The Purchasing Department of Tomorrow…Today!

Presented By:
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ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

**Blake Skiles** serves as Senior Purchasing Coordinator for Williamson County, Texas. He has 14 years of purchasing & contracting experience in the Public Sector, having previously worked for Henderson County, Texas. Blake is a graduate of Strayer University, a Charter member of the Texas Public Purchasing Association (TxPPA), a member of NIGP and an active member the National Procurement Institute (NPI) currently serving as the associations Secretary. He holds a Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB) certification with the Universal Public Procurement Certification Council (UPPCC) as well as both Certified Professional Purchasing Manager (CPPM) and Certified Purchasing Professional (CPP) certifications with the American Purchasing Society and a Construction Purchasing Certificate (CPC) with the LBJ School of Public Affairs.

**Randy Barker** serves as Purchasing Agent/Director for Williamson County, Texas. He has 23 years of purchasing & contracting experience in the public sector, having previously worked for the cities of Austin, Hutto, Round Rock and the Coastal Water Authority in Houston, Texas. Randy is a graduate of Texas State University and holds both Certified Public Purchasing Officer (CPPO) and Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB) certifications with the Universal Public Procurement Certification Council (UPPCC).
GOALS & OBJECTIVES

• Assess the current state of your department (People, Processes and Purpose)
• Determine where we can improve (Measuring Performance, Internal Communications, Vendor Communications, Etc.)
• How do we get there?
• How can today’s technology help?
• How do we get the budget?
• What are the challenges of writing an RFP for the rapidly developing market of eProcurement solutions?
• How to successfully (and quickly) implement eProcurement (Role of the Organization, Role of the Vendor & Critical Success Factors)
• Results to be expected!
• Q&A
The Williamson County Story

About Williamson County

- 1,800 Employees
- 33 Departments Supported
- 10 Purchasing Staff
- 3,300 Purchase Orders per year
- 120 Solicitations per year
- 450 Active Contracts
- 50+ Contract Renewals per year

Williamson County Purchasing has used an electronic bidding provider since 2014. The contract was nearing termination in 2019 and the department was faced with the dilemma of issuance of a new contract with the previous provider or seek a technology solution that more effectively met the needs of the organizational growth. The procurement function is decentralized in Williamson County, so department users were included throughout the decision-making and acquisition process to meet both user and Purchasing needs.
ASSESS THE CURRENT STATE OF YOUR DEPARTMENT

(People, Processes & Purpose)

SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

What is working well for:
• Purchasing
• User departments
• Vendors

What isn’t working well:
• Purchasing
• User departments
• Vendors
DETERMINE WHERE WE CAN IMPROVE

(MEASURING PERFORMANCE, INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS, VENDOR COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.)

• Working well analysis: continue or enhance

• Not working well analysis: change needed

• What functionality can improve our service(opportunities)
HOW DO WE GET THERE?

- Gather Needs
- Issue an RFI
  - Demo Solutions
- Re-assess Needs and Prioritize
- Gather End User Feedback
- Issue an RFP
  - Interview Vendors and Demo
- Organizational Buy In
  - Evaluators
- Negotiate the Contract
- Implement
HOW CAN TODAY’S TECHNOLOGY HELP?

- Automation Opportunities
- Virtual Meeting Integration
- Integrated Evaluation Tools
- Integrated Contract Management
- Communication Tools
- Own the system!
HOW DO WE GET THE BUDGET?

• Identify decision makers

• Inform & educate about need

• Involve them in the process for 1st hand experience

• Emphasize long-term benefits of immediate application (put us on the path)

• Be realistic in ask; willing to implement in stages in necessary
  • Don’t convince yourself it’s too expensive!
WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OF WRITING AN RFP FOR THE RAPIDLY DEVELOPING MARKET OF EPROCUREMENT SOLUTIONS?

Our expertise is generally based on what we have

Variety of possible solutions:

• Single platform

• Multiple modules
HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY (AND QUICKLY) IMPLEMENT EPROCUREMENT

(ROLE OF THE ORGANIZATION, ROLE OF THE VENDOR & CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS)

• Preparation
  • Assign a Project Owner
  • Involve Your Purchasing Team, Vendor Account Manager & Vendor Consultants
  • Kick Off Meeting, Establish an Implementation Plan, Appoint Your Project Team
• Design and Validation
  • Project Team & Consultants Work Together to Establish the Basic Needs of the System (User Profiles, Settings)
  • Discuss Current Workflow & Translate to Your New Platform
  • Review & Approve the Design
• Execution & Testing
  • Create Templates, Data Conversion, Vendor Testing & Entity Testing
• Training
  • User Training, System Administrator Training, Create Manuals
• Close Down & Go-Live
  • All Deliverables Are Checked & Approved, Vendor Support Begins
  • Establish Firm Go-Live Date, Train End Users, Communicate to Vendors
• Aftercare
  • Post-Implementation Evaluation Meeting, Account Management
How would you describe eProcurement Implementation in your own words?
Can you elaborate on your expectations following the RFP in terms of implementation? What did you expect going into the implementation, and how did that match up to reality?
If you could go back in time, would you do anything differently during implementation?
An implementation also means a transition for your vendors, do you have any advice on how to communicate this with the vendor community? How did vendor participation shift after going live?
Any additional advice for others that are considering eProcurement or transitioning from their current platform?
RESULTS TO BE EXPECTED!

- Plan for the worst
  - Expectation – 6 Months
  - Reality – 46 Days
- Train, Train, Train
  - End User Buy In
- Communicate, Communicate, Communicate
  - Vendor Response
    - But what about the small businesses?
- Expect the Unexpected!
- Enjoy an everlasting partnership!
QUESTIONS?

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