

PRICING

FOR CONTRACT AND GOVERNMENT PROFESSIONALS

September, 2021

Developing Pricing Leaders of The Future

by James Malloy

Agile & Adaptive Leadership

by Frank Anderson

Interview with Amanda Christian

by Kirk Donnan

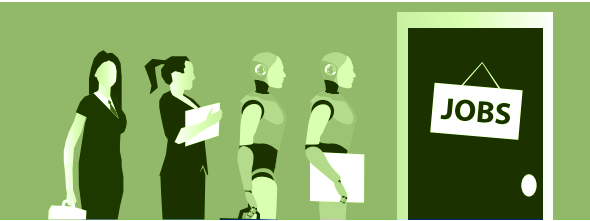
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by Shene Comodore, Rene Rendon and Carly Cox



Pricing
Development
Edition

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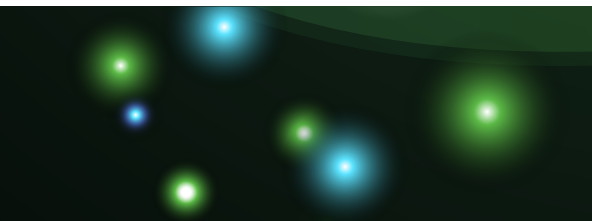
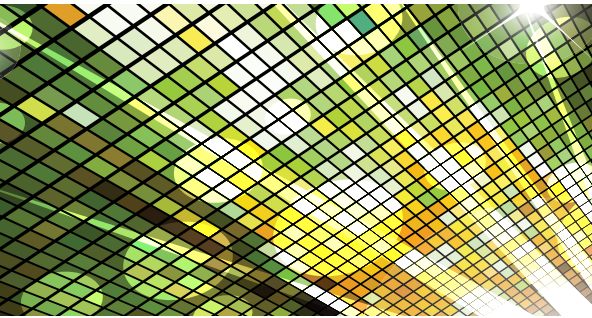
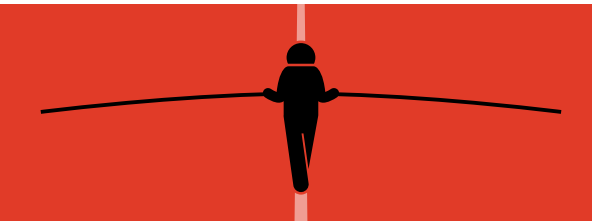


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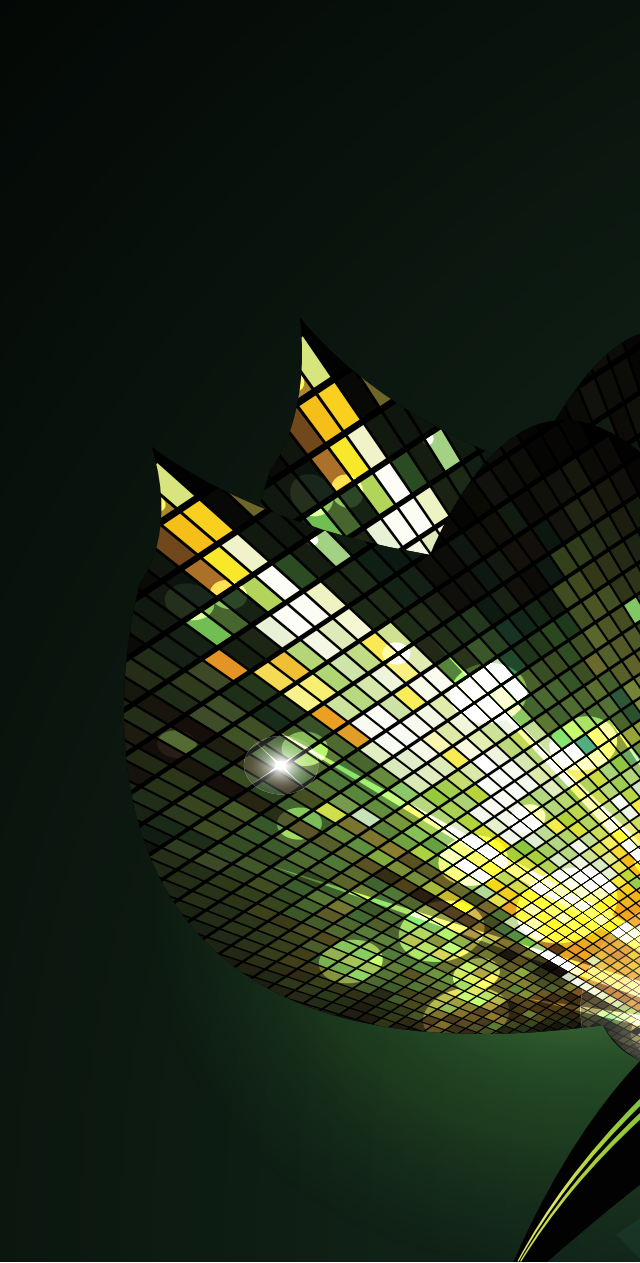
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The Pricing Hour:

Insights from GovCon Experts

SEPTEMBER

The Cost Estimating System Audit

*Marsha Lindquist,
Granite Leadership Strategies*

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH, 2021
11 AM PT / 2 PM ET

The Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA) is stepping up their to perform cost estimating system audits. DCAA is in the seat to review defense contractors estimating systems for acceptability and compliance with DFARS 252.215-7002.

OCTOBER

FY New Year Party - How to Improve for 2022

*Judy Bradt,
Summit Insight LLC*

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26TH, 2021
11 AM PT / 2 PM ET

Plan for a party! The first 50 registrants will receive a party pack complete to get your fiscal New Year started off on the right foot!

Agile & Adaptive Leadership: Game-Changing Strategies for Developing Future Leaders in Pricing

THE SPEED AGILITY

By Frank J. Anderson, Jr.,

Brigadier General (Ret), U.S. Air Force Former President of Defense Acquisition University & Director, Human Capital Initiative, Department of Defense

BE AGILE AND ADAPTIVE TO FOSTER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development for government agency and industry contractor pricing professionals has changed significantly over the years. We've moved from large classroom-based training courses to learning sessions which are now smaller, modular, and more tailored to individual needs—agile. We've also seen a shift in the use of new technologies and software. These key shifts in the professional development and learning domains point to an even greater need to improve upon the way we develop talent. Developing talent today isn't simply

about teaching skills that will be used 10 years from now. It's about teaching skills and training that pricing professionals can apply to their jobs right away. While many aspects of government pricing remain true over time, it's impossible to predict how the environment will change, and how expectations will shift going forward.

Seasoned experts and young professionals alike should focus on being agile and adaptive to new opportunities for growth and leadership. What does it mean to be agile and adaptive? It boils down to our ability to adjust to different situations while also fostering new ways to grow and develop personally.

PARTICIPATE IN TEAM-BASED AND ONLINE INDIVIDUAL LEARNING

Online individual learning allows pricing professionals to decide what they need to learn, when they need to learn it, and how much to take on. This is a distinctively different approach from team-based learning, though both are critical in today's development. Team-based learning is when a group of people with the same mission implement a strategy to get everyone on the same page. In this environment, there is a facilitator to question and guide the team through their approach on a particular issue. Ultimately, however, it's up to the team to collaborate and



even your career. At times, people may be unwilling to work with someone due to personality clashes. Other times, it's expected that mentors are the ones who need to be adaptable. This thinking is problematic.

In any professional relationship, it's necessary to adapt to each other to make the learning environment successful. True and meaningful mentoring takes time, perseverance, and adaptability.

Mentoring isn't about whether the person needing mentoring will like their mentor. We're not making best friends here. Mentees must be willing to adapt to the people who are best qualified to help them develop. Sure, it's always easier to be with someone you connect with, but the best mentoring relationships are the ones where you're sometimes stretched by the mentor.

When I worked my first job in services and construction buys at George Air Force Base in California, my mentor wasn't someone I particularly saw eye-to-eye with. Nevertheless, he taught me a lot.

If I needed an answer on something, he would always start by telling me what part of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) the information was located. He'd say, "Go read it. When you're ready, come back and talk to me." He never gave me an answer directly. Over time, I learned and grew in that environment because I had to study. Then, I'd come back, and we would discuss where to start. Through this dialogue, I was able to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for the importance of self-study and preparation for my own personal growth.

develop the game-winning strategy. In either scenario, it's important to remember that learning can be enhanced when you're sometimes forced to take the initiative. The key is that you must be an active participant.

USE MENTORING TO DEVELOP YOURSELF

Mentoring is an excellent way to nurture and grow your skills, talents, and

MENTORING IS NOT A LAISSEZ-FAIRE ARRANGEMENT WHERE YOU JUST SHOW UP AND SOMEONE FEEDS YOU. IT'S AN ACTIVE PARTNERSHIP—FOR BOTH THE MENTOR AND THE MENTEE. A GREAT MENTORING RELATIONSHIP FOSTERS GROWTH FOR BOTH PARTIES.

VOLUNTEER FOR EVERYTHING AND ANYTHING IN YOUR ORGANIZATION TO STAY AGILE AND ADAPTIVE

One piece of advice I'd give to anyone entering the acquisition workforce or pursuing growth as a pricing leader would be to embrace the importance of volunteering. Look for every opportunity to participate in new and different projects. Get in on every pricing opportunity that you can, because the best development comes from actively engaging in pricing and being part of an experience where you can take something away. Eventually, your experiences will build on one another.

