IMPROVING THE ACQUISITION PROCESS
THROUGH ACQUISITION REFORM TRAINING

Ed Meyer
Naval Air Warfare Center
Training Systems Division (NAWCTSD)
Orlando, Florida

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of a Source Selection Working Group, that was formed at the Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division (NAWCTSD), to take a systems approach to documenting the source selection process and identifying the required training needed to effectively support the acquisition process. The process flow charts and documentation were prepared and then included in the Acquisition Guide, an on-line electronic media developed in-house. Next, training was identified and the process that was required to improve effectiveness, (doing the right thing), and efficiency, (how well are we doing the right things). This resulted in a very ambitious undertaking and plan of action.

Identify the acquisition reform courses required.
Developing the course curriculum
Training the trainers.
Piloting the course.
Teaching the course.

The paper concludes with a strong recommendation that the key to success in providing quality customer service and products is continually improving the process and continually providing just-in-time training to build high performance teams.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mr. Meyer is an Electronics Engineer with a Masters Degree in Engineering Management and a Masters Degree in Ocean Engineering. He is a certified Total Quality Management (TQM) instructor and a qualified trained Team Building Facilitator. He taught at Rollins College for five years, was a Marriage and Family Counselor for six years, and has over twenty five years of Defense Training Systems Acquisitions experience. He has been the Head of the Surface, Submarine, Air, and Ground Training Systems Branches and is presently the Head of the Special Systems Branch at the Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division, Orlando, Florida.

IMPROVING THE ACQUISITION PROCESS
THROUGH ACQUISITION REFORM TRAINING

Ed Meyer
Naval Air Warfare Center
Training Systems Division (NAWCTSD)
Orlando, Florida

This paper presents the results of a Source Selection Working Group, that was formed at the Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division (NAWCTSD), to take a systems approach to documenting the source selection process and identifying the required training needed to effectively support this process. The process flow charts and documentation were prepared and then included in the Acquisition Guide, an on-line electronic media developed in-house, which is now on the internet (www.ntsc.navy.mil/refer/acqguide/acqguide.htm). This provides a very efficient way to educate industry on the Government process and provides insight to build quality into the front of the process, rather than inspect quality into the end of the process. The next step was to identify what training was needed to improve effectiveness, (doing the right thing), and efficiency, (how well are we doing the right things). This resulted in a very ambitious undertaking and plan of action. The paper concludes with a strong recommendation that the key to success in providing quality customer service and products is continually improving the process and continually providing just-in-time training to build high performance teams.

SOURCE SELECTION WORKING GROUP

A Systems Approach was taken to develop the goals and objectives for the Source Selection Working Group.

What Are Our Goals And Objectives?

What is our mission?
- Continuous improvement of the Acquisition process.
- Document the Source Selection process.
- Identify the required Source Selection training.
- Develop the prototype architecture for documenting other acquisition processes at NAWCTSD.

- Develop prototype training required to be applied to other acquisition processes.
- Apply this documentation and training across all functional areas.
- Reduce cost and risk (technical, cost, and schedule)
- Increase the performance of the Teams.
- Provide quality service and products to the customers.

What results are we looking for? To develop a method to help the working members of Integrated Product Teams (IPT) do their task more efficiently and as a result, to enjoy their work more.

What methods are to be used?

To be responsive to the quickly changing Acquisition Reform initiatives, the following methods were employed:

- Develop just-in-time training courses.
- Develop electronic on-line media.
- Identify subject matter experts that would be assigned as mentors to project teams.

What Resources Are Available?

- Which of our people should do it?
- How much time will it take?
- How much will it cost?

The Source Selection Working Group was formed with members from Engineering, Contracts, Instructional Systems Development, Logistics, and the Acquisition Reform Office. The source selection process was then flow charted and documented and included in the on-line electronic media developed in-house.

ACQUISITION GUIDE

The Acquisition Guide is an electronic means to provide a "one stop" information center on the integrated overall acquisition process, which

crosses all functional areas at NAWCTSD. The Acquisition Guide is available on the internet and accessible to both Government and Industry personnel. It is designed as a dual (Government/Industry) use program.

This wide dissemination of NAWCTSD processes has three major purposes. First is to educate and train our own employees. Second is to inform other Government agencies. And third is to inform, and educate industry.

The availability of detailed NAWCTSD processes to other Government agencies educates these agencies as to how NAWCTSD operates and thus they can better manage their expectations when working with NAWCTSD. Another benefit is that other agencies can leverage off information in order to further refine their own processes.

The availability of detailed Government processes to industry is anticipated to educate industry as to how NAWCTSD operates and thus better positions industry as a true partner in an Integrated Product Teams (IPT) arrangement. The look into our processes covered the entire acquisition/support process from determination of a government need through life cycle support of a fielded system.

The Acquisition Guide currently contains eight sections. They are: Introduction, What's New, Frequently Asked Questions, Guide Contents, Acquisition Training, Point Of Contact, Acquisition Roadmap (graphic and text versions), and Reference Library. The two primary sections are the Roadmap and Reference Library.

What Information Can The Acquisition Roadmap Provide?

