

PURCHASING SURVEY SUMMARY

In November 2006 a survey was distributed at the registration table at the “Moving at the Speed of Right” Purchasing Conference. The intention was to distribute the survey to everyone in purchasing who registered for the conference. The survey was designed to be completely confidential with no identifiers (name or agency) on the completed survey. The incentive to complete the survey was a drawing for a \$25 gift card to Target Stores. The form was distributed by personnel at the registration table.

Overall, one hundred ten (110) surveys were returned. Ninety-four (94) were tabulated for this summary. (Twelve surveys did not contain enough information to be included; four were completed by local government purchasing personnel and were held out.)

For the ninety-four surveys utilized, the average length of experience in state purchasing was 11.5 years. Five respondents indicated less than one year of experience in state purchasing; five had more than 30 years experience. There has been no attempt in this summary to link responses by amount of experience.

As best as can be determined, only one person from DRS completed the survey. Overall there is no way of knowing what the agency affiliations were for other respondents.

It should be noted that even among the surveys included in this report, a great many were not fully completed. As a result, almost all questions need to be considered from the perspective of “of those who completed this question...”

While the survey was not professionally designed and a number of the answers raised even more questions, it is still possible to draw some important conclusions from the responses.

- Less than 8% of those who responded indicated that they were familiar with the term “ESO” and only 17% linked “ESO” and “Employment Services Organization” together. Only 16% knew that “ESO/Employment Services Organizations” refers to “Sheltered Workshops”.

The implication is that, unless an education/awareness program is initiated, it does not appear that using the “ESO” designation (for instance, adding that on the eVa listing for each organization) would have much impact.

- 90% of those who have worked with ESOs were satisfied with the product/service and 89% were satisfied with the business practices of the organization. 83% felt the ESO they had dealt with competes well with other vendors and 93% thought the overall experience of dealing with an ESO was favorable.

These numbers might well be used in a marketing effort since the experience of purchasing people who have worked with ESOs is so positive.

- Only 24% of those responding believe they were currently up-to-date on regulations regarding purchases from ESOs.

This would seem to indicate a need for additional training for purchasing personnel. This might be through additional segments during their initial training, more sessions at future Moving at the Speed of Right Conferences, initiating mail and/or email educational programs or other options.

- While 85% felt that their department would support them if they made a “special effort” to utilize an ESO for purchases of products/services only 30% indicated that their decision would be influenced by the fact that it might result in providing employment for people with severe disabilities.

This would seem to indicate that the purchasing decisions are not strongly influenced by the human services element which could mean either that it serves little purpose to market ESOs in this manner, or that a better job needs to be done to make purchasing personnel understand the value of these contracts to people in their communities.

- Only 11% of the respondents indicated that an ESO had ever marketed their products/services to them, and only one respondent indicated that they had been contacted by more than one ESO. In addition only 26% of those who responded indicated that they were aware of what products and services are available through ESOs in Virginia and the vast majority of them only named one product or service when asked to name the ones they were aware of.

This certainly indicates that either the individual ESOs need to do more marketing and/or a group marketing effort needs to be implemented.

As regards the respondents ranking the factors that influence their purchasing decisions, “price” and “quality” were the clear winners (with “SWAM requirements” and “contract compliance” following in third and fourth place). Interestingly however, “contract compliance” was most frequently listed as the #1 factor. (13 times, compared to 10 for “SWAM requirements”, 8 for “quality” and 7 for “price”.) No other factor was ever listed as #1.

The complete survey results are as follows:

1. How long have you worked in procurement? **94 respondents/average of 11.5 years exp.**

2. Are you familiar with the term “ESO”? **Yes 7 (-8%) ; No 86 (+92%)**

If yes, without checking any references, please describe briefly what your understanding of an ESO is?

Senior citizens/Dept of aging

“Helping persons with disabilities find & maintain employment”

“Similar to blind”

3. Do you immediately identify “ESO” as “Employment Services Organization”? **Yes 15 (-17%); No 75 (+83%)**

4. Does the term “ESO” also represent other terms/organizations/programs to you? **Yes 1 (+1%); No 86 (-99%)**

If yes, what are they? “Emergency Services Organizations”

5. Are you aware that “Employment Services Organizations” is the term now used to refer to “Sheltered Workshops”? **Yes 15 (+16%); No 77 (+83%)**

6. If you are familiar with Employment Services Organizations, how did you learn about them (for example, procurement training, on the job, DRS marketing, etc.)?

