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National Highway
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Administration

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CERTIFIED MAIL - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

July 8, 2019

RE: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request ES19-000480

This responds to your February 13, 2019 FOIA request seeking a copy of the NHTSA Organizational Assessment of the Office of Acquisition Management, conducted by Premier Management Corporation under contract DTNH22-13-F-00455 in approximately 2013.

We have located records responsive to your request. NHTSA has determined to make a discretionary disclosure of records that would be otherwise considered exempt from the FOIA's statutory disclosure requirement pursuant to Exemption (b)(5). Enclosed are records responsive to your request.

Pursuant to 49 CFR Part 7, there is no charge for this response.

I am the person responsible for this determination. If you wish to appeal this decision, you may do so by writing to the Chief Counsel, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., West Building, W41-227, Washington, DC 20590, pursuant to 49 C.F.R. § 7.32(d). Alternatively, you may submit your appeal via electronic mail to nhtsa.foia.appeal@dot.gov. An appeal must be submitted within 90 days from the date of this determination. It should contain any information and argument upon which you rely. The decision of the Chief Counsel will be administratively final.

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Very Truly Yours,

Andrew J. DiMarsico
Senior Attorney

Enclosure

PREMiER Management corporation

Department Of Transportation

NHTSA

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Office of Acquisition Management: An Organizational Assessment

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By: PREMIER Management Corporation
July 15, 2013

ACQUISITION IN NHTSA/OAM: AN ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

ABSTRACT

This assessment analyzed the Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Office of Acquisition Management (OAM) Acquisition. The overall objective of this assessment was to identify the OAM's current strengths and challenges, examine the organizational structure and functions, assess the functional assignments, staffing levels, and administrative strengths, and identify relevant measures to monitor performance. In 2008, NHTSA OAM underwent an assessment of similar scope and magnitude. In an effort of continuous improvement, OAM requested a follow-up assessment to determine their progress against the standards and goals set as a result of the 2008 assessment. In the interest of determining an appropriate starting point, PREMIER led a discussion with OAM stakeholders at the kick-off meeting in February 2013. The stakeholders qualified (and agreed) that the application of the 2008 assessment results and recommendations are estimated to be around 70%[1].

The critical success factors of the Malcolm Baldrige Framework was used to derive a methodology for data collection, benchmarking, conducting semi-structured surveys and interviews with NHTSA and OAM professionals and Program Office stakeholders. The following findings pertain: (1) Recommend evolving the OAM to a more Cross-Functional Matrix[2] (collaborative) organizational model, organized around grades, levels, and

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[1] As discussed with stakeholders on February 22, 2013.

[2] Matrix structure: The matrix structure groups employees by both function and product. This structure can combine the best of both separate structures. A matrix organization frequently uses teams of employees to accomplish work, in order to take advantage of the strengths, as well as make up for the weaknesses, of functional and decentralized forms. Weak/Functional Matrix: A project manager with only limited authority is assigned to oversee the cross-functional aspects of the project. The functional managers maintain control over their resources and project areas. **Balanced/Functional Matrix**: A project manager is assigned to oversee the project. Power is shared equally between the project manager and the functional managers. It brings the best aspects of functional and projectized organizations. However, this is the most difficult system to maintain, as the sharing of power is a delicate proposition.

Without balance, a purely Functional Matrix tends to initially lead to operational efficiencies within that group.

measurable specialist competencies; encouraging the use of cross-functional teams to increase and maintain staff competencies, thereby creating a more streamlined, customer focused, collaborative environment that allows OAM to more accurately forecast and (re)allocate the resources (specialists) as needed to meet the changing procurement needs of the Program Offices. (2) Recommend focusing the mission and priorities of OAM to become *more* proactive, and strategically aligned. Complete and implement the OAM strategic plan. A strategic plan is a management tool that will serve the purpose of helping OAM do a better job aligning with NHTSA and DOT strategic missions, and focusing the energy, resources, and time of everyone (as well as customers) in the organization in the same direction. (3) Formally assess the entire OAM staff in order to baseline skillsets, identify staff skillsets that can be leveraged, identify competency gaps, and provide leadership with an unbiased view of the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the procurement division. Formally implement the use of Acquisition Individual Development Plans (AIDPs) in order to provide the specialists with a visual understanding of their performance expectations, their career progression potential, and demonstrate how their role "fits in" with the OAM, NHTSA, and DOT missions. (4) Formally implement the use of written Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Processes, leveraging current/personal SOPs and best practices created by OAM staff; Review and apply as appropriate Predictability Group progress, findings, and documentation. Consider developing and implementing an OAM Communication Plan[3]; implementing and using "Director's Calls" to initiate and then evaluate the efficacy of performance metrics; continuing to participate in inter-mode hiring and assignment details; participating in the Government-Industry Exchange program[4] and/or establishing an intern or career development program to train multi-level

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However as an organization grows, it tends to lead to a lack of communication between the functional groups within an organization, making the organization slow and inflexible.

[3]A successful communication strategy happens when the OAM message is not only received, but also *understood* and acted upon by the intended audience. The OAM Communication plan should focus to inform the customer on acquisition information in a way that is beneficial to *both* OAM and the customer, persuade the customer to receive and follow provided information, prevent misunderstandings, present a point of view or reduce barriers.

[4] This program permits agencies to detail an eligible employee to a private sector organization. Similarly, it allows an eligible employee of a private sector organization to work temporarily for a federal agency. This type of program could provide agencies such as OAM with the ability to familiarize its acquisition workforce with industry best practices. Likewise, the private sector participants could benefit by being involved in important government

specialists, encourage leadership progression[5], and continuing funding of graduate education for applicable employees.

Additionally, best practice suggests that in order to ensure that implementation of recommended actions do not stall and are kept on track, OAM should assign the role of 'Process Improvement Guide', to at least one individual (at minimum) to track, status, and guide the process of implementing the recommendations contained in both this report and those of the Benchmarking Report. This person will champion the 'Spirit of Excellence' within OAM!

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projects, giving them the opportunity to see first-hand how the government works. This knowledge, when shared with their private sector colleagues, will help foster a better understanding of federal business practices and procedures. Ultimately, both the private and public sectors benefit from this innovative program. We note that other agencies have a direct interest in such a program.

[5] Acquisition leaders do not grow simply by time in grade or by bestowing a title. Nurturing new (emerging) leaders through a variety of approaches and knowledge sharing practices that allow professionals to grow.

PREMiER Management Corporation

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FORWARD

THE ACQUISITION INDUSTRY AT A GLANCE

The acquisition industry within the federal government is unique unto itself. In addition to the typical organizational interests, the impacts of challenges such as budget cutbacks, shallowing of the workforce, limited talent pools, and increasingly stringent reporting requirements are being realized not only within the Department of Transportation's National Highway Safety Administration Office of Acquisition Management (OAM), but also throughout the industry as a whole.

Moreover, the ripple effect is felt within the supporting Program Offices (PMOs) and even by customers of customers. A biennial acquisition survey of federal government acquisition leaders, conducted by Professional Services Council (PSC) and Grant Thornton LLP[6], provides insight into the acquisition world — the challenges, the opportunities, the concerns and the bright spots. The survey's purpose is to provide government policymakers and industry executives with perspectives on the state of federal acquisition policy and the inevitable impact on the industry players. The relevance of these industry findings should be considered when analyzing the OAM assessment findings. Although this study survey is principally qualitative in nature, and should not be interpreted as having statistical precision, nonetheless, in each edition of the survey, including 2012, clear trends have emerged that merit close attention. As evidenced by the PSC Grant Thornton findings, the fact that, in at least the last ten (10) years, OAM has repeatedly experienced multiple challenging elements noted in the study – oftentimes simultaneously. Trends that have been founded by the study survey as well as by OAM include:

- ✓ Workforce constraints such as large retiring employee force, staffing reductions, and waning capabilities and training;
- ✓ Constrained budgets negatively affecting hiring authority, innovative training capacity, and retention abilities of acquisition offices;
- ✓ High attrition and low incentive for longevity in light of increased agency competition for a shallow pool of candidates;
- ✓ Compliance reporting requirements becoming increasingly strict, burdensome, and negatively affecting specialist ability to use innovative contracting skills

[6] PSC Grant Thornton, Acquisition Policy Survey, 2012

There can be little doubt that the precarious balancing act the acquisition community has perpetuated represents a crisis that was, in times of relatively flush budgets, easier to conceal. It is often said that crisis breeds opportunity and innovation. As the results of this year's survey show, new approaches to solving persistent challenges in the acquisition community are needed now more than ever:

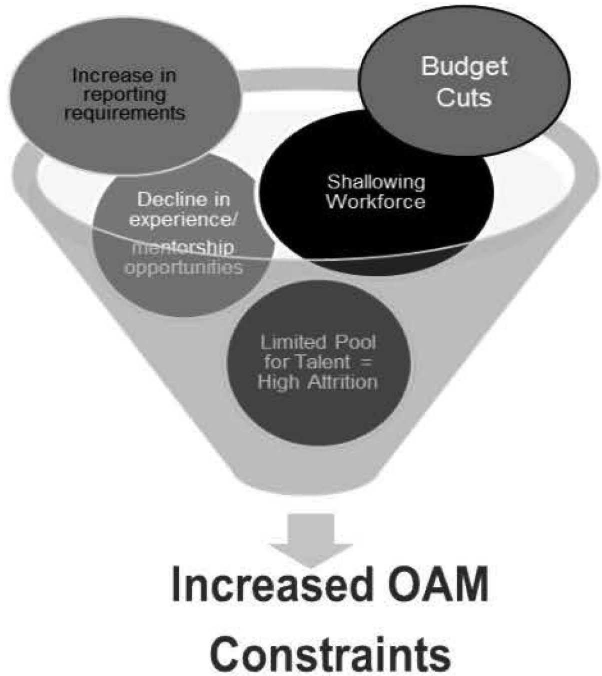

Figure 1 Industry trends are putting Acquisition Services in distressing positions. The most striking and troubling feature of the decline, is how little the solutions have changed over the last 10 years.

For the last ten (10) years, the Acquisition Policy Survey respondents have identified workforce resources, capabilities and training and development as top concerns. In addition to the size and capacity of the federal acquisition workforce, it is also clear that acquisition leaders and practitioners remain discomfited by a fundamental disconnect between the acquisition and oversight communities. This prevalent theme (of a majority of the surveys) is about more than differing perceptions of how best to ensure and protect the government's and taxpayers' best interests; it reflects an ongoing and destructive conflict that is severely inhibiting innovation and reasonable risk taking. As this year's survey respondents once again reported, the ever growing compliance regime, much of which they do not see as adding value to the process, is robbing the acquisition community of crucial time and resources that would otherwise be used to more effectively execute their day-to-day contract management responsibilities.

