this rigorous and systematic approach requires the dedicated effort of an

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

acquisition team composed of functional experts, contracting specialists, contracting officer representatives, and others working together to achieve performance results and meet their mission requirements (DoD, Guidebook for the Acquisition of Services, 2011).

The DoD Directive 5000.01 offers the current mandatory policies, procedures, and principles used for management of any acquisition program. These directives are routinely updated and modified at the discretion of the DoD. The latest DoD Directive 5000.01 update is January 7, 2015. Recently, DoD also published DoD Instruction 5000.74 providing direction for the acquisition of services.

Mapping the acquisition process provided by the ACC SharePoint reflects the process required to define requirements, funding, risk, market research, acquisition plan, contract types, competition requirements, and source selection. The SharePoint site encompasses ACC processes referencing the DoD acquisition guidebook and the FAR guidelines. It delivers a checklist for the acquisition community to guarantee following of policies and educates the team for planning purposes.

Research Methodology

The methodology utilized for the research focuses on answering the problem statement by concentrating on the information provided in the literature review and answering the question presented within the problem statement. The research utilizes an online survey distributed to ACC professionals including business management and program management personnel. The data comprises both qualitative and quantitative information.

After approval, the survey went by email to five overarching Program Executive Offices (PEOs) and three ACC centers located at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama, Aberdeen

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

Proving Grounds, Maryland, and the Tank and Automotive Command (TACOM) in Warren, Michigan. Approximately five hundred acquisition professionals consisting of Army civilian, contractor, and military were selected for survey participation. The survey entailed a list of instructions and the consent form. The web-based survey tool is Opinio. The survey consisted of twenty questions, ten of which were demographic in nature while the remaining ten focused on the research question. (See Appendix B)

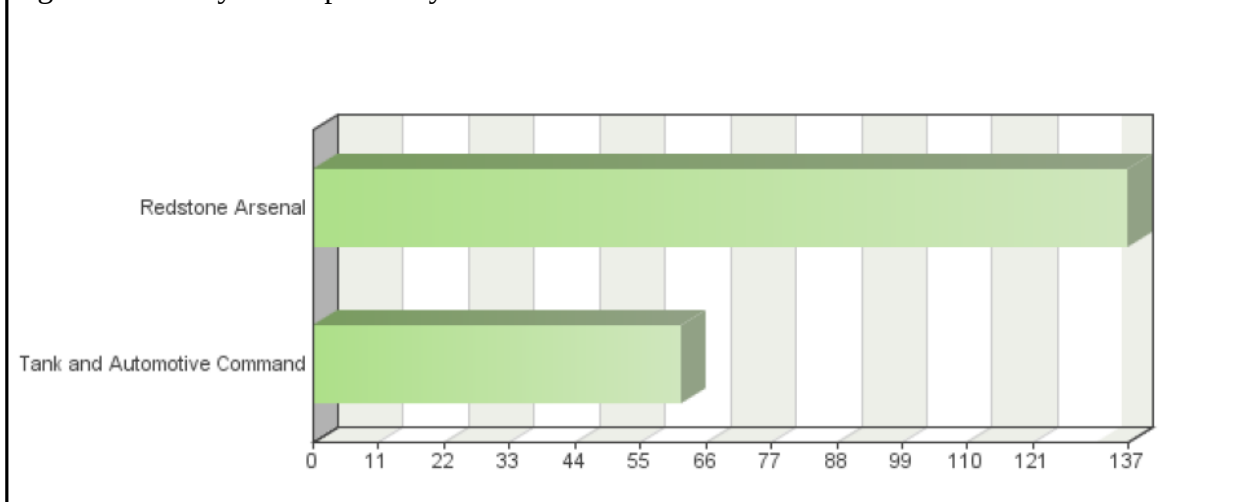
The outcome of the survey identified a substantial amount of data relevant to the problem statement and responsive to the research questions. The response rate was 39.8%.

Limitations of Study

The research survey went to three geographic locations based on commonality of the PM's mission set between each of these Army acquisition facilities. The overall scope of the survey sought to receive results at three locations from experienced acquisition professionals within every discipline that plays a role in getting requirements on contract, both PM and ACC. Legal participation did not occur in the survey possibly due to poor circulation within the PMO. Two of the three locations provided survey input limiting the population of data. The surveyed sample population was approximately five hundred personnel; however, the total number of surveys launched was 207 and five of these decided not to complete resulting in 202 surveys completed. Three out of the 202 participants stated that they were not a member of the acquisition workforce and were eliminated therefore reducing the resulting participation to 199. Figure 7 displays the Survey Participation by Location.

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

Figure 7. Survey Participation by Location



Findings

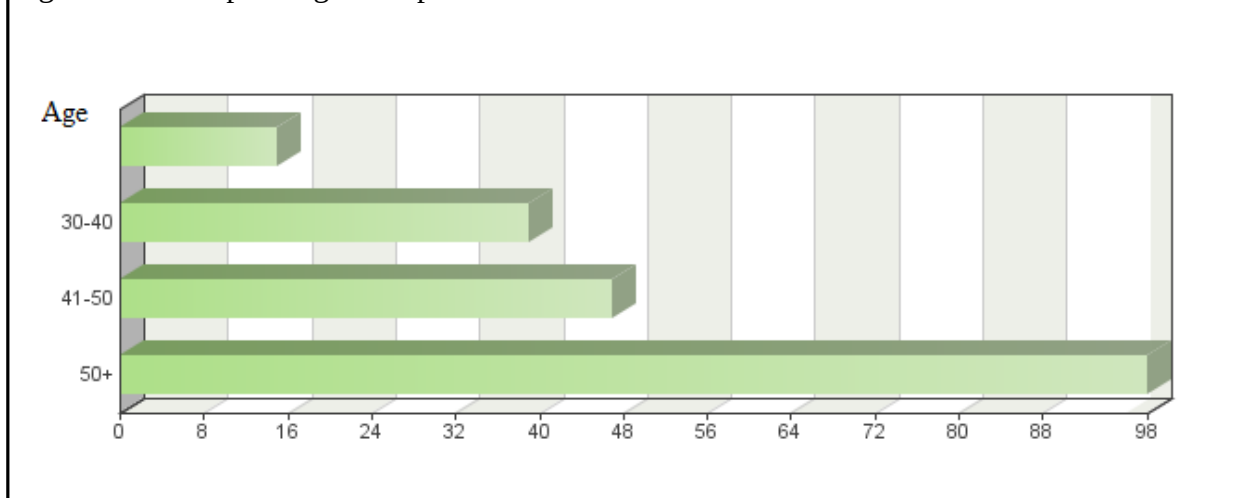
The online survey consisted of ten demographic questions concerning age, gender, current acquisition position, number of years of acquisition experience, location of work, career field, DAU level of training in each career field whether primary or secondary, and personal education level. The data determines work experience and establish the attributes of the participant population.

Age

The survey asked participants to distinguish their age group to provide a statistical measure of work experience. The data reveals a highest relative frequency of participant's age group 50+ years old as being 47.3% followed by 41-50 years at 22.7% and 30-40 years at 18.8%. Age group 30 years and less was the minority at 7.3%. Figure 8 displays the Participant Age Groups.

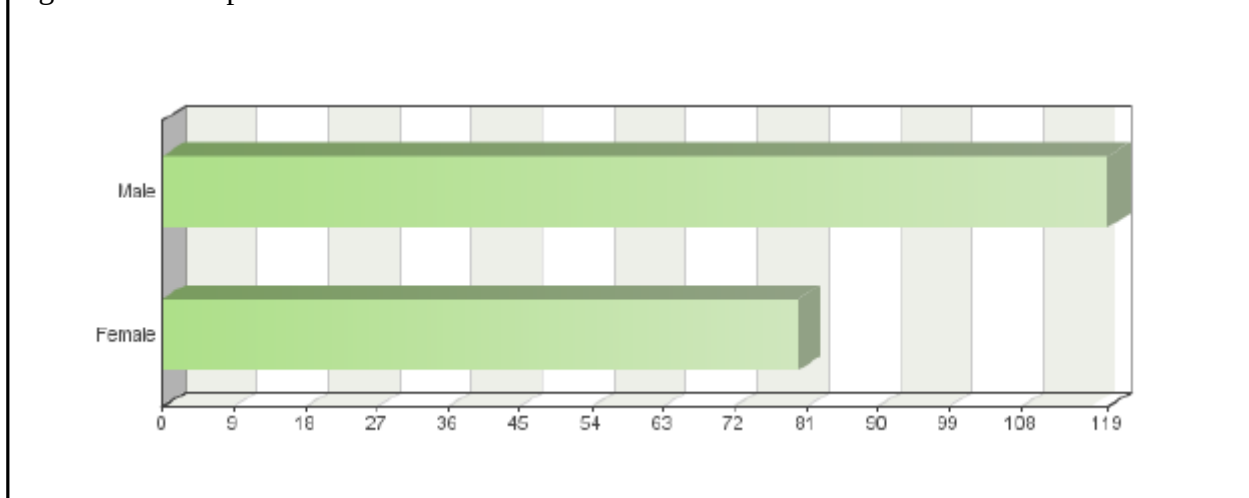
A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

Figure 8. Participant Age Groups

**Gender**

The survey requested gender on a voluntary basis. All participants elected to provide gender information. Data revealed a slight majority of participants are male with a relative frequency of males 59.8% and females 40.2%. Figure 9 displays the Participant Gender.

