

Leading for Excellence from Wherever You Are in a Public Procurement Program

Part 2: Leadership in Public Procurement

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Outline of this Part of the Presentation

- **What “leading for excellence” means in a public procurement program**
- **Traits of leaders for excellence in a public procurement program**
- **Behaviors of leaders for excellence in a public procurement program**
- **Who can/should lead for excellence in a public procurement program**
- **Barriers to leading for excellence in a public procurement program**
- **Enablers of leading for excellence in a public procurement program**
- **The ethics of leading for excellence in a public procurement program**
- **Where leadership for excellence can/should be exercised in a public procurement program**



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The Meaning of “Leading for Excellence” in a Public Procurement Program

- “Excellence” for a public procurement program: “providing maximum practicable support for the entity’s mission and goals”
- Reducing or avoiding errors is important, *but* it is a by-product of leading for excellence
- Leading, as a behavior, includes:
 - identifying, and if necessary formulating, measures that will assure maximum practicable support for the entity’s mission and goals
 - advocating measures that will promote maximum practicable support for the entity’s mission and goals
 - adopting and implementing measures that provide maximum practicable support for the entity’s mission and goals



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Traits of a Leader for Excellence Within a Public Procurement Program

Such traits include:

- clearly understands the mission and goals of the entity
- committed to supporting the mission and goals of the entity
- understands his/her role in the bigger picture
- technically and socially competent
- ethical
- client-focused
- committed to the achievement of excellence
- systems thinker
- can define problems and formulate, select, and execute solutions
- understands and can articulate the consequences of action/inaction
- can make the case for action
- credible



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Behaviors of a Leader for Excellence in a Public Procurement Program

A leader in public procurement program:

- views enabling authority as a *sword* to support the mission of the entity; not as a *shield* to protect herself or himself
- actively advocates and supports changes in current policy and practice if current policy and practice interfere with supporting the entity's mission
- does not stand by idly if or she sees that a decision or action is not going to yield an acceptable result or the best practicable result
- proposes and can justify alternative directions and measures
- takes responsibility for her or his proposals and actions
- continuously looks out for better ways to support the mission of the entity through best practice procurement
- walks her/his talk
- messes up occasionally, but learns from his/her mistakes



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Who Can Advocate or Lead Constructive Change in a Public Procurement Program?

Anyone holding a stake in or directly or indirectly involved in the procurement program of a public entity, including:

- taxpayers
- elected officials
- contractors and suppliers (and their advocates)
- other stakeholders external to the entity structure
- end-users
- requisitioners of goods, services, and construction
- entity staff who develop requirements
- procurement officials (including those with delegated authority)
- accounting and other support staff

Who do you **not** want leading change? Why?



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Barriers to Leading for Excellence in a Public Procurement Program

These can include:

- various factors in the external and internal environments of the program
- the motivations and relative clout of participants and stakeholders
- the overall culture as well as the sub-cultures of the entity
- the location of the procurement unit on the org chart
- hiring processes that make it difficult to hire the most qualified applicants
- policies that make it difficult to discipline or terminate mediocre performers, poor performers, and non-performers
- poor management and supervisory policies and practices in general
- an absence or near absence of a sense of personal accountability among program participants or stakeholders
- few or no mechanisms for assuring accountability among participants or stakeholders
- reluctance of staff to stick our their necks for fear of personal consequences
- an absence of incentives to lead for excellence



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Enablers of Leadership for Excellence within a Public Procurement Program

Enablers include:

- An informed and engaged public that demands and expects excellence in all areas of government operations and service delivery
- Supportive elective officials
- Supportive senior management
- Supportive middle management and supervisors
- A tradition of excellence within the entity
- Others?



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The Ethics of Leadership for Excellence in a Public Procurement Program

- “Ethics” relates to the rightness or wrongness of a decision or action
- Ethical actions and decisions are considered “right”
- Unethical actions and decisions are considered “wrong”
- There are ethical problems; there are ethical dilemmas
- How would you characterize a situation in which a procurement program participant is faced with deciding whether he/she should (or should not) make a decision or take an action that would result in better procurement support for the entity’s mission and goals? Would it be an ethical problem or an ethical dilemma?
- Does a decision to play it safe and do nothing when you know a decision or action would yield better support for the entity’s mission and goals constitute a breach of ethics?



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Sources

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Where Leadership for Excellence Can/Should be Exercised in a Public Procurement Program

Anywhere in the Procurement and Contract Management Cycle

Including:

- Procurement Planning
- Solicitation Planning
- Solicitation
- Source Selection
- Contract Formation
- Contract Administration
- Contract Close-Out

Anywhere in or “around” the Public Procurement Program

Including:

- Enabling Authority
- Policies and Procedures
- Procurement Practices
- Selection of Staff
- Organizational Structure
- Management Practices
- Political Impact



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Questions? More Information?

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