The Acquisition Roadmap, figure 1, is a tailored representation of the DoD acquisition process as revised by the new DoD 5000.1 and 5000.2 documents. This is the "generic" acquisition process - the level currently addressed by most of the new Acquisition Reform policy.

The map has clickable "HOT" spots containing information covering the topics behind each of the boxes on the roadmap. In some cases, the information contained behind boxes also contains additional graphic images which are clickable "HOT" spots. Figure 2 shows a sub-process.

A partial list of information from the Roadmap follows:

- What kind of contract should a program use.
- What is the difference between a Competitive and Sole Source proposal evaluation.
- What kind of system can be bought with the type of funds available.
- What's Market Research; who does it, when.
- Is a formal Procurement Planning Conference required.
- What is Cost as an Independent Variable (CAIV).
- What are the new documents required by 5000.2.
- What is the approval process for a J&A, and what does the new J&A format look like.
- What are the components of a draft RFP.
- What skills should a team have and when should the team be formed.
- What's an Integrated Product Team (IPT).
- What are the impacts and considerations for Reviews, Audits, and Testing based on acquisition streamlining and the new DoD 5000 series documents.

What Does The Reference Library Offer?

The Reference Library is a collection of many types of acquisition related information. A partial list includes: (1) Advisors, which are mini applications in and of themselves contain comprehensive information on specific topics. (2) The Guiding Principles are references and charts containing condensed, bulletized information. (3) The new DoD 5000.1 and 5000.2 are provided in their entirety. (4) The Competency Policies contains all the available documented procedures which are used at NAWCTSD. (5) The Acquisition Related Web Sites are internet links to other related sites. This section will expand rapidly as the volume of information available on the web changes. (6) Downloadable Documents is a compiled list of documents which may be downloaded from the guide. These include NAWCTSD generic documents, NAWCTSD forms, and DoD forms.

PROJECT TEAM TRAINING

To support Project Team Training, the source selection process was analyzed to determine the training requirements needed by the project team members. A study was then conducted to determine the available acquisition reform

instructional materials in order to support the concept of just-in-time training/mentoring. The training would then be conducted at the optimum point in the team's execution of the specific tasks in the acquisition process. The focus was on the acquisition reform training needed to provide the knowledge (knowing what to do), skills (knowing how to do it), and abilities (knowing how to do it well) in order to continually improving the process.

The major areas of just-in-time training/mentoring are as follows:

- Conduct fact finding and negotiations.
- Conduct proposal evaluation and prepare the PER (Proposal Ealuation Report)
- Technical Writer/Editor
- How to use electronic on-line media such as the Acquisition Guide and spec writing tools.
- Team Building
- Legal Counsel

HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS

Just like football, it would not be reasonable to think that just because you have the best team players, that you would automatically have a high performance team without team training and the whole team training together. It requires commitment, and practice, practice, practice.

Individual Skills + Team Skills + Practice = High Performance Teams

High performance teams were built by conducting Team Building training in the following areas:

- Ground Rules.
- Communication Skills
    - Brainstorming.
    - Using operational definitions.
    - Paraphrasing.
    - Clarification questions.
    - Active Listening.
    - How to provide and receive feedback.
    - Passive vs assertive vs aggressive communication.
    - Three part communication model.
    - How to communicate with different types of personalities.
    - Differences in male and female communication.
- Problem Solving and Scientific Decision Making.

- How to define and write specific goals.
- How to analyze all possible solutions and choose the best solution, develop a plan and schedule, and overcome the roadblocks.
- How to conduct more effective meetings and how to evaluate team meetings.
- Conflict Resolution Skills.
    - How to define the problem or conflict by identifying each one's understanding of the problem.
    - Attack the problem, not the person.
    - Value the person, don't interrupt, listen.
    - How to appeal to logic, emotions, and authority.
    - How to close the issue, summarize, monitor progress, and trust each other.
- How to define and improve the process.
    - Learning is a continuous process.
- Clearly defined roles.
    - Responsibilities.
    - Accountability.
    - Authority.

Finally, the results of facilitating over 70 acquisition team indicates that it takes strong leadership skills of continuous practice, persistence, and patience, as well as strong character, courage, and conscience to build high performance teams.

