

## CONTRIBUTIONS OF PUBLIC PURCHASING DEPARTMENTS TO COMPETITIVE ACQUISITION PROCESSES FOR CONSULTING SERVICES

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**ABSTRACT.** The extant literature provides very little insight into the way in which public purchasing departments are contributing to competitive acquisition processes for consulting services. This research attempts to address this shortcoming by describing the way that public purchasing departments have been able to contribute to these decisions throughout the various stages of the acquisition process. Study informants included 1782 public purchasers from federal, state, provincial, and local government agencies throughout the United States and Canada. While the purchasing department is *involved* in these important purchase decisions, it would seem that their respective agencies might benefit from increased involvement and consequently the value that *can* result.

### INTRODUCTION

This research looked at the way in which public purchasing departments are contributing to competitive acquisition processes for consulting services. Included is a discussion of the value that they are able to add at the various stages of the acquisition process for these important types of purchase decisions. Study informants included 1782 public purchasers from federal, state, provincial, and local government agencies throughout the United States and Canada. While research has shown that the public purchasing department is capable of contributing value to these types of purchase decisions when *meaningfully* involved (Schiele, 2007) the findings from this research suggest that purchasing departments still needs to increase their involvement and the value that they add.

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### THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSULTING SERVICES

Consulting services as a purchase category have been noted as an important research topic within the literature (Anand, Gardner & Morris, 2007; Jaakkola, 2007; Lai, Wang & Liang, 2006). Within the public sector a variety of consulting services are delivered to client departments. These consultants provide advice about training, the provision of public services, ongoing management of departments, environmental planning and assessment, engineering, architectural planning, communication, and political strategy, to name a few. This research focused on the types of consulting services that were strategic by nature; the type of consultants that provide advice and or aid in the deliberation of strategic decisions, not outsourced professional services.

The impact that these types of consultants have on the proper functioning of organizations is considerable. Consultants have not only been responsible, in part, for the propagation of new frameworks, tools, and techniques in organizations; they may well have been one of the most important and enduring types of services purchased by organizations over the last 50 years (Canback, 1998; Canback, 1999). Organizations use consulting advice to help resolve issues of strategic importance and rely on this expert advice as a key input into other strategic processes. Making these purchase decisions effectively can be difficult, however.

Because consulting services are associated with a higher degree of intangibility, labor intensity, customer contact and interaction, and customization (Haywood-Farmer, 1988; Verma, 2002; West, 1997), they tend to be very complex and difficult to describe (Shetterly, 2002). This makes evaluating these services both pre and post delivery problematic (Soriano, 2001), which in turn, makes purchasing these types of services very risky. If special training or skills are required to make these decisions effectively, then the purchasing department might be in a better position to affect more positively these types of purchase decisions. Further, if poor purchase decisions related to these services can lead to poor performance, and good decisions to better performance (Mitchell, 1994; Soriano, 2001; West, 1997) then the role of the purchasing department and the opportunity to add value would increase as these purchases become more strategic.

### THE ROLE OF THE PURCHASING DEPARTMENT AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADD VALUE

The ability of the purchasing department to make positive contributions to organizational performance has been discussed at length within the literature (Carter & Jennings, 2004; Nijssen, Biemans & de Koop, 2002; Leenders, Johnson, Flynn & Fearon, 2007; Zsidisin & Ellram, 2001). Despite that the purchasing department has been shown to play a central role in helping to ensure that funds are spent properly, improve the quality of goods and services purchased, and save both time and money, purchase decisions, made by public sector organizations concerning consulting services, have included very little, if any involvement by public sector purchasing departments (Schiele & McCue, 2006). These low involvement levels might suggest that these services are being acquired without appropriate consideration of organizational goals and objectives, and the possibility that taxpayer funds are being spent improperly.

Notwithstanding these low involvement levels, research has been able to show that when public purchasing departments are *meaningfully* involved that they are *capable* of contributing significant value to these types of purchase decisions (Schiele and McCue, 2006; Schiele, 2007). The term meaningful involvement was originally defined by Stuart (1991, p. 30) as “The timely and useful collaboration of purchasing knowledge and expertise... in all aspects of the acquisition process, including the decision making process, leading to the best buy decision with the objective of satisfying the immediate needs of the specifier and the long term needs and strategic objectives of the [organization] as a whole.”

Johnson and Leenders (2003) revisited the concept by discussing meaningful involvement in terms of levels. They found that purchasing department involvement ranged from none, to documentary, to professional, to meaningful. No involvement represents cases in which the purchasing department has essentially been bypassed. Documentary involvement represents a level of involvement in which the purchasing department performs very basic administrative activities for the client department, such as posting an RFP, collecting and distributing proposals received by the department, or issuing a purchase order. Professional involvement refers to cases in which the purchasing department performs higher

order activities, such as meeting with client departments to discuss their needs, providing information not originally requested by the client department in order to facilitate the purchasing process, or carrying out any other kind of activity focused on the client department's needs in a manner that exceeds documentary involvement. Meaningful involvement was referred to as an ideal level of involvement on the part of the purchasing department. It occurs when the purchasing department carries out the activities that characterize professional involvement, while also considering the interrelationship between the various purchasing activities performed and their affects on the long-term needs and strategies of the organization. Johnson and Leenders call this type of involvement "an ultimate state of perfection... not normally attainable."

Schiele (2007) went even further to describe the way that public purchasing departments were able to contribute value throughout each stage of the acquisition process for consulting services when meaningfully involved, as defined by both Stuart (1991) and Johnson and Leenders (2003). Schiele's research was based on 10 in-depth case studies involving interviews with 25 purchasing and client department informants. Despite attempts to define what is possible as far as these types of contributions are concerned, what has not been available up until this point is any research that attempts to take a "pulse of procurement" as it relates to the way that public purchasing departments are contributing value to acquisition processes for consulting services.

If purchasing is going to continue to evolve into a function that is not viewed as a policing function or as an obstacle to effective and efficient decision making with respect to acquisitions, they need to be more involved in higher order decision making activities in addition to their documentary type involvement. In this way they would not only help client departments meet their immediate needs in an effective and efficient manner, such as for a consultant, but do so while considering the inter-relationships between those client objectives and the strategic goals and objectives of the organization as well. A sense of how purchasing is currently adding value would provide a good starting point with respect to the improvement process related to achieving this goal.

The purpose of this research was to expand upon earlier case-based work through the design and administration of an empirical

survey to public purchasers across the United States and Canada. In doing so it should give public purchasers a better sense of how they are doing and what they can do to improve upon the way that they add value to these important types of purchase decisions when involved.

### **METHODS**

This research surveyed public purchasers about the value that their agency purchasing departments were contributing to acquisition processes for consulting services. The membership list of the National Institute of Governmental Purchasers (NIGP) was used as the sample frame for the study. The NIGP is a national, membership based, not for profit organization that provides support to professionals within the public sector purchasing profession. The NIGP is composed of 73 affiliate chapters and more than 2,300 agency members representing federal, state, provincial, and local government levels throughout the United States and Canada. These agencies represented over 13,500 individual members that served the public procurement community. The membership list included the names and background information (title, organization, and contact details) for all members. Survey responses were collected through an online, structured survey.

The survey instrument that was used for this study was based on previous research (Schiele, 2005; Schiele & McCue, 2006; Schiele, 2007) that involved in-depth interviews with 25 key informants about the type of value the public purchasing department was able to add to competitive acquisition processes for consulting services. The interviews focused on the way that the purchasing department was able to add value throughout each stage of the acquisition process when the department was meaningfully involved. A strong functional orientation was apparent; interviewees spoke about the performance of the purchasing department and the way that the department contributed to the decisions that were made along each stage of the purchasing process. These interviews provided the basis for the development of the online survey used for this study.

The survey was divided into three sections that contained questions related to the various factors that may affect purchasing department involvement, the value that the purchasing department was able to contribute to these purchase decisions throughout each

stage of the acquisition process, and questions related to background information concerning respondents. The questionnaire included 37 items that measured the factors that affected the ability of the department to add value to these decisions and 38 items that measured the way that they were able to add value throughout each stage of the purchasing process. To test for comprehension, relevance, and completeness, the survey was pre-tested with study informants. No major difficulties were encountered. Minor modifications were made for clarification purposes.

The survey was administered online during a six-week period ending January 15, 2006. A total of 8549 email invitations were sent to NIGP members asking them to participate in the study. The email invitation asked recipients to respond to whether or not the recipient's purchasing department was involved in purchase decisions related to consulting services and if so, they were then asked to complete the online survey. Three reminder emails were sent at two, three, and four-week intervals to non-respondents. Each email contained an embedded link to the survey.

A total of 1782 responses were received, for a response rate of 21%. Of those responses received, 734 respondents stated that their purchasing department was not involved in purchase decisions for consulting services while the remaining 1048 completed and submitted the online survey.

Job titles of respondents represented the range of possible titles for individual members. Further, these respondents were drawn from a cross section of public agencies. Most respondents were located in the United States with a small percentage from Canada. Table 1 contains related statistics concerning informants. Appendix 1 contains the survey that was administered. Results from Parts 2 and 3 of the survey are reported herein. Results from Part 1 are forthcoming in other work.

## RESULTS

The ability of the purchasing department to contribute value throughout the various stages of the acquisition process for consulting services was measured using a simple average of a department's scores concerning the type of value assessed.