One of the lessons of the budget cuts of the 1990s is that not enough attention was paid to the critical acquisition capabilities that would become increasingly central to the effective execution of the government's missions. As a result, instead of a strategic reduction in the acquisition workforce, acquisition capabilities were reduced at nearly the same rate as other functional areas of the federal workforce. There can be little doubt that the precarious balancing act the acquisition community has perpetuated represents a crisis that was, in times of relatively flush budgets, easier to conceal. It is often said that crisis breeds opportunity and innovation. As the results of this year's survey show, new approaches to solving persistent challenges in the acquisition community are needed now more than ever. While some progress has been made, nothing in any edition of the survey suggests that it has been significant enough to substantially ameliorate these concerns. Given the centrality of the acquisition workforce to the execution of the government's missions, solving these challenges should be a high priority for appointed and elected officials acquisition officials.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An acquisition function that is successful at effectively and efficiently meeting the agency's missions generally reflects a consistent, cross-functional, and multidisciplinary approach to management, both internal and external to the organization, and determined to provide the best service to its customers.

This report will debrief and provide analysis and best practice recommendations for improvement regarding the findings. OAM can then apply the recommendations based on the analysis of findings, as well as explore the recommended areas for further research to make improvements to its organizational structure and processes. The primary goals of the assessment are:

- ✓ Provide a detailed examination of OAM's organizational structure and functions;
- ✓ Assess the functional assignments and staffing levels required to perform current duties;
- ✓ Assess administrative strengths and practices;
- ✓ Identify public peer contracting agencies and provide benchmarking and gap analysis;
- ✓ Identify relevant measures to monitor performance; and
- ✓ Provide specific recommendations with associated timeline, steps/actions to implement

After an initial assessment, observation, and interview with OAM leadership, several guiding strategies were created and followed as the assessment progressed:

- ✓ Guiding Assessment Questions Document[7](Appendix A); – used to guide the OAM staff and Program Office interviews;
- ✓ The OAM Procurement Systems and Process Assessments – used to capture System and Process workflow and administration (Appendix B);
- ✓ The Best Practice Determination and Benchmarking Partners Guide – used to aid the benchmarking research (Appendix C);

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[7] Sample Assessment Questions for the NHTSA/OAM Organizational Assessment were provided for review on March, 11, 2013. The Director of OAM, as well as COTR, was allowed to review the sample questions. Based on their feedback, the sample questions were then tailored for the Director level and Program Staff level interviews.

- ✓ The Preliminary Findings Report – used to debrief OAM leadership on the results of Task 3: Data Gathering (Appendix D) and provide an opportunity for initial revealing and validation of issue areas.

The results were analyzed to measure the level of consistency or inconsistency with that of known organizational critical success factors and the mission of the NHTSA/OAM.

After workplace observation, research, data gathering efforts, and formal interviewing of 22 individuals (11 OAM, 11 Program Office and NHTSA support staff) recurring themes began to surface, unveiling six (6) critical areas that should be urgently addressed:

- ✓ Organizational Structure & Functions, to include the lack of written, standardized and updated Policy and Guidance; lack of clearly defined lines, roles, and responsibilities of OAM Leadership, Staff, and Program Offices[8].
- ✓ Process & Workflow – broken and convoluted internal processes and workflow within OAM - inefficient method of work distribution, tracking, and statusing[9]; and resultant inefficiencies negatively affecting NHTSA Program Offices
- ✓ Communication – poor communication and dissemination of information on multiple levels within OAM and to the Customer[10]
- ✓ Customer Service – many services and processes are not guided by updated, written, OAM specific standards or Business to Customer Best Practices. Program Offices believe that the

[8] Of the OAM staff interviewed, 70% stated that they frequently receive conflicting (not incorrect) information from Upper Management regarding requirements, processes, and procurement activities. Additionally, from the Program Offices interviewed, 91% stated that they believe OAM management and specialists are not on the "same page" when it comes to what they believe is the role of the customer versus the specialist.

[9] Work distribution and tracking within OAM is manual and time intensive. On average it can take from 1-3 days to assign a specialist to a project; from interview and observation, statusing is performed by the Team Leading walking around to each desk with a printed copy of work report; comparing/measuring/tracking progress is performed at basic level and yields minimal insight into productivity nor ROI.

[10] 95% of all interviewed stated that OAM-Customer communication practices could be significantly enhanced. 90% of Customers interviewed believed that they felt that they are not being communicated to in a manner that was efficient for them or could be used to provide appropriate insight to their leadership chain. 100% of Customers stated that communication regarding statusing is not sufficient. 100% stated that they believe updated and accurate written policies and guidance is non-existent (save for the COTR Communiques).

level of competency and knowledge of the specialists varies greatly and is inconsistent and unreliable. Customer service and professionalism has been an issue on multiple occasions.

- ✓ Team Administration, to include Supervision, Management, and Staff Development/Skill Competency, and Team Morale
- ✓ Tools & Technology – under-utilization, lack of OAM-specific Policy and Guidance regarding the application of technology to procurement needs, and the increasing automation trend of OAM's customers.

By understanding and addressing the issues surrounding the mission critical areas above, OAM will be able to successfully transition from an environment that is largely reactive in nature, to a more proactive, forward-*thinking* acquisition office.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE & FUNCTIONS

ACTUAL STRUCTURE

Organizational structure affects organizational action in two major ways. First, it provides the foundation on which standard operating procedures and routines rest. Second, it determines which individuals get to participate in which decision-making processes, and thus to what extent their views shape the organization's actions. Further, the set organizational structure may not coincide with agency needs (mission), evolving in operational action. Such divergence decreases performance, when growing; a wrong organizational structure may hamper cooperation and thus hinder the completion of procurement actions in due time and within limits of resources and budgets. As a rule of best practice in Organizational Modeling, organizational structures are to be adaptive to process requirements, aiming to optimize the ratio of effort and input to output.

The ideal OAM model should be driven by OAM's goals and serves as the context in which processes operate and business is performed. A copy of the OAM organizational chart, shows that it is linear in nature with three (3) horizontal tiers: Director (at the top), Team Leads/Policy, Small Business Unit, VRTC (in the middle), and the remaining procurement staff on the last tier, aligning under their respective team lead. An assessment of office functioning and processes, along with an analysis and comparison of OAM's organization to comparative models, finds that functionally OAM operations most closely resemble a Pre-bureaucratic, Functional Structure:

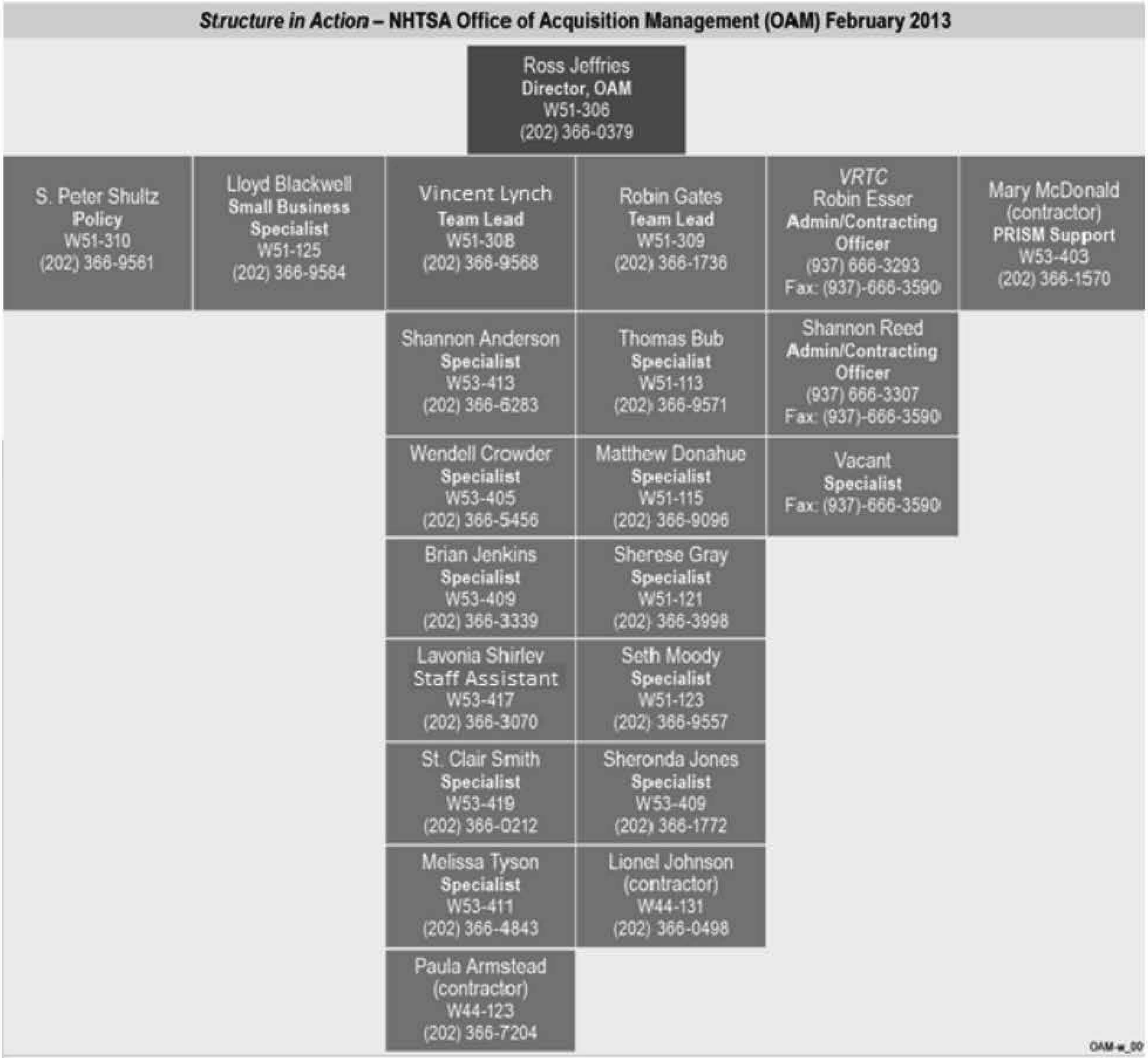

Figure 2. Structure.

Usually the structure is centralized and there is only one key decision maker. The organization is primarily divided into segments based on the functions of NVS, NTI, NPO (and some small others) (teams) when managing. Properly managed, it allows the organization to enhance the efficiencies of these functional groups. This type of structure is quite helpful for small organizations because the leader has the full control and is accountable over all the decisions and operations.

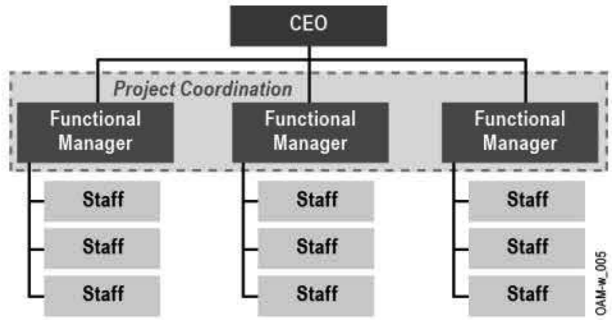

Figure 3. No matter how ingenious a leader is, it is virtually impossible for a single individual to generate the range of strategic ideas possible in a large, interdisciplinary group – such in the Functional Org Structure above.