Be committed to learning the FAR, but don't let the FAR block you from new experiences. Recognize that the FAR is a set of game rules. Use it to enhance and facilitate your ability to get things done and improve team collaboration.

All too often, agency teams believe contractors become a roadblock because of inaccurate interpretations of the FAR. Instead, focus on building a team-based environment where everyone feels responsible for doing their part to accomplish the overall objectives of the team. Make it a place where everyone sees their role as integral to achieving ultimate success. It's not simply implementing the FAR correctly on both sides of a contract; it's about enhancing and facilitating the team.

Be willing to continuously stretch yourself, remaining agile and adaptive to do things that you haven't done before. This is how you're going to grow, get the job done, and become a successful leader in the pricing profession.



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**DEVELOPING
PRICING LEADERS
OF THE FUTURE**



James Malloy Jr.

Professor of Contracting Management and Learning Director at the Defense Acquisition University

James W. Malloy, Jr. is a Professor of Contracting Management and Learning Director at the Defense Acquisition University. His portfolio responsibilities include Construction Contracting and Architect-Engineer Contracting Credentials, and DoD Small Business Program learning assets. He is also a DAU Executive Coach.

Mr. Malloy is a retired U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel with over 21 years of acquisition service and a member of the Defense Acquisition Corps. He holds the National Contract Management Association Certified Federal Contracts Manager designation and is DAWIA Level III certified in Contracting and Manufacturing and Level II in Program Management.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed herein are those of the author and not necessarily of the DoD or any of its components.

This edition of Pricing Magazine introduces a campaign to highlight future defense acquisition leaders. In support of the initiative, this article will focus on a few traits and habits of successful leaders, along with some personal observations.

From 1966-1973 prime-time television featured a popular espionage-themed series called *Mission Impossible*. The series was revived into feature films starring Tom Cruise from 1996-2018. Weekly episodes revolved around a small, diverse, elite team of covert operatives known as the “Impossible Missions Force (IMF).” IMF missions were so hazardous they were deemed “impossible” or appropriately most improbable. Viewer suspense was nearly palpable as the team’s leader heard “Your mission, should you choose to accept it.” Success was always achieved due to leadership, diversity, cohesion, self-mastery, and execution excellence.

Attendees of the virtual 2021 Government Contract Pricing Summit witnessed many thought-provoking discussions involving some of the most accomplished and forward-thinking leaders from the Department of Defense, other federal agencies, and industry. During a senior leader panel

discussion, and in response to the question “What keeps you up at night?” asked by moderator Elliott Branch, USAF Major General Cameron Holt responded, “The threat! The threat! The threat!” These sentiments were echoed by other panel members.

U.S. adversaries are determined to undermine and dominate American life and interests. Threats are sophisticated, digital, borderless, and virtual. Strategies involve economic, technological, and information dominance, as well as cybersecurity and cyber warfare executed with unparalleled speed. National response demands a highly skilled, self-motivated “IMF-type” workforce of critical thinkers focused daily on personal and professional mastery. To that end, consider taking guidance from the following 10 traits of a successful leader:

BE RADICALLY OPEN-MINDED AND RADICALLY TRANSPARENT

Ray Dalio, Founder of Bridgewater Associates, one of the world’s most successful hedge funds, published *Principles* in 2017. The volume condenses 40 years of life and business lessons. One of those lessons is to seek truth and openness. “Do not let the need to be right take priority over the need to discover what is true.” Promote diversity. Create an idea

meritocracy that recognizes and values the best ideas and diverse viewpoints. Foster an environment of openness and transparency and a culture where it is acceptable to make mistakes but unacceptable not to learn from them.

PURSUE MASTERY

"Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom."

Aristotle

In the article "The Making of an Expert" from the 2007 Harvard Business Review, researchers found that expert performance resulted from many years of "deliberate practice and coaching." In answering "Are experts made or born?" Dr. Benjamin Bloom's investigative research revealed that "superb performers had practiced intensively, had studied with devoted teachers, and had been supported enthusiastically by their families throughout their developing years. Furthermore, the amount and quality of practice were critical factors in the level of expertise achieved. "Consistently and overwhelmingly, evidence shows that experts are always made, not born."

Share mastery. As the saying goes, "If you can't explain it simply, you don't know it well enough."

MASTER THE ART OF INQUIRY

"If I had an hour to solve a problem upon which my life depended, I would spend the first 55 minutes defining the problem and the last five minutes solving it."

Albert Einstein

Develop your ability to ask deep, reflective questions that stimulate innovation and learning. Brainstorm using only open-ended questions. The results may surprise you.

BE PERSISTENT

"It can be done."

General Colin L. Powell

Challenges may seem out of our control. However, we control our responses. Baseball Hall of Famers Hank Aaron and Babe Ruth each struck out over 1,300 times during their extensive careers that lasted more than 20 years. Yet both reached sports immortality with only a 30% success rate. Winners view mistakes as improvement opportunities and pursue greatness despite the odds. Reflect and correct, then step back up to the plate.

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF AND OWN YOUR OUTCOMES

"You are responsible for your life. If you are sitting around waiting on someone to save you, to fix you, to even help you, you are wasting your time because only you have the power to take responsibility to move your life forward."

Oprah Winfrey

Trust your capabilities. Don't allow another's perception of you to become your reality. Hold yourself accountable, support your teammates, and press on together to greatness.

EXECUTE WITH EXCELLENCE

"I directed our focus less to the prize of victory than to the process of improving, obsessing perhaps about the quality of our execution. Then the winning would take care of itself."

Bill Walsh, Head Coach San Francisco 49ers

Quality is never an accident. Get the culture right. Believe in your purpose, mission, and team. Then observe how well people perform.

BECOME AN ACTIVE LISTENER

"Listen" contains the same letters as "Silent." Be present. Listen to understand; not to speak. In a TED talk, Simon Sinek recounts a story about Nelson Mandela's practice of being the last to speak. People feel respected, know they've been heard, and that their opinions are valued.



BE COURAGEOUS

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Feel fear but don't allow fear to control you. Afraid of public speaking? Develop your speaking skillsets so that you can influence others.

Keep the faith! Trust and believe, even when difficult to do so.

"You cannot slay the dragon every day. Some days the dragon wins."

General Colin L. Powell

EMBRACE DIVERSITY

"Is everyone in the room?" asked the CEO before a meeting, noting the lack of diversity. After hearing "No," the leader replied, "The meeting will resume when everyone is in the room."

Support diversity in people, talent, and thought. We all possess varying talents and skillsets that collectively strengthen the whole. Set an inclusive and meritocratic tone for the organization.

MANAGE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

"If you can't change the people around you, change the people around you."

Chuck D.

Roses generally don't grow in the desert. Transplant your seed into different soil if the need arises. Your quality of life in five years will depend greatly on the relationships, habits, and influences you allow in your thinking. Doubtful? Review your last five years.

The world today is vastly different than just a few years ago. You possess the capabilities to advance far beyond those before you. Future generations are counting on you to secure their future. This is your mission, should you choose to accept it.

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and presenters, this year's virtual
2021 Government Contract Pricing Summit
was an inspiring success!*



Those who attended the event heard from top professionals in their field, such as John Tenaglia, Principal Director, Defense Pricing and Contracting, Department of Defense, and Denyce Carter, Vice President, Contracts and Purchasing at General Atomics. As keynote speakers of the Government Contract Pricing Summit, Ms. Carter and Mr. Tenaglia both shared insightful viewpoints from their unique perspectives.

Senior-level panelists from the US Army, US Navy, and US Air Force discussed the future of contract pricing, and senior industry leaders gave their thoughts on contract pricing challenges and innovative technologies.

Some excerpts from this year's event include how the Defense Department is changing the way it is contracting with industry. Whether through new, faster contracting vehicles or through emergency authorizations during COVID-19, it's clear that the DoD is meeting its needs differently now than in the past.

One of the most noticeable ways the Pentagon is changing its contracting approach is through technology, according to Brian Burmeister, Executive Director of Sales at ProPricer.

"The government's focus is on technology and leveraging that technology to award contracts more quickly, by determining fair and reasonable pricing more efficiently," Burmeister said during a conversation sponsored by ProPricer. "DoD wants to reduce the time it takes to get on contract."

The DoD's desire to connect with industry faster stems from some high-priority needs within the department. The rise of near-peer competitors is forcing the DoD to move faster in order to stay ahead of adversaries. Another factor is the rise of cyber threats and how quickly technologies change. The DoD can no longer wait five or more years for a new technology when systems are changing on a timeline of months.

"Workforces are innovating in the area of contract pricing and proposal analysis," Burmeister said. "Rebecca Weirick, the Army's Deputy Assistant Secretary for acquisition, technology, and logistics spoke at the 2021 Government Contract Pricing Summit. They're looking to connect to industry partners on common platforms

that are widely used across industry. That's exciting. We're starting to see light speed in contracting, and that's better for the taxpayer. Most importantly, it gets the much-needed resources to the warfighter in the field as fast as we possibly can."

Burmeister said young professionals are starting to question why the DoD is contracting the old-fashioned way in some instances.

"We're seeing an infusion of smart, young professionals who've been living tech-savvy lives. Then as they become senior professionals, they're passing on the wisdom they've acquired," Burmeister said. "The new professionals have been asking the why questions—'Why do we do it this way? Why don't we leverage this? Why is it done this way when it can be done a better way?'—and we're seeing senior staff all the way up to the executive office listening and reacting. That's really encouraging, especially when we've traditionally seen industry outpace government when it comes to the speed at which new technology is adopted. We're starting to see government quickly react and close that gap."