Figure 9. Participant Gender

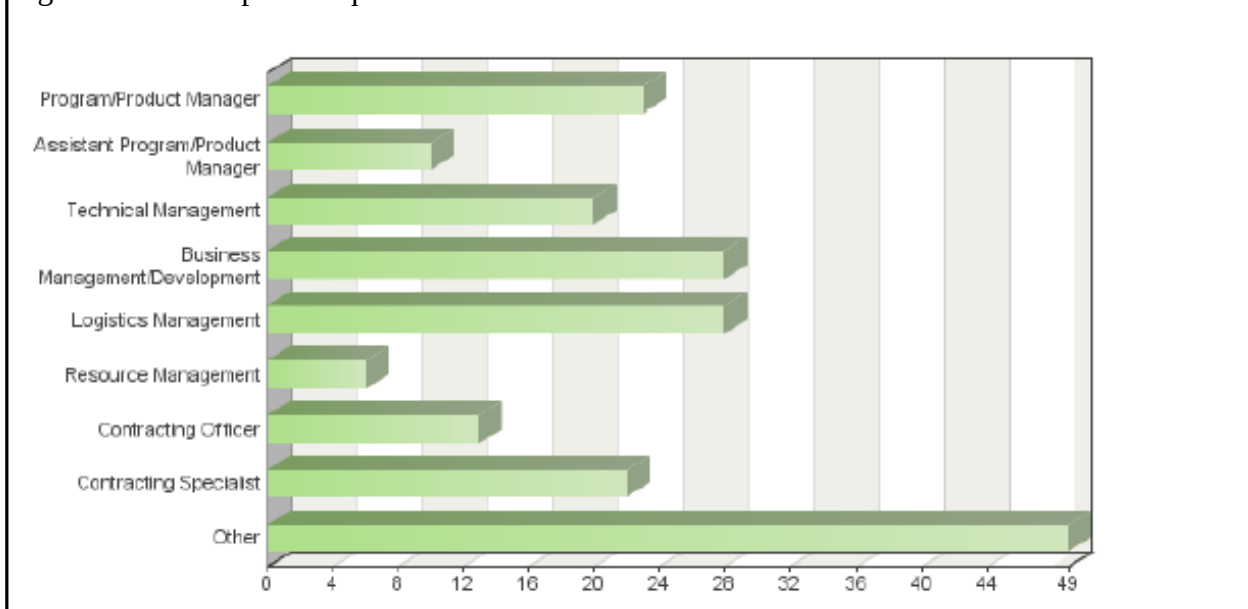


A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

Current Acquisition Position

The survey research primarily concentrated on program management and contracting command personnel. It is important to distinguish the fact that program management organizations within the Army typically include employees in the technical, business, logistics, and resource management career fields. The survey data shows a breakdown of the following disciplines by relative frequency: PM-11.6 %, Assistant Product Manager (APM)-5.0 %, Technical Management-10.0 %, Business Management-14.1 %, Logistics Management-14.1%, Resource Management-3.0 %, Contracting Officer-6.5%, Contracting Specialist-11.1 %, and Other 24.6 %. The “other” category contained the following disciplines: Acquisition Analyst, Contract Analyst, Procurement Analyst, Program Integrator, Deputy Program Manager, Assistant PEO, and Cost Analyst. The data suggests personnel from all disciplines involved in the planning and development of requirements actively participated in the survey with the exception of Legal. Figure 10 displays the Participant Acquisition Position Breakdown.

Figure 10. Participant Acquisition Position Breakdown

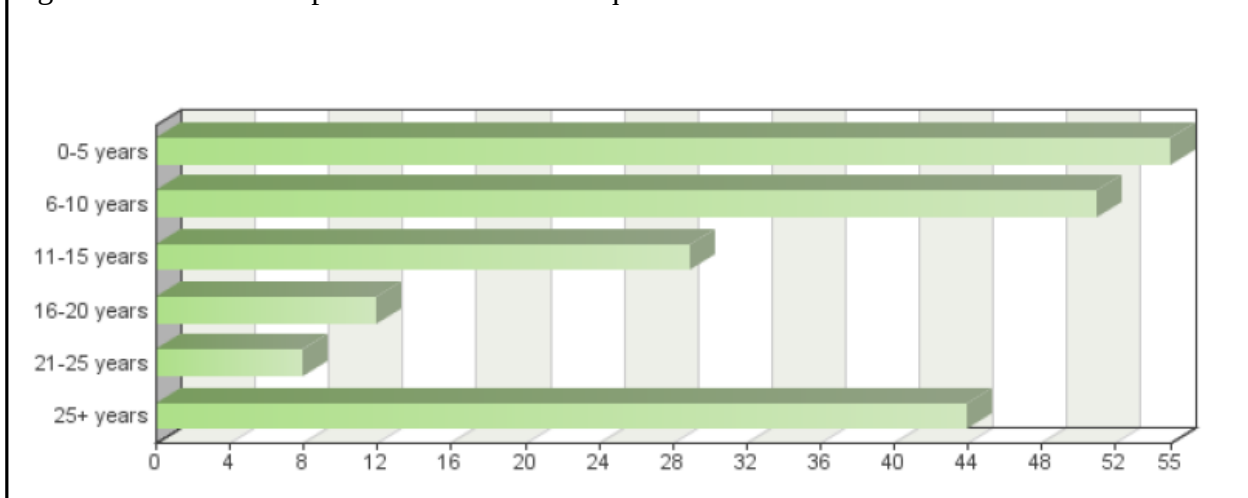


A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

Years of Experience in Acquisition

The survey requested each participant provide the years of experience in his or her current acquisition position. The information is important to consider based on the more direct questions following the demographic questions. The data is relative when taking into consideration the research question at hand. The data shows 22.1 % of all participants have 25+ years of experience in his or her current acquisition position. There is a reduction in acquisition personnel between 16-25 years of experience. This group comprises only 10.1% of the participants. The data trend reveals 52% of survey respondents have 10 years or less experience. Figure 11 shows the Years of Experience in Current Acquisition Position.

Figure 11. Years of Experience in Current Acquisition Position



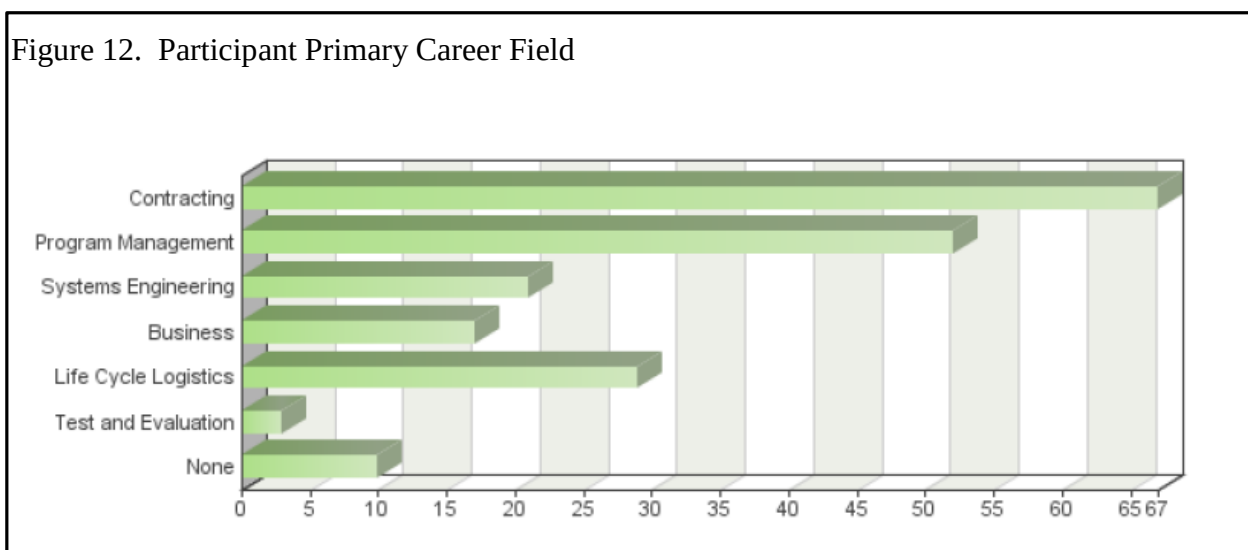
Primary Career Field

There are several career fields within the acquisition workforce. The DAU developed the curriculum for level I, II, and III certification within each career field. The DAU mission is to “provide a global learning environment to develop qualified acquisition, requirements, and contingency professionals who deliver and sustain effective and affordable warfighting capabilities” (Defense Acquisition University Mission, 2016). The career fields found within the

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

ACC and PM offices related to contract planning and development are as follows: Contracting, Program Management, Systems Engineering, Business, Life Cycle Logistics, Test and Evaluation, and Requirements Management. Legal is the only stakeholder in the acquisition process that does not have a career field nor receive instruction or training to gain certification levels at the DAU. The research does not address why legal is not included in DoD acquisition training. Survey data depicts that 33.7% of participants are in the contracting primary career field and 26.1% in program management. The category of none indicates 4.8% have no career field; these personnel are likely support contractors working within the PMO. Figure 12 presents the Participant Primary Career Field.

Figure 12. Participant Primary Career Field



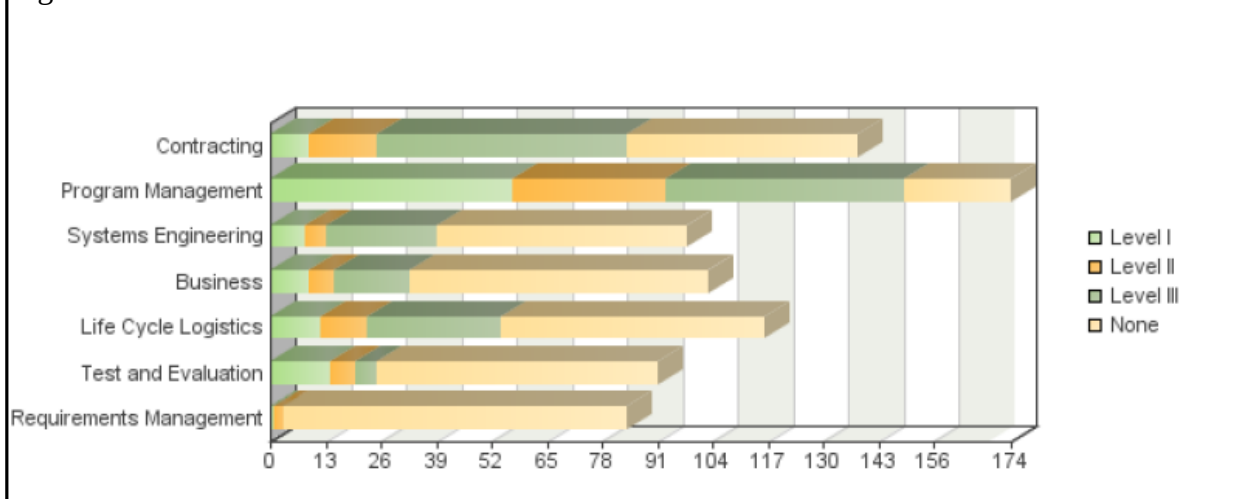
Certification Levels of Various Career Fields

Workforce members must complete level III certification in their primary career field to be competitive for career advancement. These professionals may elect to receive training/certifications in other career fields after completing level III in their respective career field. Survey data depicts that 29.6 % of participants have level III certification in contracting

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

and 28.1% in program management. The results across all career fields indicate a high volume of level III certified personnel in each primary career field. The data also indicates a significant number of level I and II certified personnel in program management. Data on requirements management level I and II certifications show that only 3.5% of the survey participants achieved this level of certification. Figure 13 shows the Level of Certifications in All Career Fields.