However, in order for OAM to support the procurement needs of NHTSA, the type and duration of contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements, and the emergency procurement activities, are such that a purely functional organizational structure would eventually become overwhelmed and unable to move beyond stove-piped procurement activities. This is the case currently. As determined from interviews with OAM and Program Offices, OAM Leadership is routinely multi-tasked, and Leadership has had to step into specialist roles in order to support or mitigate workflow and procurement activities. The Director of OAM has had to act as both Director and Team Lead on multiple occasions due to vacancies and attrition. Additionally, per interview response, Team Leads have had to complete the work of specialists due to the volume or the nature (or difficulty, lack of experience) of the work assigned to certain specialists. Of the OAM specialists interviewed[11] 80% stated that they feel neither incentivized to perform nor connected to the procurement work they perform. Unfortunately, OAM is currently experiencing the most notable aspect of this type of structure: the lack or robust performance measurement and accompanying standards.

[11] PREMIER request to interview all OAM staff was denied. However, informal conversations were had with 11 members of OAM staff. The sentiment of not feeling incentivized nor motivated to excel was apparent. Further, we were told by more than 50% of the staff that they felt there were no accountability/disciplinary actions for non-performance. 90% stated that they had neither aspirations nor motivation to aspire to leadership within OAM.

In our analysis of determining positive opportunities for improvement within OAM's organizational structure and functioning, it was found that the organizational chart provided was visually inaccurate. It did not accurately represent the alignment of VRTC, PRISM Support, Support Contractors, and Policy Support. When looking at the 'true' organizational make up of OAM, it projects the *intent* of being a matrix organization. This is promising in that OAM shows that it exhibits qualities of a *Functional* Matrix (of both types of models).

A more accurate depiction of OAM's organizational structure

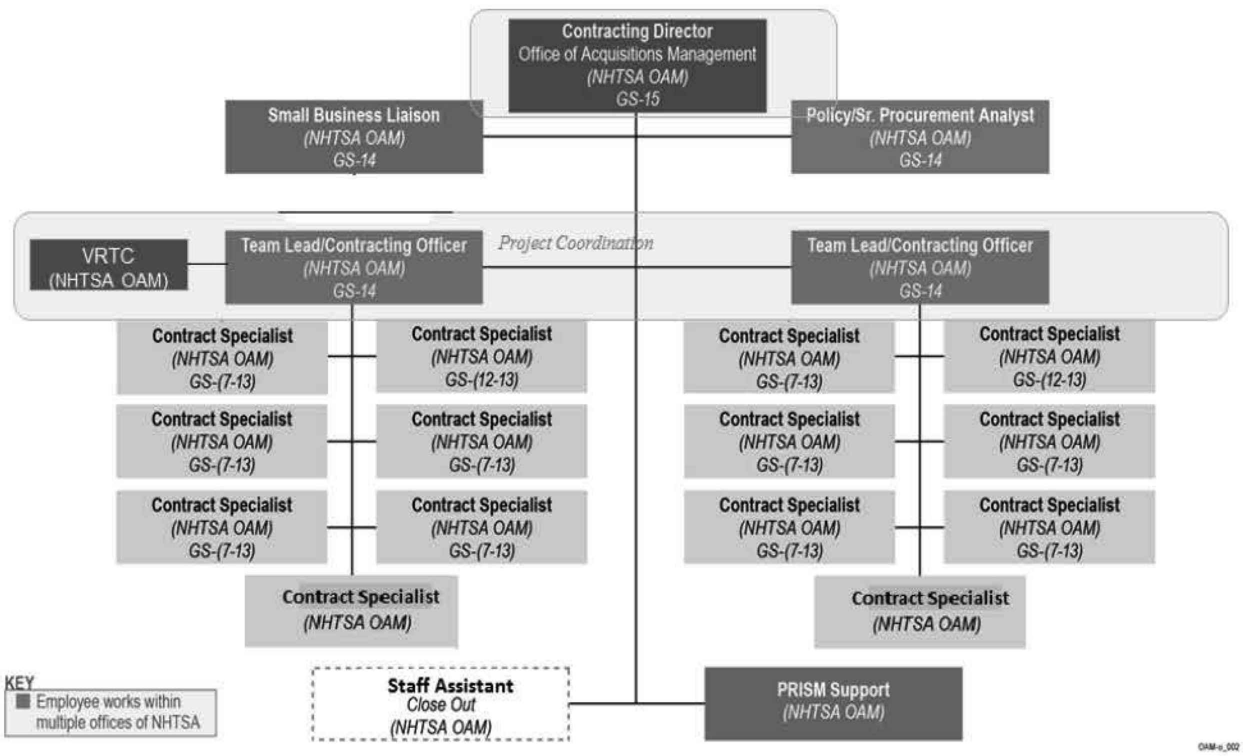

Figure 4. Current structure

This is positive support for the development of an optimal organizational model. In a Matrix (or Cross Functional Team structure), the acquisition office places the contract specialists based on the procurement need (supply/demand, how many forecasted procurement activities), the function (i.e. NVS, NTI, NPO) and the procurement type (grants/cooperative agreements/contract/POs, etc.).

The matrix structure gives the best of the both worlds of functional and divisional structures:

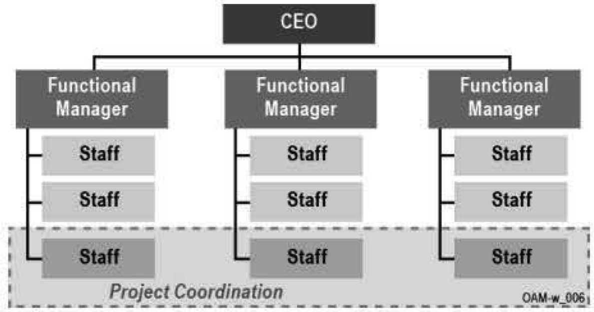

Figure 5. In this type of an organization, the organization uses teams to complete tasks. The teams are formed based on the functions they belong to (ex: grants/cooperative agreements, contracts) and product they're involved in (ex: Project A).

In most cases, organizations evolve through structures when they progress through and enhance their processes and manpower. One organization may start as a pre-bureaucratic, and may evolve up to a matrix organization. Further, to put the analysis in perspective, several benchmarking partners have evolved from pre-bureaucratic to Cross Functional Matrix Teams within recent years. For example, the National Health /National Cancer Institute progressed from a strictly bureaucratic to a high-performing Cross-Functional Matrix Team in the span of five (5) years. Five years ago, they observed that their procurement teams were linear and processes were increasingly becoming unsynchronized and it seemed that they were unable to keep up with the procurement demand of their Program Office customer. Further, their ability to accurately plan and forecast for out-year procurement actions was decreasing. They had the same number of staff (+/-) on each team, yet it always seemed that they were overworked and experienced "unavoidable" delays. They realized that by re-organizing based on competency, levels, and procurement type, they could ensure that (1) sharing of the procurement workload provided better time management, forecasting, increased customer satisfaction; (2) Organization specific knowledge would be retained and shared; and (3) it ensured that staff would be allocated in order to accommodate the work load in any given Program area, and (4) leadership and customers could be assured that they were providing and receiving the same level of competency with any given staff. This shift has been credited with increasing the overall knowledge skills, and competencies within the division as well as customer satisfaction levels. Other agencies that follow the Functional-Matrix Organizational model include the Department of Commerce, Federal Highway Administration, and Department of Labor.

Recommendation1

Evolve the OAM to a more Cross-Functional Matrix (collaborative) encouraging the use of cross-functional teams to allow for a more streamlined and flexible approach to address forecasted procurement activity. Instill a collaborative team environment that allows OAM to more accurately forecast and (re)allocate the resources (specialists) as needed to meet the changing (and projected) procurement needs of the Program Offices.

We have developed an 'optimal organizational model' for OAM that is in keeping with its values, capitalizes on current structure, yet focuses on base-lining then increasing competency, efficient and accurate distribution of procurement actions, and allow planning for and servicing customers' evolving acquisition needs. Additionally, with the increased work force, OAM would have the support it needs to move from reactionary, to proactive procurement functioning.

We recommend implementing a more collaborative organizational model that is organized around procurement type grades, levels, and specialist competencies; teams should operate more interactively to move towards the use of cross-functional matrix teams to increase and institutionalize a knowledge-sharing environment within OAM:

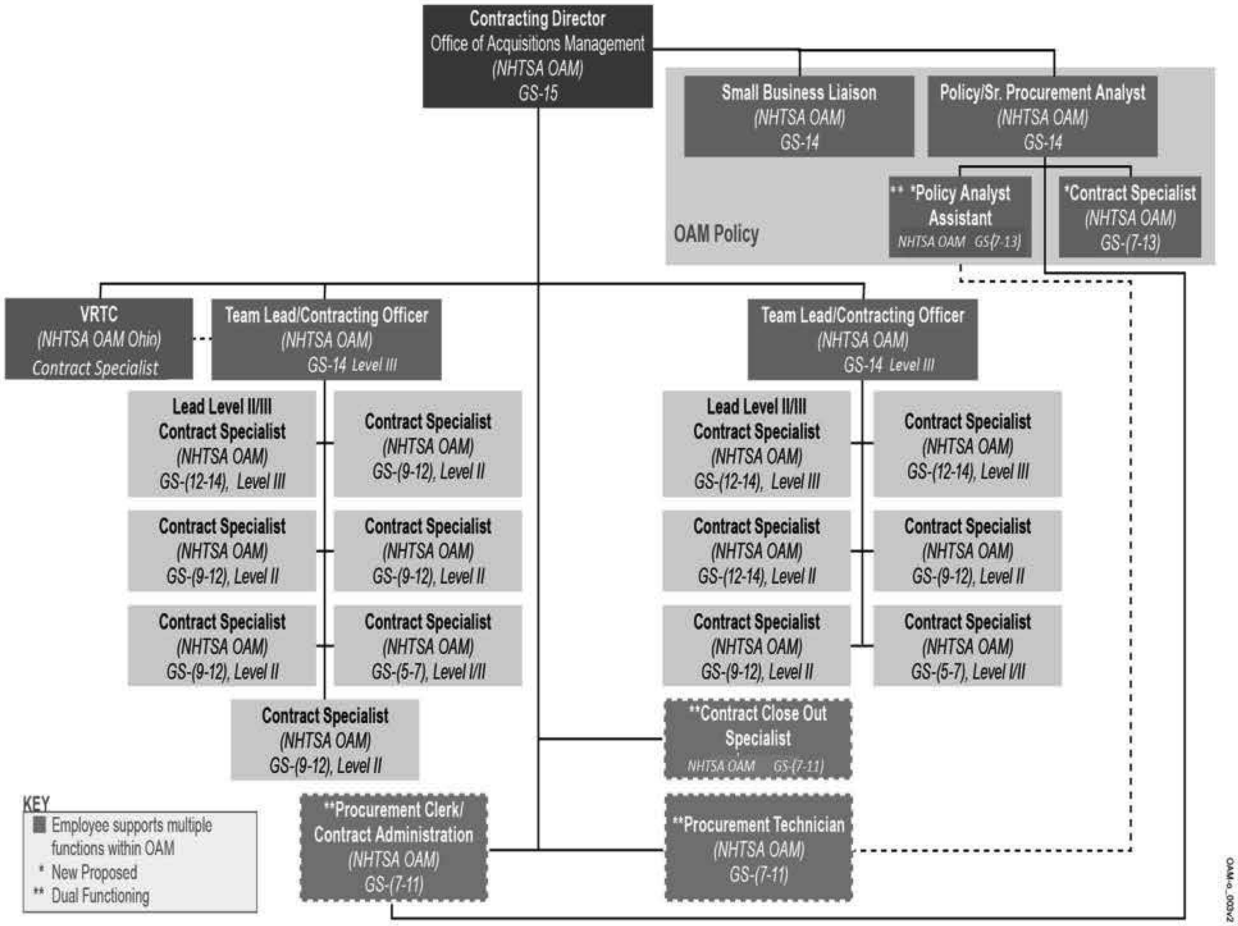

Figure 6. Proposed Structure.