CONCLUSION

The emphasis was placed on learning as a continual process. A common sense, good business, high tech approach was used, that focused on what could be changed in order to foster continuous improvement. Who is responsible for the success of the team? Everyone is responsible for the success of the team. The key to a successful acquisition is to continually improve the acquisition process and continually provide just-in-time training. As a result, quality customer service and products are provided at reduced cost and reduced risk in technical, cost, and schedule. The end goal is to build High Performance Teams, that consist of the right people , in the right place, at the right time, continually improving doing the right things; thus, enjoying their work together and resulting in a quality customer service and product.
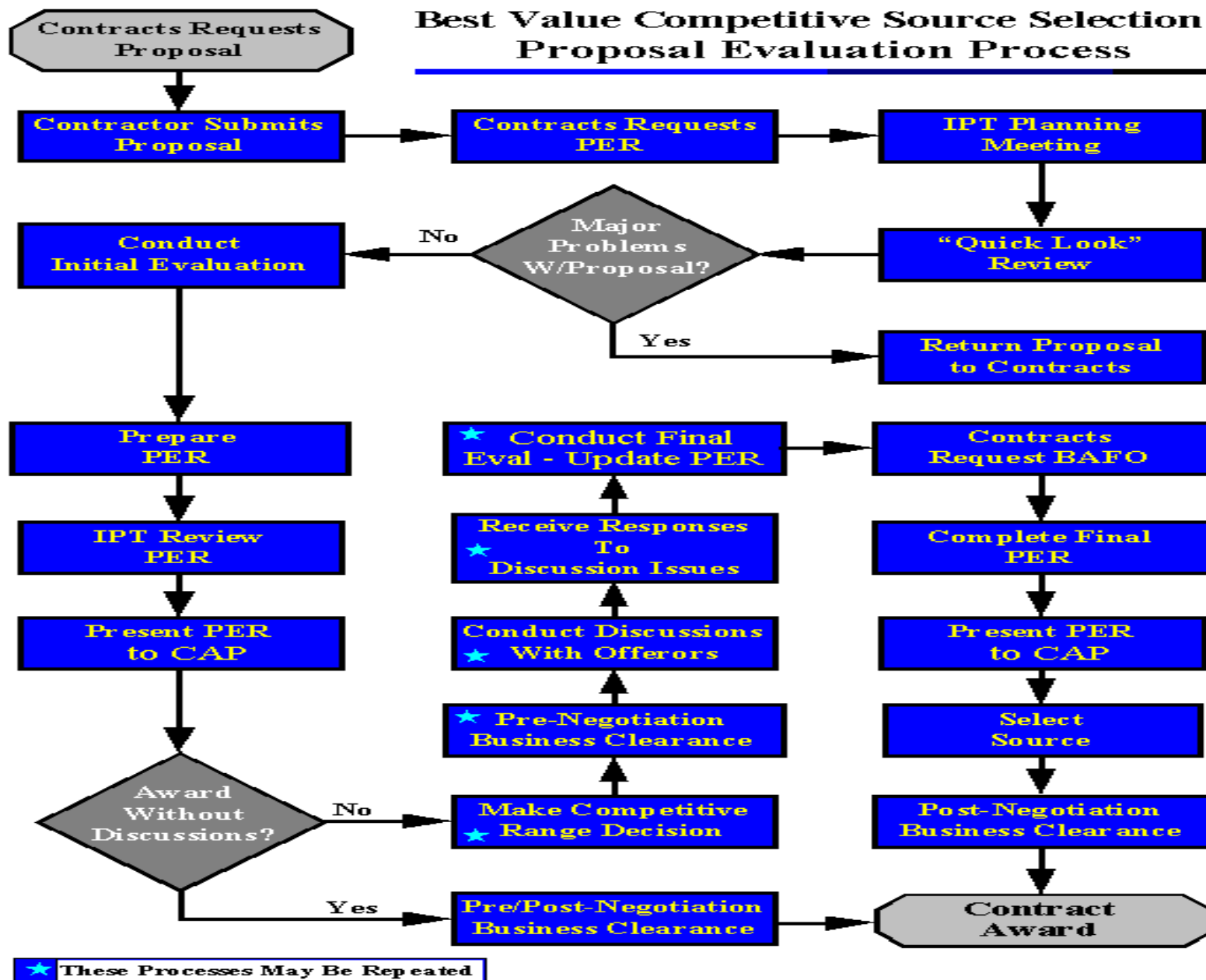
Best Value Competitive Source Selection Proposal Evaluation Process

```
Contracts Requests
Proposal
    │
    ▼
Contractor Submits ──────▶ Contracts Requests ──────▶ IPT Planning
Proposal                    PER                         Meeting
                                                          │
                                                          ▼
Conduct           ◀── No ── Major             ◀────────  "Quick Look"
Initial Evaluation          Problems                      Review
    │                       W/Proposal?
    │                           │
    │                          Yes
    │                           ▼
    │                      Return Proposal
    │                      to Contracts
    ▼
Prepare            ★ Conduct Final ──────▶ Contracts
PER                  Eval - Update PER       Request BAFO
    │                     ▲                      │
    ▼                     │                      ▼
IPT Review         Receive Responses        Complete Final
PER              ★ To                         PER
    │                Discussion Issues          │
    │                     ▲                      │
    ▼                     │                      ▼
Present PER        Conduct Discussions      Present PER
to CAP           ★ With Offerors             to CAP
    │                     ▲                      │
    │                     │                      ▼
    │              ★ Pre-Negotiation        Select
    │                Business Clearance       Source
    ▼                     ▲                      │
Award                     │                      ▼
Without ── No ──▶ Make Competitive        Post-Negotiation
Discussions?      ★ Range Decision          Business Clearance
    │                                           │
   Yes                                          ▼
    ▼
Pre/Post-Negotiation ───────────────────▶ Contract
Business Clearance                          Award
```

★ These Processes May Be Repeated

FIGURE 2