Figure 13. Level of Certifications in All Career Fields

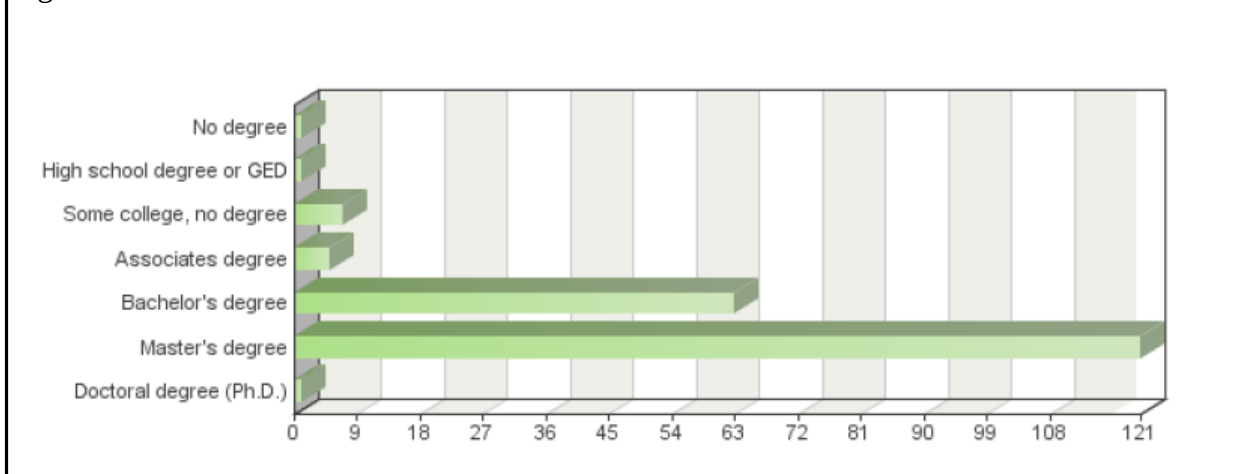


Personal Education

One survey question asked for the highest level of personal education from each participant. The frequency of survey participants with a doctoral degree was 0.5%, master's degree was 60.8%, followed by bachelor's degree at 31.7%, and associate's degree at 2.5%. The remaining 4.5% stated some college, high school degree, and no degree. Figure 14 displays the Personal Education data in graphical form.

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

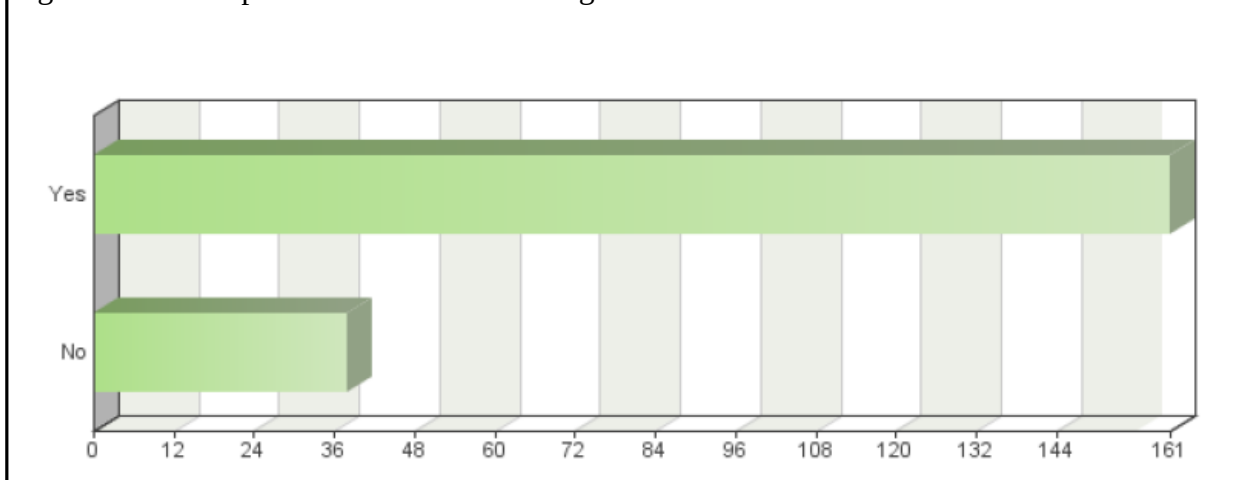
Figure 14. Personal Education



Involvement in a Contract Planning IPT

PMs use IPTs to facilitate all representatives working together. Effective IPTs are essential for the contract planning and development phase of acquisition. A survey question stated, Have you participated in a contract planning IPT? The majority of participants stated yes at a frequency of 81%. The remaining 19% had not ever participated in a contract planning IPT. Figure 15 reveals the Participation in Contract Planning IPT.

Figure 15. Participation in Contract Planning IPT

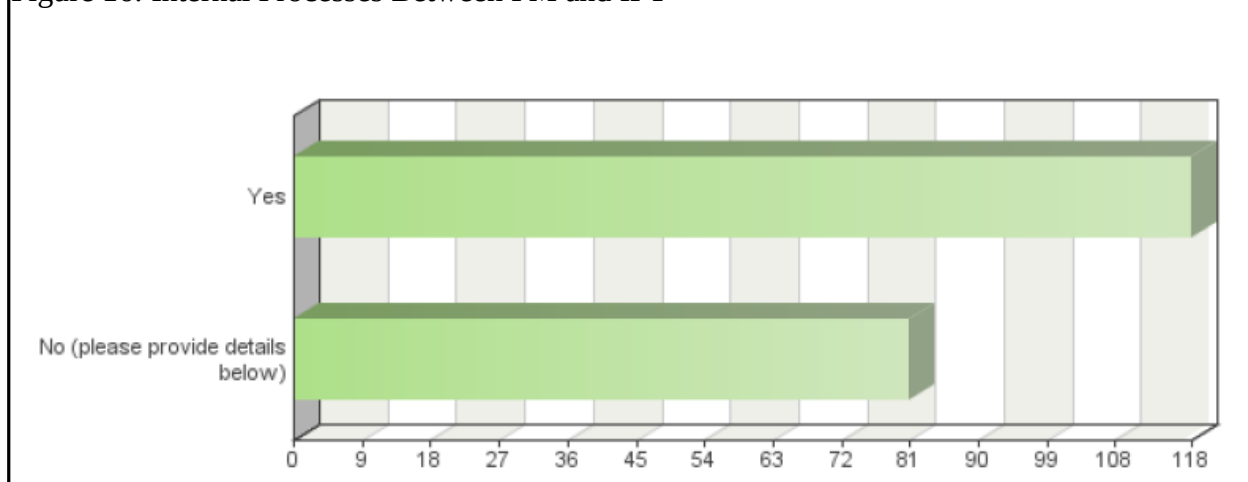


A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

Next, a survey question stated, Were you included from the beginning of the requirements definition phase (Statement Of Objectives (SOO), Statement Of Work (SOW), PWS)? Again, 20% answered no to this question. Many participants provided consistent comments stating instances where IPT members were absent at requirements definition. Participant's comments are located in Appendix C.

Next, a survey question stated, Do you feel that internal processes were in place between program managers and IPT members that promote getting requirements on contract efficiently? The outcome to this question was 59.3% stating yes and 40.7% answering no. The frequently recurring areas of concern identified by respondents include no controls on the process, infighting over requirements and priorities, strong lack of communication, lack of training, under resourced personnel, limited participation of members, and misunderstood roles and responsibilities. Participant's comments are in Appendix C. Figure 16 displays Internal Processes Between PM and IPT.

Figure 16: Internal Processes Between PM and IPT



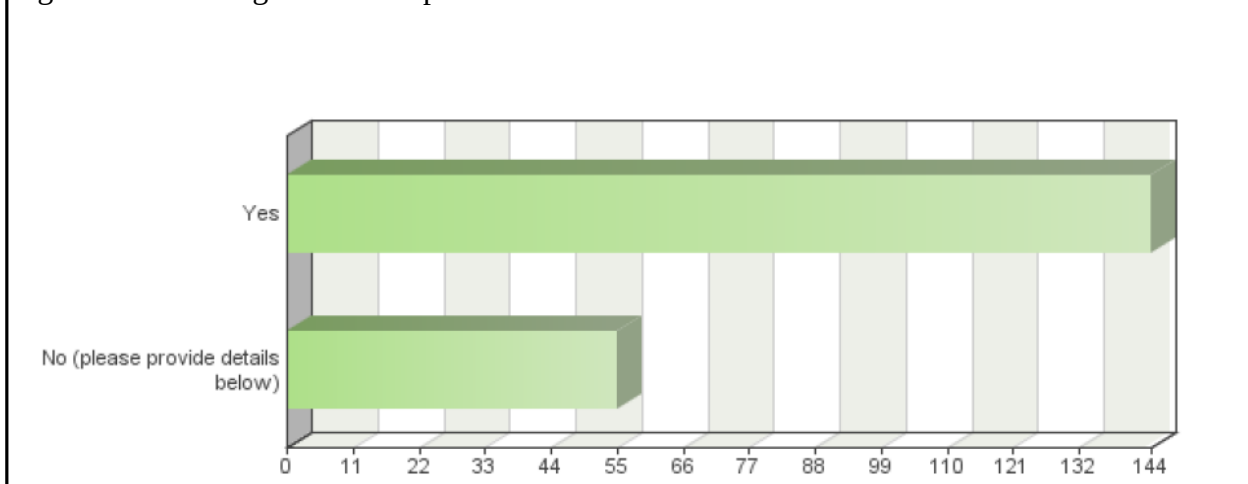
The survey examined training and development with the question, Do you feel that you have been provided the proper training and development to complete your role in the contract

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

planning IPT? The outcome to this question was 72.4% stating yes and 27.6% answering no.

The recurring comments made by participants are no IPT training, learn as you go, evolving process influenced by experience and personalities, and training does not address how to lead in a multifunctional team. Participant's comments are in Appendix C. Figure 17 illustrates the results of Training and Development.