The interactive organizational chart in Attachment E provides OAM-specific Position descriptions of each piece of the structure and key information that can be leveraged when implementing this recommendation.

TEAM STRUCTURE

Reporting to the Director of OAM, Teams should be established using the procurement type forecast amount of NTI, NVS, and NPO as the main Program Offices. Two teams should remain:

Team-A and Team-B should each be managed by one (1) Contracting Officer Level III (Unlimited Warrant) Team Lead (TL). The Team Lead will responsible for managing the people within the team and taking the administrative “Day to Day” responsibility off the Director. Each team will consist of at least:

- ✓ Lead Level II/III Specialists (warrant up to $1,000,000) – they will be able to act as first line of review for the Team Lead, as well as authorize smaller procurement actions
- ✓ Contract Specialists Level II
- ✓ Contract Specialists Level I (GS 7/9/11 and/or Cert Level 1). The specialist here could be classified as procurement technicians and handle a variety of procurement tasks including contract closeouts, policy assistant duties (updating or uploading policy documents), and PRISM administrative tasks.

Additionally:

- ✓ VRTC should eventually transition to be its own separate "team" (Team C) that reports to the Director; The VRTC Team Lead should reside in Ohio. The person in this location needs to be warranted to meet the needs of the customer. The VRTC should allocate adequate Program support staff and should be protected from potential organizational staffing/resource allocation conflicts to ensure consistency in service.
- ✓ OAM Grants, Inter-Agency Agreements (IAAs), Cooperative Agreements (COOPs) – Allocate more resources to work with them; this is part of the continual training.
- ✓ The organizational structure should be reviewed annually (specifically to coincide with the procurement forecast assessment period) and at least two members amongst teams should rotate to accommodate procurement workload predictions annually. This will ensure that (1) workload is properly managed and anticipated; and (2) that the rotating specialists learn how to perform their assigned procurement activity for any Program Office.

This model allows for team members to develop into increasing responsibility. As a team member is given increased responsibility for actions, they are encouraged to grow in their knowledge and depth of competency, can take proactive responsibility of their career, which aids the inherent organization success plan.

Policy Group

Within OAM, the Policy office is actually the duty of only one (1) individual. Best practice amongst benchmarking partners would dictate that maximum policy efficiency for OAM's size can be had with the commitment of three personnel: One (1) Senior Policy Analyst and two (2) policy assistants/analysts whose duties can be shared amongst other OAM acquisition functions.

It is our recommendation that the Procurement Technician/Specialist (GS-7/9/11s (Level 1 or no level)) highlighted in yellow, be a shared resource with the OAM Policy office. This will foster continued growth for OAM Policy group and can be the training ground for Contract Specialists Level 1 and others new to OAM. It would encourage them to become familiar with NHTSA/OAM specific policies and procedures and become acquainted with Purchase Orders (POs), Small Dollar acquisitions, items that can be purchased quickly on Government Wide Acquisitions Contracts (GWACs) and other acquisitions that will prepare them for large dollar acquisitions.

Small Business Coordination should coordinate closely or even eventually report under Policy, this will ensure any guidance that needs to be coordinated comes through Policy before being introduced to NHTSA/OAM.

OAM Functioning

OAM's current acquisition organizational structure and functioning does not effectively support the NHTSA's acquisition needs. Although OAM successfully awards procurement and acquisition actions for the agency every year, these actions are not completed in a timely fashion or in a method that allows the Customer to adequately plan for their current or future forecasting needs. The time it takes to complete modifications, time to award, or other procurement actions is often inaccurate and/or underestimated. It should not be inferred that since all procurement actions are completed by fiscal year end that completion equates to successful contracting. In contrast, providing and abiding by accurate Procurement Action Lead Times is not only important to OAM and Customers, but allows for accurate forecasting on multiple levels and for multiple stakeholders. For example, 100% of Program Office respondents stated that they felt they could not rely on the accuracy of the majority of the 28 Milestones and Delivery Dates that were assigned by the contract specialists. When asked why they felt this way, the respondents stated on a regular basis the due dates agreed upon were more likely to not be adhered to than to be met. Further, on a routine basis, 91% stated that they had experienced delays in simple actions, such as processing an award through submission to Oklahoma City processing office, even after the award document had been signed, would not be completed in a timely fashion.

In contrast to the intent of the Service Acquisition Reform Act of 2003, OAM's lack of Acquisition Processes has created obstacles and barriers to: (a) Definitive procurement policy and guidance. (b) Timely completion of procurement actions. (c) Transparent and accurate multi-level statusing, (d) Nurturing a high-performing, fully competent staff, and (e) Effective customer communications. As evidenced by the OAM Benchmarking Report[i], 82% of NHTSA staff surveyed believed that OAM did not maintain acquisition relevant processes, SOPs, nor updated, written policies and guidance. These process inefficiencies restrict and convolute the flow of information and diminish the ability of not only the Director of OAM, but also Senior Leadership, to effectively and accurately manage, forecast, and make decisions around acquisition and Program Office needs.

The functional problems are further complicated by long-standing and/or revolving vacancies in leadership and staff positions, and the lack of a dedicated Policy office with support within OAM that prevents the office from fulfilling key procurement duties. For example, within the last ten (10) years, OAM has operated for a total of approximately five (5) years without either a permanent Director, adequate team leadership (team leads), and/or minimal staff manning at 60% (due to revolving attrition)[12] leaving OAM without a dedicated principal to implement procurement policies, regulations, and standards for Department-wide use and to account for the OAM's procurement system[13]. As such, the OAM today is a result of an organization operating in 'contingency' mode for such an extended period of time that many administrative activities fell to the wayside.

It is not to underscore the benefit and insight that can be had by operating in a reactionary environment. Team solidarity is built, management's ability to multi-task and meet mission needs is displayed, and it demonstrates that the procurement needs of NHTSA can be met even in contingency times. A positive survey finding was that OAM leadership is perceived to be receptive to acquisition performance excellence, including having a positive attitude towards enhancing both customer and workforce satisfaction. The OAM section is likewise perceived to be a family-type environment that the Program Offices are invested in.

[12] According to the OAM Director, OAM has had to stretch resources utilizing approximately 14-15 FTEs (versus previous 21FTEs). Further, 2012 was the worst year of attrition: there were no team leads and OAM Director had to perform the dual-hat role of Team Lead and Director.

[13] in light of footnote #10, and per interview, the OAM Director was himself performing multiple roles/tasks and it is improbable that he had the focus and time needed to perform, create, update, and implement the policies and procedures needed on a regular basis.

OAM STRATEGIC PLANS, POLICY AND GUIDANCE

OAM Strategic Plan

Complete and implement the OAM Strategic Plan allowing OAM to develop and align the OAM/NHTSA/DOT mission and the vision.

The importance of a Strategic Plan, and more importantly, strategically aligned and mission specific policies and procedures cannot be underestimated. Policies and Procedures are the strategic link between OAM's Vision and its day-to-day operations. Coupled with well-written policies & procedures, it allows employees as well as customers to understand their roles and responsibilities within predefined limits. As evidenced by request, interview, and research, OAM lacks a formal NHTSA/OAM Strategic Plan, Mission, or Vision.

> ***Recommendation 2***
>
> ***Create value statements, which provide a touchstone to the organization for how business decisions are made, are the roadmap for growth and prosperity, and define what will be accomplished, by whom and when.***

OAM needs to develop, implement, and display OAM's Vision, Values, and Strategic Goals (VVS). After development, these need to be linked to polices, standards, and procedures, which would allow management to guide operations (internally and externally) without constant management intervention.

We found that after the National Cancer Institute implemented an office VVS[14], contract specialists and Program Offices alike began to feel more connected to their work. Policies and procedures should reflect the goals of OAM and should be referenced when making decisions around workload, employee development, and/or Program Office Procurement needs. Further, the VVS will allow for a common, well-defined, and respected bond between the acquisition office and the customer in that clear guidance will not only be provided, but can demonstrate it is aligned to organization as well as DOT strategic objectives.

[14] Unclear whether OAM currently has this. When asked to provide for review any written OAM strategic or mission/vision/goals/objectives, none were provided. 95% of all interviews stated that they have never seen nor are aware of an OAM Strategic Plan, or Vision/Values statement.

Figure 7. Sample of OAM's potential VVS. An example of the simplicity of a VVS. This can be customized to OAMs Vision Statement.

OAM POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Although OAM lacks an adequately staffed Policy Office, the current Senior Analyst has accomplished great strides to ensure that NHTSA COTRs are provided timely acquisition related information and impacts via COTR Communiques. The COTR Communiques have been valued and appreciated by all. Further, proactive measuring and reporting of staff workload, PR statusing, and ad hoc reports are provided on a weekly basis to OAM Team Leads and Management. Additionally, OAM training for the Program Offices is coordinated and rolled out by the OAM Policy staff.

Although the above is an impressive accomplishment of this Policy Analyst, this has been the duty of only the one (1) individual, not a dedicated OAM policy office, who is already over tasked. As a result, critical processes and guidance have gone unattended. As evidenced by observation, direct request to produce, or by direct response to the question, it is estimated that more than 70% of OAM's written policies and procedures are out of date or non-existent – and as a result do not allow for nor promote effective acquisition management. Interviews with

[15] 100% of Customers interviewed stated that they are not able to adequately forecast their acquisition planning due to inaccurate milestone/delivery due dates. 100% of Customers surveyed stated that they now build in extra processing time (that is more/beyond the due dates provided by OAM) and build in overtime (OT) into their Program budgets because they know from experience that at the end of the year they will receive a last minute request for information, action, or know that the delivery/due dates will not be on time as provided by OAM.

Contract Specialists, Program Office personnel, and Leadership provided information to identify the "critical" signs that OAM's policies and procedures need to be created, provided, reviewed and updated. The results of these interviews showed: an increase in the number of mistakes, kickbacks, and the amount of work being completed; frequent lulls in completion of simple acquisitions; and the customer's resultant un-predictable end of year budget[15]. The Program Office and OAM Staff attribute a large part of the issue to a lack of OAM process standardization[16]. For example, in an effort to mitigate risk caused by this deficiency, the Program Offices have built in extra-overtime into their budgets because they expect to get requests for corrective additional information without sufficient time to respond.