Burmeister said he sees the Government Contract Pricing Summit furthering that conversation.

"We're looking to attract counterparts from government and industry to attend collaborative and interactive sessions together," he said. "The goal is to create an environment where there is bidirectional learning wherever possible."

Next year's 2022 GCP Summit aims to continue these discussions and others in our first ever hybrid event in San Diego, CA, June 14-16. Come join us in-person to learn from contract pricing thought leaders, and to engage in networking opportunities with your peers and people you won't have access to at any other event. The GCP Summit is where contract pricing professionals from industry and government gather to collaborate. Don't miss out!

Sincerely,

The GCP Summit Team at ProPricer

Industry Events

- [➔ 2021 DFAR Part 239: Acquisition of Information Technology](#)

- [➔ California Virtual Digital Government Summit 2021](#)

- [➔ Ohio Virtual Digital Government Summit 2021](#)

- [➔ 2021 DFAR Part 243: Contract Modifications](#)

- [➔ 2021 DFAR Part 244: Subcontracting Policies and Procedures](#)

- [➔ Government Contract Compliance](#)

- [➔ 2021 DFAR Part 249: Termination of Contracts](#)

- [➔ 2021 DFAR Part 231: Use of Government Sources by Contractors](#)

Wed, Sep 8, 2021

12:00pm - 1:00pm ET

Tue, Sep 14, 2021

11:30am - 6:50pm ET

Tue, Sep 21, 2021

8:30am - 3:50pm ET

Wed, Sep 29, 2021

12:00pm - 1:00pm ET

Wed, Oct 6, 2021

12:00pm - 1:00pm ET

Tue, Oct 19, 2021

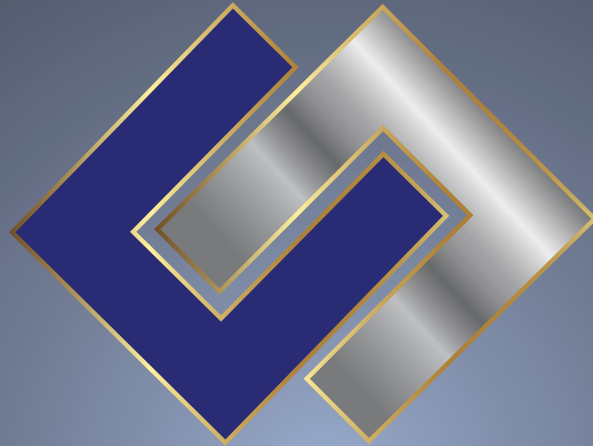
12:00pm - 4:00pm ET

Wed, Nov 3, 2021

12:00pm - 1:00pm ET

Wed, Nov 17, 2021

12:00pm - 1:00pm ET



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Ms. Shene' Commodore, CPCM, Fellow is CEO & Founder of Commodore Consulting. Ms. Commodore has over 25 years of procurement experience. Commodore Consulting provides contract management, strategic planning, proposal writing, GSA services, & training. She also works with government agencies to provide program management, acquisition support, and IT services.



Carly Cox

President, JJR Solutions

Carly Cox is President & COO of JJR Solutions, LLC responsible for executing company strategy and stewarding company financial performance, quality operations, and client experience. As a life-long dreamer and problem solver, she finds joy and meaning in creating and building solutions to complex challenges. She is passionate about engagement, culture, and helping develop systems to sustain these important organizational facets at scale.



Dr. Rene Rendon

Associate Professor, Naval Postgraduate School

Dr. Rene G. Rendon is a nationally recognized authority in the areas of supply management, contract management, and project management. He is an associate professor at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, where he teaches in the MBA and Master of Science programs in acquisition and contract management. In addition, he has conducted research on acquisition and contract management for the Department of Defense and has taught acquisition and contract management courses to international military and civilian officials.



“WE ALL WANT TO DO WELL, BE INSTRUMENTAL IN HELPING OUR COMPANIES GENERATE THE PROFIT THAT THEY NEED, BUT ALSO SERVING OUR CUSTOMERS WHILE PROTECTING THE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES.”

*- Shene Commodore,
Commodore Consulting*

Key Professional Development Tips for Contract Management Professionals

This past June, expert leaders from the contract management community led a discussion at the Government Contract Pricing Summit to discuss key tips for the pricing professional to grow and develop in the contract management field.

We broke down the discussion and pulled out six insights and topics that can help to not only advance you in your career, but improve your skill set overall.

EXPAND YOUR KNOWLEDGE BEYOND YOUR ROLE

Pricing professionals are in a very interesting position. As Dr. Rene Rendon, Associate Professor at the Naval Postgraduate School, suggested, “I’ve always considered a pricing professional, just like all contract management professionals, to be in a boundary-spanning role. Meaning the roles and responsibilities of pricing is expanding throughout the organization.”

Once a pricing professional has mastered the technical skills of pricing—cost analysis, price analysis, cost estimating, etc.—they should expand their body of knowledge. Pricing is a subset—a critical one—of the contract lifecycle, and an integral part of the contract management body of knowledge. But expanding your knowledge to understand all phases of the contract life cycle, from pre-award (market research, market intelligence, proper RFP development) to award (source selection and negotiations) and post-award (contract administration and contract closeout) can prove to be extremely valuable.

In addition to understanding the other lifecycle phases, expand your understanding of “the other side of the table” competencies. If you are on the buyer’s side, learn more about the seller processes, and vice versa for the sellers. This will only help when it comes time to negotiating and strategizing.

EXPAND YOUR KNOWLEDGE BEYOND THE FAR

When entering the world of government contracts, most everyone is trained on the FAR. However, with so many non-FAR contracts—Other Transaction Authorities (OTAs)—being awarded, certified cost and pricing data is non-existent. Without having access to cost and pricing data, how is a pricing professional supposed to determine fair and reasonable pricing?

Value-based pricing and possessing the skills to use other factors and metrics to determine price is critical. Find other value in what the contract provides, like additional capabilities from the product or service. Or is the contractor going to be reinvesting in the organization’s emerging technologies or research? Expanding knowledge beyond just FAR-based contracts can pay dividends for pricing professional development.

EXPAND YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF AI

As Artificial Intelligence (AI), bots, and Robotic Process Automation (RPA) become more and more prevalent in the workforce, understanding their capabilities and how they can be used will not only help pricing professionals advance in their careers, but most likely, it will help with their current job functions. Running towards this change in technology with an open mind is a critical skill, and something leadership within the industry is rewarding.

Data is constantly evolving. Technology and data are hitting the workforce so fast, it is often hard to keep up. Using AI to handle more mundane tasks and freeing up time to assess data and turn it into useful information is a great display of innovative and progressive thought leadership.

BE A MENTOR OR MENTEE

Education is good, book knowledge is good, and explicit knowledge has a role to play for professional development, but there is also tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge comes from experience and practice, and in order to get experience and practice, pricing professionals need mentors, coaches, and on the job training.

To not only know the “what” but the “how” is extremely important. Dr. Rendon stated, “you can’t be a professional pricer or professional

contract manager just on book knowledge. You have to have the experience; you have to have the practice.”

BE BOLD

Cultivate an environment that compels people to do more than just their obligatory job duties. What pricing professionals can really do, can far exceed day to day mundane tasks sometimes associated with job descriptions.

Carly Cox of JJR Solutions noted, “it’s not always about really good Excel skills or knowing the ins and outs of the FAR. It’s about problem solving, critical thinking, collaborating, and quite frankly, just being willing and able to think outside the box and help something succeed.”

Greatness can come from the boldness a person can bring to the table. Having the ability to respectfully challenge Program Managers to consider alternative approaches, or engage other employees as well as customers, displays out-of-the-box thinking, a proactive spirit, and mission focused leadership.

BE OPEN

Be open to a shift in mindset. Don’t just look at what something costs, but instead, look at the value of the total solution that is being obtained. This is a new way of thinking when it comes to pricing.

Another change in mindset is looking at a mutually beneficial, holistic approach where government is more actively engaged with industry. Being open to a more collaborative approach helps both sides to better understand the current market conditions, which ultimately, helps to produce better results.

To watch the complete discussion head to www.gcpsummit.com/agenda.



STRESS IN 2021

How Federal Managers
Are Supporting
Their Employees

For the last two years, federal managers have had to re-think, retrain, and revise the way agency leadership handles their workload and workforce effectiveness. There has been a lot of discussion about how to streamline and tackle remote environments from a company standpoint, but now management is turning inward even more—focusing more on the whole person, rather than just their workspace and productivity.

In an interview with Tom Temin from Federal News Network, Kristen Vaughan, Managing Director for Accenture Federal's Human Capital Practice, discussed how important it is to deal with the stress and pressure the pandemic has brought to employees.

Ms. Vaughan has been conducting extensive research over the last two years on the working conditions in the public sector. Overall, through this era of COVID, federal workers actually found their jobs more meaningful. "Federal workers took great pride in their role fighting the pandemic," stated Vaughan. However, even with an increase of work meaningfulness, stress also increased by 68 percent*. "So again, you have employees that are super engaged, but they're also very stressed at the same time," said Vaughan.

The study went on to show that half of the federal workforce believes that their full potential is being used or taken advantage of at work. Considering the United States federal civilian workforce is estimated at 2.1 million, that's a huge amount of unlocked and unrealized potential for employers.