**TABLE 1**  
**Related Statistics Concerning Respondents**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>% of Total Responses</b>	<b># of Responses</b>
<b>Type of Agency Responding</b>		
Federal Government	1.2%	13
State/Provincial Government	24.1%	253
County/Regional Government	20.3%	213
City/Municipal Government	31.4%	329
School System	7.9%	83
College/University	6.5%	68
Health Related	0.9%	9
Utility	1.0%	10
Special Authority	5.2%	55
Other	1.3%	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1048</b>
<b>Location of Agency Responding</b>		
Northeast	4.0%	42
Mid Atlantic	16.9%	177
Southeast	25.1%	263
South Central	15.4%	161
Central	9.6%	101
Great Lakes	10.5%	110
North Central	1.2%	13
West	10.4%	109
Canada	6.3%	66
Other	0.5%	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1048</b>
<b>Population Served</b>		
Less than 10,000	5.4%	57
10,001 - 25,000	6.0%	63
25,001 - 50,000	6.0%	63
50,001 - 75,000	5.9%	62
75,001 - 100,000	6.2%	65
100,001 - 200,000	13.8%	145
200,001 - 400,000	10.7%	112
400,001 - 600,000	6.9%	72
600,001 - 800,000	4.6%	48
800,001 - 1 Million	6.9%	72
1 Million > 2 Million	11.2%	117
2 Million > 4 Million	6.4%	67
Over 4 Million	9.9%	105
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1048</b>

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Variables	% of Total Responses		# of Responses	
<b>Total Procurement</b>				
Less than \$1 M	1.5%		16	
\$1 M > \$10 M	10.4%		109	
\$10 M > \$25 M	14.0%		147	
\$25 M > \$50 M	13.5%		142	
\$50 M > \$75 M	9.4%		98	
\$75 M > \$100 M	7.5%		79	
\$100 M > \$200 M	13.0%		136	
\$200 M > \$300 M	6.9%		72	
Over \$300 M	23.7%		248	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>1048</b>	
<b>Total Spend on Consulting Services</b>				
Less than \$1 Million	24.3%		255	
\$1 M > \$10 Million	37.4%		392	
\$10 M > \$25 Million	13.6%		143	
\$25 M > \$50 Million	8.1%		85	
\$50 M > \$75 Million	4.0%		42	
\$75 M > \$100 Million	4.1%		43	
\$100 M > \$200 Million	2.7%		28	
\$200 M > \$300 Million	1.4%		15	
Over \$300 Million	4.2%		45	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>1048</b>	
<b>Education Background of Respondents</b>				
Education Levels	Purchasing Department's Respondents		Client Departments' Respondents	
	% of Total	# of Responses	% of Total	# of Responses
Graduate Degree	20%	200	32%	22
Bachelors Degree	41%	399	33%	23
Associates Degree	16%	157	19%	13
High School	12%	114	6%	4
Other / Courses	11%	109	10%	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>979</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Work Experiences</b>				
	Purchasing Department Respondents		Client Department Respondents	
Average Years of Work Experience	18.3		20.1	

Responses were measured on a five-point (1-5) scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The eight stages of the Robinson-Faris buying model (1967) were used as the basis upon which to analyze and present the type of value that was reported by study informants along each stage of the acquisition process. The use of this model has been supported empirically (Anderson, Chu & Weitz, 1987) and has been referred to as “one of the most useful tools... in organizational buying behavior” (Moriarty, 1980, p. 23). Mitchell (1998) has also expressed strong support for this buying model and has used it to organize his findings concerning professional services purchased by local government purchasers. This buying model proved to be a very useful tool to organize and better understand the buying behavior analyzed by this study. Table 2 provides a description of each purchasing stage and the related survey questions that were used to measure the purchasing department’s contributions.

**TABLE 2**  
**Description of Each Purchasing Stage and Related Survey Questions**

Stage	Description of Purchasing Stage	Questions
1	Need anticipation or recognition of a problem	1
2	Determination of the characteristics of the services needed	2-6
3	Description of the characteristics of the services needed	7-13
4	Search for potential suppliers	14-16
5	Acquisition and prescreening of proposals received	17-20
6	Evaluation of supplier proposals and selection of supplier	21-23
7	Order routine for the service to be delivered	24-26
8	Post service delivery	27-30

Arguably, these steps may "blur" somewhat, occur at the same time in some cases, and include feedback loops. However, for the purposes of our analysis we still felt this model to be very practical when it came to organizing and displaying our results. In addition to the latter items, Questions 31-38 were used to measure the overall contribution of the purchasing department including whether value for money spent was achieved, whether the purchasing department was able to help save time and/or money, whether a better quality service was purchased, and whether respondents felt that job enrichment or learning occurred on the part of the client departments

due to the involvement by the purchasing department in their respective decisions.

### **Involvement throughout the Purchasing Process**

The way that purchasing departments were able to contribute value to acquisition processes for consulting services was relatively consistent across the types of agencies surveyed, levels, population served, location, dollars spent on consulting services, and total spent on goods and services. Purchasing involvement and the value that was consequently contributed by the purchasing department really started during Stage 2 of the purchasing process when it came time to "Determine the Characteristics of the Consulting Service Needed" then increased during Stage 3 when it was time to "Describe the Characteristics of the Consulting Service Needed" in the RFP that was ultimately developed. Purchasing involvement then dropped during Stage 4 at the time to "Search for Potential Suppliers" and then increased again during Stage 5 when it came time to "acquire and prescreen proposals received." For Stages 6, 7, and 8, purchasing involvement tended to decrease and level off. Mean scores for each stage ranged from a high of 4.5/5 to a low of 1.78/5. Further, individual scores for the types of values that were used to calculate the mean scores for each stage ranged from a high of 4.89/5 to a low of 1.78/5.

Although there was a great deal of consistency in terms of the value that purchasing departments were able to add there were some under / over performers, category wise. Canadian purchasing departments, purchasing departments serving less than 10,000 people, purchasing departments that spent between 100-200 million dollars on consulting services, purchasing departments that spent between 200-300 million on goods and services, federal government agencies, and finally health-related agencies tended to out-perform others when it came to the way that their respective purchasing departments were able to add value. In contrast, purchasing departments located in the north central region of the United States, purchasing departments serving between 800-1000 million people, purchasing departments that spent between 200-300 million on consulting services, purchasing departments that spent between 10-25 million on goods and services, city and municipal government agencies, and finally utility-related agencies tended to under-perform

others when it came to the way that their respective purchasing departments were able to add value. Tables 3 through 7 display these results.

**TABLE 3**  
**Contribution by Agency Type**

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	Federal Govt.	State/Prov. Govt.	County/Reg. Govt.	City/Muni. Govt.	School System	College/University	Health Related	Utility	Special Authority	Other	Grand Total
<b>Stage 1: Need anticipation / recognition of problem</b>	<b>2.69</b>	<b>2.55</b>	<b>2.54</b>	<b>2.51</b>	<b>2.30</b>	<b>2.44</b>	<b>1.78</b>	<b>2.10</b>	<b>2.64</b>	<b>2.71</b>	<b>2.51</b>
Is involved in the client department's long range planning activities	2.69	2.55	2.54	2.51	2.30	2.44	1.78	2.10	2.64	2.71	2.51
<b>Stage 2: Determination of the characteristics of the services needed</b>	<b>4.06</b>	<b>3.64</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>3.38</b>	<b>3.78</b>	<b>3.84</b>	<b>3.30</b>	<b>3.74</b>	<b>3.39</b>	<b>3.63</b>
Provides information to the client department about marketplace / suppliers	3.77	3.44	3.46	3.30	3.07	3.34	3.44	3.00	3.58	3.21	3.37
Identifies the specific delivery needs of the client department	3.69	3.40	3.41	3.35	3.20	3.54	3.44	3.30	3.49	3.07	3.38
Helps the client department understand and deal with needs versus its wants	4.15	3.79	3.95	3.79	3.54	4.01	4.33	3.50	3.80	3.43	3.82
Helps the client department define and understand its needs	4.54	3.84	3.95	3.80	3.61	4.03	4.11	3.50	3.93	3.71	3.85
Clarifies the operating environment within which the service will be delivered	4.15	3.72	3.87	3.67	3.48	3.96	3.89	3.20	3.89	3.50	3.74
<b>Stage 3: Description of the characteristics of the services needed</b>	<b>4.51</b>	<b>4.22</b>	<b>4.46</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>4.37</b>	<b>4.51</b>	<b>4.70</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>4.44</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>4.31</b>
Improves the RFP developed	4.62	4.45	4.59	4.44	4.40	4.62	4.67	4.00	4.53	4.36	4.48
Develops an RFP that includes evaluation criteria used to evaluate supplier	4.62	4.34	4.60	4.35	4.51	4.65	4.78	3.80	4.62	4.29	4.44

TABLE 3 (Continued)

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	Federal Govt.	State/Prov. Govt.	County/Reg. Govt.	City/Muni. Govt.	School System	College/University	Health Related	Utility	Special Authority	Other	Grand Total
Develops an RFP that includes a weighting scheme of evaluation criteria	4.54	4.33	4.49	4.26	4.45	4.57	4.78	3.90	4.64	4.07	4.38
Develops an RFP that improves a supplier's understanding of needs	4.69	4.28	4.54	4.28	4.42	4.57	4.78	3.70	4.44	4.14	4.37
Develops an RFP that reduces the risk associated with legal claims	4.69	4.34	4.64	4.40	4.51	4.63	4.67	3.70	4.56	4.29	4.47
Develops an RFP that reduces the risk associated with non-performance	4.46	4.28	4.57	4.31	4.45	4.62	4.78	3.80	4.51	4.00	4.39
Develops interview questions	3.92	3.49	3.78	3.40	3.88	3.91	4.44	3.10	3.76	3.71	3.61
<b>Stage 4: Search for potential suppliers</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>3.99</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>4.22</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>3.81</b>
Identifies potential service Providers	4.23	3.95	4.17	3.99	3.96	4.15	4.22	3.80	4.33	4.21	4.05
Acts a single point of contact for service providers.	3.92	3.77	4.15	3.73	3.70	3.81	4.56	3.60	4.07	3.86	3.85
Discusses ideas about service delivery with service providers	3.85	3.48	3.65	3.43	3.51	3.63	3.89	3.10	3.60	3.86	3.53
<b>Stage 5: Acquisition and prescreening of proposals</b>	<b>4.44</b>	<b>4.04</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>4.07</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>4.53</b>	<b>3.78</b>	<b>4.11</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>4.09</b>
Pre-screens proposals submitted by service providers	4.23	3.78	3.78	3.42	3.67	3.69	4.33	3.50	3.53	3.71	3.65
Makes copies of the proposals received and delivers these stakeholders	4.23	3.91	4.26	4.04	3.99	3.85	4.00	3.30	3.96	4.21	4.03
Contacts service providers when information is needed	4.69	4.26	4.57	4.27	4.36	4.54	4.89	4.30	4.56	4.14	4.38
Acts as a liaison between departments and service providers	4.62	4.21	4.48	4.21	4.24	4.49	4.89	4.00	4.38	4.14	4.30