Recommendation 3

Formally implement the use of written Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Processes; leveraging current/personal SOPs and best practices created by OAM staff in order to provide a definitive resource for information that cannot easily be compromised nor modified. Review and apply as appropriate Predictability Group progress, findings, and documentation.

While OAM is responsible for maintaining and communicating NHTSA acquisition policies, guidance, and updates, the lack of a dedicated OAM policy office and staff have resulted in policies remaining out-of-date since 2009, even though OAM was aware (as captured via interviews with CS, COs, and PMOs) of the required updates and changes. Weaknesses in OAM's policies and procedures hinder NHTSA/OAM's ability to promote consistent implementation of acquisitions Department-wide. Further OAM's lack of adequate policies has led to the deterioration of the customer relationship in that it cannot provide a written definitive source of either NHTSA/OAM acquisition-related policy or procedure. Recommend the following:

(a) Formally implement the use of written Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Processes;
(b) Reuse and leverage current SOPs created by OAM staff, and review and apply as appropriate Predictability Group progress, findings, and documentation.

[16] 91% of *all (20 of 22 individuals)* surveyed stated they believed that OAM could improve their service both internally and externally if they were provided written, standardized, and definitive SOP/Guidance aside from the FAR/TAR/TAM.

i. Continue work with Predictability Group to finalize common definitions and the twenty-eight (28) Milestones and Deliverables within the next three (3) months (October 2013);

ii. This would serve to baseline the definitions that are currently being used and provide the clarity that the Program Offices desire to better prepare and support the CS with the procurement process; it has been expressed during the interviews that the Program Offices are confused about the exact times and expectations of the procurement life cycle.

iii. In response to the requested written clarification from the PMOs which they can reference and use in their planning efforts, issue a NHTSA memo socializing the completion of the definition. Include the memo in the NHTSA Daily Communicator (+30 days).

(c) The COTR Communiques are not readily available, in a structured, searchable archive for quick reference or use. Recommend to digitally store, archive, and make all NHTSA/OAM specific guidance readily and easily accessibly using OAM's shared folder, intranet site, and broadcasting updates via the NHTSA Daily Communicator.

PROCESS & WORKFLOW

INTRA-OAM – THE PROCESSES AND WORKFLOW WITHIN OAM

Workflow and processes within OAM have been practiced in a largely unwritten, ad hoc fashion. Currently no standardized or documented policies, standard operating procedures, workflows, or guidance are in place at NHTSA OAM.

Additionally, the following observations are noted:

- ✓ Any guidelines are communicated verbally or via email to the staff.
- ✓ The formatting of the documents used in OAM's processes also further prolongs OAM's processes. Some forms are outdated and have multiple versions. The Program Office often modifies documents at some points in the processes.

Many processes are inefficient and need to be manually performed:

- ✓ No method is in place for statusing; therefore it is difficult for many of the specialists to keep track of where they are in a process, what actions still need to be completed, and when the action(s) need to be completed.

- ✓ In assigning specialists: one particular point in the PR process requires that the requisitions be printed out and given to OAM team leads. The team leads then review the requisitions, select a contract specialist, and then return to PRISM Support to assign the contract specialist through PRISM.

Recommendation 4
Automate administrative tasks such as statusing, tracking, and contract specialist assignments in order to allow for ease of access to information, increase accuracy of information, and provide a technology stepping-stone for (integration with) other enterprise IT products such as SharePoint, OAM's intranet, or even potentially OAM's customers' technology.

It is recommended that such actions be automated using the technologies at OAM's helm - PRISM, internet, intranet, etc. Instead of printing out these documents and editing them manually, the team leads should receive and view these documents using email or one of PRISM's many functionalities.

- ✓ Activate functionalities in PRISM that are currently turned off (i.e. clause functionality)
- ✓ Explore other Acquisition Government off The Shelf (GOTS) procurement all-in-one solutions that can be easily implemented and seamlessly integrated with current OAM processes (e-Contracts, Document Generation System (DGS), FRA SharePoint system)
- ✓ Develop and implement a more interactive and automated way to report and update status – create status-reporting form using Excel where staff can be accountable and self-report their status. Make status report accessible to staff on OAM portal
- ✓ Have the OAM team leads assign requisitions to Contract Specialists through the PRISM system[17];
- ✓ Create standard versions of each type of form/document to be used in procurement processes and provide *all* documents on OAM intranet. Further, in the absence of guidance, and enforcement of said guidance to ensure customers do not modify documents, an alternative is to create/re-use/modify documents and templates that are already in use within OAM. This

[17] The premise here is to automate as much as possible and re-allocate the time needed to manually perform these tasks to other processes that need manual support.

will minimize the time needed to create from scratch and shorten the acceptance period (mitigate resistance to change).

- Leverage existing templates created internally, by VRTC, or other standard forms to jump start SOP creation and Template/Document standardization; Request/Data Call to VRTC, FRA, PMOs[18] for templates, SOPs, definition documents
- Document (via SOP) the Closeout Process – review Admin SOPs
- Review PMO provided Best Practice Templates and review and/or incorporate; provide feedback[19]
- Assign CO or CS to review and find best of class then submit to Director for approval

WORK DISTRIBUTION

Appropriate work distribution leveraging OAM's internal environmental skill set consists of the division looking inward assessing its own staff strengths and weaknesses. A positive finding is that the OAM Team Leads intimately (personally) know the capabilities and workload abilities of their staff and assign work accordingly. However, the gap can be observed when those that are competent are overtasked or there is an imbalance between work being assigned, completion times, and staff ability. Moreover, assignment of work purely on individual knowledge of competency can show bias if level and certifications are not properly considered.

Recommendation (90-120 days)

The competency gap within OAM is wide enough to recommend a staff capability (baseline) assessment. Further, analysis demonstrates that there may be a lack of aligned skillsets, grade, and certification leveling (to include warranting). If it is discovered that there is a disconnect between level, knowledge, and competency, then there is an opportunity to provide refresher and

[18] Although PMO is not an acquisition entity, information and best practices can originate from any source as long as the information, practice, or service meets both the requirements dictated by OAM and meets the needs of the customer. We understand that OAM continues to work very closely with its customers to ensure that they are included (to an acceptable degree) in creation processes. The Predictability Group is a great example of this synergy. Additionally, the same exact forms that can be provided by other acquisition peers are practically identical to the ones being used (and modified) currently within OAM.

[19] Our research discovered that OAM forms have been modified by the PMO and have been used and accepted by OAM. These same forms, if acceptable and meet the requirements of OAM and the needs of the customer, should be standardized and provided as templates for all submissions as appropriate.

rehabilitative on the job training (OJT). This would present an opportunity to leverage the skills of OAM specialists that may be able to provide mentoring or knowledge sharing sessions with the group or those in need in a mutually beneficial relationship.

Effective acquisition planning requires that the Director be fully knowledgeable of his or her staff capabilities and skill set. Establishing NHTSA OAM competencies and occasionally assessing the acquisition office staff against those competencies can provide performance measurement insights to both employees and leadership.

This is accomplished in one or two ways

- ✓ Assessment of capabilities and skill set against current performance; or
- ✓ Assessment of capabilities and skill set against a process standard.

Recommendation (+60 days after assessment)

Upon completion and analysis of the competency assessment, implementing and following an Acquisition tailored Individual Development Plan (AIDP) would serve as another way to re-focus the OAM mission and staff, and provide a path to leadership. A formal memorandum of understanding (MOU) should be issued fully implementing the current IDPs that some staff are voluntarily using. These current IDPs should be reviewed and revised as needed according to assessment findings. Using the five elements of the Acquisition Development Plan (Attachment 2), the Director of OAM will be able to:

- ✓ Champion the use and ensure the elements of the AIDP are included in performance appraisals,
- ✓ Be proactive in allowing each OAM Staff the opportunity to acquire and chart their progress towards the skills that are critical for their success.
- ✓ Set the precedent for performance accountability and expectations

COMMUNICATION

Assessment findings reveal that miscommunication is commonplace and a clear, revamped line of communication needs to be re-opened and closely monitored. Some of the common issues/perceptions are highlighted below:

OAM TO CUSTOMER COMMUNICATION

- ✓ Meetings are held between PMO and OAM, "CSs/COTRS" not typically included

- ✓ Meetings are not governed by agenda, facilitation(i.e. Purpose, Expectations, Outcomes, Action Items with set timeframe)
- ✓ Values/Concepts of Customer Service can be improved
- ✓ Common perception is several CS are nice and friendly
- ✓ Adequate communication and follow through is inconsistent.
- ✓ Customers feel they need to micromanage or act as teachers to some of OAM
- ✓ OAM Guidance, Direction, Instruction to PMOs on how to do NHTSA requirements is not readily available, consistent, or updated

Leadership to Customer

- ✓ Monthly/Bi-Monthly Status Meetings are held and are appreciated
- ✓ Customers desire consistent guidance; better understanding of OAM and OAM process

Team (CO/CS) to Customer

- ✓ CS feels frustrated, overwhelmed by lack of COTR understanding
- ✓ CS responsible to provide milestone plan to PMO
- ✓ CS communication to PMO is inconsistent

Recommendation

Several simple activities can help to repair and raise the level of customer (the Program Office) and provider (the specialists) satisfaction. Below is an example of activities that are currently in place that OAM can leverage (to meet multiple needs) with minimal effort. OAM attendance as a subject matter expert (SME) can serve to both allow specialists an opportunity to showcase and refine/develop their skills, and serves to demonstrate to customers a willingness to participate in their learning efforts as well:

a. Attend Program Office meetings and provide insight into OAM and to address "Just in Time" training workshops[20]

    i. Quarterly use 1 Project Status meeting

    ii. June 19: DLI: When work gets done by Assistance Agreement vs. A Contract

[20] Data gathering revealed that these meetings are already in place (and scheduled) with NTI, however, NVS and NPO stated that they definitely would like and enthusiastically welcome a similar meeting/session/workshops.

iii. Late Summer – Writing effective statements of Work

iv. Early 1st QTR – Cost Estimating 101; and Principles of Project Financing

v. Early 2nd QTR – Unilateral v. Bi-Lateral mods

b. Re-instate 'Ask OAM'

CUSTOMER SERVICE

To ensure excellent customer service and a timely response time to your customers, the OAM should establish a Procurement Administrative Lead Time (PALT) goal. The PALT time starts when the contracting office receives a complete acquisition package and begins the formal process to prepare the solicitation. The PALT timeline concludes when an award is made. Below are the goals for PALT average time (in calendar days) for nine types of contracts. The lead times were calculated by taking the average of the benchmarking partners we interviewed. Additionally, these times are successfully being used by the majority of acquisition offices in the National Capital Region as well. Below is a comparison of OAM and industry PALT goals:

Awards	OAM PALT Goals	Industry Average
Simplified Acquisitions – Above $3,000 to $25,000	45 days	15-30 days
Simplified Acquisitions – Above $25,000 to $150,000	90 days	45-60 days
Negotiated Sole Source – Open Market, above $150,000	180 days	60-90 days
Negotiated Full and Open – Open Market, above $150,000	240-days	180-days
GSA Products/Services	45–90 days	20-days
Interagency Agreement	90 days	60-days
Task/Delivery/CAP	90-days	90-days
Modification Unilateral (non-negotiated)	15-days	120-days
Grant/Cooperative Agreement	210-days	150-days

MODIFICATION TIMELINE

Recommendations:

Contracting officer exercise option checklist:

✓ Memorandum to the program office

120-day request letter –to the program office from the contracting officer is recommended at least 120 days prior to the option performance start date.