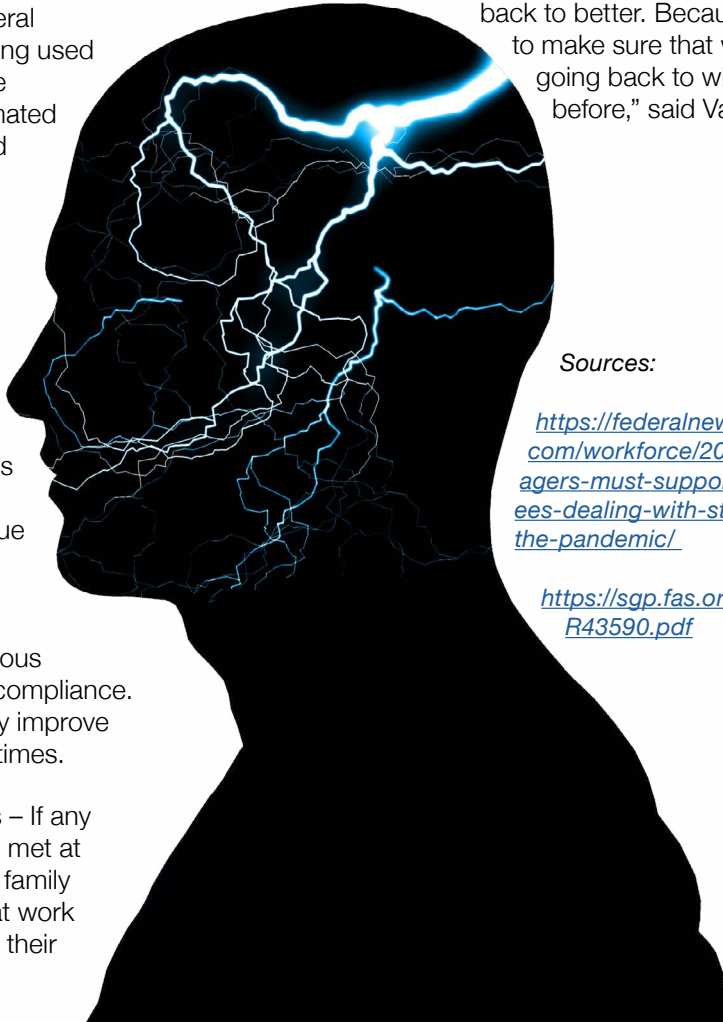
The study found that companies that scored high in helping their employees become "net better off," earn higher levels of trust, and trust led to loyalty and productivity. "So really implementing this 'net better off' framework can also strengthen an agency's Employer Value Proposition," said Vaughn. "This is what we call the EVP. It's the perceived benefits from working for a specific organization." To help companies achieve a better Employer Value Proposition, she broke down five fundamental practices:

1. Enable Continuous Learning – Continuous learning is no longer about workforce compliance. Employees are seeking ways to actively improve their skills and keep up with changing times.
2. Listen to the Needs of Your Employees – If any employee knows their needs are being met at work whether it be time off to handle a family emergency or tools to better perform at work – they are more likely to be engaged in their work for the long run.

3. Use Technology to Enable Flexible Work Arrangements – Have an employee that works remotely or in a different office outside your time zone? Tools like Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Slack keep teams connected from any location to enable flexible work arrangements.
4. Champion Workforce Well-Being – Incentives such as free counseling, flexible work arrangements, and over communication on health and available support options goes a long way for employee who may feel highly stressed.
5. Set and Share Specific People Metrics – People like to feel connected, especially in the workplace. Sharing people metrics such as DE&I goals is one way to make employees feel connected.

Over the past two years, companies and agencies have learned a lot about their workplace environment and employees. For those that have chose to lean into the new changes, a fresh work-life balance outlook is presenting more and more benefits, both financially and personally.

"I think that's why we're really saying back to better. Because we want to make sure that we're not going back to what we were before," said Vaughan.



Sources:

<https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2021/08/managers-must-support-employees-dealing-with-stress-during-the-pandemic/>

<https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R43590.pdf>



THE FUTURE

OF PRICING AND PROCUREMENT

AWARD



The past year undoubtedly led to many changes for government agencies and companies. No matter your role, we all had to be innovative to keep our job duties rolling. Not only did the past year shift the way we work, but it forced many employers to quickly shift to support their employees in a remote environment while juggling business operations.

To reflect the major transformational changes over the past year, and the innovation shown in pricing and procurement, we've decided to honor those who have stood out in exemplary ways throughout the government contracting industry. The Future of Pricing Award is presented to 5 individuals who are up and coming in the industry, and 5 individuals who are in leadership roles. At both levels, these individuals represent resilience, boldness, and innovation.

As we continue to adapt to new operations, we hope that the nominees for this year can cultivate inspiration for teams nationwide, and inspire innovation. Mostly, we hope these individuals are people whom you can connect with to extend conversations of their practices and mindset shifts.

LEADERSHIP



Kelly Poree

Professor / Former Contracting Officer

With over 30 years of DoD experience, Kelley Poree is currently a lecturer at Naval Postgraduate School's Graduate School of Defense Management where he is responsible for educating U.S. and allied military officers and defense civilians in defense-focused business policies and praxis. Mr. Poree is not only an educator, but an advocate for incorporating new technologies into higher education.



Kevin Jans

President, Skyway Acquisition

Kevin Jans is the President and Founder of Skyway Acquisition, creator and co-host of the Contracting Officer Podcast, a TEDx Speaker, and published author. Over 16 years as a DoD contract specialist and contracting officer he awarded over \$1 billion in contracts. Most recently, he founded Skyway to help middle-market firms navigate the increasingly complex process of competing for Federal contracts.



Peter Guinto

Chief of Contracts, U.S. Air Force

Peter Guinto is an attorney and the Chief of Contracts in the U.S. Air Force's Medium Altitude Unmanned Aerial Systems Division in Dayton, Ohio. Over the last decade, Mr. Guinto has continued to excel in his career, developing and evaluating methodologies and best practices for USAF multi-year efforts. His work has been featured in the Harvard Business Review, and his studies with UNC Executive Development programs have helped him to shape the pricing and contract landscape throughout his tenure.



Marsha Lindquist

President / CEO, Granite Leadership Strategies

Marsha Lindquist is one of the most positive entrepreneurs and professional women consultants in the United States today. Whatever the issues are relating to creating a profitable business and winning competitive government procurements, Marsha finds creative ways to solve them and make a significant difference for the organizations she works with. In her almost 40-year career in government contract pricing, contracts, and finance, she has led her clients in their strategic pricing to win billions of dollars in government contracts.



Polly Hall

Executive Director, Procurement Innovation Lab

Polly Hall serves as the Strategy & Planning Lead for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Procurement Innovation Lab (PIL). Polly has been with DHS since 2010, serving with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office, and the Transportation Security Administration prior to her role with the PIL. In her role, Polly is instrumental in shaping the strategic direction and collaboration framework of the PIL, which is a virtual lab providing a safe space to experiment with innovative acquisition techniques designed to improve procurement processes and outcomes for the DHS mission. The work of the PIL, including coaching support and workforce training, is driving cultural change across the federal acquisition community.

UP AND COMING



Heather Nakagawa
Sr. Pricing Analyst

As the Senior Pricing Analyst for Nammo Defense Systems Inc. (NDS), Heather Nakagawa strives to proactively improve efficiencies of the pricing and proposal process. Recently, Heather's leadership and guidance in support of a crucial proposal for NDS resulted in a successful contract award that's positioned the company for additional long-term contract agreements. Mrs. Nakagawa is a passionate professional, committed to continuous improvement and effective utilization of innovative systems. She has employed the knowledge acquired at seminars and uses software upgrades to provide individualized training to multiple functional organizations across the Nammo enterprise with the goal of helping the worldwide team to work effectively and efficiently.



Kevin Meyers Jr.
Price Estimating Analyst

As a pricer with Northrop Grumman for almost five years, Kevin Meyers Jr has helped to procure almost two billion dollars in awards. Since Mr. Meyers has worked on both the front and back end of programs, he has an appreciation for how multiple departments need to work together for a company to be successful. Mr. Meyers understands the value of establishing and maintaining effective, cooperative relationships, as well as adapting to changes in the work environment.



Nancy Iwasaka
Business Systems Analyst

As a Business Systems Analyst in the Proposal Advancement Office for SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, Nancy Iwasaka has been on the forefront of evaluating, coordinating, and pushing for better, more efficient systems. Ms. Iwasaka's role has allowed her to ensure efficiency and compliance for her team of colleagues. Thanks to Ms. Iwasaka's innovative spirit, other labs are now looking at SLAC as a model to mirror their business systems from.



Richard Wahidi
Contracting Officer

Richard Wahidi is a Procuring Contracting Officer for the U.S. Air Force Electronic Warfare and Avionics Program Office at Robins Air Force Base. He is also a diligent, passionate member of the National Contract Management Agency (NCMA), who has acquired tremendous insight into the association's mission and the opportunities it offers. Additionally, he serves as the Public Relations Director for the NCMA Middle Georgia Chapter and has been recognized as a standout in the field, graduating as part of NCMA's Leadership Development Program. To add to his repertoire, Mr. Wahidi is currently studying at the Naval Postgraduate School.



Daniel Wesoloski
Contract Price/Cost Analyst

Having transitioned from an audit background, Daniel Wesoloski joined the DCMA Commercial Item Group and immediately let the creative juices flow. During his tenure, he has led the team's imaginative approach by leveraging eBay data as a source of research data, comparing actual commercial prices paid for similar products to what our military is buying. He continued to push the envelope, supporting the Air Force with a large base-housing/land-lease contract. Mr. Wesoloski has presented concrete examples of his work providing over 1,000 CLOPs to the acquisition workforce in his Defense Acquisition University webcast. According to his supervisor, Catalina Savill, Mr. Wesoloski "dreams big" and "epitomizes the concept of market-based pricing."



