DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
ACQUISITION LOGISTICS AND TECHNOLOGY
103 ARMY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON DC 20310-0103

29 DEC 2003

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

SFAE-CON

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: The Role of Contracting Personnel

The Contracting and Acquisition Career Program (CP-14) Professional Development Committee (PDC) is chartered to develop and provide recommendations on policy, procedures, and goals relating to training and development of the Contracting and Acquisition Career Program (CP-14). One of the outputs of the PDC is a reassessment of the role of contracting and an action-oriented description of the contracting professional (enclosure).

This evolving role for contracting is founded on the success of our acquisition reform efforts, rapid advances in information technology, and the higher educational standards imposed by the recently amended Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA). It is especially timely in light of Army Transformation and emerging organizational constructs.

This redefinition of the contracting professional clearly establishes mission accomplishment and customer satisfaction as key goals of the contracting organization. I expect these goals to guide strategic and performance planning within Army contracting activities and to serve as a barometer of the overall effectiveness of contracting organizations.

The contracting organization must be a strategic partner with its customers throughout the acquisition life cycle and bring business advice and solutions to bear on acquisition problems. Fulfilling this role requires a significant knowledge of business operations and commercial practices and a partnership with suppliers to the mutual benefit of the parties. I expect these requirements to guide the educational and experiential qualifications of our contracting workforce and to better focus our recruiting efforts and our training and developmental programs.

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Claude M. Bolton, Jr.
Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Acquisition, Logistics and Technology)

Enclosure

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Contracting Business Manager/Advisor

Acquisition is the process by which the Army determines needs, conducts research necessary to define alternative solutions, develops and tests those solutions, selects the best solution, and finally produces the materiel that is used to equip our military forces. Contracting, or procurement as it is often called, is a major function of the Army acquisition process. Contracting bridges the gap between Army requirements (the soldier and combat and materiel developers) and the supplier of materiel or services to satisfy those requirements.

Contracting business managers of the new millennium are recognized as professionals with broad acquisition knowledge, outstanding business and management acumen, and demonstrated expertise in developing and applying effective business solutions to accomplish the spectrum of acquisition missions. This new breed is mission focused, customer oriented and forward thinking. They are innovative and proactive "doers" who eschew the limitations of stovepipe processes and think and act in terms of "mission accomplishment" and "product or service fulfillment".

Contracting business managers understand their customers' missions and business processes, providing them with effective business solutions to accomplish missions and achieve goals and objectives. They are full partners in the totality of acquisition life cycle management, advising and assisting customers to effectively plan and project needs, define requirements, and develop sound acquisition strategies and advocacy approaches that support prudent decision-making. They also advise in the development of requirements documentation that will support the negotiation of best value business arrangements meeting the goals of both customer and supplier.

In addition, contracting business managers partner with suppliers to better understand their products and processes and the dynamics of their business sector and overall market. They are cognizant of current and projected economic conditions and defense requirements and the impact of each on industry. They are knowledgeable of their suppliers' operating cycles and the key drivers of investment and internal operations decision-making, using this knowledge to manage risk and develop and negotiate mutually beneficial business arrangements.

Contracting professionals strive to continuously enhance their awareness, knowledge, competencies, and capabilities through learning and experience. They use, capture, and share knowledge to the overall benefit of their organization and the Army. They are invaluable members of the professional acquisition team that ensures American soldiers receive the right equipment and support, at the right time, to ensure they can perform and accomplish their missions.