✓ Program/project office response to 120-day request letter

Program office response to the contracting officer is recommended to be returned to the contracting officer within 90 days prior to the option performance start date.

- ✓ Notification to contractor of government intent to exercise an option
  60-day notification– preliminary notification to the contractor of intent to exercise an option is recommended at least 60 days prior to the option performance start date or 30 days prior to issuance of unilateral modification or lead time as otherwise agreed to in the contract.
- ✓ Determination & findings - determination and findings (D&F)) to exercise the contract option in accordance with far 17.207.
- ✓ Language for modification - use modification language when exercising an option (for page 2 of the sf-30 in accordance with far 52.217-9).
- ✓ Types of modifications
  - Administrative changes
  - Exercise Option Year
  - Product or Service Additions / Deletions
  - Price Decreases
  - Price Increases (Economic Price Adjustments - EPA)
  - Solicitation Refreshes and Contract Amendments
  - Change Orders

(TEAM) ADMINISTRATION

LEADERSHIP

A positive finding was that leadership was perceived to be receptive to acquisition performance excellence, including having a positive attitude towards enhancing both customer and workforce satisfaction. Separately, the roles, responsibilities, and guidance (to) of stakeholders in the acquisition process were not perceived to be well defined. Common observations of OAM Leadership included:

- ✓ Leadership is friendly
- ✓ Leadership/Upper Management (Team Leads) does not appear to be on the same page when it comes to service, knowledge, or responsiveness

SUPERVISION, MANAGEMENT, AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

OAM lacks standardized management controls that are needed to ensure its procurement actions, work processes, and acquisition data are reported in an efficient, systematic method which allows for analysis and accurate budget forecasting. Research into how procurement actions are measured and quantified showed that this is being performed manually at the basic level.

TOOLS & TECHNOLOGY

OAM's technology is not fully optimized and as such cannot be assured of the data's usefulness in either making informed management decisions at the strategic, transactional or customer level. When accountability and productivity cannot be quantified (e.g. how OAM calculates its return on investment (ROI) in terms of training, employees, technology, workflow), the ability for a stakeholder to efficiently use, manage, and monitor (using said technology) funds and resources is diminished. Based on our interview with the Director of OAM, it is unclear how productivity is tied to revenue and if said productivity, activity, or office processes is efficient, can be increased, streamlined, or allow for the appropriate amount resource allocation. Moreover, the idea of transparency cannot be qualified.

Typical questions that NHTSA/OAM may look to answer include: *How much does it cost us to process one simplified acquisition? How can we process these efficiently to give us the best ROI and use of budget?* Acquisition technology today can provide the answer these questions with minimal effort and with simple reports and automated analysis. If these questions cannot be readily answered, how is NHTSA/OAM sure that they are protecting Department funds from fraud, waste, or abuse? How are they assured that the specialists performing the work are working at a peak efficiency that is beneficial for both the employee and the agency? In the vast majority of offices of acquisitions management, systems are used in the procurement process for all government acquisitions. The current trend is that increased automation in acquisition yields more efficient use of government dollars. Using systems that are either partially or fully automated has generally improved the overall output in the acquisition management process. The following list below show the current system(s) used at the NHTSA OAM for procurement;

- ✓ PRISM 7.1
  - o In use since 2005
  - o Upgraded from PRISM 6.5 to 7.1 October 2012
  - o Has full functionality to process acquisition from conception to close out
  - o Integral procurement process(es) being conducted with external systems; such as MS Word, Excel, etc.

- Inability to perform adequate statusing and tracking of workload
- No enterprise wide capability, i.e. cannot integrate with external systems
- FAR, System updates and maintenance performed once a month or whenever the Database Analyst decides
- Not a relational database management system tool, i.e. data cannot be queried with SQL or other basic programming language[21]
- PRISM support/ procurement technician overburdened with tasks from other OAM employees
- No OAM-specific standard operation procedures/ guidelines on how system is to be used
- Clauses are not activated - templates can be created with various clauses, but it can be time consuming
- Reports are generated by loading a new system, i.e. Crystal report(s)
- Hardcopy file storage which leads to redundancy

✓ MAPS – Management Accountability and Planning System – as evidenced by interviews with CS, CO, COTR personnel; in-person demonstration by NTI; in-person demonstration by ESC:

- Currently used primarily(and completely) by the NTI Program office, NVS also inputs financial information
- Version currently used is Primavera P6
- Used for project management
- Not a relational database management system tool
- Report cannot be easily created which creates complaints by users, i.e. employees
- Inability to perform job functions between multiple screens/ multiple projects
- System can integrate with PRISM but not efficiently
- Users progress on workload cannot be easily measured, i.e. tracking and statusing
- Log on/ sign on takes too long, i.e. average of 3minutes
- A lot of manual corrections have to be made when inputting and/or changing data

✓ CRYSTAL REPORT

- Owned by SAP

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[21] This is the primary obstacle to MAPS integration.

- Used to generate data reporting

✓ MS PROJECT

External Findings/ Analysis on Technology

Major peers to NHTSA OAM use diverse systems for their procurement process, which has further resulted in faster procurement processing time, data management techniques, and revenue generation. Additionally, the systems are typically integrated with other project management tools.

✓ External peers and system used

- DoEd – Comprizon Suite
  - Integrates and streamlines entire acquisition process from requisition to close out
  - Web base systems with a relational database management capability
  - Promotes and maintains team document sharing
  - Enterprise systems with the capacity to integrate with other systems like financial, project management etc.
  - Notifies users when deliverables are due on workload(s)
  - System allows for standardized templates such as routing lists, clause matrices, document template
  - Centralized procurement data improves the quality of enterprise-wide reporting Robust clause management capabilities ensure content standardization for Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) as well as agency-specific clause supplements such as Department of Education Acquisition Regulation (EDAR), General Services Acquisition Regulation (GSAR), and Department of Commerce Acquisition Regulation (CAR)
  - Set email preferences such as out of office forwarding instructions and notifications for action alerts and routed items

- NCI-NIH – DGS (Document Generation System) – GOTS product
  - Been in use for 10yrs
  - Creates templates with several populated fields and clauses auto populate based on contract type
  - Easy to implement with zero downtime

- Allows for standardization
- Interfaces easily with a multitude of currently used systems such as PRISM, FPDS-NG, MarkView, Delphi, as well as any oracle based systems (e.g. MAPS).
- OA intranet
  - Currently working to have eContracts linkage/integration with PRISM; has the following fields listed below with eContracts:
    - Started as client service system (CSS) which was not web based
    - CSs accessibility to his/her own/ personal work load
    - Team lead can access all work loads, which gives ability to adequately track
    - Policies and procedures are also listed
    - Query database
    - DGS
      - Work form prescription(handbook) available for
        - RFP
        - Contracts

Recommendations

For NHSTA OAM Technology

✓ Turn on full functionality for PRISM
✓ Provide training/Compusearch End User training manual for all OAM PRISM users
✓ All acquisition processes can be completed in PRISM
✓ Screen shots in training manual shows that Contract specialist can be assigned in PRISM
✓ Develop systems standard operating procedure which will describe roles and functionality of major key players/employees
✓ Provide centralized data repository for data management and reporting
✓ Develop an enterprise wide procurement system
✓ Improve FAR and other regulatory(s) integrations and clause management
✓ Upgrade PRISM to or develop a system with relational database management system capacity

- ✓ Reduce hardcopy file storage by increased electronic recordkeeping/ file keeping capacity
- ✓ Faster access, creation, and dissemination of contract documents
- ✓ Provide training both internal and external systems trainings for employees incorporating learning modules on basic IT terminologies
- ✓ Research and implement an external system that can integrate with PRISM and MAPS to help track and provide status updates on workload(s)[22]

Summary

Although many of the findings and analysis may appear to be "observational" or perception-based, as a provider of services to outside customers, perception and addressing the needs of the customer is extremely important. Further, lack of clear internal standard operating procedures, accountability structure, and streamlined processes to support the demand of OAM customers continues to lead OAM down a reactionary path. Additionally the competency of OAM's specialists cannot be accurately gauged and workflow and assignments cannot be made in an effective and repeatable manner. Implementing the recommendations contained in this Report and the Benchmarking Report, will allow OAM to capitalize on its current strengths. Many of the suggestions are relatively simple to implement and can produce an increase in productivity and reduce customer frustration. Unfortunately merely allocating more resources without addressing the competencies or implementing standards will only perpetuate the current inefficiencies.

OAM is responsible for millions of dollars of acquisitions each year. OAM represents the core of the NHTSA's acquisition functions. Significant challenges in the acquisition industry as well as internal to its acquisition function, however, limit OAM's ability to efficiently carry out its responsibilities to support NHTSA's mission. OAM has recognized that it needs to make changes—in both its organization structure and processes—and has begun to take action. OAM has fully committed to reforming its acquisition processes.

[22] There are many systems that are Government created and operated that have been developed to specifically address the challenges of PRISM functionality and program management.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NHTSA/OAM ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

GUIDING ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

PREMIER MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

FEBRUARY 28, 2013

The National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration (NHTSA) Office of Acquisition Management (OAM) desires an assessment to assist managers in prioritizing and implementing effective action plans and appropriate solutions toward the achievement of more efficient, and integrated performance. A part of the assessment will include interviewing key personnel individually and possibly in-group settings. The results of the interviews will be analyzed and incorporated into various aspects of the required deliverables, provide benchmarking criteria, as well as provide insight into current NHTSA/OAM strengths, challenges (weaknesses), opportunities, threats[23], and trends.