HORIZON



Horizon Industries is an IT services corporation serving Clients across the U.S. and internationally. Horizon has over **25 years** of experience providing IT and Management consulting services to the U.S. Government and commercial clients around the globe. We focus on emerging capabilities in **Cyber, Low Code, RPA, AI and Network Technologies**. To meet the business objectives and needs of our clients, our teams deliver full life cycle of support from business strategy analysis, business system development and deployment, and operations support.

A global provider of the most advanced Artificial Intelligence driven cyber threat detection and remediation platforms for Enterprises and Managed Security Service Providers (MSSP). The platform empowers Enterprises and MSSPs to analyze operational security data, proactively detect threats and vulnerabilities, and automatically contain and eliminate them in real-time. It also goes beyond traditional defense-in-depth based Silo tools to provide “Comprehensive Cybersecurity for the Digital-Era” through the coalescence of Seceon’s Dynamic Threat Models, Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence (AI) with actionable contextual awareness.

Horizon partners with industry leaders such as Appian (10+ years of low code development), Eclipses (data security), and ServiceNow (cloud computing platform) remaining poised to deliver solutions that meet the highest standards.

WHY CHOOSE HORIZON

We focus on the business objectives and needs of our clients, delivering a full lifecycle of support from business strategy analysis, business system development and deployment, and operations support.



INDUSTRIES SERVED

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- Consumer Goods
- Healthcare
- Transportation
- Defense



Get in touch: info@hil.us and <https://hil.us/>

“Fear **Not** the Bot”

*Diffusing Myths
about AI & Bot Technology in Acquisition*

(Top 7)





Sunil Shamlal

President of Horizon Industries

Mr. Shamlal's experience extends over 20 years in various aspects of IT consulting, information assurance, financial analysis, organizational assessment, procurement support, business management, requirements analysis, and teaching systems design as an adjunct IT professor at a 4-year university. Mr. Shamlal holds a Civil Engineering degree as well as an MBA from American University.

The “robots will steal our jobs” narrative, often used as a typical objection to robotic process automation (RPA), is the core reason for a staff’s lack of willingness to accept new technologies. This is also very real in the acquisition and pricing domains.

In fact, if we look back at history, this fear of automation taking over jobs has been in place for quite some time, ever since cars replaced horses and trains replaced carriages. The reality is that technology makes it possible for us to live more efficiently and increases our quality of life.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is already all around us. Email communications, social media, driving directions, music and movie recommendations, web searching—all of these are using AI. Most of us can agree that these things have improved our lives in many ways. Therefore, we should not look at this change as something scary, but

instead look at ways it can help us be more efficient. We should consider how we can utilize AI and other emerging technology and robotics in ways that serve us and our lives.

Nonetheless, change can be scary, and it is natural for us to be concerned about how change can impact our lives, or in this particular case, our jobs. There are steps we can take to ensure that the change has a positive impact. You might be leading an acquisition team where the implementation of new technology will impact outcomes but also team members. It is your role to make this transition as smooth as possible, starting with educating your team about the exciting possibilities of implementing new technology.

For starters, prior to engaging in the automation project, you should educate your team about what software robots can and cannot do. This will help them understand that the bots

should be seen as helping—and not hindering—the current work roles, projects, and mission outcomes. Moreover, you should invest in training employees regularly, as the “automation era” will likely require them to acquire new skills.

By being proactive with your team and enhancing their skills to effectively utilize new software and tools, you not only upskill them for the future of work requirements, but also assist them in feeling secure and ready to take on this change.

The myths around AI and its impact on the way we work within acquisition can be quite diverse, so we have put together a list of myths which can provide insights on the realities and the misconceptions to prepare you and your organization for the future.

1 MYTH

THE BOT IS SEEKING TO TAKE OVER MY JOB... AND THE WORLD

The bot is seeking to do nothing, only assist in aspects of work that are more efficiently done by bots. Statistics by the World Economic Forum 2018 show that the jobs created by automation far exceed the jobs lost to automation. We worried at every stage of the industrial, and now the information evolution, that machines would take our jobs. However, it's been seen over the years that jobs get added as automation evolves. Yes, some jobs go away but new ones get created in larger numbers. Companies that have created robotic process automation (RPA) tools—like BluePrism, UiPath, and others—have created thousands of jobs. The automation we continue to see in our work life and within acquisition from bots continue to allow us to do more.

Key Take-Away: Bots allow us to do the more cerebral work, while automating the repetitious and tedious work. Machines are created by humans and AI is designed and developed by humans. All this creates jobs and doesn't take ours away.

2 MYTH

BOTS ARE SO MUCH SMARTER THAN PEOPLE...

Let's first take a look at we mean by AI being "smarter" than people. A famous psychologist, J.P. Guilford, divided creative thought into two categories: divergent and convergent thinking. Divergent thinking is the process used to creatively generate many ideas and come up with many solutions. Convergent thinking is arriving at one correct answer, leaving very little room for creativity or different solutions. So, when it comes to AI becoming

smarter than humans, we can say that it might have strong convergent thinking because it can process more information than our human brain and in shorter period of time. But what it lacks is curiosity and creativity—or divergent thinking ability. Today, AI is specialized in specific tasks and specific outcomes. The human brain is designed to adapt to many different environments and has the social skills and emotional intelligence that even the most intelligent computer does not have.

Key Take-Away: Machines are programmed to solve specific problems, not be diversified in coming up with creative solutions.

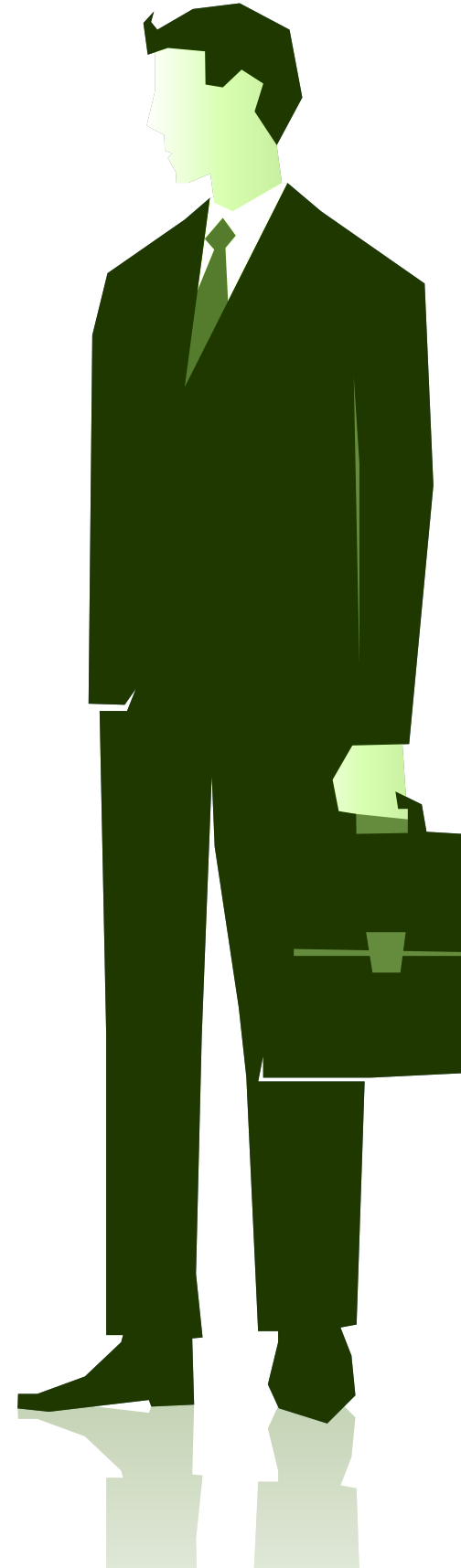
3 MYTH

PEOPLE & BOTS CANNOT CO-HABITATE...

Machine learning, AI, and robotics are all around us. We are already living with one another effectively. AI experts predict that the technology by itself will not be at the optimal level to take over completely, and there will always be a need for human decision making that cannot be handed over to a machine. This hybrid model of problem solving and decision making between human and a machine is a powerful combination that will serve us in a positive way, particularly as each side learns more and more about how to best co-exist together. A good example of this relationship is the semi-driverless car—it requires both participants to actively be involved in the experience.

Algorithms are only good for specific situations and problem-solving steps, so when a new piece of information is introduced, a machine might not be good at assessing the new situation, thus causing a failure, accident, or mistake. Just remember a time when Google maps took you to the wrong location and you blindly followed its direction without thinking that something might be off.

Key Take-Away: We can live in the same environment as bots. However, humans have a responsibility to pay attention to the results machines are producing to ensure things are aligned.



4 MYTH BOTS AUTOMATICALLY INCREASE EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS...

The impact of AI has been felt across many industries, from acquisition to healthcare to finance to customer service and retail. Workplace AI is making a difference in individual ability and performance. What is the catch then? The catch is that humans need to know how to utilize the technology effectively and incorporate it into the workflow. AI can impact your workday in just about every aspect. As employees and leaders, we need to be proactive in understanding how our respective area of work is being affected by technology. Are we taking advantage of these innovations or are we lagging behind and creating a threat of being dissolved? Continuous learning is something that must be actively practiced because the world of work and technology is not slowing down. Ultimately, we have a choice, to keep up or be left behind. Where can you save time, money, and effort by utilizing the latest technology or automation tools?