TABLE 3 (Continued)

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	Federal Govt.	State/Prov. Govt.	County/Reg. Govt.	City/Muni. Govt.	School System	College/University	Health Related	Utility	Special Authority	Other	Grand Total
<b>Stage 6: Evaluation of supplier proposals and selection of supplier</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>4.04</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>3.97</b>	<b>4.04</b>	<b>4.48</b>	<b>3.40</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>3.93</b>	<b>3.84</b>
Organizes and chairs meetings	4.15	3.95	4.33	3.92	4.14	4.29	4.56	3.50	4.18	3.86	4.07
Evaluates proposals jointly with the client department	4.08	3.68	3.92	3.57	4.02	4.00	4.44	3.40	3.73	3.93	3.76
Reduces costs on the basis of supply choice and the accounting for extras	3.77	3.57	3.86	3.54	3.73	3.84	4.44	3.30	3.85	4.00	3.68
<b>Stage 7: Order routine for the service to be delivered</b>	<b>4.18</b>	<b>3.70</b>	<b>3.74</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>3.80</b>	<b>3.97</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>3.83</b>	<b>3.74</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>3.71</b>
Ensures the timely delivery of the service as needed	4.15	3.68	3.70	3.56	3.83	3.87	4.11	3.60	3.75	4.14	3.69
Arranges for the delivery and payment of service	3.85	3.31	3.19	3.02	3.33	3.57	3.33	3.40	3.31	3.14	3.22
Notifies service providers of the final supply decision	4.54	4.12	4.33	4.18	4.25	4.46	4.56	4.50	4.16	4.29	4.23
<b>Stage 8: Post service delivery</b>	<b>4.21</b>	<b>3.77</b>	<b>3.87</b>	<b>3.66</b>	<b>3.69</b>	<b>4.01</b>	<b>4.47</b>	<b>3.43</b>	<b>3.99</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>3.78</b>
Solves problems related to consulting service providers	4.54	3.96	3.95	3.72	3.82	4.06	4.56	3.80	4.02	3.79	3.89
Debriefs unsuccessful consulting service providers	4.46	3.77	3.96	3.68	3.64	4.19	4.56	3.40	4.27	3.50	3.83
Inquires about the quality of the service delivered	3.92	3.69	3.74	3.55	3.69	3.96	4.44	3.40	3.89	3.93	3.69
Inquires about the quality of the services provided by purchasing	3.92	3.64	3.82	3.68	3.60	3.85	4.33	3.10	3.76	3.64	3.71
<b>Overall Contribution</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>4.10</b>	<b>4.29</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>4.40</b>	<b>3.69</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>4.14</b>
Enriches the jobs of those involved through learning	4.08	3.85	3.96	3.86	3.99	4.12	4.33	3.50	3.95	4.07	3.91
Ensures a fair and defensible process	4.69	4.49	4.69	4.47	4.47	4.76	4.78	4.20	4.65	4.36	4.55

TABLE 3 (Continued)

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	Federal Govt.	State/Prov. Govt.	County/Reg. Govt.	City/Muni. Govt.	School System	College/University	Health Related	Utility	Special Authority	Other	Grand Total
Improves the quality of service delivered by the consulting service providers	4.08	3.72	3.80	3.60	3.63	3.85	4.00	3.10	3.67	3.86	3.70
Ensures value for money spent	4.38	3.93	4.15	3.79	3.90	4.21	3.78	3.40	3.84	4.07	3.95
Develops the potential for future time savings through the learning that occurs	3.85	4.09	4.26	3.98	4.23	4.31	4.44	3.70	4.00	4.00	4.11
Makes the purchasing experience more enjoyable for the client department	3.69	3.94	4.17	3.98	4.08	4.01	4.44	3.50	3.87	3.86	4.01
Answers the client department's questions / timely and informative	4.38	4.42	4.63	4.42	4.39	4.59	4.78	4.20	4.53	4.36	4.48
Helps to avoid pitfalls and delays during the purchasing process, thus saving time	4.46	4.33	4.62	4.30	4.40	4.57	4.67	3.90	4.44	4.36	4.40

TABLE 4  
Contribution by Location

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	Northeast	Mid Atlantic	Southeast	South Central	Central	Great Lakes	North Central	West	Canada	Other	Grand Total
Stage 1: Need anticipation / recognition of problem	2.52	2.58	2.65	2.50	2.35	2.63	2.23	2.19	2.41	2.40	2.51
Is involved in the client department's long range planning activities for consulting	2.52	2.58	2.65	2.50	2.35	2.63	2.23	2.19	2.41	2.40	2.51

TABLE 4 (Continued)

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	Northeast	Mid Atlantic	Southeast	South Central	Central	Great Lakes	North Central	West	Canada	Other	Grand Total
<b>Stage 2: Determination of the characteristics of the services needed</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>3.60</b>	<b>3.78</b>	<b>3.61</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>3.56</b>	<b>3.34</b>	<b>3.35</b>	<b>3.59</b>	<b>3.64</b>	<b>3.63</b>
Provides information to the client department about marketplace / suppliers	3.67	3.33	3.66	3.37	3.28	3.28	3.08	2.92	3.26	3.20	3.37
Identifies the specific delivery needs of the client department	3.69	3.32	3.60	3.38	3.43	3.19	3.00	3.08	3.32	3.00	3.38
Helps the client department understand and deal with needs versus its wants	3.90	3.85	3.90	3.73	4.02	3.75	3.62	3.59	3.83	4.00	3.82
Helps the client department define and understand its needs	3.93	3.86	3.92	3.85	3.93	3.86	3.38	3.64	3.86	4.00	3.85
Clarifies the operating environment within which the service will be delivered	3.86	3.67	3.82	3.74	3.89	3.70	3.62	3.53	3.70	4.00	3.74
<b>Stage 3: Description of characteristics of the services needed</b>	<b>4.37</b>	<b>4.29</b>	<b>4.36</b>	<b>4.26</b>	<b>4.43</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>3.85</b>	<b>4.15</b>	<b>4.48</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>4.31</b>
Improves the RFP developed	4.50	4.44	4.53	4.40	4.63	4.50	4.23	4.41	4.58	4.00	4.48
Develops an RFP that includes evaluation criteria used to ultimately evaluate supplier	4.60	4.46	4.48	4.39	4.59	4.35	3.92	4.27	4.67	4.20	4.44
Develops an RFP that includes a weighting scheme of evaluation criteria	4.50	4.40	4.42	4.33	4.45	4.29	3.69	4.27	4.64	4.20	4.38
Develops an RFP that improves a supplier's understanding of needs	4.45	4.35	4.48	4.29	4.52	4.28	3.77	4.16	4.58	4.20	4.37

TABLE 4 (Continued)

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	Northeast	Mid Atlantic	Southeast	South Central	Central	Great Lakes	North Central	West	Canada	Other	Grand Total
Develops an RFP that reduces the risk associated with legal claims	4.57	4.43	4.53	4.35	4.59	4.38	4.00	4.42	4.64	4.40	4.47
Develops an RFP that reduces the risk associated with supplier non-performance	4.45	4.34	4.48	4.33	4.51	4.33	3.92	4.31	4.48	4.20	4.39
Develops interview questions	3.52	3.63	3.60	3.73	3.68	3.65	3.38	3.22	3.77	4.20	3.61
<b>Stage 4: Search for potential suppliers</b>	<b>3.76</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>3.91</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>3.87</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>3.47</b>	<b>3.91</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>3.81</b>
Identifies potential consulting service providers	4.07	4.00	4.19	4.09	4.06	4.02	4.15	3.77	3.98	4.20	4.05
Acts a single point of contact for consulting service providers.	3.81	3.84	3.93	3.93	4.00	3.76	3.62	3.51	4.00	3.80	3.85
Discusses ideas about service delivery with potential consulting service providers	3.40	3.58	3.62	3.56	3.54	3.46	3.23	3.13	3.74	4.00	3.53
<b>Stage 5: Acquisition and prescreening of proposals received</b>	<b>4.11</b>	<b>4.06</b>	<b>4.16</b>	<b>4.11</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>4.01</b>	<b>3.60</b>	<b>3.87</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>4.10</b>	<b>4.09</b>
Pre-screens proposals submitted by consulting service providers	3.43	3.62	3.76	3.71	3.69	3.48	3.38	3.41	3.88	3.80	3.65
Makes copies of the proposals received and delivers these to other stakeholders	4.05	3.89	4.05	4.06	4.26	4.06	3.69	3.89	4.11	4.40	4.03
Contacts consulting service providers when additional information is needed	4.50	4.42	4.42	4.39	4.44	4.29	3.69	4.20	4.55	4.20	4.38
Acts as a liaison between client departments and service providers	4.45	4.33	4.39	4.29	4.41	4.21	3.62	3.98	4.48	4.00	4.30

TABLE 4 (Continued)