- At Forum (2 times)
- Work for DRS
- Provided services for them
- Worked with field office of DRS
- Procurement Training (4 times)
- Marketing & Training
- Table Talk
- On the job

7. Have you ever purchased goods or services from an Employment Services Organization/Sheltered Workshop? **Yes 28 (+31%); No 62 (+68%)**

A.. If yes, in general terms, what have you purchased?

- Shredding (2 times),
- Pens (2 times), writing instruments (3 times),
- pillows, mattresses, mop heads, beds, gloves, survey stakes, plaques
- tray inserts, dietary kits
- local labor on campus
- Dishware
- Mailing services (2 times)
- Condiment packages
- Boxes (2 times)
- t-shirts, name tags and book bags
- survey stakes
- “Hatcher center provided curtains for psych center plus anti-strip jumpsuits.

B. Were you satisfied with the product/service? **Yes 27 (90%); No 3 (10%)** If no, why?
Didn't buy

C. Were you satisfied with the business practices of the ESO? (For example, on-time delivery, adherence to contract, etc.) **Yes 26 (+89%); No 3 (+10%)** If no, why?

D. In general, do you feel that the ESO you dealt with competes well with other vendors?
Yes 30 (+83%); No 6 (+16%)

E. If no, why not? “They don't offer enough selection”;

F. Is there any reason you would NOT use a particular ESO again? **Yes 0: No 51 (100%)**
If yes, why?

8. Do you believe you are currently up-to-date on regulations regarding purchases from ESO?
Yes 17 (+24%); No 52 (+75%)

9. Have you ever had an ESO market their products/services to you? **Yes 9 (+11%); No 67 (+88%)**

A. If yes, how many times? 1 time (by 9 respondents)

B. How many ESOs have done so? One - 7 respondents; Two to Five - 1 respondent ; More than Five - 0 respondents

10. Has your overall experience dealing with ESO been favorable? **Yes 28 (+93%); No 2 (+6%) (an additional 27 checked “no experience”)**

If no, why?

11. Has your overall experience dealing with ESO been: **23 (+82%) comparable to; 4 (+14%) better than; 1 (-4%) worse than** the experience dealing with other vendors?

12. Are you aware of what products and services are available through ESO in Virginia? **Yes 18 (+26%); No 50 (+73%)** If yes, please name the products/services you know about:

- Bulk laundry,
- line service,
- pens,
- pillows, mattresses (2 times),
- envelopes,
- mop heads,
- gloves,
- mailing (2 times)
- tray inserts, dietary packets,
- labor
- document shredding,
- cleaning,
- apparel
- recycling mailings

13. How did you become aware of what was available?

- From end user at agency
- vendor fair;
- by working with clients in DRS;
- open discussions,
- one came to me,
- past on from experience.
- Forum workshops,
- APSPM

14. If you have tried to identify an ESO to provide a particular product/service, has there been any problem in identifying appropriate vendors? **Yes 2 (+5%); No 42 (+95%)** If yes, what problems did you encounter?

- “information”;
- “Finding a workshop that could make the product to our specification”

15. Have you experienced any difficulty in finding vendors for ANY products or services in the past two years? **Yes 15 (+28%); No 37 (+71%)** If yes, what were they?

- Water testing equipment and solutions,
- books;
- police equipment;
- facility materials;
- service mats, shoe rubber,
- textiles

16. Are there any products/services that you purchase from out-of-state vendors because in-state vendors are not available? **Yes 13 (+27%); No 35 (+72%)** If yes, what products/services?