How are you preparing for the future of work?

Key Take-Away: *Keep pace with AI technology and learn how to leverage it most effectively and efficiently within your organization.*

5 MYTH THE BOT IS CAPABLE OF SOLVING ALL MY PROBLEMS...

The bot is only capable of solving what you direct the tool to solve. Is a task repetitive? Is it one that does not require human interaction? Is it subject to human errors, like large data entry? Based on your answers to these questions, you can then choose to

automate the task. We have been automating tasks that we do everywhere to become more efficient. Even getting fresh orange juice is automated. The bot is just another tool that should be used wisely to allow humans to work more efficiently. Bots don't make decisions that require the social and emotional aspects of decision making. Bots and AI can apply pre-determined logic and even learn on that basis. But at the end of the day we need human IQ, thinking, emotions, and operational environment understanding to solve problems. We know how to adapt; bots and machines don't. We know how to consider emotion; bots don't. We either solve problems or employ bots to solve problems.

Key Take-Away: *Automated tasks are ideal candidates for a bot, but problems are solved by humans.*

6 MYTH AI LEARNS ON ITS OWN...

When it comes to machine learning, we might assume that after some time, it starts to learn on its own. But that is not completely correct. In fact, the data preparation, removal of biases, and basic input of the problem is done by a human.

Key Take-Away: *There needs to be continuous improvement and updates to AI software to ensure new knowledge and data are integrated accordingly.*

7 MYTH COMPANIES DON'T NEED AN AI STRATEGY...

Machine learning and AI are going to impact businesses globally, even further than they already have. The notion that your business does not need a strategy to effectively navigate the changing waters of business and

technology is worrisome. How much and how fast they change are two considerations we need to keep in mind. Not every company is going to be able to implement all new technology or implement new technology all at once. But there needs to be a continuous flow of consideration when it comes to AI and its impact on business from operations to sales to the performance and productivity of the workforce. If done right, the integration of AI—particularly RPA—can help us redesign the way we work and automate many processes, leaving humans with more time on their hands and increased productivity across board.

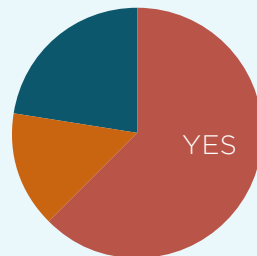
Key Take-Away: *Don't fear the bot! What does your AI strategy look like?*



Professional Development Survey



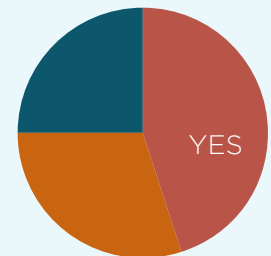
Does your organization/agency actively promote continuing education or training opportunities?



- Yes, I am always encouraged to pursue training opportunities - 62.5 %
- Yes, but I wish I had more opportunities - 15 %
- No, I find the opportunities myself - 22.5 %

40 Answers

Is there a lot of diversity in training opportunities that offer credits towards CLP?



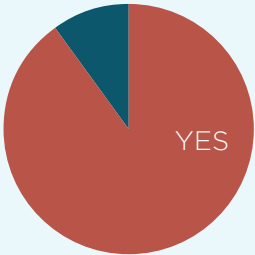
- Yes, I feel like there are a lot of topics for me to earn credit towards - 45 %
- Kind of, it is a hit-or-miss with the topics - 30 %
- No, I wish there were more - 25 %

40 Answers

“What would you attempt to do if you knew you would not fail?”

DR. ROBERT SCHULLER

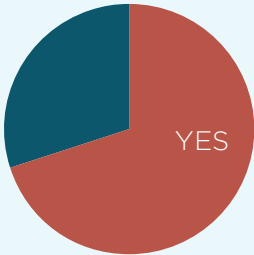
Does a toxic workplace have a direct effect on individual employee personal development?



- Absolutely - 90 %
- Depends on leadership - 10 %

40 Answers

Does your leadership team make an effort to learn about innovative practices (example: artificial intelligence) even if they are not experts in the subject matter?



- Yes, I feel like my leadership understands my role - 70 %
- No, not that i am aware of - 30 %

40 Answers

If you want to participate in professional development, does your agency/company require CLP credits for it to count?



- Yes - 12.82 %
- No - 87.18 %

39 Answers

ProPricer Partners

The ProPricer Partnership Program gives consultants, referrers, and system integrators a new way to increase profitability while growing their business. Partners can offer a serious competitive edge by augmenting their services with unmatched proposal pricing capabilities.

Learn more about the ProPricer Partnership Program at www.propricer.com/partners.

Consulting



The Contract Coach offers a unique set of skills and expertise to the potential client. These skills encompass a deep understanding of U.S. Government contracts (Certified by the National Contract Management Association) coupled with a PMP certification and acceptance by the American Association of Cost Engineers International as a Certified Cost Technician. The Contract Coach can work seamlessly with your proposal or execution team using advanced tools like ProPricer and RiskyProject to tie all the pieces (and data) together to produce risk adjusted schedule and cost estimates.

Technology



Predictive power. Confident estimates. Organizations worldwide across the aeronautics, space, and government industry have used PRICE Cost Analytics™ for over four decades. They gain fast, more accurate cost intelligence and process integration for projects, budgets, and bids—offering a unified cost format, data transparency, insightful metrics, and defensible estimates.

Education



The Naval Postgraduate School is a graduate research university offering master's and doctoral degrees in more than 70 fields of study to the U.S. Armed Forces, DOD civilians and international partners.

The Naval Postgraduate School provides defense-focused graduate education, including classified studies and interdisciplinary research, to advance the operational effectiveness, technological leadership, and warfighting advantage of the Naval service. Learn more at www.nps.edu.

Media



Federal News Network is the key source of breaking news, information, and analysis on the topics that matter most to federal agency managers, policy makers, and contractors. We cover the federal government and those who do business with the government, concentrating on workforce, management, defense, technology, contracting, policy, and pay and benefits issues.

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THE PENALTY OF
NOT TAKING A RISK
CAN BE FAR GREATER
THAN TAKING A RISK



Amanda Christian

*CACI International Incorporated
NCMA President*

Ms. Christian is the Senior Vice President of Subcontracts and Procurement at CACI International Inc., a professional services and IT solutions company with \$6B in revenue. In this role, she leads an organization that purchases goods and services with an approximate spend of \$3B per year. Ms. Christian is responsible for setting direction, policy, and procedures based upon corporate-level strategy, and ensure the procurement and subcontracts personnel provide value and contribute to the overall success of the company. As a key position on the Executive Leadership Team, she delivers on strategic initiatives, implements industry best practices, while maintaining a DCMA Approved Purchasing System.

Ms. Christian has over 20 years of Procurement experience. Prior to joining CACI International Incorporated in 2008, she was with Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC). She holds an MBA from Marymount University and a BSBA specializing in Supply Chain Management from Bowling Green State University (BGSU). Ms. Christian is a longtime member and President of the National Contract Management Association, in addition, she serves on the BGSU Department of Management Advisory Council, and the BGSU Alumni Board.

In a recent conversation with Amanda Christian, the newly elected President of the National Contract Management Association (NCMA) and Senior Vice President of Subcontracts and Procurement at CACI, Incorporated, we discussed professionalism, pricing development and certification, new and innovative technology, and her thoughts and advice on how to take on new challenges.

Kirk Donnan: *Mrs. Christian, tell us a little bit about your day-to-day responsibilities as the Senior VP of Subcontracts and Procurement at CACI and specifically, what's your role in helping the company prepare its workforce for success?*

Amanda Christian: In my role at CACI I provide leadership and oversight of the Procurement and Subcontracts Department, which spends close to \$3 billion annually on products and services in direct support of government contracts, and in support of the company's infrastructure. The company budget—really, any dollar that's spent—is under my purview.

My job is to ensure CACI's procurement professionals have the skills necessary to help our business sectors deliver on current and future work, leverage and institute best practices to improve CACI's competitive position, and improve effectiveness of the organization.

I have a great team and I invest many resources into developing and growing our procurement professionals. I have a fantastic Training Manager who has launched over 50 procurement-related courses in CACI's Virtual University that provide both in-person and on-demand delivery. The courses support and grow the capabilities of our Buyers and Subcontract Administrators, and the topics range from file documentation, to supporting large scale proposals, to using our Procure-to-Pay (P2P) system.

KD: *Of all the things you do, is there one thing that you enjoy the most?*

AC: There are many things I enjoy. One of the reasons why I like procurement so much is because I get to tackle routine challenges and new challenges every day. Each day is different.

However, I most enjoy helping people grow professionally. I always mentor several people, and I am extremely proud of the intern program we rolled out immediately after I took over the department in 2009. We have employed and coached over 40 interns to become stronger supply chain professionals over the years.

KD: *Please tell us a little bit about specific policies that you oversee and how you ensure that CACI is following or even setting industry best practices in these policy areas?*

AC: My job is to maintain CACI's Approved Purchasing System, thus I am responsible for CACI's procurement manual. I also

oversee the Small Business Liaison Office and the Supply Chain Department, so all policies and procedures in support of those areas fall under my purview. Because of those duties, I pay close attention to new statutes, regulations, policies (including the many new Executive Orders), and trends being discussed. I also help develop execution strategies as part of a cross-functional team of legal, information technology, security, contracts, and government compliance experts within CACI.

I definitely have to stay on my toes. Things are changing at a much more rapid pace than they have in the past. We focus not only on compliance, but also on how to use existing technology to ensure we have the proper controls in place to track, document, and report in the most efficient manner. Especially with a lot of the new regulations that come out, it's often requested that we have reporting requirements—so you have to get prepared for what may come.