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	Northeast	Mid Atlantic	Southeast	South Central	Central	Great Lakes	North Central	West	Canada	Other	Grand Total
<b>Stage 6: Evaluation of supplier proposals and selection of supplier</b>	<b>3.89</b>	<b>3.89</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>3.82</b>	<b>4.04</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>3.26</b>	<b>3.43</b>	<b>4.10</b>	<b>3.93</b>	<b>3.84</b>
Organizes and chairs meetings	3.98	4.06	4.16	4.07	4.26	4.05	3.15	3.71	4.32	4.20	4.07
Evaluates proposals jointly with the client department	3.83	3.85	3.73	3.75	4.04	3.84	3.15	3.22	4.02	3.80	3.76
Reduces costs on the basis of supply choice and the accounting for extras	3.86	3.76	3.70	3.63	3.82	3.54	3.46	3.38	3.95	3.80	3.68
<b>Stage 7: Order routine for the service to be delivered</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>3.77</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>3.65</b>	<b>3.23</b>	<b>3.36</b>	<b>3.82</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>3.71</b>
Ensures the timely delivery of the service as needed	3.79	3.76	3.89	3.69	3.68	3.57	3.08	3.17	3.82	3.80	3.69
Arranges for the delivery and payment of service	3.21	3.37	3.33	3.16	3.23	3.15	3.00	2.85	3.23	3.00	3.22
Notifies consulting service providers of the final supply decision	4.26	4.20	4.22	4.20	4.50	4.21	3.62	4.06	4.42	4.40	4.23
<b>Stage 8: Post service delivery</b>	<b>3.85</b>	<b>3.84</b>	<b>3.87</b>	<b>3.74</b>	<b>3.89</b>	<b>3.61</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>3.55</b>	<b>3.95</b>	<b>3.80</b>	<b>3.78</b>
Solves problems related to service providers	4.05	3.99	4.02	3.91	3.88	3.65	3.38	3.61	3.89	4.20	3.89
Debriefs unsuccessful service providers	3.88	3.87	3.76	3.66	4.01	3.67	3.08	3.88	4.41	4.40	3.83
Inquires about the quality of the consulting service that was delivered	3.95	3.78	3.90	3.70	3.74	3.56	3.00	3.18	3.64	3.40	3.69
Inquires about the quality of the services provided by purchasing	3.50	3.71	3.81	3.70	3.91	3.55	3.15	3.53	3.85	3.20	3.71

TABLE 4 (Continued)

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	Northeast	Mid Atlantic	Southeast	South Central	Central	Great Lakes	North Central	West	Canada	Other	Grand Total
<b>Overall Contribution</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>4.09</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>4.07</b>	<b>4.29</b>	<b>4.08</b>	<b>3.61</b>	<b>3.94</b>	<b>4.21</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>4.14</b>
Enriches the jobs of those involved through the learning that occurred	3.88	3.91	4.05	3.91	4.02	3.82	3.00	3.72	3.92	3.60	3.91
Ensures a fair and defensible process	4.57	4.53	4.64	4.42	4.71	4.47	4.15	4.47	4.70	4.40	4.55
Improves the quality of service delivered by the service providers	3.74	3.71	3.81	3.63	3.82	3.64	3.15	3.39	3.88	4.00	3.70
Ensures value for money spent	3.98	3.88	4.10	3.83	4.07	3.87	3.54	3.73	4.12	4.20	3.95
Develops the potential for future time savings through learning	4.26	4.02	4.21	4.13	4.30	4.01	3.62	3.84	4.20	4.00	4.11
Makes the purchasing experience enjoyable for the client department	3.81	3.90	4.21	3.98	4.23	3.95	3.69	3.73	3.98	3.80	4.01
Answers the client department's questions / timely and informative	4.50	4.45	4.59	4.34	4.63	4.49	3.92	4.37	4.42	4.20	4.48
Helps to avoid pitfalls and delays during the purchasing process	4.40	4.34	4.55	4.32	4.56	4.36	3.77	4.23	4.47	4.20	4.40

TABLE 5  
Contribution by Population Served

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	25,001 - 50,000	50,001 - 75,000	75,001 - 100,000	100,001 - 200,000	200,001 - 400,000	400,001 - 600,000	600,001 - 800,000	800,001 - 1 Million	1 Million > 2 Million	2 Million > 4 Million +
<b>Stage 1: Need anticipation or recognition of a problem</b>	<b>2.49</b>	<b>2.56</b>	<b>.45</b>	<b>.35</b>	<b>2.54</b>	<b>2.53</b>	<b>2.60</b>	<b>2.43</b>	<b>2.48</b>	<b>2.46</b>

TABLE 5 (Continued)

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	25,001 - 50,000	50,001 - 75,000	75,001 - 100,000	100,001 - 200,000	200,001 - 400,000	400,001 - 600,000	600,001 - 800,000	800,001 - 1 Million	1 Million > 2 Million	2 Million > 4 Million +
Is involved in the client dept.'s long range planning activities	2.49	2.56	2.45	2.35	2.54	2.53	2.60	2.43	2.48	2.46
<b>Stage 2: Determining the characteristics of the services needed</b>	<b>3.56</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>3.77</b>	<b>3.54</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>3.64</b>	<b>3.61</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>3.59</b>	<b>3.78</b>
Provides information to the client department about marketplace and suppliers	3.37	3.60	3.65	3.27	3.37	3.33	3.25	3.19	3.31	3.46
Identifies the specific delivery needs of the client department	3.41	3.58	3.32	3.26	3.49	3.24	3.46	3.32	3.36	3.49
Helps the client department understand and deal with needs versus its wants	3.63	3.89	3.97	3.84	3.90	3.90	3.85	3.65	3.74	3.96
Helps the client department define and understand its needs	3.76	3.84	4.02	3.77	3.88	3.94	3.81	3.78	3.86	3.99
Clarifies the operating environment where the service will be delivered	3.63	3.87	3.88	3.55	3.90	3.78	3.69	3.54	3.68	3.99
<b>Stage 3: Description of characteristics of service needed</b>	<b>4.42</b>	<b>4.38</b>	<b>4.35</b>	<b>4.23</b>	<b>4.38</b>	<b>4.34</b>	<b>4.17</b>	<b>4.16</b>	<b>4.32</b>	<b>4.36</b>
Improves the RFP developed	4.67	4.56	4.46	4.46	4.57	4.44	4.35	4.35	4.44	4.61

TABLE 5 (Continued)

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	25,001 - 50,000	50,001 - 75,000	75,0001 - 100,000	100,001 - 200,000	200,001 - 400,000	400,001 - 600,000	600,001 - 800,000	800,001 - 1 Million	1 Million > 2 Million	2 Million > 4 Million +
Develops an RFP that includes evaluation criteria used to ultimately evaluate supplier	4.43	4.53	4.49	4.40	4.46	4.50	4.21	4.35	4.49	4.52
Develops an RFP that includes a weighting scheme of evaluation criteria	4.40	4.47	4.34	4.34	4.48	4.36	4.19	4.24	4.43	4.51
Develops an RFP that improves a supplier's understanding of needs	4.51	4.45	4.43	4.26	4.43	4.42	4.21	4.22	4.39	4.46
Develops an RFP that reduces the risk associated with legal claims	4.63	4.52	4.55	4.41	4.56	4.50	4.33	4.25	4.51	4.51
Develops an RFP that reduces risk assoc. with supplier non-performance	4.48	4.45	4.51	4.36	4.51	4.43	4.25	4.15	4.48	4.42
Develops interview questions	3.84	3.68	3.66	3.40	3.67	3.74	3.65	3.54	3.53	3.48
<b>Stage 4: Search for potential suppliers</b>	<b>3.83</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>3.93</b>	<b>3.89</b>	<b>3.69</b>	<b>3.83</b>	<b>3.70</b>	<b>3.80</b>
Identifies potential service providers	4.13	4.23	4.26	4.01	4.07	4.14	3.77	3.97	3.97	4.07
Acts a single point of contact for service providers.	3.90	3.95	3.78	3.70	4.04	3.99	3.83	3.94	3.73	3.90
Discusses ideas about service delivery with potential service providers	3.46	3.40	3.58	3.46	3.69	3.56	3.48	3.58	3.40	3.43

TABLE 5 (Continued)

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	25,001 - 50,000	50,001 - 75,000	75,001 - 100,000	100,001 - 200,000	200,001 - 400,000	400,001 - 600,000	600,001 - 800,000	800,001 - 1 Million	1 Million > 2 Million	2 Million > 4 Million +
<b>Stage 5: Acquisition and prescreening of proposals</b>	<b>4.04</b>	<b>4.01</b>	<b>3.93</b>	<b>4.10</b>	<b>4.24</b>	<b>4.18</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>4.09</b>	<b>4.21</b>
Pre-screens proposals submitted by service providers	3.33	3.44	3.45	3.62	3.74	3.79	3.42	3.64	3.63	3.72
Makes copies of proposals received and delivers to stakeholders	4.10	4.23	3.74	4.19	4.30	3.97	3.98	3.85	4.14	4.03
Contacts service providers when information is needed	4.41	4.19	4.29	4.33	4.46	4.47	4.31	4.26	4.38	4.64
Acts as a liaison between departments and service providers	4.33	4.19	4.26	4.24	4.47	4.47	4.21	4.18	4.20	4.45
<b>Stage 6: Evaluation of proposals and selection of supplier</b>	<b>3.79</b>	<b>3.79</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>4.07</b>	<b>3.74</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>3.86</b>
Organizes and chairs meetings	3.94	3.97	4.20	3.88	4.23	4.36	4.10	3.99	4.08	4.07
Evaluates proposals jointly with the client department	3.83	3.71	3.48	3.70	3.90	4.14	3.54	3.31	3.85	3.76
Reduces costs on basis of supply choice and accounting for extras	3.62	3.69	3.48	3.61	3.87	3.72	3.56	3.44	3.65	3.75
<b>Stage 7: Order routine for service delivered</b>	<b>3.90</b>	<b>3.84</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>3.77</b>	<b>3.77</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>3.43</b>	<b>3.54</b>	<b>3.70</b>
Ensures the timely delivery of service as needed	3.79	3.81	3.55	3.66	3.74	3.82	3.50	3.39	3.63	3.63
Arranges for the delivery /payment of service	3.44	3.48	3.22	3.09	3.28	3.15	3.17	2.99	3.03	3.16

