You Are What You Buy

Tips for Values-Based Procurement

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Enjoy your morning beverage while I talk about...

- Context
- Where the values come from (and where they are missing)
- How I did it
- What I learned
Agency Context: City of Philadelphia

Procurement Dept. serves 55 other agencies

Solicitation Types:
- Bids (lowest responsive/responsible)
- RFPs (best fit solution)
- Best Value RFPs (best fit + price)

Formal values:
- MWDBE goals, LBE
- Special program for public works
My context:

- 3.5 years in public procurement
- Background in food & agriculture
- “Good Food Purchasing Coordinator”
- Co-housed across departments
The City’s Values

Voters approved a permanent Office of Sustainability

Mayor signed 2014 Executive Order establishing nutrition standards

Food Policy Advisory Council defined food values they recommended City abide by:

- Healthy
- Sustainable
- Fair
- Local

2009

2014

2016
But no official procurement policies.
How do I add values without policies or resources to back me up?
Create excitement about values

- To my commissioner: “Raise the profile of Procurement!”
- To my allies: “Use food contracts to test the waters!”
- To the skeptics: “Make sure it won’t cost more!”
Do the dirty work: specifications review

- Refer to others’ example specifications
- Make it match: consistency
- Ask for more in your specs
  - Example: conventional chicken v. antibiotic free chicken
Measure what you value: Reporting

- Third party certifications
- Detailed volume reports:
  - Include manufacturer name & origin, other label info
- Regular reporting periods and performance meetings
  - Penalties can help
Dare to experiment

- You can’t get what you don’t ask for
- Used Best Value when it was still new
- Reviewed what we could get, and what we couldn’t
Leaders like hearing that they are living up to the values they promote.
Share the success!

- Any improvement should be celebrated
- Make sure the public knows about it
- Ask for feedback from your stakeholders
Final thoughts...
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You can use inertia to your advantage.

Also, the news.

Get comfortable talking about the *value* of values.

Be consistent.

Don’t stop.
Thank you!
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