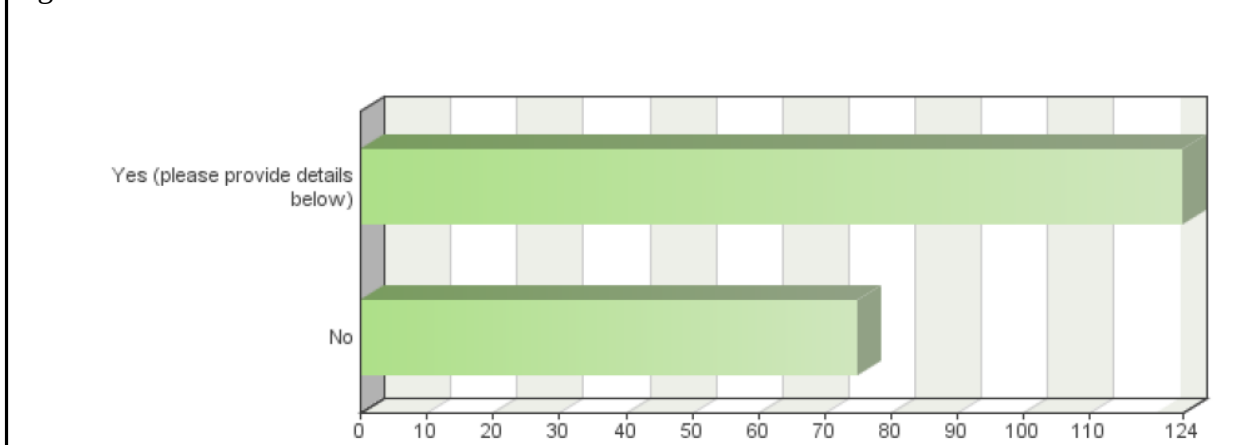
Figure 17. Training and Development



The survey also focused on obstacles discouraging IPT efficiency. A survey question stated, Have you witnessed obstacles (such as bad relationships, processes, and/or undertrained team members) during your involvement in the IPT preventing you or the team from accomplishing tasks in a timely manner? The response to this question was 62.3% stating yes while 37.7% stated no. The recurring comment data includes no clear decision making authority, legal often taking weeks to review, bad relations between PM and ACC, under resourced and under trained teams, inexperience, failure to communicate, and personalities taking ownership. Participant's comments are in Appendix C. Figure 18 shows the responses to Obstacles Within an IPT.

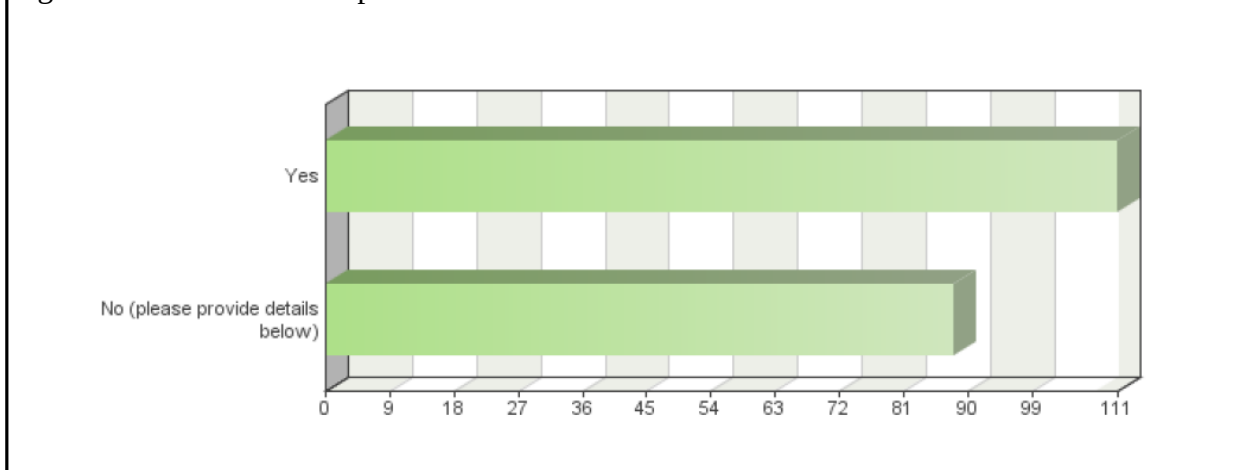
A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

Figure 18. Obstacles Within an IPT



The survey next examined the participation of all required members of a contract planning IPT by stating, In your experiences as a member of an IPT for contract planning, were all members represented (legal, resource management, program management, business management) on a regular basis? The results were 53.6% stating yes and 44.2% stating no. The recurring statements by participants are minimal interaction of team members, legal never involved, and lack of contracting officer. Participant's comments are in Appendix C. Figure 19 displays Full IPT Participation.

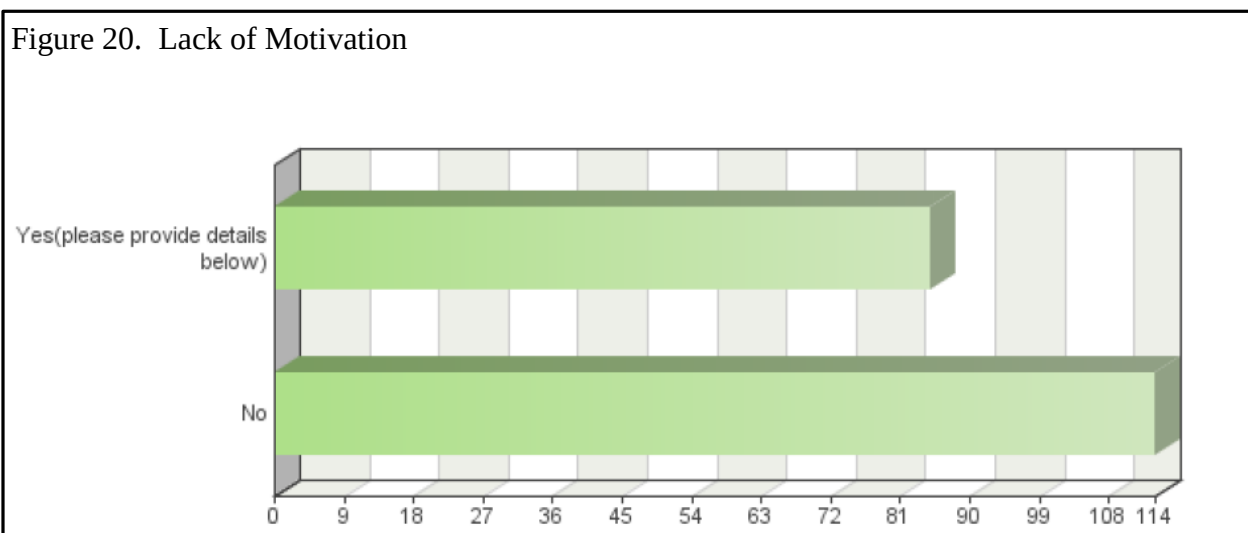
Figure 19. Full IPT Participation



A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

Another survey question stated, Have you experienced IPT members (not motivated or unhappy in their job) being an obstacle in the IPT contract planning efficiently? The results showed 42.7% stating yes and 57.3% stating no. Recurring comments include lack of enthusiasm, not being prepared, personality conflicts, lack of appreciation of others roles, lack of empowerment, frustration with the contracting process, and low Government morale.

Participant's comments are in Appendix C. Figure 20 displays Lack of Motivation responses.

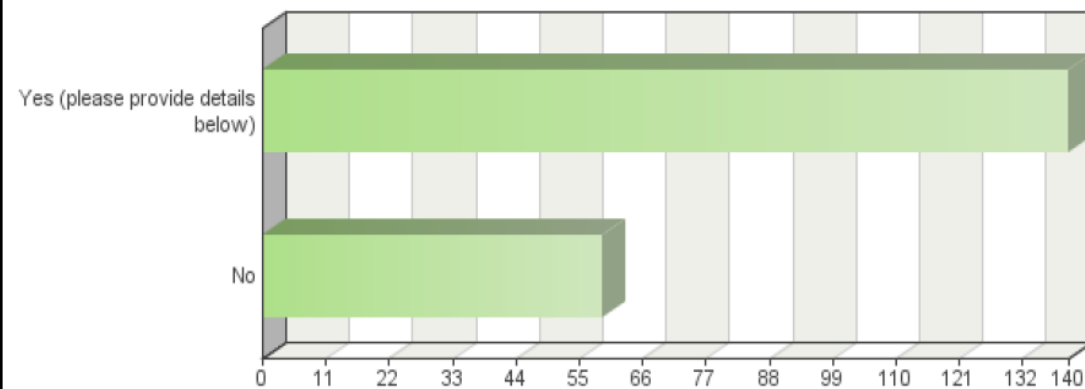


Policy

A survey question stated, Do you feel that lengthy policies and/or changing policies prevents contract planning in a timely manner? Survey data depicts that 70.4% stated yes and 29.7% stated no. The recurring statements include multiple levels of review and rules of engagement not understood by all disciplines. Participant's comments are in Appendix C. Figure 21 displays responses to the survey question Lengthy Policies in Contract Planning.

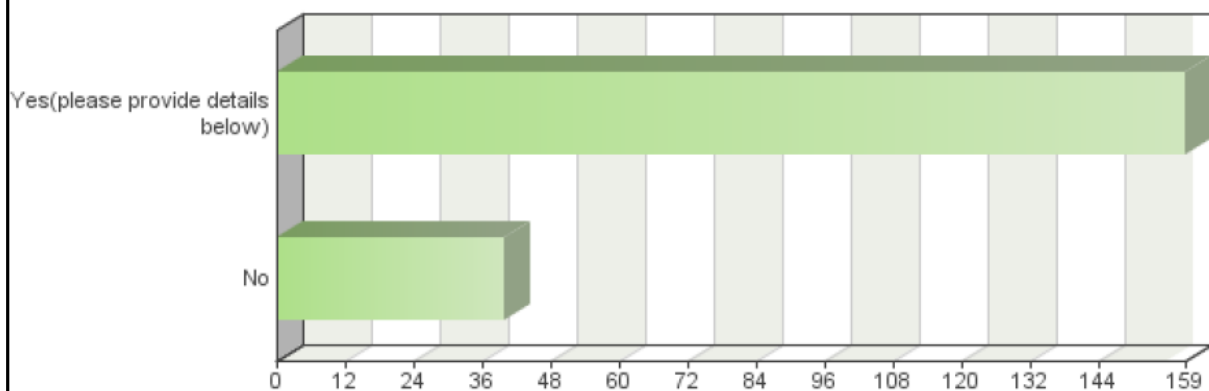
A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

Figure 21. Lengthy Policies in Contract Planning



Next, a survey question stated, Do you feel that contracting timelines could be shortened? This resulted in 80% stating yes and 20% stating no. Participant's comments are in Appendix C. Figure 22 displays responses to the survey question, Can Contracting Time be Shortened.

Figure 22. Can Contracting Time be Shortened



Summary of Findings

The process of contract planning and development involves many stakeholders and requires close communication and coordination among all to gain efficiencies where possible. The responsibility of the PM to manage cost, performance, and schedule while including all

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

stakeholders is a daunting task. The research provides a representative measure of perspectives among all stakeholders with the exception of Legal. Detailed comments provided by the survey participants are common among many and signify negative trends in key areas working in an IPT. These trend areas include lack of accountability, inadequate empowerment, sparse legal review, unclear roles and responsibilities, inconsistent participation, varying policy interpretations, and undertrained team members. Demographic data indicates the possibility of declining expertise among many stakeholder disciplines in the near future. All of these factors based on survey responses reveal there is much work still needed to ensure the acquisition workforce has the right skills and motivation to work as a team for the sake of the defense of the Nation.