TABLE 5 (Continued)

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	25,001 - 50,000	50,001 - 75,000	75,001 - 100,000	100,001 - 200,000	200,001 - 400,000	400,001 - 600,000	600,001 - 800,000	800,001 - 1 Million	1 Million > 2 Million	2 Million > 4 Million +
Notifies service providers of final supply decision	4.46	4.24	4.35	4.28	4.30	4.33	4.08	3.90	3.97	4.30
<b>Stage 8: Post service delivery</b>	<b>3.78</b>	<b>3.78</b>	<b>3.76</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>3.80</b>	<b>3.66</b>	<b>3.76</b>	<b>3.66</b>	<b>3.84</b>
Solves problems related to service providers	3.95	3.95	3.88	3.77	3.98	3.79	3.65	3.79	3.80	3.97
Debriefs unsuccessful service providers	3.75	3.69	3.91	3.70	4.09	3.99	3.77	4.01	3.60	4.01
Inquires about the quality of the service delivered	3.68	3.84	3.55	3.68	3.76	3.75	3.60	3.58	3.57	3.67
Inquires about the quality of the services provided by purchasing	3.73	3.63	3.71	3.75	3.87	3.67	3.60	3.67	3.67	3.69
<b>Overall Contribution</b>	<b>4.17</b>	<b>4.21</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>4.09</b>	<b>4.24</b>	<b>4.13</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>4.03</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>4.19</b>
Enriches the jobs of those involved	3.86	4.05	3.95	3.91	3.98	3.83	3.94	3.86	3.90	3.99
Ensures a fair and defensible process	4.76	4.60	4.57	4.50	4.66	4.54	4.29	4.40	4.59	4.63
Improves quality of service delivered by the service providers	3.46	3.66	3.71	3.66	3.88	3.68	3.65	3.65	3.68	3.70
Ensures value for money spent	3.94	3.95	3.94	3.86	4.04	3.99	3.94	3.86	3.92	4.01
Develops potential for time savings through the learning	4.17	4.10	4.22	4.12	4.13	4.18	3.96	3.99	4.09	4.15
Makes purchasing experience enjoyable	4.06	4.18	4.09	3.97	4.16	4.01	3.94	3.97	3.91	4.04
Answers client department's questions. Timely and informative	4.56	4.60	4.60	4.41	4.59	4.46	4.38	4.29	4.44	4.52
Helps to avoid pitfalls and delays	4.51	4.50	4.55	4.28	4.50	4.33	4.27	4.21	4.39	4.51

**TABLE 6**  
**Contribution by Consulting Dollar Spend**

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	Less than \$1 M	\$1M > \$10 M	\$10M > \$25M	\$25M > \$50M	\$50M > \$75M	\$75M > \$100M	\$100M > \$200M	\$200M > \$300M	Over \$300M	Grand Total
<b>Stage 1: Need anticipation / recognition of problem</b>	<b>2.44</b>	<b>2.55</b>	<b>2.54</b>	<b>2.35</b>	<b>2.21</b>	<b>2.70</b>	<b>2.43</b>	<b>2.73</b>	<b>2.82</b>	<b>2.51</b>
Is involved in the client department's long range planning activities	2.44	2.55	2.54	2.35	2.21	2.70	2.43	2.73	2.82	2.51
<b>Stage 2: Determination of the characteristics of the services needed</b>	<b>3.59</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>3.61</b>	<b>3.59</b>	<b>3.62</b>	<b>3.62</b>	<b>3.46</b>	<b>3.49</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>3.63</b>
Provides information to the client about market / suppliers	3.37	3.44	3.34	3.32	3.00	3.47	3.18	3.33	3.36	3.37
Identifies the specific delivery needs of the client department	3.39	3.47	3.24	3.33	3.33	3.40	3.21	3.13	3.30	3.38
Helps client department understand and deal with needs versus its wants	3.75	3.91	3.85	3.86	3.95	3.67	3.61	3.73	3.50	3.82
Helps the client department define and understand its needs	3.79	3.89	3.92	3.84	4.02	3.86	3.64	3.80	3.68	3.85
Clarifies the operating environment where the service will be delivered	3.66	3.84	3.71	3.60	3.81	3.72	3.68	3.47	3.68	3.74
<b>Stage 3: Description of the characteristics of the services needed</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>4.37</b>	<b>4.37</b>	<b>4.33</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>4.19</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>3.87</b>	<b>3.99</b>	<b>4.31</b>
Improves the RFP developed	4.46	4.54	4.52	4.45	4.55	4.49	4.39	4.07	4.25	4.48
Develops an RFP that includes evaluation criteria to ultimately evaluate supplier	4.41	4.50	4.56	4.53	4.36	4.21	4.46	4.07	4.05	4.44
Develops an RFP that includes a weighting scheme of eval. criteria	4.31	4.44	4.50	4.49	4.36	4.16	4.46	3.87	4.02	4.38

TABLE 6 (Continued)

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	Less than \$1 M	\$1M > \$10 M	\$10M > \$25M	\$25M > \$50M	\$50M > \$75M	\$75M > \$100M	\$100M > \$200M	\$200M > \$300M	Over \$300M	Grand Total
Develops an RFP that improves a supplier's understanding of needs	4.35	4.43	4.43	4.38	4.31	4.30	4.43	3.93	4.07	4.37
Develops an RFP that reduces the risk with legal claims	4.38	4.55	4.53	4.53	4.48	4.35	4.50	3.93	4.14	4.47
Develops an RFP that reduces the risk with supplier nonperformance	4.29	4.49	4.44	4.46	4.36	4.30	4.50	3.73	4.09	4.39
Develops interview questions	3.69	3.68	3.58	3.51	3.33	3.53	3.36	3.47	3.34	3.61
<b>Stage 4: Search for potential suppliers</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>3.82</b>	<b>3.84</b>	<b>3.87</b>	<b>3.85</b>	<b>3.64</b>	<b>3.40</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>3.81</b>
Identifies potential consulting service Providers	4.05	4.11	4.06	4.07	4.12	3.98	3.79	3.40	3.84	4.05
Acts a single point of contact for consulting service providers.	3.70	3.93	3.86	3.94	3.95	4.02	3.64	3.67	3.86	3.85
Discusses ideas about service delivery with potential providers	3.50	3.55	3.55	3.52	3.55	3.56	3.50	3.13	3.50	3.53
<b>Stage 5: Acquisition and prescreening of proposals received</b>	<b>4.04</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>4.08</b>	<b>4.06</b>	<b>4.15</b>	<b>4.10</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>3.63</b>	<b>4.02</b>	<b>4.09</b>
Pre-screens proposals submitted by consulting service providers	3.64	3.67	3.61	3.45	3.86	3.67	3.89	3.33	3.73	3.65
Makes copies of proposals and delivers these to stakeholders	4.07	4.06	4.02	4.08	4.10	3.95	3.86	3.33	3.82	4.03
Contacts service providers when information is needed	4.31	4.46	4.36	4.41	4.36	4.33	4.61	4.00	4.18	4.38
Acts as a liaison between client departments and service providers	4.15	4.36	4.34	4.29	4.31	4.44	4.64	3.87	4.36	4.30

TABLE 6 (Continued)

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	Less than \$1 M	\$1M > \$10 M	\$10M > \$25M	\$25M > \$50M	\$50M > \$75M	\$75M > \$100M	\$100M > \$200M	\$200M > \$300M	Over \$300M	Grand Total
<b>Stage 6: Evaluation of supplier proposals and selection of supplier</b>	<b>3.83</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>3.87</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>3.83</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>3.47</b>	<b>3.74</b>	<b>3.84</b>
Organizes and chairs meetings	4.00	4.08	4.06	4.14	4.10	4.26	4.14	3.60	4.20	4.07
Evaluates proposals jointly with the client department	3.77	3.81	3.90	3.52	3.67	3.70	3.57	3.60	3.45	3.76
Reduces costs on basis of supply choice and the accounting for extras	3.71	3.74	3.66	3.58	3.71	3.47	3.71	3.20	3.57	3.68
<b>Stage 7: Order routine for the service to be delivered</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>3.74</b>	<b>3.64</b>	<b>3.62</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>3.56</b>	<b>3.16</b>	<b>3.64</b>	<b>3.71</b>
Ensures the timely delivery of the service as needed	3.78	3.72	3.59	3.54	3.67	3.72	3.57	3.33	3.59	3.69
Arranges for the delivery and payment of service	3.45	3.18	3.14	3.06	3.26	3.16	2.82	2.73	3.14	3.22
Notifies consulting service providers of the final supply decision	4.20	4.31	4.20	4.25	4.12	4.16	4.29	3.40	4.18	4.23
<b>Stage 8: Post service delivery</b>	<b>3.78</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>3.78</b>	<b>3.74</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>3.78</b>
Solves problems related to service providers	3.84	3.91	3.94	3.94	3.93	3.93	3.93	3.47	3.82	3.89
Debriefs unsuccessful service providers	3.72	3.88	3.85	3.82	4.10	3.81	3.79	3.53	3.93	3.83
Inquires about the quality of the service delivered	3.78	3.68	3.66	3.62	3.69	3.88	3.29	3.67	3.64	3.69
Inquires about the quality of the services provided by purchasing	3.76	3.78	3.66	3.55	3.71	3.88	3.32	3.33	3.45	3.71

TABLE 6 (Continued)