- Specialty classroom/lab supplies
- Health Educational Materials
- Mechanical Repair parts
- Cold chain supplies
- X-ray equipment & parts
- Many for university needs
- Surveying equipment
- MJO contract with agency
- Prison ready/compliant medical beds
- Shoe rubber

17. If you made a special effort to utilize an ESO for the purchase of products/services, do you believe your efforts would be supported by your department? **Yes 35 (+85%); No 6 (+!4%)**

18. Would the fact that your contract with an ESO might result in providing employment for people with severe disabilities influence your decision about selecting them as a vendor? **Yes 30 (+53%); No 26 (+46%)**

19. What would your suggestions be to an ESO trying to sell good/services to your agency?

- Show that the products/services meet the requirement needed;
- Follow through with deadlines/promises
- Keep in touch
- Make agencies aware
- Provide a quality product & a reasonable price
- Provide a good product for a good price in a timely manner
- More advertising & marketing to let us know what is available
- Post on DPS website – vendor name and commodities offered
- Do a website
- Advertise
- Contact me
- Provide contact info for ESOs

- More info available
- Raise visibility
- “Just talk to me”
- Send their brochure/catalog
- Need a mailing list of VCOs – send out info
- Call our procurement director
- Outreach (2 times)
- Have a website with central information about exactly what each can provide
- Site visit
- Market more & Emphasis no competition is needed/provide acceptable product at a good price
- How to partner with agency to meet agency mission
- Market to agencies in the communities

20. Do you have any suggestions on ways to make it easier for you to find products and services available through ESO?

- Send information about ESOs in my area to all agencies
- Send a letter with prices and products offered
- Post them on eVa website (2 times); Post on the web sites agents visit frequently –eVa,,DPS, etc.
- Internet link
- IT Access
- Have ESOs with booths at Forum and VAGP Expos
- Need to get the word out
- Include each ESO on the state contract list
- On line website listing products, services and locations/contact info
- Create their own website

21. In order of importance, what factors influence your decision to make purchases?

(NOTE: A number of respondents merely checked off the items they felt were important and others ranked them (some ranking all nine and others only ranking a few or several). As a result these responses are more difficult to rank. Therefore the responses are listed using six different measures.

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS WHO CHECKED OFF THIS ITEM (i.e. but did not rank it).

- 25 Price
- 12 Contract compliance
- 0 Difficulty in finding vendors
- 25 Quality
- 5 Invoicing/documentation accuracy
- 7 Credit card acceptance
- 8 Good history with vendor
- 11 Meeting delivery requirements
- 14 SWAM requirements
- 2 Other: One respondent listed “DMBE Certification” and one respondent listed “Mandatory”.

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS WHO RANKED THIS ITEM

- 39 Price
- 31 Contract compliance
- 20 Difficulty in finding vendors
- 39 Quality
- 23 Invoicing/documentation accuracy
- 22 Credit card acceptance
- 28 Good history with vendor
- 28 Meeting delivery requirements
- 32 SWAM requirements

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS WHO RANKED OR CHECKED THIS ITEM

<u>64</u>	Price
<u>43</u>	Contract compliance
<u>20</u>	Difficulty in finding vendors
<u>64</u>	Quality
<u>28</u>	Invoicing/documentation accuracy
<u>29</u>	Credit card acceptance
<u>36</u>	Good history with vendor
<u>39</u>	Meeting delivery requirements
<u>46</u>	SWAM requirements

NUMBER OF TIMES RANKED #1 in IMPORTANCE

<u>7</u>	Price
<u>13</u>	Contract compliance
<u>0</u>	Difficulty in finding vendors
<u>8</u>	Quality
<u>0</u>	Invoicing/documentation accuracy
<u>0</u>	Credit card acceptance
<u>0</u>	Good history with vendor
<u>0</u>	Meeting delivery requirements
<u>10</u>	SWAM requirements

NUMBER OF TIMES RANKED #1, 2 or 3 in IMPORTANCE

<u>29</u>	Price
<u>18</u>	Contract compliance
<u>1</u>	Difficulty in finding vendors
<u>28</u>	Quality
<u>0</u>	Invoicing/documentation accuracy
<u>2</u>	Credit card acceptance
<u>5</u>	Good history with vendor
<u>10</u>	Meeting delivery requirements
<u>22</u>	SWAM requirements

AVERAGE RANKING REGARDING IMPORTANCE (Lowest score being the best)

<u>2.69</u>	Price
<u>3.23</u>	Contract compliance
<u>7.9</u>	Difficulty in finding vendors
<u>2.77</u>	Quality
<u>7.0</u>	Invoicing/documentation accuracy
<u>5.9</u>	Credit card acceptance
<u>5.0</u>	Good history with vendor
<u>4.86</u>	Meeting delivery requirements
<u>2.75</u>	SWAM requirements

While the concept of “State Use” could not be simpler, the genesis of the term itself seems to be a mystery.