Conclusion

The data collected during the research sufficiently addresses the problem statement. It delivers a cohesive response to many instances where Army acquisition teams do not agree on interpretation of policies and processes. According to the data, interaction between the PM and ACC evidently can result in varying policy interpretations and poor operations. Acquisition reform has been a topic within the DoD for well over fifty years (Fox, 2011). However, despite the defense community's intent to reform the acquisition process, the difficulty of the problem and the associated politics, combined with organizational dynamics that are resistant to change, have led to only minor improvements (Fox, 2011). According to the research data, participants imply that politics, resistance to change, and organizational dynamics still play a key role in contract planning and development.

Another interesting consistency in the research data is the appearance that the workforce does not fully understand, respect, nor properly administer the use of IPTs. The data is

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

surprising given how long DoD has officially been implementing IPTs as a method to organize. Secretary of Defense, Dr. William Perry, directed on May 10, 1995, the “immediate implementation” of a management process called Integrated Product and Process Development (IPPD) throughout the acquisition process to the maximum extent possible (DoD, DoD Guide to Integrate Product and Process Development, 1996, p.ix). IPTs are at the core of the IPPD process and work best with empowered, well trained, and motivated members. The research indicates that there is no unified implementation approach to utilizing IPTs to enhance inter-organizational cooperation. In a 2006 report, the Government Accounting Office listed three factors useful for improving defense service acquisition. At the strategic level, these factors include strong leadership to define and articulate a corporate vision, including specific goals and outcomes, results-oriented communication metrics, and defined responsibilities and associated support structures (Tailored Approach Needed to Improve Service Acquisition, 2006).

Recommendations

The research and survey data provided is sufficient in providing several contract planning and development recommendations.

Recommendation 1. Leaders should recognize the disparity between PMOs and ACC. Leaders should foster an environment from the top down that promotes unity between the organizations. Leaders should prioritize efforts by first strengthening relationships, developing mutual respect, and all the while enhancing the understanding of how important these two organizations are to the Army. Leaders should offer mutually shared professional development opportunities and social events.

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

Recommendation 2. Leaders in all stakeholder organizations should ensure the proper conduct of personnel and should seek to establish cross training through individual development planning. Leaders should take the time to recognize personnel skills and qualifications by holding regular award ceremonies that recognize top performers.

Recommendation 3. Leaders should empower the workforce for the IPT structure to flourish and reduce review levels by implementation of lean six sigma. Institute an IPT to identify non-value added steps in processes through value stream mapping. Leaders should also hold stakeholders accountable for regular participation in IPTs.

Recommendation 4. Reduce interpretation error in policy or regulation with regular refresher training at the leader and workforce level through strong leadership and collaborative environments.

Recommendation 5. Leaders should employ an IPT to define, develop, and implement a voluntary mentoring system in each organization ensuring senior experience is not lost due to attrition.

Recommendation 6. All stakeholder organizations should work to agree on requirements early and upfront via continuous active participation in an IPT.

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

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A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

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A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

Appendix A
Glossary of Acronyms and Terms

Acronym	Description
ACC	Army Contracting Command
COR	Contracting Officer Representative
CRP	Contract Requirements Package
DAMS	Defense Acquisition Management System
DAU	Defense Acquisition University
DoD	Department of Defense
IGE	Independent Government Estimate
IPPD	Integrated Product and Process Development
IPT	Integrated Product Team
J&A	Justification and Approval
LPTA	Low Price Technically Acceptable
PCO	Procurement Contract Officer
PEO	Program Executive Office
PM	Program Manager
PMO	Program Management Office
PWS	Performance Work Statement
QASP	Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan
RFP	Request for Proposal
SSCF	Senior Service College Fellowship
SOO	Statement of Objectives
SOW	Statement of Work
TACOM	Tank and Automotive Command
T&M	Time and Materials

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

Appendix B
Survey Questions

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Contract Planning Survey

This survey is acquiring data from current Army program management personnel and Army contracting command representatives.

The purpose of this research is for Senior Service College Fellowship Project to identify if differences in integrated contract planning across various Army Contracting Commands (ACC's) and the Program Management Offices (PMO's) they support drive different contract award timelines.

The results of this survey will be anonymous and only aggregate data will be used in the paper. The results of this survey will be used to determine if there are any areas to be improved with respect to getting Army requirements on contract in a timely manner. If you have any questions, please contact Terry Hice at terry.hice@dau.mil.

Would you please consider taking a few moments to complete this survey? When answering the questions, please address with full and open honest remarks based on your own experiences as you find useful.

Start

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Consent Statement

1. I understand that this survey is for academic purposes and all responses are anonymous. I also read the Informed Content Statement and:

- ☐ I agree to participate.
☐ I prefer not to participate.

Next

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Demographic and Position Questions

2. Are you working as a member of the defense acquisition workforce or defense industry?

☐ Yes

☐ No

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3. What is your age group?

☐ <30

☐ 30-
40

☐ 41-
50

☐ 50+

4. What is your gender?

☐ Male

☐ Female

[Next](#)

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5. What is your current acquisition position? (Select one response.)

- ☐ Program/Product Manager
- ☐ Assistant Program/Product Manager
- ☐ Technical Management
- ☐ Business Management/Development
- ☐ Logistics Management
- ☐ Resource Management
- ☐ Contracting Officer
- ☐ Contracting Specialist
- ☐ Legal
- ☐ Other

6. Number of years' experience in your current acquisition position:

- ☐ 0-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 11-15 years
- ☐ 16-20 years
- ☐ 21-25 years
- ☐ 25+ years

7. Please identify the location where you work.

- ☐ Redstone Arsenal
- ☐ Aberdeen Proving Grounds
- ☐ Tank and Automotive
Command

[Next](#)

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8. Please identify all of your certification levels within the following DAWIA career fields? (Select all that apply.)

	Level I	Level II	Level III	None
Contracting	☐	☐	☐	☐
Program Management	☐	☐	☐	☐
Systems Engineering	☐	☐	☐	☐
Business	☐	☐	☐	☐
Life Cycle Logistics	☐	☐	☐	☐
Test and Evaluation	☐	☐	☐	☐
Requirements Management	☐	☐	☐	☐

[Next](#)

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

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9. What is your primary career field?

- ☐ Contracting
- ☐ Program Management
- ☐ Systems Engineering
- ☐ Business
- ☐ Life Cycle Logistics
- ☐ Test and Evaluation
- ☐ Requirements Management
- ☐ None

10. What is the highest educational degree you have earned?

- ☐ No degree
- ☐ High school degree or GED
- ☐ Some college, no degree
- ☐ Associates degree
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Doctoral degree (Ph.D.)
- ☐ Other post graduate degree

[Next](#)

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

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Survey Questions

This survey asks several questions about integrated contract planning through Integrated Product Teams (IPTs).

11. **Have you participated in a contract planning Integrated Product Team (IPT)?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

12. **Were you included from the beginning of the requirements definition (SOO, SOW, PWS)?**

☐ Yes

☐ No (please provide details below)

13. **Do you feel that internal processes were in place between program managers and other IPT members that promote getting requirements on contract efficiently?**

☐ Yes

☐ No (please provide details below)

[Next](#)

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

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14. Do you feel that you have been provided the proper training and development to complete your role in the contract planning IPT?

☐ Yes

☐ No (please provide details below)

15. Have you witnessed obstacles (such as bad relationships, processes, and/or undertrained team members) during your involvement in the IPT preventing you or the team from accomplishing tasks in a timely manner?

☐ Yes (please provide details below)

☐ No

16. In your experiences as a member of an IPT for contract planning, were all members represented (Legal, Resource management, program management, business management) on a regular basis?

☐ Yes

☐ No (please provide details below)

[Next](#)

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

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17. Have you experienced IPT members (not motivated or unhappy in their job) being an obstacle in the IPT contract planning efficiently?

- ☐ Yes (please provide details below)
- ☐ No

18. Do you feel that lengthy policies prevents contact planning in a timely manner?

- ☐ Yes (please provide details below)
- ☐ No

19. Do you feel that constantly changing policies cause delays in contract planning?

- ☐ Yes (please provide details below)
- ☐ No

20. Do you feel that contracting timelines could be shortened?

- ☐ Yes (please provide details below)
- ☐ No

[Next](#)

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

Appendix C **Comment Results to Survey Questions**

Question 12: Were you included from the beginning of the requirements definition phase (Statement Of Objectives (SOO), Statement Of Work (SOW), PWS)?

- Typically, programs come in to the PM who then tasks Engineering with an assessment. If they think it is viable, then other disciplines are invited to play along.
- On some programs, I have been and others I have not, or have come into the program after the requirements were completed.
- Because I am in Business, I often am included after the requirements have been defined.
- The participation of the ACC at the beginning of the requirements definition process varies from PM to PM. If the Contract Specialist is co-located with the PM, they will be in at the beginning. If not co-located, many times the scope/spec are handed to the Contract Specialist well after initial development.
- Depends on the PM - some are very good to include contracting from the beginning, other times we are not.
- SOW was developed prior to contract analyst involvement. That drove re-work needed when I had to review the documents.
- Limiting factor in IPT process from the outset is often the business/contracting personnel. Unfortunately, these critical representatives (Acquisition Analyst and Contracting Officer) are often not available early in the process due to staff levels and workload.

Question 13: Do you feel that internal processes were in place between program managers and IPT members that promote getting requirements on contract efficiently?