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	Less than \$1 M	\$1M > \$10 M	\$10M > \$25M	\$25M > \$50M	\$50M > \$75M	\$75M > \$100M	\$100M > \$200M	\$200M > \$300M	Over \$300M	Grand Total
<b>Overall Contribution</b>	<b>4.13</b>	<b>4.19</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>4.04</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>3.93</b>	<b>4.14</b>
Enriches the jobs of those involved through the learning	3.88	4.01	3.92	3.95	3.86	3.72	3.79	3.53	3.68	3.91
Ensures a fair and defensible process	4.51	4.60	4.57	4.55	4.48	4.70	4.54	4.00	4.41	4.55
Improves the quality of service delivered by the service providers	3.65	3.73	3.81	3.68	3.79	3.70	3.36	3.53	3.59	3.70
Ensures value for money spent	3.99	3.97	3.89	3.94	4.00	3.86	3.96	3.80	3.77	3.95
Develops the potential for future time savings through the learning	4.09	4.16	4.13	4.11	4.17	4.00	4.07	3.73	3.86	4.11
Makes the purchasing experience more enjoyable	4.03	4.08	3.94	3.96	4.02	4.07	4.07	3.27	3.66	4.01
Answers the client department's questions - timely / informative way	4.45	4.53	4.48	4.48	4.43	4.56	4.36	4.07	4.27	4.48
Helps to avoid pitfalls and delays during the purchasing process	4.40	4.44	4.41	4.44	4.40	4.47	4.18	4.07	4.23	4.40

TABLE 7  
Contribution by Total Dollar Spend

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	Less than \$1 M	\$1M > \$10 M	\$10M > \$25M	\$25M > \$50M	\$50M > \$75M	\$75M > \$100M	\$100M > \$200M	\$200M > \$300M	Over \$300M
<b>Stage 1: Need anticipation or recognition of a problem</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>2.58</b>	<b>2.48</b>	<b>2.35</b>	<b>2.58</b>	<b>2.57</b>	<b>2.53</b>	<b>2.47</b>	<b>2.50</b>

TABLE 7 (Continued)

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	Less than \$1 M	\$1M > \$10 M	\$10M > \$25M	\$25M > \$50M	\$50M > \$75M	\$75M > \$100M	\$100M > \$200M	\$200M > \$300M	Over \$300M
Is involved in the client department's long range planning activities	3.06	2.58	2.48	2.35	2.58	2.57	2.53	2.47	2.50
<b>Stage 2: Determination of the characteristics of the services needed</b>	<b>3.53</b>	<b>3.63</b>	<b>3.60</b>	<b>3.70</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>3.65</b>	<b>3.69</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>3.55</b>
Provides information to the client department about marketplace/suppliers	3.69	3.37	3.41	3.33	3.42	3.25	3.49	3.60	3.24
Identifies the specific delivery needs of the client department	3.38	3.58	3.40	3.35	3.43	3.44	3.40	3.33	3.27
Helps the client department understand and deal with needs versus its wants	3.69	3.73	3.74	3.94	3.87	3.85	3.90	3.86	3.77
Helps the client department define and understand its needs	3.56	3.77	3.76	3.99	3.87	3.99	3.85	4.00	3.80
Clarifies the operating environment within which the service will be delivered	3.31	3.71	3.69	3.90	3.78	3.71	3.82	3.78	3.65
<b>Stage 3: Description of the characteristics of the services needed</b>	<b>3.89</b>	<b>4.23</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>4.41</b>	<b>4.40</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>4.34</b>	<b>4.51</b>	<b>4.24</b>
Improves the RFP developed	4.19	4.39	4.42	4.62	4.61	4.39	4.51	4.61	4.43
Develops an RFP that includes evaluation criteria used to ultimately evaluate supplier	4.13	4.28	4.35	4.59	4.50	4.49	4.53	4.64	4.36
Develops an RFP that includes a weighting scheme of evaluation criteria	3.94	4.21	4.35	4.42	4.51	4.35	4.47	4.64	4.32
Develops an RFP that improves a supplier's understanding of needs	4.00	4.28	4.31	4.43	4.44	4.39	4.42	4.56	4.33
Develops an RFP that reduces the risk associated with legal claims	3.94	4.35	4.41	4.56	4.60	4.42	4.51	4.65	4.42
Develops an RFP that reduces the risk associated with supplier non-performance	3.94	4.28	4.36	4.49	4.45	4.39	4.43	4.58	4.34
Develops interview questions	3.13	3.79	3.52	3.74	3.66	3.70	3.52	3.89	3.44
<b>Stage 4: Search for potential suppliers</b>	<b>3.23</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>3.84</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>3.87</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>3.93</b>	<b>3.69</b>
Identifies potential service providers	3.50	4.17	4.11	4.04	4.17	4.14	4.13	4.19	3.85
Acts a single point of contact for consulting service providers.	3.06	3.78	3.86	3.88	3.93	3.86	3.95	3.88	3.83

TABLE 7 (Continued)

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	Less than \$1 M	\$1M > \$10 M	\$10M > \$25M	\$25M > \$50M	\$50M > \$75M	\$75M > \$100M	\$100M > \$200M	\$200M > \$300M	Over \$300M
Discusses ideas about service delivery with potential service providers	3.13	3.62	3.55	3.52	3.51	3.57	3.58	3.71	3.40
<b>Stage 5: Acquisition and prescreening of proposals received</b>	<b>3.59</b>	<b>4.16</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>4.22</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>4.15</b>	<b>4.23</b>	<b>4.03</b>
Pre-screens proposals submitted by consulting service providers	3.00	3.78	3.55	3.57	3.72	3.56	3.66	3.81	3.67
Makes copies of the proposals received and delivers these to other stakeholders	3.50	4.12	4.12	4.00	4.26	4.03	4.01	4.25	3.85
Contacts consulting service providers when additional information is needed	4.00	4.47	4.33	4.35	4.50	4.39	4.46	4.50	4.29
Acts as a liaison between client departments and service providers	3.88	4.28	4.21	4.27	4.41	4.23	4.45	4.36	4.30
<b>Stage 6: Evaluation of supplier proposals and selection of supplier</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>3.89</b>	<b>3.82</b>	<b>3.85</b>	<b>3.87</b>	<b>3.79</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>4.03</b>	<b>3.76</b>
Organizes and chairs meetings	3.56	4.03	3.97	4.06	4.09	3.97	4.06	4.32	4.15
Evaluates proposals jointly with the client department	3.25	3.92	3.78	3.78	3.81	3.73	3.78	4.03	3.58
Reduces costs on the basis of supply choice and the accounting for extras	3.44	3.73	3.71	3.69	3.70	3.67	3.80	3.75	3.56
<b>Stage 7: Order routine for the service to be delivered</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>3.85</b>	<b>3.80</b>	<b>3.76</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>3.80</b>	<b>3.58</b>
Ensures the timely delivery of the service as needed	4.00	3.82	3.71	3.69	3.67	3.49	3.80	3.67	3.60
Arranges for the delivery and payment of service	3.50	3.53	3.39	3.22	3.38	3.11	3.10	3.21	2.99
Notifies consulting service providers of the final supply decision	3.69	4.21	4.30	4.37	4.14	4.13	4.22	4.51	4.15
<b>Stage 8: Post service delivery</b>	<b>3.94</b>	<b>3.89</b>	<b>3.80</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>3.87</b>	<b>3.87</b>	<b>4.01</b>	<b>4.06</b>	<b>3.82</b>
Solves problems related to consulting service providers	3.13	3.83	3.84	3.96	3.73	3.81	3.76	4.18	3.78
Debriefs unsuccessful consulting service providers	3.56	3.80	3.86	3.63	3.66	3.67	3.74	3.94	3.52
Inquires about the quality of the consulting service that was delivered	3.56	3.80	3.81	3.65	3.78	3.54	3.79	3.92	3.58
Inquires about the quality of the services provided by the purchasing department	4.00	3.82	3.71	3.69	3.67	3.49	3.80	3.67	3.60

TABLE 7 (Continued)

Value Added by purchasing department during purchasing process	Less than \$1 M	\$1M > \$10 M	\$10M > \$25M	\$25M > \$50M	\$50M > \$75M	\$75M > \$100M	\$100M > \$200M	\$200M > \$300M	Over \$300M
<b>Overall Contribution</b>	<b>4.02</b>	<b>4.06</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>4.21</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>4.11</b>	<b>4.16</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>4.07</b>
Enriches the jobs of those involved through the learning that occurred	3.50	3.78	3.93	3.99	4.07	3.94	3.96	3.85	3.88
Ensures a fair and defensible process	4.38	4.42	4.53	4.69	4.64	4.44	4.63	4.58	4.50
Improves the quality of service delivered by the service providers	3.75	3.69	3.69	3.68	3.85	3.76	3.69	3.75	3.62
Ensures value for money spent	4.13	3.98	3.99	3.99	3.99	3.94	3.93	3.94	3.86
Develops the potential for future time savings through the learning that occurs	4.06	4.05	4.12	4.19	4.15	4.09	4.12	4.21	4.03
Makes the purchasing experience more enjoyable for the client department	3.75	3.96	4.05	4.06	4.11	4.01	4.06	4.14	3.88
Answers the client department's questions in a timely / informative way	4.38	4.33	4.44	4.59	4.61	4.38	4.50	4.57	4.44
Helps to avoid pitfalls and delays during the purchasing process, thus saving time	4.19	4.26	4.34	4.52	4.57	4.29	4.41	4.58	4.37

### An Overall Assessment of the Contribution Made by Purchasing

When it came time to assess the overall ability of the purchasing department to add value to the acquisition process a number of other measures were assessed. These measures included whether value for money spent was achieved, whether the purchasing department was able to help save time and or money, whether a better quality service was provided, and whether respondents felt that job enrichment or learning occurred on the part of the client departments due to the involvement by the purchasing department in their respective decisions. Scores were relatively consistent across categories with the highest scores being assessed for the ability of the purchasing department to "Help Ensure a Fair and Defensible Process" and lower scores for the ability of the purchasing department to "Improve the Quality of the Consulting Service Purchased". Mean scores for the measures used to assess the

overall contribution of the purchasing department ranged from a high of 4.78/5 to a low of 3/5. Tables 3 through 7 display these results.