KD: *Congratulations on becoming the new President of the National Contract Management Association. Having served on the NCMA Board for several years and as an executive contracting official in industry, what are your views on the importance of professional certifications such as the NCMA Certified Professional Contracts Manager Certification?*

AC: NCMA certifications play a vital role in elevating the role and stature of contracting professionals. I think there are two things that come into play:

For the individual, it is a great way to put themselves apart from their peers. It demonstrates to employers an individual's willingness to study, work hard, and go above and beyond to prove their competency levels.

It gives employers a great way to evaluate and identify candidates with a sound foundation in Contracts Management who are looking to advance in the field. Certifications also provide bosses with an indication of an individual's ability to see that contracting isn't merely a "stove piped" specialty in a business, but rather one of several vital skills that must come together to make a company customer-focused, competitive, and profitable.

KD: *Currently there aren't any specific certification programs with an emphasis on pricing, do you think there is an opportunity to develop some type of certification program to support the needs of pricing professionals?*

AC: Although pricing does not have their own certification program, pricing is covered under NCMA's CPCM certification. That said, a Pricing Certification has been discussed many times by NCMA and is worthy of further discussion, specifically a certificate program. I do see it

as an important step for the pricing function and professionals in that area.

So much of the current body of pricing knowledge is strictly oriented toward cost-based analysis, and if we want to truly exploit commercial technology in the current market, we're going to have to collectively improve our pricing acumen.

KD: *If you had a crystal ball, what would you see that the future of pricing might look like? Do you foresee a greater reliance on automation to support tasks that could be accomplished by robotic process automation (RPA) software or other innovative technologies?*

AC: I am a big proponent of automation and utilizing RPA where it makes sense. I believe, just like in Contracts and Procurement where routine pricing tasks can be automated, automation (including bots and AI) may allow professionals to focus on larger, more complex issues and utilize their business skills to support their customers.

I do think there is definitely a role for automation in pricing. If pricing professionals can reduce the time it takes to input data by relying on bots to pull information from multiple sources, resources could be redirected to perform harder tasks such as building a large-scale pricing model that may identify areas to reduce cost and risk.

RPA would allow teams to focus on building out their complex pricing models and strategies with their price-to-win and capture teams, which is vital when you have

limited resources within a company.

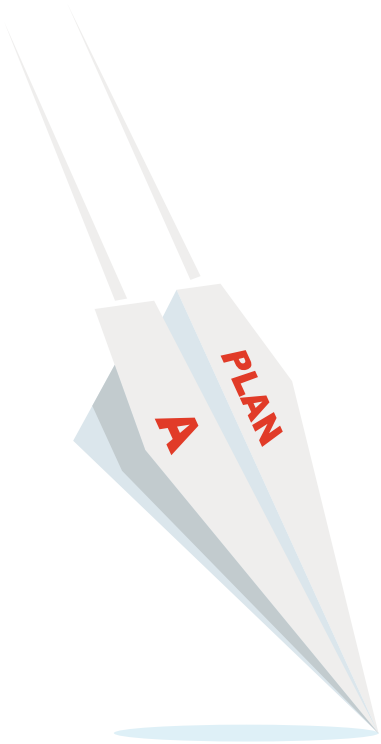
KD: *It is hard to find an executive at your level who has not run into challenges at various points in their career. What advice would you offer for others to consider as they face professional and career challenges?*

AC: When I have faced hard challenges in the past, I've always counted on the support of a great team to help me work through the challenge. I consider my teammates to include not only the people who work for me, but also my peers and my leadership. Knowledge of their support and awareness that others will also give 100 percent toward the success of the team—and each individual—helps tremendously. For leadership, it is important your team knows they have your support and backing. It takes time to develop that support system and trust, but it is vital to your success.

Another piece of advice I'll offer is that you should sit down, clear your head, and come up with a sound plan before executing when faced with a challenge. It is typical to want to jump in and begin “doing something” immediately but take a breath and prepare your path to improve your odds of success. Be willing to accept advice and iterate as you go, as things often don't pan out exactly as you planned. Another thing I have learned over the years is that if you have developed the best execution plan and given 100 percent, then that is the best you can do. You have to be willing to accept the outcome, but if you fail, then you must learn from it! Our collective experiences, both good and bad, offer the best schooling money can buy.

KD: *There seems to be a dichotomy around failure. Obviously, no one wants to fail, but sometimes taking risks that do not turn out as anticipated offer great opportunities*





for learning and innovation. So sometimes risk aversion due to the fear of failure can be as detrimental as the failure itself. What are your thoughts on this and what would you tell pricing and procurement professionals who want to introduce ideas and take risk, but are hesitant to do so?

AC: The penalty of not taking a risk can be far greater than taking a risk. As a leader it is my job to build an environment that makes employees feel safe enough to take measured risks and to innovate. If you look at some of the biggest and best companies around, they continue to innovate. How? By taking risks, failing in certain situations, and always learning and improving. It is an important step in the push for change and success.

Everybody should be empowered and have the confidence to test and learn constantly. The organization may use successes, past failings, and other opportunities that arise to create something even better. The important thing a leader must do is to create a psychological safety zone that allows for sharing and rewarding risk taking within the organization in order to obtain the benefits.

***KD:** With more than 20 years of experience in contracting and procurement, what tips have you learned that you would pass on to those who are just getting started or perhaps in the middle of their career?*

AC: Government contracting is a small world. So, make sure you build a strong reputation and brand. That's done by becoming known as someone who people want to work with and think of when they have new positions and openings. A strong reputation will open new doors and expose you to new opportunities throughout your career. Also, work to build a strong

professional network. Your network should include not only people in similar disciplines, but also individuals from a number of backgrounds who can help expand your possibilities and grow you as a professional.

Finally, find good mentors that can help you design and plan your career. Using your career plan, strong reputation, network, and hard work will put you on a great path to success while also affording you the opportunity to adjust your career path as your interests and aspirations evolve over time. Find someone that can stretch you and push you to the other levels you never thought you could get to.

***KD:** Any final thoughts you would like to offer our readers regarding pricing and its importance to both industry and government?*

AC: Looking forward, the world is moving to more of a pay as you go approach, and the government is already embracing procurement of cloud services in such a manner.

Stay flexible. New pricing models are emerging and will quickly become the de facto way to price and procure technology and services. So, making sure you have the understanding and skill sets to adjust and work within these new models and environments will be vital for pricing, contracts, and procurement professionals.

So, stay on your toes and keep your skill set up to date because things are moving at more and more of a rapid pace every day.

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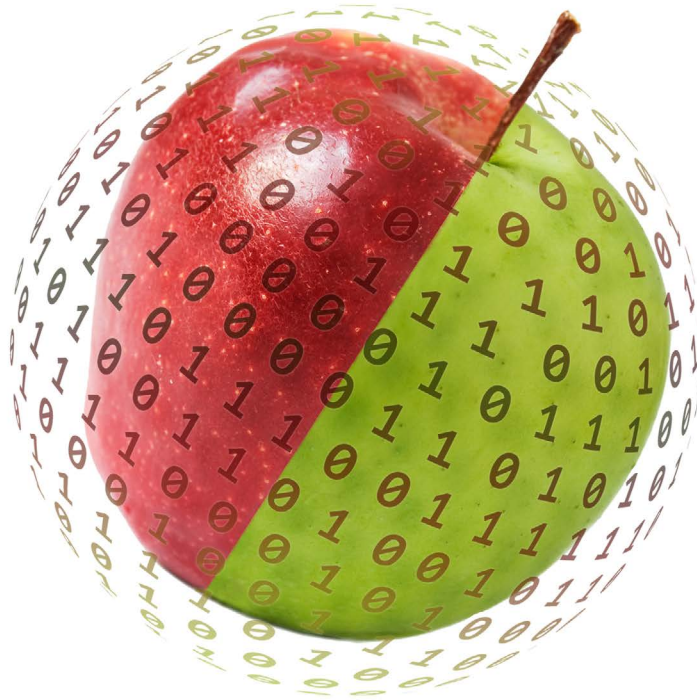


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Industry News

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MATTERS. WHY?

The workforce over the past decade has become increasingly competitive, and in order to excel, training and development is essential. However, studies show that a third of the workforce in the United States doesn't take the time to invest in their skillset. In fact, the number one challenge facing the government's desire to modernize is the workforce—namely, availability and access to a skilled workforce to transition government information technology (IT) to “next-generation” capabilities.

If federal practices in pricing and procurement want to stay current with the innovative artificial intelligence (AI) and cybersecurity practices and technologies, these statistics must change.

For example, in the cybersecurity industry, government agencies are trusting these professionals to protect the organization. However, if they are not given time or resources to get training or mentorship, how can government agencies trust that? It's that significant, especially in this day and

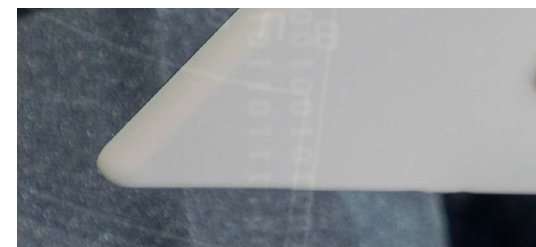
age where cyber is everywhere and in everything.

With the emergence of new technology and AI, there is a need for professionals who are knowledgeable about the future of all pricing practices. The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC) has approved a bipartisan bill that would direct the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to develop an AI training program for procurement officials at civilian agencies.