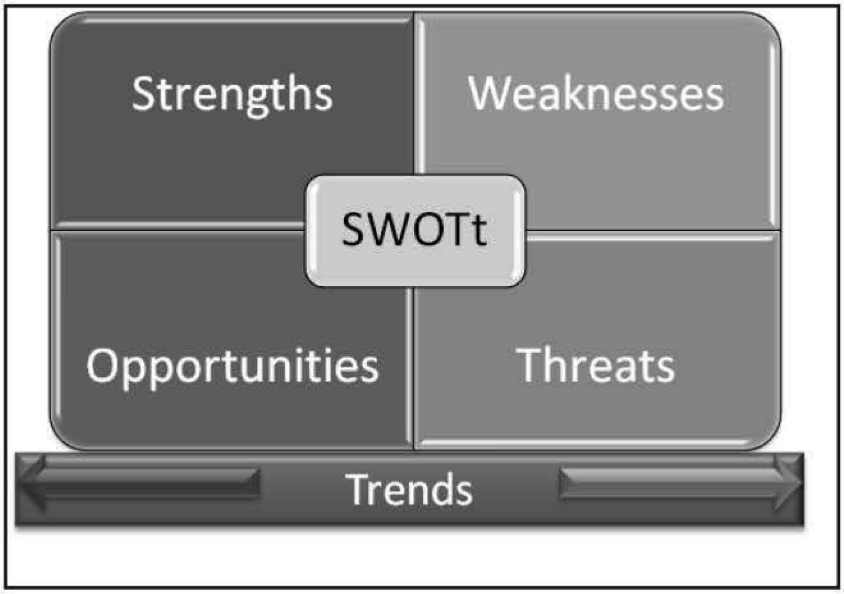

Figure A-1. The results of the interviews will be used to support a detailed SWOTt (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, and Trends) Analysis:

Prior to the interview, a list of questions will be provided to the individual. This is to set the tone of the interview and act as a guide for the conversation. The questions will be grouped and tailored relative to the position, program, and interaction with OAM (i.e. team member, customer, oversight, etc.) of the interviewee. It is noted however that this will be a

[23] During a SWOTt analysis a variety of threats to your business (process operations) will be considered. These threats will typically all be external to OAM.

A threat is a forecast environmental condition that is out of your control and has the potential to harm your businesses profitability.

conversation and, depending on the response to the questions, follow up, additional questions, and further discussion may be had.

In all cases, leading questions will not be employed in order to receive unbiased responses from the team (e.g. "In high performing agencies, x is used as a best practice. Do you have x practice here?"). Further, confidentiality is of utmost importance so we want the individuals to feel free to express their opinions, to provide advice and resources for further information, and to give guidance on how we can qualify/quantify their statements.

Below are sample questions that will be used to guide the conversation. Questions may be added, refined, or deleted. Follow up questions may be more detailed and include gathering information around actual workflow, technology used, and time required for specific processes/activities.

Director Level Questions:

1. What are your expectations from this follow up assessment?
2. What do you see are your current biggest challenges?
3. What currently works well within your team?
    a. Why do you think this is a successful process/practice?
4. What does not work so well?
    a. What do you think contributes to this issue
5. Let's talk about organization: Are you satisfied with the way your team is organized?
    a. What are the strong points/traits/characteristics of your team?
    b. What do you think contributes to this?
    c. What are the areas that need more attention/focus?
    d. What do you think can support this need?
6. What is your attrition rate?
    a. What is your return rate?
    b. What do you feel contributes to this?
7. What is the attitude/moral of your team?
    a. What do you believe are the main contributors to this assumption?
8. Mentoring: Do you employ this technique with your team?
    a. Why/why not?
    b. What success have you had with Mentoring?
    c. What challenges have you experienced?
9. Communication (Team and Stakeholder):
    a. Are you satisfied with the way your team communicates internally?
    b. How do *you* communicate changes to your team?

c. How do communicate with your stakeholders and customers?
d. How do you measure the effectiveness of OAM communication to your customers/stakeholders?
e. How is OAM communication received by stakeholders/customers?
f. Have there been any complaints? How have these been addressed?

10. Accuracy of Work
    a. What checks and balances are in place to ensure accuracy?
    b. What SOPs are utilized
11. Training: What is the availability of training funds?
    a. Is training mandatory or optional for your team?
    b. What is the process for requesting or suggesting training like?
    c. How do you measure the effectiveness of your team's training?
    d. What role does training currently play on your team?
    e. What role would you like it play in an ideal situation?
    f. What training goals have you set for your staff? What has been your success and challenges in this regard?
12. Strategic Plan: What process do you employ to ensure alignment of your processes/activities/actions to OAM's Strategic Plan/Mission/Goals?
    a. And further up to tie into the NHTSA Strategic Objectives?
    b. And to DOT's?

OAM Staff Questions:

1. What is your official job function/role?
2. What are your expectations from this follow up assessment?
3. Let's talk about positives: What are the positive aspects surrounding your job?
    a. What do you appreciate most about your job/role that you play?
    b. What areas are exemplary or that you would like to highlight?
4. What do you see are your biggest challenges in performing your duties?
    a. Do you have "other" duties (which overshadow your "formal" assignment)?
5. Let's talk about SOPs: Which SOPs do you refer to most in performing your job?
    a. Where are the SOPs located?
    b. Are these updated/accurate? Who does this? When does this occur
    c. Do you have 'work-arounds' that you have developed?
    d. Have these been incorporated into the greater team processes?
6. Is there an established Milestone Plan and How do you determine your Procurement Administrative Lead Time (PALT)?
    a. What are factors that are not taken into consideration in your PALT?
    b. What are factors effect and areas where there can be improvement?
7. Let's talk about Staffing Levels, roles, and responsibilities
    a. Do you feel your current levels are adequate?

8. Let's talk about your team: What currently works well within your team?
    a. Why do you think this is a successful process/practice?
    b. What are the strong points/traits/characteristics of your team?
    c. What do you think contributes to this?
    d. What are the areas that need more attention/focus?
    e. What do you think can support this need?
9. What is the attitude/moral of your team?
    a. What do you believe are the main contributors to this attitude?
10. What does not work so well?
    a. What do you think contributes to this issue?
11. Communication: Are you satisfied with the way your team communicates?
    a. How do you communicate changes?
    b. How are your needs for change received?
    c. Where do you go for guidance? Are all 3 COs equally accessible, reliable for information?
12. Mentoring: Do you have (or have you had) a mentor?
13. Training:
    a. Is training mandatory or optional for you?
    b. What is the process for requesting or suggesting training?
    c. Are you current on your certifications? Why or why not
    d. How would you like to receive training (brown bags, training class outside the agency, etc.)?
    e. What priority does training currently have on your team?
    f. What role would you like it play in an ideal situation?
    g. What training goals have you set for yourself? What has been your success and challenges in this regard?
14. Customer Service
    a. How do you communicate with your stakeholders/customers?
    b. Is this part of the standard process or is this your own process?
    c. What are the chief complaints of customers/stakeholders? How have these been addressed by you? By management?
15. Tools:
    a. Do you have the tools you need to perform your job?
    b. What tools do you use that you love?
    c. What tools need to be obsoleted?
    d. What tools would you like to have or you feel need to be implemented?
16. Strategic Plan: How do you ensure your processes/activities/actions align to OAM's Strategic Plan/Mission/Goals?
    a. Do you have an action plan or some other plan that provides you with this information?

Program Staff Questions

1. What is your official job function/role?
2. What type of contracts do you typically execute? (Grants, Cooperative Agreements, Delivery Order, etc.)
3. Which type of contracts take up most of your time? (T&M, Cost re-imbursement, FFP, etc.)
4. Let's discuss Grants & Assistance agreements and the transition to Contracts?
    a. What has aided your work in this area?
    b. What are the main obstacles?
    c. What do you think contributes to this?
    d. What tools/SOPs/guidance do you rely on?
    e. What tools/SOPs/guidance would help you perform more effectively?
5. In your day-to-day activities, which tools aid in your procurement-specific job performance?
6. Are these aids sufficient? How often are these updated? In what manner do you receive notification of updates or new tools that may be available to you?
7. What do you see are your biggest challenges in performing your procurement duties?
    a. Do you have "other" duties (which overshadow your "formal" assignment)?
8. Let's talk about SOPs: Which SOPs do you refer to most in performing your job?
    a. Where are the SOPs located?
    b. Are these updated/accurate? Who does this? When does this occur
    c. Do you have 'work-arounds' that you have developed?
    d. Have these been incorporated into the greater team processes?
9. What is hindering your office from getting ahead of your procurement cycle? What steps do you feel can be initiated to change this?
10. Let's talk about Support Staffing Levels, roles, and responsibilities
    a. Do you feel your current levels are adequate?
11. Communication: Are you satisfied with you receive updates/additions/or changes to rules, regulations, and procedures from OAM?
    a. How would you like to receive this communication?
    b. How are your needs for change or updates received?
    c. Where else to do look for current contracting/acquisition guidance or updated information?
    d. What work-arounds have you developed? Has your team implemented or standardized any of these?
12. Training:
    a. Is training mandatory or optional for you?
    b. What is the process for requesting or suggesting training?
    c. Are you current on your certifications? Why or why not

d. How would you like to receive training (brown bags, training class outside the agency, etc.)?
e. What priority does training currently have on your team?
f. What role would you like it play in an ideal situation?
g. What training goals have you set for yourself? What has been your success and challenges in this regard?

13. Customer Service
a. How do you communicate with OAM?
b. How do you communicate with your stakeholders/customers?
c. What are the chief complaints of customers/stakeholders? How have these been addressed by you? By management?

14. Tools:
a. Do you have the tools you need to perform your job?
b. What tools do you use that you love?
c. What tools need to be obsoleted?

General Acquisition Questions – These questions may be incorporated as needed during initial or follow-up conversations

1. What is your perception of your office structure?
a. What types of contracts are being executed?

2. What is the "color of your money" and how does it affect your procurement process? (Taking into consideration Continuing Resolutions and other appropriation difficulties)

3. Is there an established Milestone Plan and How do you determine your Procurement Administrative Lead Time (PALT)? What are factors that are not taken into consideration in your PALT? What are factors effect and areas where there can be improvement?

4. What do you feel can increase the Efficacy of your office?
a. Contractually?
b. Technology?
c. Office/Workflow?
d. Relationships?
e. Education?

5. What is the forecasting method used in your office? How is that distributed?

6. What is hindering your office from getting ahead of your procurement cycle? What steps do you feel can be initiated to change this?

7. How can Program Office be better educated?

8. How can the Contracting Office/OAM be better educated?

9. What is the contract review process?

10. Who do you support and what is their mission?

   a. What is your impact? (Locally, Nationally, Globally)
11. What is keeping your office from transitioning to a steady state, proactive environment?
12. Why are you supporting NHTSA/DOT?
   a. Do you feel you are an elite person in your career field?
   b. What do you need to make you better?
   c. What are you willing to do to become better?
   d. Is there any incentive to this?
13. What Continuity Plans are in place, how do you deal with and approach turnover?
14. What is the current contracts review process?
   a. Is there something you feel can make things easier?
15. What steps are in place to deal with Contingency (Emergency Buys)?
16. Do the people in the organization have the flexibility and training to meet the need to this office?
17. Can we see sample contract and cooperative agreement files?
18. Are you aware of OAM's process, have you been to training to be a COTR, COR, CO, etc?
19. What can be put in place to raise unit morale?