- No controls on the process and infighting over requirements and priorities.
- Strong lack of communications between IPT members. No training at the beginning; lots of confusion.
- Varies by the effort. A few efforts I have been on we had a fairly disciplined process that resulted in good requirements that were understood by the majority. More often, there was intense schedule pressure that tended to produce a hurried process, not all stakeholders involved up front, and more "misses" that had to be corrected later.
- Contracting is a very nebulous animal. Actual guidelines are few and far between; generally relying on past experience or tradition (e.g., that's how we've always done it).
- Processes were in place and agreed upon but ACC backed out of agreed timeline and milestones and deferred much of contracting decisions to Legal.
- The contracting process does not allow efficiency
- Internal processes are in place; however, there are rarely enough human resources to allow us to get our requirements on contract in a timely fashion

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

- Our requirements can be routinely changed by the Acquisition Center. The reason for the change is usually touted as some legal reason that is usually someone's "opinion" rather than a restriction either by statute or the FAR
- The IPT teams were too busy to work together to work on the SOW. The team is too busy to work on the SOW as a group
- Yes and No. I have been involved in many contract planning IPT's, some work smoothly, some do not.
- The specific issues differ from case to case, but generally the biggest problem is getting agreement and alignment with all the key leadership (PM, Contracting, etc) before initiating work on Acquisition Strategies, Acquisition Plans, SOO, SOW, PWS, etc. Getting everyone aligned upfront, can save a lot of rework.
- It seems that each contracting/procurement specialist has their own definition of the roles, responsibilities, flow, and level of effort.
- Very limited participation by members. More emphasis on cut and paste than bottoms up build based on program requirements.
- There is a disconnect between subject matter experts and lessons learned and the IPT that is tasked with a new contract.
- Yes. The IPT member, specifically the procurement analyst is matrixed from the acquisition center and not a core member of the PM organization. At times, the contract process is done outside of the PM organization and there are some 'loss' of understanding of what needs to be in the contract.
- Again, this varies from office to office. Some PM's insist on contracting participation up front in the process, which then clearly streamlines the process since the contracting office then understands the requirement much better.
- I have been on many IPTs, and feel it depends on the IPT and its leadership more than an internal control process. When working as a team, where the team makes decisions, then requirements generation is efficient. When there is a group of individuals, who lack accountability, then requirements generation is not efficient.
- The process to contract requirement package is anything but efficient and there is little willingness to tailor.
- There are internal processes but only a few know or have the experience using the process. There is much time lost within the IPT trying to figure out what to do. At times, the PM does not know what the process is and is learning alongside the IPT.
- The constantly changing membership of IPTs is a detriment to the process. Members often were junior and did not understand their role and relationship to the rest of the IPT. Everyone needs to learn proficiency in his or her field before being "thrown" into an IPT like this.
- Regulations, Policies and Instruction continuously change but Business process not established to implement nor updated to include the changes in a timely manner.
- No main POC in the Project Office to coordinate with the different functional areas to get the answers needed.
- Too many similar reviews by numerous personnel. This type of review process causing too many changes back and forth.

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

- No. As a PM member in the requirements definition phase, we asked for reps from ACC, Small Biz, and Legal to join. We had no participation from those groups but told they would review after the contracts requirements package was submitted to ACC. After submission to ACC, the ACC then wants to tear it to shreds and tell the PM of all their faults. If we used a true IPT process for requirements development, it eliminate these issues.
- There is a communication problem even between PMs and Acquisition Management personnel in a project office that support them. Management makes decisions regarding contract timelines without contracting personnel being consulted.
- No, processes were unclear and if there are/were process, they were not communicated well with Program Office and even among the ACC personnel.
- I think there is room for improvement. Tracking the status of the effort seem difficulty since the documents are sometimes not given as a complete package but individual documents over a long period of time.
- ACC employees work in separate access controlled areas and only engage when they want to; it is very difficult to coordinate with them. They should be embedded with the PMs they support. They also feel like they should be dictating the acquisition strategy, contracting plan, & source selection concept to the PMs, typically long after these decisions have been made by the PM. The amount of time going in circles with contracting counterparts is extremely unproductive.
- Cannot speak for every program office, but the last two POs I supported needed a significant amount of assistance writing their contracts. For example, one particular contract had been amended through the entire alphabet and still the requirements could not be captured well enough to perform the contract efficiently.
- IPTs are not normally done, contracts requirements package is filled out passed to contracting and then passed back and forth over and over again.
- Most offices has a "this is the way we always do it" mentality. Doing a best value contract or anything outside the "usual" for people felt a great deal like a Sisyphus task.
- No, previous contract efforts were not available to the team. Added additional efforts and research to complete.
- There is a lot of back and forth between functionals to agree on what the SOW should say.

Question 14: Do you feel that you have been provided the proper training and development to complete your role in the contract planning IPT?

- No, it has been learn as you go.
- No, I had to seek out additional training and lessons learned from other sources.
- I was trained at my position; however, there was never any training on how to function within an IPT.
- For myself yes based on years of experience. Younger staff, no. All school and no experience. Limited to no IPT training.

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

- There is a big gap between the things we learn at DAU and the actual practice of completing a contract action.
- Engineers do not receive sufficient classes on contract language - I learned by doing and do my best pass those lessons learned on to my associates. On the Job training is the only way this is currently learned.
- It is important to have formal training, however the On the Job training and development needs to happen, and often the situation only presents itself depending on where in the life-cycle it is occurring. Also, the original participants in the planning IPT are not necessarily the one to execute and manage the production.
- Not really, it's more an evolving process influenced by experience and personalities. PM's that require contracting participation up front become the most effective in the overall planning.
- Minimal train up prior to IPT. What training is available did not address program objectives.
- I have had ACQ 201A but have been bumped a couple of times from taking ACQ201B for others with priority that are Program Managers or Analyst. My role is an Acquisition Analyst with a Program Office; I have a great need to understand the whole process from cradle to grave.
- The DAU training that is offered for the contracting career field discusses Contract Requirements Package (CRP) development from the aspect of a contracting officer or contract specialist within a Contracting Command. The training does not address how to lead a multifunctional team to develop a CRP within a program office.

Question 15: Have you witnessed obstacles (such as bad relationships, processes, and/or undertrained team members) during your involvement in the IPT preventing you or the team from accomplishing tasks in a timely manner?

- No leadership from some of the participants, infighting on requirements, no clear identification of decision making authority, no delegation to make decisions so the outcomes are subject to change.
- Legal review often takes weeks and months with multiple revisions.
- In the past, bad relationship between the PM and Contracting team members. PM member was negative and accusatory towards contracting. Prevented anything from getting accomplished.
- Logistics is more often than not the last discipline invited, when it should be among the first. Late logistics involvement means less influence on design for maintenance and sustainment, which are the big cost drivers on a program.
- Inexperienced contracting workforce; Undermanned / under-resourced contracting teams; Adversarial PM/PCO relationships; overly risk-averse PCO's and Lawyers.
- PCO and Contract Specialists that do not understand the program manager's role, the life cycle management process and the fact that they are serving and being paid by the PM. PCO and Contract Specialists put up roadblocks, offer no

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

solutions, and rely heavily on the Procurement Policy handbook over DoD Directives, statutes and regulations.

- Lawyers thought they were financial/budget experts; Pricers thought they were lawyers and as such they got out of there swim lanes and slowed things down.... rather than comment on their specialty.
- Requirements documents often took a long time due to overly burdensome processes. Sometimes, we had undertrained team members (interns) assigned to the team, in order to give them some experience.
- The biggest obstacle in my experience is lack of accountability to get it right or done efficiently. Decision by "group" can make the accomplishment of the task not be accountable to time or what the PM needs/wants.
- In two previous PM shops, contracting involvement in the IPT was the expected norm. Since In my new office, our contracting support comes from ACC. Participation has been spotty; mid and upper level ACC leaders, in some cases without explanation, overrule decisions by the IPT and PM. I have also experienced PM's not including contracting, failing to consider contracting a stakeholder, and failing to provide requirements and critical details to contracting.
- Bad Processes and untrained APMs cause most of the issues. They are trying to hold schedule by force of will rather than proper planning.
- Undertrained team members and low morale of the group.
- Planning that does not go smoothly is usually because of inexperience, and/or acquisition specialists/contract officers that only have "one way" to do something. Because that is the way, they learned it, and it might be different than four other contract planning IPT's that are going on at the same time or in series to each other. What was acceptable for one PCO is not acceptable for another PCO, resulting in lost time/rewriting content that is used multiple times - this becomes very inefficient especially in the world of reduced work force.
- Having been a Deputy Project Manager for the last 10 years and a Contracting Officer/Procurement Analysts at various levels of management for the 20 years before that, I have seen all of the above and more as the reason an IPT fails to execute in a timely fashion.
- The PCO are not involved early and often enough. The bulk and heavy lifting is often left to technical PM staff and young contract specialist how do not have enough experience to function on their own. There is also a lot of inconsistency between what one Contracting Officer feels is a must compared to another. USMC has a tool that help frame things in the past which I thought was a wonderful tool to help build a good outline. Something similar for the Army would be useful.
- Typically, the root cause seems to be too much work for contracting and procurement. It seems to be consistent for the backlog rather than content/scope/errors that takes significant time to process actions.
- The interaction between business, contracting, legal, and engineering groups is lacking and the training is almost nonexistent.
- Biggest complaint is under-committed legal and PCO support. They tend to bottleneck the process and prefer to give a "no" answer rather than explore potential solutions. Note this is only one opinion - other areas may be better.

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

- Very inexperienced ACC staff, unfamiliar with many options, such as 8(a), limitations (or lack of limitations) on sole source, incentives (and penalties). In addition, unfamiliar with all the steps and approvals required for certain types of awards.
- Have seen IPT functionals (Logistics, Engineering, procurement, etc.) Not prepared to ensure or have knowledge of program products to put on contract or worse yet WHY and When to put an effort on contract.
- Personalities and lack of cooperation between PM's and the contracting office significantly hinder the overall process.
- Frequent internal policy changes (in processes) have created some confusion and increased review/completion time of certain required documents, such as Justification and Approval (J&A), Acquisition Plans.
- Generally, the problems are associated with protection of "roles", individual goals, rather than team goals, and a lack of accountability for individuals.
- Periodically during IPTs, I have worked with individuals who are close to retirement, and have thus seemed to decide that they just are not going to do anything resembling work, thus adding to the workload of all other parties involved.
- Changing the requirement and failure to communicate those changes to the Contracting personnel before release of the RFP. The Program Managers relaying information to the Contractor and not relaying that same information to Contracting personnel.
- People are assigned to IPTs versus volunteering. The buy in is not there. Excess waste of time, no results in the end.
- Members who do "drive bys" - they just come when they want and are not committed to developing a viable product.
- Disparity in urgency of actions between the PEOs/PMs and the supporting ACC.
- Many people think it is up to the contracting division to write up and put together everything in a J&A and CRP, which is not the way it is supposed to be. Too many people say they do not have the time or experience to submit the paperwork contracting personnel need to do their job.
- Only that my PM management does not always have a full understanding/acceptance of the functional role.
- Some individuals in key positions allow their personalities to take ownership of the IPT. They want to make decisions without listening, considering, and valuing a contract's person's experience and knowledge.
- Undertrained team members are a big problem. Lack of communication (between management to workforce; between functional group to another; within functional groups) is a huge problem. Nobody willing to make a decision.
- I have experienced and witnessed my Procuring Contracting Officer acting very unprofessional. This PCO has been a firewall to achieving requirements on a new program, throwing obstacles, pushing back w/o fully understanding the requirement and not explaining his self well.