### Client Department Informants and What They Had to Say

In addition to the purchasing department informants included in our study, a total of 69 client department informants (6.6% of completed survey respondents) also responded to our survey. When compared to purchasing department respondents, client department respondents reported lower scores as they related to purchasing department's ability to add value to acquisition processes for consulting services. These scores on average were half a point (.5/5) less than those reported by purchasing department respondents. Table 8 displays these results.

**TABLE 8**  
**Contribution by Purchasing Department as per Purchasing and Client Departments' Respondents**

Value Added by purchasing department	Documentary vs. Meaningful	Purchasing/ Procurement	Client Department	Grand Total
<b>Stage 1: Need anticipation or recognition of a problem</b>	-	<b>2.50</b>	<b>2.62</b>	<b>2.51</b>
Is aware of the client department's upcoming consulting needs due to their involvement in the client department's long range planning activities	M	2.50	2.62	2.51
<b>Stage 2: Determination of the characteristics of the services needed</b>	-	<b>3.64</b>	<b>3.20</b>	<b>3.63</b>
Provides information to the client department about the marketplace and the availability of service suppliers	M	3.40	2.97	3.37
Identifies the specific delivery needs of the client department	M	3.41	3.07	3.38
Helps the client department understand and deal with any inherent tradeoff concerning needs versus its wants	M	3.85	3.42	3.82
Helps the client define and understand its needs	M	3.89	3.33	3.86
Clarifies the operating environment within which the service will be delivered	M	3.77	3.33	3.74

TABLE 8 (Continued)

Value Added by purchasing department	Documentary vs. Meaningful	Purchasing/ Procurement	Client Department	Grand Total
<b>Stage 3: Description of the characteristics of the services needed</b>	-	<b>4.36</b>	<b>3.62</b>	<b>4.31</b>
Improves the RFP developed	D	4.53	3.80	4.49
Develops an RFP that includes evaluation criteria used to ultimately evaluate supplier	D	4.49	3.75	4.45
Develops an RFP that includes a weighting scheme that weights various evaluation criteria according to importance which is used during the evaluation process	D	4.43	3.68	4.38
Develops an RFP that improves supplier's understanding of client's needs / expectations thus allowing them to prepare better relevant proposals	M	4.42	3.70	4.38
Develops an RFP that reduces the risk associated with legal claims	D	4.52	3.70	4.47
Develops an RFP that reduces the risk associated with supplier non-performance	D	4.45	3.65	4.40
Develops interview questions	M	3.65	3.09	3.61
<b>Stage 4: Search for potential suppliers</b>	-	<b>3.84</b>	<b>3.35</b>	<b>3.81</b>
Identifies potential consulting service providers	D	4.09	3.45	4.05
Acts a single point of contact for consulting service providers.	D	3.89	3.35	3.86
Discusses ideas about service delivery with potential service providers (via supplier meetings).	M	3.55	3.26	3.53
<b>Stage 5: Acquisition and prescreening of proposals received</b>	-	<b>4.12</b>	<b>3.70</b>	<b>4.09</b>
Pre-screens proposals submitted by consulting service providers for client department	M	3.67	3.30	3.65
Makes copies of the proposals received and delivers these to other stakeholders	D	4.06	3.68	4.03
Contacts consulting service providers in the event that additional information is needed	D	4.41	3.97	4.38
Acts as a liaison between client departments and consulting service providers	D	4.34	3.83	4.30
<b>Stage 6: Evaluation of supplier proposals and selection of supplier</b>	-	<b>3.87</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>3.84</b>
Organizes and chairs meetings	M	4.11	3.57	4.07
Evaluates proposals jointly with the client department	M	3.78	3.46	3.76
Reduces costs on the basis of supply choice and the accounting for extras that may arise	D	3.71	3.23	3.68

TABLE 8 (Continued)

Value Added by purchasing department	Documentary vs. Meaningful	Purchasing/ Procurement	Client Department	Grand Total
<b>Stage 7: Order routine for the service to be delivered</b>	-	<b>3.74</b>	<b>3.34</b>	<b>3.71</b>
Ensures the timely delivery of the service as needed	D	3.72	3.32	3.69
Arranges for the delivery and payment of service	D	3.24	2.86	3.22
Notifies consulting service providers of the final supply decision	D	4.26	3.84	4.23
<b>Stage 8: Post service delivery</b>	-	<b>3.82</b>	<b>3.36</b>	<b>3.78</b>
Solves problems related to consulting service providers	M	3.93	3.42	3.89
Debriefs unsuccessful consulting service providers	M	3.87	3.38	3.83
Inquires about the quality of the consulting service that was delivered	M	3.73	3.29	3.70
Inquires about the quality of the services provided by the purchasing department	M	3.74	3.36	3.71
<b>Overall Contribution</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>4.18</b>	<b>3.61</b>	<b>4.14</b>
Enriches the jobs of those involved through the learning that occurred	M	3.94	3.54	3.92
Ensures a fair and defensible process	M	4.58	4.22	4.55
Improves the quality of service delivered by the consulting service providers	M	3.73	3.30	3.70
Ensures value for money spent	M	3.98	3.42	3.95
Develops the potential for future time savings through the learning that occurs about the requirements of the purchasing process for consulting services	M	4.15	3.58	4.11
Makes the purchasing experience more enjoyable for the client department	M	4.05	3.45	4.01
Answers the client department's questions in a timely and informative fashion	M	4.53	3.78	4.48
Helps to avoid pitfalls and delays during the purchasing process, thus saving the client department time	M	4.46	3.59	4.41

### Meaningful versus Documentary Types of Activities

This study also examined the difference between more Meaningful versus more Documentary type of activities that were related to the value that was contributed by the purchasing departments. Consequently, we found that purchasing departments

were assessed higher scores for more Documentary types of activities and their related contributions when compared to more Meaningful activities. Once again, client department informants gave purchasing departments lower scores for each type of value that was assessed. Table 8 displays these results.

### **What Enables the Purchasing Department's Ability to Add Value?**

In addition to assessing the way that public purchasing departments were contributing value to purchasing decisions for consulting services, this study also assessed a number of factors that may affect the ability of these departments to add the value that they did. While a comprehensive analysis of these factors is not complete, a preliminary analysis of these findings has been completed and is consistent with those findings reported in earlier work (Schiele & McCue, 2006).

The finding from the present study suggested that in order for the purchasing department to be involved and add value to purchase decisions concerning consulting services, they needed to be involved early in the purchasing process. Simply, early involvement on the part of the purchasing department provides them with the background and understanding necessary to affect positively the purchase decision in such a way that characterizes meaningful involvement.

Informants also identified a number of necessary preconditions that must be met in order for the purchasing department to be meaningfully involved, early in the purchasing process. Firstly, the client department must be willing to involve the purchasing department in the particular purchasing decision.

Further, the willingness of the client department to involve the purchasing department in these purchase decisions was driven primarily by trust. That is the client department's belief that the purchasing department would, when involved, positively affect their purchase decisions and not delay the ultimate satisfaction of their need. Research has suggested that a person or group is deemed trustworthy to the extent that they are seen as likely to act in a way that fulfills the needs and interests of both groups (Dirks, 2000; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, & Werner, 1998). A person or group's trustworthiness strengthens one's willingness to be vulnerable to this person's or group's actions (Mayer et al., 1995). Thus, a client department's willingness to

involve the purchasing department is contingent upon the purchasing department's trustworthiness.

When trying to determine whether the purchasing department is trustworthy, the client department may ask itself this question: "What evidence do we have that suggests that the purchasing department is likely to act in such a way that will fulfill our needs and interests?" The trust literature suggested that there are two important traits that could increase the purchasing department's trustworthiness: (1) the extent to which the purchasing department has the requisite expertise and ability to benefit the client department, and (2) the extent to which the purchasing department is concerned about the needs and interests of the client department. These two traits can be more simply labeled "ability" and "benevolence" (Bews & Rossouw, 2002; Mayer et al., 1995), which denote respectively whether the purchasing department *can* and *wants to* benefit a particular client department.

The purchasing department's broad knowledge and experience relating to both the acquisition process and the consulting service sought, its ability to meet deadlines and to solve problems, and its knowledge of the client department's specific needs are all related to the purchasing department's *ability* to fulfill the needs and interests of the client department. Tact, respect, openness and friendliness, initiative, and use of a service-based approach exemplify the purchasing department's *benevolence*, at least from the perspective of the particular client departments interacting with the purchasing department.

It is also important to note that a client department's willingness may remain a factor even once involvement of the purchasing department begins. Specifically, if the client department's willingness weakened during the acquisition process, perhaps because the purchasing department had been less than helpful, then it may decide to limit or terminate the continued involvement of the purchasing department for the remainder of the purchasing process.

Additionally, the purchasing department's ability and benevolence may also directly affect whether it is meaningfully involved. That is, once the client department has decided to involve the purchasing department, the purchasing department must use its ability and benevolence to ensure its actions and decisions clearly denote

meaningful involvement. If the client were to determine that the purchasing department was not able or willing to provide quality assistance, the client's willingness to further involve the purchasing department would likely wane, thereby hindering the department's meaningful involvement.

Finally, the risk associated with a particular purchase decision was also found to affect positively the willingness of the client department to involve the purchasing department. This of course was moderated by the aforementioned trust that the client department had in the purchasing department's ability and intentions with respect to helping them with their purchase decisions. This risk increased under conditions where there was more political or public scrutiny regarding the purchase, perceived difficulty of finding a suitable supplier, a high dollar value involved, increased complexity associated with the service, and or an urgent need for the service. These factors were found to have strong positive effects on a client departments' willingness to involve the purchasing department so long as they were deemed trustworthy.