“We need a federal acquisition workforce that understands AI, how it works, how it can help the government run better, and the ways we can fix the problems with AI systems so those procurement professionals can know they are buying the right AI systems for the government,” said HSGAC ranking member Rob Portman (R-OH).

Under the AI Training Act (S. 2551), OMB would have one year after enactment to implement the program in coordination with the General Services

Administration (GSA). Additionally, program managers, budget analysts, and those responsible for conducting systems research, development, testing, and evaluation will be required to have training on the following topics:



- The science underlying AI, including how AI works.
- The ways in which AI can benefit the federal government, as well as ways to mitigate risks posed by AI, including efforts to create and identify AI that is reliable, safe, and trustworthy.
- Future trends in AI related to national security and innovation.

But what can teams do to make sure employees have what they need? The current shift in work practices has caused federal and industry management teams to supply their employees with the tools they need to be effective in a remote setting. Professional



Politics

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development is often left out of that realm.

Kristen Vaughn, Managing Director at Accenture Federal Services, says the data for the Army and other federal agencies is looking at progression,


Taking the time to invest in employees and their professional development allows them to gain new skills and ultimately leaves them more engaged, giving them better career outlook and satisfaction.

Build and skill the workforce with certifications and training. More people than ever are entering higher education, and the workforce is inundated with educated candidates seeking entry-level positions. Build on that advantage—invest in continued growth and development to ensure continued progress.

Sustain and retain the workforce by creating a company culture that gives people a compelling reason to stay.

Lead with innovation by offering the workforce access to emerging technologies through public and private partnerships and relationships with academia.

The future of the workforce will depend on the innovation within each agency and companies training practices. GovCon leadership must invest in their people, skills, and uplifting the communities around them.



attrition rates, and how they can make people feel like they have a career path, career trajectory, and that they are learning and growing their skills. "I think what we've seen a lot during the pandemic also is continuous learning. So people want to learn and not just learn for compliance. I've seen a big shift and government agencies where before the pandemic, they used training as a point in time where it was checking the box to make sure that you complete your annual training. And now I see it more as continuous learning to enable workforce improvement, knowledge gain, and using things like upskilling and reskilling on AI, cloud, cyber."

According to George Batsakis, Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer at 1901 Group, the future of the workforce is built on four core tenants:

Develop and scale the workforce outside the saturated federal government labor markets. The more rural market space has been left behind as automation and new technologies make many jobs obsolete. These areas are ripe for new economic growth and an untapped market to grow an entirely new IT workforce.



A Focus on Accessible Training

PROPRICER ENTERS THE VIRTUAL STAGE TO DELIVER TRAINING OPTIONS FOR THE CHANGING WORKFORCE LANDSCAPE.

Dear Reader,

I hope this issue of Pricing Magazine not only provided new insight into the future of pricing, but also served as a resource for your professional development. As always, our goal for each issue of this publication is to offer an educational tool and outlet that helps promote career growth and innovative ideas.

To help do our part, ProPricer Technical Support will be debuting interactive computer-based training (CBT) in a few short months. Our CBT program is designed for pricing and procurement professionals who want to learn the ins and outs of ProPricer and practice using our software.

ProPricer CBT offers an immersive, hands-on learning experience with the flexibility and accessibility needed by pricing professionals in high-security and busy office environments. Along with singular modules to choose from, people can select personalized learning journeys for ProPricer training that relates to their specific position and job duties.

Our plan is to continue building up the momentum of our virtual training, and we are aiming to develop new approaches and tools for cost and pricing analysis.

Getting the right information into the right hands at the right time is what we will always strive for, and we look forward to growing with you.



Estevan Mercado

Technical Support Manager

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📞 951-693-0440

To learn more about ProPricer training and other offerings, including requirements related to education, practical experience, and continuing professional education credits, visit propricer.com/training.

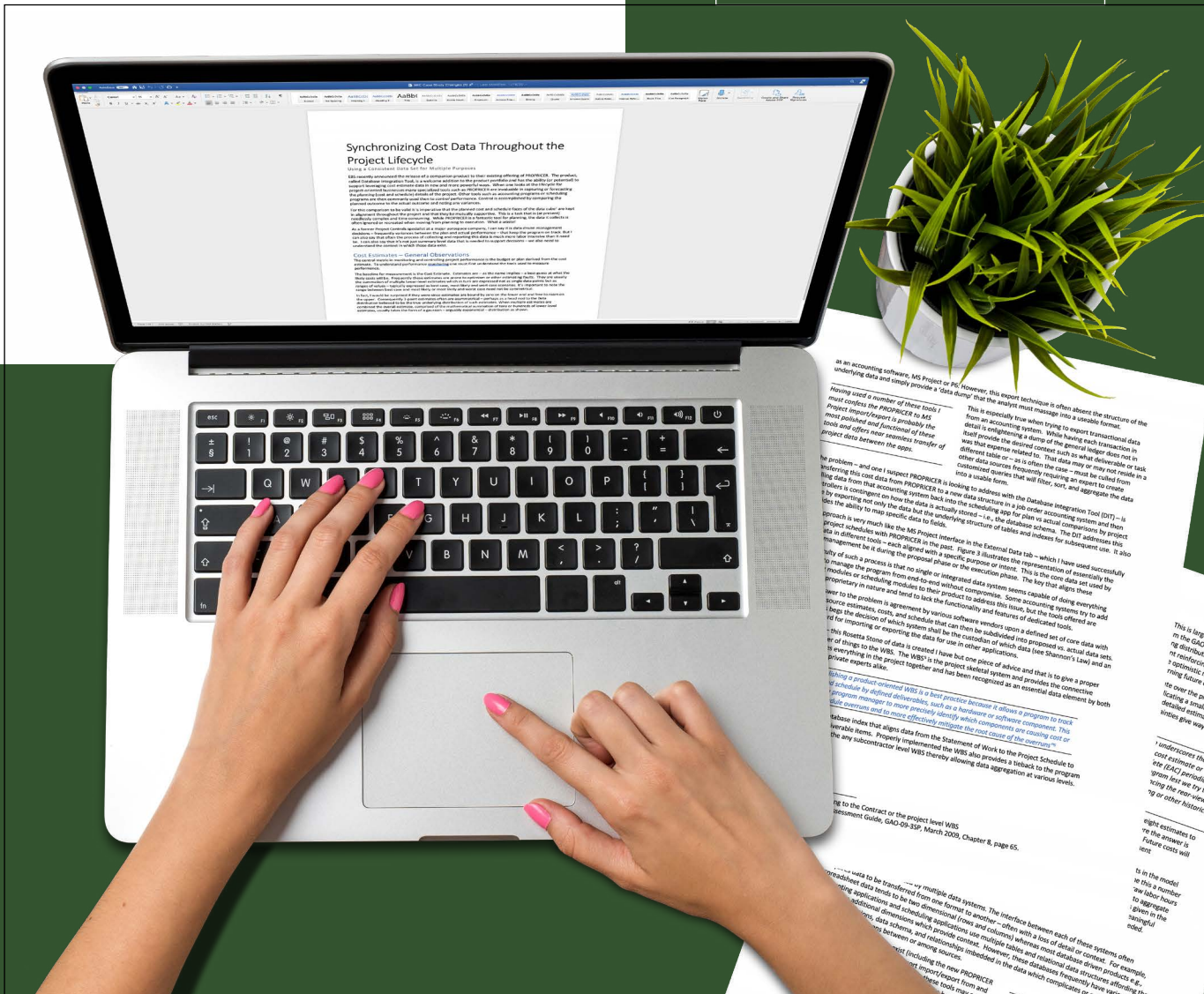
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Future Issues of Pricing Magazine for 2021

• December, 2021



Synchronizing Cost Data Throughout the Project Lifecycle

Using a Connected Data Set for Multiple Purposes

As a project manager, you know that your project data is a valuable asset. It's not just the data you collect during the project, but the data you use to manage the project. This data can be used in a variety of ways, from tracking project progress to identifying areas for improvement. The key is to ensure that your data is accurate, up-to-date, and easy to access. This is where a connected data set comes in. A connected data set allows you to store your data in a central location, making it easy to access from anywhere. This is a great way to ensure that your data is always available and up-to-date. In this article, we'll explore how you can use a connected data set to manage your project data throughout the project lifecycle.

Cost Estimation - General Observations

Cost estimation is a critical part of project management. It allows you to determine the resources needed to complete a project and to identify potential cost overruns. There are several factors that can affect cost estimation, including project complexity, resource availability, and market conditions. To ensure accurate cost estimation, it's important to use a reliable data source. A connected data set can provide the most accurate and up-to-date information for cost estimation. By using a connected data set, you can ensure that your cost estimates are based on the most current and accurate data available.

in an accounting software, MS Project or Primavera, this report technique is often absent the structure of the underlying data and simply provide a "data dump" that the analyst must massage into a useable format.

Having used a number of these tools I must confess the PROPRICER to MS Project export is probably the most polished and functional of these tools and offers near seamless transfer of project data between the apps.

The problem - and one I suspect PROPRICER is looking to address with the Database Integration Tool (DIT) - is that by exporting out the data to a new data structure in a job order accounting system and then the ability to merge specific data to feed into a different tool - is often the case - must be pulled from a customer source frequently requiring an expert to create into a usable form.

This is especially true when trying to export transactional data from an accounting system. While having each transaction detail is enlightening a dump of the general ledger does not provide the desired context such as what deliverable or task different tasks are - as is often the case - must be pulled from a customer source frequently requiring an expert to create into a usable form.

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