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

- Layers of approval along with bad relationships between internal and external customers instead of focusing on meeting the needs of the warfighter in a timely manner.
- While bad relationships will almost always derail the process, what I have seen is people who are technically competent in their field but have no clue as how to translate the requirement into a SOW that can be priced, negotiated and executed.
- Sometimes programs have an agenda or desired method for moving forward and these agendas/methods are not compatible with acquisition laws and regulations. I spend a lot of time discussing what regulation prevents us from their desired path forward. They spend a lot of time trying to find a way to get what they want. Sometimes we just go around in circles.
- In some cases, relationships between the ACC and PM shops were not good. Therefore, the IPT was bogged down on whose job it was from an ACC/PM perspective.
- Getting contract attendance in IPT is a challenge due to limited contracting personnel and demands on their time.
- Execution side of contracting or the Contract Specialist or Procuring Contracting Officers (PCOs) are defensive and not proactive in trying to get the missions accomplished for the project offices. I do the planning and processing of contract requirement packages in the program office. Often the acquisition center or PCOs return documents for the project to complete; documents that are their responsibility, i.e., Justifications & Approval. The project offices only provide the technical inputs; the J&A is to be signed by the PCO and HCA.
- Process varies from office to office. Efficient execution exists where the analyst and PCO are involved early on and fully support the IPT. Inefficient execution exists when the analyst and/or PCO are hands off early in the IPT and basically don't get involved until the CRP is 'tossed over the fence' from PM to Business/ACC. Often this is not due to bad relationships, but understaffing and workload.

Question 16: In your experiences as a member of an IPT for contract planning, were all members represented (Legal, Resource management, program management, business management) on a regular basis?

- Ad hoc for some of the principles.
- Reviews were done in stages, with minimal interaction of other team members..
- When there is a lot of pressure to get RFP out quickly, there is a tendency for a smaller group of people to work the SOW and often-key personnel do not get a full opportunity to ensure all requirements are addressed. I will also add that we never have legal involved early on--they are always short-handed and do not typically review documents until much later in the cycle.
- Legal/Resource Management are not normally engaged on a regular basis. They are usually only present when needed.
- It was difficult to get all members together at one time, as well as getting members to submit their sections of the SOW on the "due date".

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

- Contracting would not involve themselves until writing the RFP commenced even though they insisted on a J&A and Acquisition Plan a significant time beforehand. Makes no sense to not have your requirements in place before a J&A or Acquisition Plan. ACC has too many green/inexperienced managers that cannot think in abstract terms and are not customer focused.
- Some groups tend to resist joining the IPTs. I believe it is because they will be expected to provide an answer in the IPT and they like to be able to spend hours researching each topic.
- A core group always represented the IPT; however, not all members (i.e., Legal, resource management) attended every meeting. Contracting and acquisition members were there at all times.
- They were in meetings and unable to attend. They were invited to all the meetings.
- The IPTs focus on "functional" representation such as logistics, engineering, PM, Packaging, user, etc. While legal can and has stopped things in its tracks, they do not routinely attend IPT meetings. That is the same for PCOs they send their buyers. Business management and resource management is usually only brought in if there is a question on the budget/color of money, etc.
- Never see Legal and when you do, they do not understand the business or add value to the process. Again, the APMs do not like being told No by the disciplines so they frequently run off and make decisions without the concurrence of the other representatives.
- Certain members, such as Legal, only come in for a review of draft contracting documents. Their ongoing workload supporting numerous programs only allows limited, as-needed, or on-call participation.
- I do not think I have ever seen any one from legal involved in regular working level IPT's. It is one of the reasons that scopes of work can take so long - It becomes a hierarchal review instead of an IPT review and then content needs to be continually re-worked because folks outside of the IPT review content after the fact. Generally, all the other disciplines are included.
- The answer is sometimes and sometimes not. Legal frequently does not attend except for the high dollar and/or high visibility actions.
- PM technical staff and junior contract specialist and procurement analyst on a regular basis while there was irregular attendance by PCO and Legal.
- I do not consider attendance as represented. Sending a note-taker/messenger does not contribute to the effective/efficient development of the product.
- Yes but often not the person with the right credentials.
- ACC and legal were outside of the team and acted as a gate guard. We had several iterations of SOW editing because of changes in personnel at ACC and legal. If we had them in the team, we would have saved a lot of time and money.
- Sometimes but not always. Contracting reps are difficult to get into the IPTs, particularly at certain times of the year.
- When members are missing and non-consistent, it only make what goes on contract that much more difficult to correct or to obtain a satisfactory product from the original equipment manufacturer. A functional with experience goes a long way to forward-, backwards- and laterally-plan on contracts.

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

- Legal is available on an as needed basis. Which is understandable but could be more available.
- Not always. As I mentioned before, they drop in when it is convenient. Legal and Acquisition Center were spread too thin, and seldom attended meetings. This leaves the bulk of the work for the core IPT. In addition, the levels of reviews the ACC now utilizes just make the timeline ridiculous.
- Cannot get legal or Contracting Officers involved prior to fully defined requirements.
- I have not seen contract specialists, legal, and business (cost, budget) being representative as they should. I have begun to attend as a contract analyst new to this office and have seen a lack of participation.
- Legal is included in the review of contract requirement packages; however, they are deferring their recommendations to the PCO if Acquisition Policy takes precedence. This takes a significant amount of time since PCOs and Contract Specialists are having to wait for direction from their policy offices. Often, when a completed CRP is provided to the PCO, the policy office asks for information and other criteria that are not currently specified in the Program Office Regulation specified by the acquisition center. Often the PCO is not aware of some of the new policies. This is causing a significant amount of added lead-time on packages that normally would take 9 to 12 months to complete to as much as 18 to 24 months to complete!

Question 17: Have you experienced IPT members (not motivated or unhappy in their job) being an obstacle in the IPT contract planning efficiently?

- Some were too busy to participate, until forced by their management.
- Not happy with their positions and leadership did not motivate them to put their best effort to the task.
- Members of the IPT, most times engineers, just wanted to do their actual job, and were not at all enthused about IPT meetings/assignments.
- Peer team review members have shown up not prepared even though mountains of documentation was sent in advance and they were included in meeting invites. ACC personnel work in tunnel vision and are resistant to learning functional teams needs and incorporating all requirements into a procurement package.
- All the time. If an individual disagrees with the team or the PM, they become unmotivated.
- Contracting Office does not actively support its customers not co-located. All this contracting office does it put up roadblocks to actually executing and awarding contracts. Forced to use other contracting agencies.
- There are several, very unhappy people who cause many troubles.
- Personality conflicts which prevented seamless cooperation.
- I think the root cause is not appreciating the role of others or the work that needs to be accomplished limits their input and contribution to include their willingness to contribute. It seems too easy to fall back on waiting

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

until the product is complete versus helping to complete the product for the next phase.

- Actions not completed in a timely manner by a disgruntled person in one function caused delays in other functions.
- PCO and legal have much authority - when they are not motivated to support the project significant delay results.
- I have worked with individuals close to retirement who were no longer motivated to do their job. I have also worked with people who seem to be unhappy with life in general; who is negative, abrasive attitudes become an obstacle for all those who have to work with them.
- Exactly as the example implies, people that are not happy with their current positions and feel like they are not empowered to make decisions so they do very little to assist.
- Getting contracts signed and definitized often times rely on single individual bottlenecks, which can easily lead to unnecessary delays if said person is unmotivated or simply overwhelmed.
- Some people are just stuck in the mood of "we've always done it a certain way" so they make no progress. Or "there's nothing we can do to make things better."
- The Air-Worthiness Authority would have differing objectives and concerns that would drive requirements beyond reasonable expectations.
- Yes, I have experienced this and it has resulted in the inability to define the requirement in a timely manner. It ends up causing major delays to contract award, and it creates more work for the team (i.e. - preparing/reviewing/approving documents--more document generation; answering taskers from higher headquarters to explain why contract has not been awarded; risk of losing funds; overtime/comp-time paid to employees who have to work longer to get the work done).
- The morale in the government is really low and it shows. The government has brought on a great number of contractors who are doing the work government people should be doing and this is causing heartburn among the troops - even in IPT meetings. I have even seen issues among matrix and core personnel.
- There is a huge amount of frustration with the contracts process in every organization I have ever worked in. Incredibly demotivating. I am certain this environment has evolved because the contracting folks feel they are over scrutinized and are always worried about going to jail.
- Some people are burned out by the Contracting career field and basically give up. That makes the process take longer because you have to spend time correcting the performance.
- Not motivated. Some people just do not see meeting contract timelines as important. They do not see the big picture and the impacts of a late award has across the community at large within DoD and Industry.
- Some overworked contract specialists or contracting officers can have inefficiencies due to workload or lack of clear priorities from leadership leading to missed dates.

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

- Product Managers are responsible for cost schedule and performance. Contracts personnel need to focus on getting the contract awarded; they are not responsible for cost, schedule, and performance.
- I believe there is tension between the Acquisition Command Center and the Project Office. In order to support the mission the teams have to work together.
- Experienced PCOs and Contract Specialists are becoming frustrated with extreme new policy requirements that are hindering their lead-time to process contract actions. Often the new policy requirements are non-value added to the requirement, but takes time to resolve in order for the specialist to process their contracts.
- PCOs are generally afraid of their authority. Until they have a lawyer that tells them that a certain action is legally acceptable, their first answer is usually "no".
- This goes back to accountability of getting something completed on time. I have waited a month for PCO comments. Because they did not attend IPT meetings, thus they have to "brought up to speed"...again.

Question 18/19: Do you feel that lengthy policies and/or changing policies prevents contract planning in a timely manner?

- Contract planning is contract planning. Policy changes can impact what specific terms and clauses need to go in, how things are worded, what specific Contract Data Requirement Lists are asked for--but the steps in the process should be pretty much unchanged.
- Rules of engagement are documented (FAR, etc) but not well understood by disciplines other than contracting.
- More to the point, the policies extend contract processes with little value added.
- Policies are often contradictory and waivers must be sought.
- Some of the current policies (service contract approval needed every time funds are added to a contract) create extra-unneeded work.
- The level of effort to contract for products and services under the FAR is a challenge. Local policy since ACC stood up provides additional barriers. They have also inserted multiple layers of additional approvals.
- As described earlier, legal review after the content has been developed leads to back and forth questions and resolutions, which all add time (weeks at a time). Review by PCO supervisors also create back and forth resolutions. My view, whoever is part of the IPT should be empowered to represent their specialty. And any supervisor that is above that IPT should only identify gross issues to be resolved - not question language choices, intent of scope etc. All this does is severely lengthen the planning process.
- The policy to complete a contract action should not be longer than the contract product being developed.
- Yes and no, it is an impediment but the bigger issue is the lack of planning for the execution and assignment of tasks. It normally is getting a group together and

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

everybody given assignments with little or no coordination and some critical missions overlooked all together.