### **Limitations of the Findings**

Like any study, this research is not without its limitations. First, we cannot assume that just because the purchasing department is not as involved as it could be, that other purchasers from other departments are not able to effect the same type of results as when purchasing is meaningfully involved in these types of decisions. This research does make the assumption that if purchasing is meaningfully involved that they could in effect create more value in terms of both helping the client department meet its immediate needs for a consultant in an efficient and effective manner while ensuring that the long terms needs of the organization as a whole were also being met.

In addition, while this study's response rate could have been better, it may still be reasonable especially given the low involvement levels on the part of the purchasing department in purchase decisions for consulting services. In the present study, 734 of the 1782 responses received stated that their purchasing departments were not involved in purchase decisions for consulting services. Therefore, our study may include a larger portion of the departments

that are involved from the total population and give much more relevance to the research findings.

Lastly, because the majority of the respondents included in this study were purchasing department employees, the research findings reported herein may be somewhat biased. In future, it may be better to involve more client department informants so as to get a better balance of perspectives on the issue examined by this research.

### **Where Do We Go From Here – Future Research?**

While it is important to understand the way that public purchasing departments are contributing to these types of purchase decisions, it may be even more important to understand the basis for these low involvement levels and why this value results. The factors that affected the involvement that is occurring was also identified by this research and a more detailed discussion of these factors is forthcoming in other work. Future research may also want to examine cases where little or no involvement exists on the part of the purchasing department, in contrast to the cases of meaningful involvement, to determine whether or not non-purchasing department purchasers are making these types of decisions effectively. In doing so we may determine if the purchasing department can learn from what they are doing, and consequently be able to achieve without their involvement. Further, it might also be interesting to look at the way that private sector purchasing departments are involved in these important types of purchase decisions. It is likely that involvement levels are even lower than in the public sector. However, if we could identify cases where the purchasing department was involved, it might prove very interesting to find out how and what type of value they are able to contribute to these types of purchase decisions. If the goal is to increase the contributions made by the purchasing department then additional research that helps to provide the information needed to train and develop the skills necessary for this to happen would also be very useful.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

This research has been able to provide insights, otherwise not available, into the way in which public purchasing departments are contributing to competitive acquisition processes for consulting services. In doing so, it takes a "pulse of procurement" as far as this

involvement is concerned and the value that has resulted. While the public purchasing department has been able to make significant and valuable contributions to purchase decisions related to consulting services when meaningfully involved, the current state of involvement is not resulting in the type of contributions that are possible; purchasing needs to do a much better job at becoming more involved especially in meaningful tasks, earlier in the purchasing process, and with both the needs of the client department and the organization in mind.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing, Inc. for their support and assistance with this research, especially Dr. Donna McCarthy at NIGP for her invaluable assistance with the refinement and administration of the online survey, and ongoing comments concerning this paper.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**Survey Instrument**  
**Purchasing Involvement in the Acquisition of Consulting Services**

Within the public sector a variety of consulting services are delivered to client departments. These consultants provide strategic advice about training, the provision of public services, ongoing management of departments, environmental planning and assessment, engineering, architectural planning, communication, and political strategy. Consulting services can have a significant impact on the functioning of client departments.

These departments are required to make effective purchase decisions with respect to these services. However, public purchasing departments, responsible for helping client departments with these decisions have been involved in only 5% of the purchase decisions relating to consulting services! This is despite the fact that these departments have been shown to help to ensure that funds are spent properly, improve the quality of goods and services purchased, and save both time and money.

If we are to find ways to help purchasing departments more positively affect these important purchase decisions, we must understand the basis for these low involvement levels.

Towards that end, this survey asks you to respond to a series of statements about various factors that may affect the involvement of the purchasing department in purchase decisions related to consulting services. In addition, we would also like you to respond to a series of statements concerning the value your purchasing department adds to these important purchase decisions.

Your contribution is greatly appreciated and very much needed at this time. As an informed professional, you have particularly important insights that could help us shed new light on this dilemma. Please note that your involvement is completely voluntary and at any time you may choose not to participate in the study.

Once complete, results from this survey will be available at the NIGP website. Again, we appreciate the time that you are taking to complete this survey. We thank you for your participation. Please do not hesitate to contact us directly if you have any questions or are in need of some further clarification.

**THE SURVEY – PART 1**

The following concerns the various factors that may affect the involvement of the purchasing department in a consulting service purchase decision. Please read each statement carefully and then indicate your level of agreement from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*.

1. Finding a suitable consulting service provider is difficult.
2. There is political pressure towards how money is spent.
3. There is political scrutiny about the consulting service provider to be selected.
4. Organizational policies direct the involvement of the purchasing department.
5. Management has mandated or suggested (outside of policy requirements) that the purchasing department be involved in purchase decisions for consulting services.
6. The client department's office is located close to the purchasing department.
7. The purchasing department is organized as a centralized business function.
8. The client department is aware of the value that purchasing adds to their decisions.
9. The client department lacks the specific skills required to make an effective decision when it comes to consulting services.
10. Due to a heavy workload, the client department has very little time to devote to their purchase decisions.
11. The client department has a positive relationship with the purchasing department.
12. The needed consulting service is complex and difficult to describe.
13. The service needed is by nature, strategic.
14. There is an urgent need for the service.
15. There is a high dollar value associated with the service.

16. The purchasing department can solve problems.
17. The purchasing department can facilitate the purchasing process.
18. The purchasing department can avoid delays during the purchasing process.
19. The purchasing department can meet timelines / deadlines
20. The purchasing department is knowledgeable about the purchasing process.
21. The purchasing department is knowledgeable about the marketplace.
22. The purchasing department is flexible throughout the purchasing process.
23. The purchasing department demonstrates the value offered by the department.
24. The purchasing department is tactful when working with client departments.
25. The purchasing department uses a service-based approach with client departments.
26. The purchasing department shows respect for the client department's position.
27. The purchasing department is open and friendly
28. The purchasing department understands the needs of the client department.
29. The purchasing department tries to understand the needs of the client department
30. The purchasing department has a good relationship with client departments.
31. The purchasing department is proactive when helping client departments.
32. The client department seeks help from the purchasing department when needed.
33. The client department contacts the purchasing department to discuss its needs.

34. The client department involves the purchasing department in department planning.
35. The client department accepts guidance and advice from the purchasing department.
36. The client department is open and honest when discussing their needs versus their wants.
37. The client department relies on the purchasing department for help.

#### THE SURVEY – PART 2

The following section concerns questions about the value contributed by the purchasing department throughout the purchasing process for consulting services. Please read each statement carefully and then indicate your level of agreement from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The Purchasing Department...

1. Is aware of the client department's upcoming consulting needs due to their involvement in the client department's long range planning activities for consulting services.
2. Provides information to the client department about the marketplace and the availability of consulting service suppliers
3. Identifies the specific delivery needs of the client department.
4. Helps the client department understand and deal with any inherent tradeoffs concerning the client department's needs versus its wants.
5. Helps the client department define and understand its needs.
6. Clarifies the operating environment within which the consulting service will be delivered.
7. Improves the RFP developed.
8. Develops an RFP that includes evaluation criteria used to ultimately evaluate suppliers.
9. Develops an RFP that includes a weighting scheme that weights various evaluation criteria according to importance which is used during the evaluation process.

10. Develops an RFP that improves a suppliers understanding of the client department's needs and expectations thus allowing them to prepare better more relevant proposals.
11. Develops an RFP that reduces the risk associated with legal claims.
12. Develops an RFP that reduces the risk associated with supplier non-performance.
13. Develops interview questions.
14. Identifies potential consulting service providers.
15. Acts as a single point of contact for consulting service providers.
16. Discusses ideas about service delivery with potential consulting service providers (via supplier meetings).
17. Prescreens proposals submitted by consulting service providers for client department.
18. Makes copies of the proposals received and delivers these to other stakeholders
19. Contacts consulting service providers in the event that additional information is needed.
20. Acts as a liaison between client departments and consulting service providers.
21. Organizes and chairs meetings.
22. Evaluates proposals jointly with the client department.
23. Reduces costs on the basis of supply choice and the accounting for extras that may arise.
24. Ensures the timely delivery of the service as needed.
25. Arranges for the delivery and payment of service.
26. Notifies consulting service providers of the final supply decision.
27. Solves problems related to consulting service providers.
28. Debriefs unsuccessful consulting service providers.
29. Inquires about the quality of the consulting service that was delivered.

30. Inquires about the quality of the services provided by the purchasing department.
31. Enriches the jobs of those involved through the learning that occurred.
32. Ensures a fair and defensible process.
33. Improves the quality of service delivered by the consulting service providers.
34. Ensures value for money spent.
35. Develops the potential for future time savings through the learning that occurs about the requirements of the purchasing process for consulting services.
36. Makes the purchasing experience more enjoyable for the client department.
37. Answers the client department's questions in a timely and informative fashion.
38. Helps to avoid pitfalls and delays during the purchasing process, thus saving the client department time.

### THE SURVEY – PART 3

The following are general questions concerning you and the agency that you work for.

1. What type of public agency do you represent?
  - Federal Government
  - State/Provincial Government
  - County/Regional Government
  - City/Municipal Government
  - School System
  - College/University
  - Health Related
  - Utility
  - Special Authority/District.
2. What is your job title?
3. What is your total years of experience in your field?
4. How long have you held your current position?

5. What is your education level (please check one)?
- High School
  - Associate Degree
  - Bachelor's Degree
  - Graduate Degree
  - Other (please specify)
6. What is the population of the constituency that your agency serves?
7. What is the annual procurement spend by your agency on all goods and services?
8. What is the annual procurement spend by your agency on consulting services?

**Other Comments**

Please use this section to provide any other thoughts or insights that you may have about the lack of purchasing department involvement in purchasing decisions for consulting services.