- We have to ensure that we are meeting all of these policies. When they are cumbersome, it takes more time and we miss important things.
- As with most of my government experience, the bureaucratic policies and processes are an unnecessary component. Too many people need to sign off on things when they usually trust the people preparing the documents and do not review them anyway.
- Too many levels of approval on too many redundant documents. The whole system needs streamlining.
- Would be better served if contract review liaison team and policy worked together. If "lengthy" but "clear", not an issue.
- Getting even the most simple contracts awarded, such as an indefinite delivery indefinite quantity for existing (i.e. technical drawings exist) parts, takes at least 9 months. That is unacceptable.
- The greater problem is when people take an individualistic approach rather than a teaming approach. Policy then becomes a way of either increasing obstacles to further their individual goal, or a shield to protect their turf.
- There is too much red tape, too many policies, too many changes to the policies; it makes the job unnecessarily difficult.
- Why does it take 18-24 months to award action? Hate to but using the phrase "in the old days we did it in 6-8 months". It should be easier today with technology. We are afraid to comment, everything has multiple layers of staffing.
- It can - multiple levels of review and rework causing re-staffing definitely impacts the time it takes to get an Acquisition Plan or Strategy approved.
- Acquisition Plans and Limited Source Justifications take an inordinately long time to complete due to templates not being understood at every level of review. Lower level reviewers require changes that are not value added due to fears that the next level will reject the documents if these grammatical changes are not make. This requires a lot of re-work and really slows the process.
- Review processes seem to take longer than required time.
- The multitude of peer reviews just drains everyone. Someone needs to be the gatekeeper for the acquisition activities. We had documents bounce between two GS-14/15s - just back and forth - because they did not agree on wording. We need some common sense in these processes. Happy to glad just does not work. Is the meat there - are the requirements defined? That is what is important.
- We are currently trying to get a contract modification approved. The PCO keeps coming back with questions that we already answered. It has been 6.5 months since we started this.
- The Acquisition Center is always backlogged with internal policies and practices that delay contract awarding.
- Yes, the policies have so many requirements that it is almost impossible to get contracts awarded in a reasonable time.
- Some policies conflict with one another, or there are different interpretations from Legal, Contracting, Small Business, or the requiring activity.

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

- Recent changes to peer reviews and policy reviews at all levels within the contracting command and throughout the Army chain have added weeks and months to milestones.
- Many outside the contracting world are just not aware how long it take to get a contract or task order awarded and all that goes into the process. Very time consuming.
- Most definitely. The ACC has expanded their policy group and staffed it with people with little contract experience. They cannot properly interpret guidance coming from senior acquisition personnel in Washington DC.
- Yes, the more paperwork and reviews that are required add time to the contract timeline. Simply put- if you add a new process or policy to comply with, you add time. This is something that everyone needs to understand.
- The consistent inconsistency (yes, I meant that) in obtaining approval for simple documents, when all the information is sitting there, is severe obstacle. Workers want to do their jobs and do it right without the duplication of effort that can be placed on another project.
- The timelines to get to contract award are based on predetermined (standard) lengths of time. As such, people tend to take the time allotted to them rather than completing the work in an efficient and expeditious manner. It is also hard to incentivize people to complete something earlier when the reward/award system has been devastated.
- Due to staff changes and job title along with manpower, it appears that there is a lot of knowledge lost in transition. Therefore takes time, redo, review, and finish. This is just my guess.
- Better Buying Power is a great initiative but it is the polar opposite of Acquisition reform. The rule of thumb is to take our time and do things right which is promoting adding time to our timelines.
- Local policies on top of federal guidance and repetitive reviews that result in multiple changes to document; sometimes from same reviewing official in same step.
- The review and approval process takes the longest because packages have to be signed by people that are not familiar with the requirements or do not have a "need to know". It is more or less checking the box.
- To many chiefs, to many people have to look at documents, takes too long to award a contract or even to get an Acquisition plan through ACC. A program has never been saved because of an Acquisition plan or SOW, it boils down to execution that a paper document has limits in value. Too many people put too much stock in written words over execution.
- While streamlining was the buzzword for a while, it seems to be a thing of the past today. Things such as multiple peer reviews, Policy reviews, constant change in preparing correspondence, regulation changes, constant changes in PCOs, and many other new requirements make it impossible to contract in a timely manner.
- You cannot keep up with the policies coming out. As soon as you think you have a good document, you need to change it and sometimes you do not find out about

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

the changes until 2-3 months after the document is approved or is in the review process.

- It takes too long for major acquisition programs to get the required approvals of contract strategy in order to move forward. At the point the approvals are granted or disapproved, it may be too late to affect the proposed strategy without significantly impacting the contract award schedule.
- Absolutely, 100% agree with that statement. When policies are changed that affect the contract action that you are planning, it creates re-work. When you are forced to start over with your contract planning packages, it adds time to the award timeline, and you expend more time explaining to management and higher headquarters why the timeline has moved to the right. If there are multiple contract planning requirements being worked by an analyst, the delay is greater.

Question 20: Do you feel that contracting timelines could be shortened?

- With sufficient ACC staffing, and better training of the engineers writing work directives.
- With a consistent personnel working together as a team - understanding the product and the mission this would go a long way. i.e. the right team of procurement analyst with the budget analyst and a PCO that has the right philosophy.
- Understand the need for legal review, but since every acquisition is a contract action, maybe the legal side needs more personnel to move things along.
- Too much unnecessary oversight and re-work because ACC does not empower their people and managers want to step in at the last minute and second guess months' worth of work after they fail to show up to meeting invited to.
- Service Contract Approval is a requirement for all service contracts, The SES, approving official, takes 4 - 6 weeks to approve. Options are listed but still have to go thru the approval process again when exercised; it seems like a duplication of effort.
- Have define roles and responsibilities. Also, when policies are created make sure you have input from the areas that will be acting on those policies. For example, the contracting community may create a new policy requiring documentation but they are not the ones creating the documentation.
- Lack of accountability and over reliance on legal make the contracting process problematic. The IPT will present a contracting strategy and legal/PCOs/others (in the Acquisition Center) will stop it dead in its tracks - again no attendance at the weekly IPT. Also, outside stakeholders don't really care what the PM needs.
- If there was enough staff, properly trained, and with good leadership, this should be easy to shorten.
- Contracting timelines can still definitely be reduced by enforcing IPT authority (empowering), reducing higher-level reviews, and including legal in the IPT, not after the product is done. The reason industry is able to complete actions faster is because they reduce the layers of review and empower participants.
- Of course. However, the layers and layers of guidance and additional steps levied on PMO and contracting, make that very unlikely. The best strategy is working

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

out the acquisition/strategy and plan upfront with senior leaders in PMO (PEO if necessary) and the Contracting shop. Full alignment among all the key players/leaders that have a say early avoids a lot of rework.

- With well-trained personnel and better resourcing (numbers and skills). A critical problem is the "we/them" resulting from legal, Contracting and PM. reporting through different chains with different success metrics. This did not happen when everybody reported to the Commanding General.
- We need to really focus on the value stream of a contract action and eliminate the Non-Value Added.
- The process is not normally the problem. The problem seems to be an unwillingness to meet as a group during the final stages. Too much, email with questions going back and forth between PM, Contractor, Contracting officer, and legal.
- Use of standard templates and more realistic approval authority (fewer levels of review) would greatly improve the process. No incentive to do so on the ACC side - efficiency translates to fewer personnel required. In the automotive world, significantly complex assemblies could be contracted for in weeks... here, even the simplest takes months.
- Contracting timelines are generally static and well defined. What lengthens the contract formulation process is the time it takes to firmly define what the requirements organization wants the contracting office to buy.
- IPTs do not take on a teaming approach; this is where the most time is lost.
- The policies, fear of being in the newspaper, leaders that cannot make decisions drive the timeline far to the right. We have become very inefficient in contracting over the last several years and it continues to get worse.
- Getting all the right people in the room at the same time (in lieu of serial independent reviews) can have amazing results. The review levels should also be re-examined and/or reduced.
- NO the process takes time and should not be artificially shortened or compressed. Trying to award contracts based on target award dates causes more problems, drives up cost, decreases efficiency and we should really stop trying to squeeze a few days out here and there. Why not just accept that is going to be 365 or 480 days for award of Sole source contract and plan accordingly.
- Too much contracting bureaucracy in the contracting timeline to meet demands. Also, contracting teams do not work for PEOs or their subordinates, so there is no impact to contracting priorities.
- Yes, the timeline can be shortened. Have legal provide the opinion and stop rewriting the SOW to meet their requirement and not the objective of the SOW.
- Only, if processes and reviews are revised to shorten timeline. I do not know if this is possible with current process requirements. Senior leaders must be more comfortable with delegating decisions. Not with current processes and reviews.
- I feel if we removed many of the reviews, inefficient processes, and some of the document generation required, that contracting timelines could absolutely be shortened. Several specific processes that are currently required at the ACC that do not add much value to the overall end result: Solicitation Review Board, Contract Review Board, and Peer Reviews. It has been my experience that the

A STUDY OF PLACING ARMY REQUIREMENTS ON CONTRACT

individuals on these panels are not familiar with the specific Product or Service that is being procured; so many comments that are provided (and are required to be reconciled) are not even applicable to the contract requirement. The reviewing of documents also takes much longer than it should. Some reviewers do complete their reviews in a reasonable amount of time and others take much too long. There is an approver who only approves documents one day every other week-- this does not seem efficient.

- Vet a gated policy that all stakeholders follow (PM, Business, and Contracts) and ensure that each is represented early and throughout the IPT once a requirement is validated. This would allow familiarity with the effort and associated documents and expedite peer reviews.
- Absolutely, has been done for years with experienced contracting specialists and PCOs. Many of the new work force is insecure and unable to make decisions to proceed with actions. Mentoring has been limited due to heavy workloads for experienced personnel who do not have adequate time to bring along in-experienced personnel. Also, many have been promoted to higher positions and have not had enough seasoning in lower levels to gain confidence in their decision making and work ethics. They are also very defensive and hesitant to listen to experienced people that have had experience, particularly on the planning side of the house. When things are bogged down in the processing of packages, however, they come back to the experienced people and expect them to correct any issues that are causing the delay. They do not communicate adequately with the planning side of the house, leaving the planning side to think that the acquisition center is working the requirement, only to find out the specialist and PCO have not been working the requirement. If the planning side attempts to ask the status of the requirement, often they are told it is being worked but does not have top priority!