APPENDIX B
OAM SYSTEMS PROCESS QUESTIONS

PRISM/MAPS System	
	Comments
What staff members and/or systems do you interact with in your daily work?	All users, OAM, Program management, CORS, PRISM, FPDSNG, CRYSTAL REPORTS, EXCEL, WORD
Are these policies OAM specific or recommended by your company?	Which policies? Adheres to her own policies, no Standard Operating Procedures
What is your process for fielding and/or handling your PR's?	New Project: If the requisition is 150,000.00 or above it must be routed to SBA for review. If the requisitions are for IT related purchase it must be routed to OCIO for review. The text is reviewed to make sure it is stating the action in which the contract specialist will be taking to award. Attachments are reviewed to make sure the specific documents required are attached. Requisitions are then printed and given to OAM team leads to choose a contract specialist; once this is completed I assign the requisitions to a contract specialist and link a milestone. Requisition for modifications: Text is reviewed to make sure it is stating the action in which the contract specialist will be taking to award. Line items are checked to see if the funds are incrementally funded and if so make sure the line item was not increased along with accounting, incrementally funded lines should not increase in value. The award would be opened to check the line item value of the last modification against the line item of the requisition for mod, if it did not change then the requisition was done correctly. The contract specialist listed on the last modification of award will automatically populate the buyer field, to make sure that the crystal report picks up the buyer name; I assign it to myself and then back to the previous buyer and link milestone.
What are the other processes you that you are responsible for and how are they initiated, executed, and reported?	PRISM support, FPDSNG support, contract specialist active reports through crystal reports every Tuesday, closed requisition report in excel every Tuesday, Requisition assignment report through crystal every day for CS, CC, and CORS.

What is the cumulative time and costs it takes to complete each of your processes?	Do not know
How effective are the systems used in your process?	Very effective
Do any other systems that you work with provide capabilities that OAM does not currently use? If so, what are they?	I do not use any others
Would any of these capabilities benefit OAM and increase the efficiency of their process?	
What is the program office involvement in PRISM?	Program Office create requisitions within PRISM
What is the timeframe it takes from PMO input to a PR assignment?	Requisition for modifications is assigned the same day they are created unless they have a contract specialist that is no longer with NHTSA. All new project requisitions are given to OAM team leads so that they may choose the contract specialist, once chosen they are given back to me and assignments are given at that time. I could get them back the same day or it could take a few days before they are given to me to process.
Can you explain the CO review process?	You will have to ask the CO
Are there errors that can be associated with this review? If so, what are they?	You will have to ask the CO
Are there milestones set up in PRISM? If so, what is the timeline and how are they used?	Yes, the templates have different time frames depending on what type of award.
Does anyone currently use this milestone?	Yes
How are the documents handled and stored during your process?	Documents are filed within a folder labeled with the award number; all documentation within the folder will most likely be stored as an attachment within the award document in PRISM.

How can a staff member progress through your current system?	All users have been trained to progress through PRISM
Would it be beneficial to have more people trained in the use and the management of these systems? If so, what are those benefits?	It's always beneficial to have more people trained, but PRISM is driven by how many license NHTSA allows.
Is vendor information stored in the system?	Yes
Can any of the current processes be streamlined?	
Are there any aspects of your current process that you feel could be automated rather than manual?	My processes are automated

APPENDIX C

PREMIER Management corporation

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

BEST PRACTICE DETERMINATION

&

BENCHMARKING QUESTIONS

PREMIER MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

APRIL 1, 2013

If you have any questions regarding participation as a DOT Benchmarking Partner, or as to the nature of the interview, please feel free to contact Adarien.Jackson@premgtcorp.com – onsite NHTSA Project Manager or Tiana.Gordon@premgtcorp.com – VP Programs, PREMIER Management corporation.

PREMiER Management

BENCHMARKING PARTNER:

Please find in this document a list of questions that will set the tone of the interview and act as a guide for our conversation. It is noted however that this will be a *conversation* and, depending on the response to the questions, follow up, additional questions, and further discussion may be had, or others may be obsoleted. Follow up questions may be more detailed and include gathering information around actual workflow, technology used, and time required for specific processes/activities.

In all cases, we will try not to employ leading questions in order to receive unbiased responses and adhere to benchmarking best practices (e.g. "In high performing agencies, x is used as a best practice. Do you have x practice here?"). Further, we assure you that confidentiality is of utmost importance-- please feel free to express your opinions, provide advice and resources for further information, and to give guidance on how we can qualify/quantify your statements. Further, if you could provide any supporting documents or templates (redacted for privacy) that we may use as an example of DOT excellence, it would be greatly appreciated.

Below are sample questions that will be used to guide the conversation. We anticipate the interview to last one (1) hour to one (1) hour 30 minutes. We appreciate your time and your support helping DOT in achieving Acquisition Excellence!

Individual:

1. What is your official job function/role?

Organization

Procurements:

1. What type of Contract actions does your organization typically execute?
2. Can you provide an estimate of the procurement amounts of your organization in FY12 and projections for FY13?
3. What is the "color of your money" and how does it affect your procurement process? (Taking into consideration Continuing Resolutions and other appropriation difficulties)

Structure:

1. How many people work in your organization, how many programs do you support?
    a. How many of those individuals are COTR/COR/PM(s)?

2. How is your acquisition team structured? (Do you have a copy of your acquisition team org chart that you can share?)
3. How was this established, and what is the basis of this structure?
4. Can you describe your organizational dynamic?
    a. How are teams managed?

    b. How are individuals managed?
    c. How is information (i.e. status reports; policy updates; changes in procedures) received and distributed?
    d. How are lines of communication kept open?

Team:

1. Let's talk about Staffing Levels, roles, and responsibilities
    a. How many people are doing contracting or functioning in an acquisition role? Is this adequate?
    b. Based on workload would you change this number?
    c. With the current number how have you been able to get the highest level of effort and efficacy out of your teams?
    d. Do you have detailed roles & responsibilities for individuals based on grade or level?
    e. Has the role of your Team Leads, Supervisors, Mentors, and Contracting Officers been clearly expressed?

Performance

1. What is the attitude/morale of your team?
    a. How do you maintain this Morale?
2. How do you recognize/reward your staff for outstanding performance?
    a. Can you share an example?
3. What do you believe incentivizes your staff to remain and excel? Can you share some examples?
    a. Can you share some ideas that you believe are unique that have been received well by your staff?
4. What challenges have you had in terms of motivating your staff? How have you overcome those challenges?

Mentoring

5. Mentoring: Can you explain your Mentoring Plan/Program?
    a. How is it effective?
    b. Is there clear guidance for how this is accomplished?
    c. What success have you had with Mentoring?

d. What challenges have you experienced?

Training

1. How do you foster growth within your teams and your staff?
   a. How do you maintain expertise, with a knowledgeable and engaged contracting staff?
   b. Do you follow a Training Plan?
   c. Does your staff follow Career Development or Individual Development Plans?
   d. Do you have Performance Directives?
2. How is Training prioritized in your organization?
   a. How is training provided?
   b. How do team members/employees get certifications, and required CLPs?
   c. Do you have a training budget?
   d. Is there a required training level associated with grade level?

Warranting:

1. What is your warranting process, and how do you determine who gets a warrant and at what level?
2. Are Warrants tied to promotion?

Process

1. Do you have established Standard Operating Procedures, Operation Instructions, Policy, or Guidance for contract execution?
   a. Where is this guidance provided? (e.g. procedures written in manuals/books, on shared drive/portal)
   b. How often are the above updated?
   c. How are changes to the guidance communicated?
2. Do you have a:
   a. Transition/Continuity Plan?
   b. Contract File Index?
   c. Milestone Plan?
3. Was there a time when you did not have these processes/procedures in place at the level they are now?
4. How has the establishment of these processes/procedures affected your:
   a. Procurement process?
   b. Team Dynamic?
   c. Customer Relationship?

Acquisition/Contract Management:

17. Is there an established Milestone Plan and How do you determine your Procurement Administrative Lead Time (PALT)?
    a. What are factors that are not taken into consideration in your PALT?
    b. Is there a specific time frame for each action?
    c. How is that established?
18. How are actions Prioritized?
    a. Is this a defined process?
19. What is the Procurement Forecasting Cycle?
    a. How is it established?
20. How are acquisitions staggered throughout the year?
21. What is the contract review process?
22. What steps are in place to deal with Contingency (Emergency Buys)?

Accuracy of Work

1. How do you ensure your Contract Specialists prepare PRs accurately, with uniformity, and with attention to detail?
    a. Do you have any types of review processes/procedures?
    b. Are any tools, checklists, or guides used during review?

Customer Relationship:

1. Can you describe your customer relationship?
    a. Are you seen and presented as a customer service agency?
    b. How do you execute keeping this as a focus?
    c. What best practices or lessons learned do you use to foster/maintain customer relationships?

Tools

1. What contract management system are you currently using?
    a. How does your Contract Management System aid you in your job and increase execution efficacy?
    b. What other tools/systems does your staff use to perform their job?
2. How is reporting generated?
3. How is status tracked, monitored, and managed?
4. Do you use project management tools (i.e. MAPS, MS Project, MS Outlook, MS Excel)?
    a. Are any of them DOT/Enterprise-wide?
5. Are there any organization specific tools?
6. How are these systems maintained and managed?
7. Strategic Plan: What process do you employ to ensure alignment of your processes/activities/actions to your Leadership's (Organizational) Strategic Plan/Mission/Goals?

a. And further up to tie into the Administration's Strategic Objectives?
b. And to DOT's?

Final Question:

20. If we were to take anything from your office and implement it Agency wide what would it be?

APPENDIX D
PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

PREMiER Management
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Department Of Transportation,
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
Office of Acquisition Management (OAM)

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Task 3: Data Gathering
Preliminary Findings
April 12, 2013

SDVOSB

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1

Agenda

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- Overview of Preliminary Findings
- Organizational Structure & Functions
- Functional Assessment
  - Process & Workflow
  - Communication
- Team Administration
- NHTSA/OAM Tools & Technology
- Next Steps: Benchmarking

Organizational Structure & Functions

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- Levels
  - Director (GS-15)– Ross Jeffries
  - Team Leader – Vincent Lynch (GS-13)
  - Team Leader – Robin Gates (GS – 13)
- Teams
  - Team A (Robin Gates)
    - NVS Main Client. Also provides support to NPO, OCIO, and other special sub-divisions
    - 5 FTE, 1 Contractor
    - Team includes VRTC, 3 people only 1 tied to OAM (Team Lead)
  - Team B (Vincent Lynch)
    - NTI Main Client, Also provides support to NPO, OCIO, and other special sub-divisions
    - 6 FTE, 1 Contractor
- Leadership
  - Greg Walters, SAA
  - Mary Sprague DCFO, AA responsible for OAM

<u>Support</u>

Policy - S. Peter Schultz

PRISM Support - Mary McDonald (CTR)

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Functional Assessment: Process & Workflow

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- **Program Office to OAM**
  - Program Office creates the requirement, including a large number of documents for acquisition package
  - Requirement is forwarded to the Contract Coordinator (CC) or COR
  - COR/CC is responsible for entering requirement into PRISM. often acts as liaison between Program Office and OAM
  - Program Office routes contracts/projects to OAM through PRISM

- **Intra-OAM (i.e.... how are the P & W within OAM?)**
  - Team Leads are responsive and cognizant of the staff's abilities and productivity; work is distributed based on this knowledge
  - Very limited updated, readily available standardized process and workflow (guidance) in place
  - Team Lead is responsible for distribution of workload (via PRISM Support admin)
  - Specific guidance, process, or direction for actions is not readily available.
  - PRISM Support responsible for assigning projects to Contract Specialist within PRISM
  - Process are extremely flexible and not subject/accountable to OAM-specific SOPs

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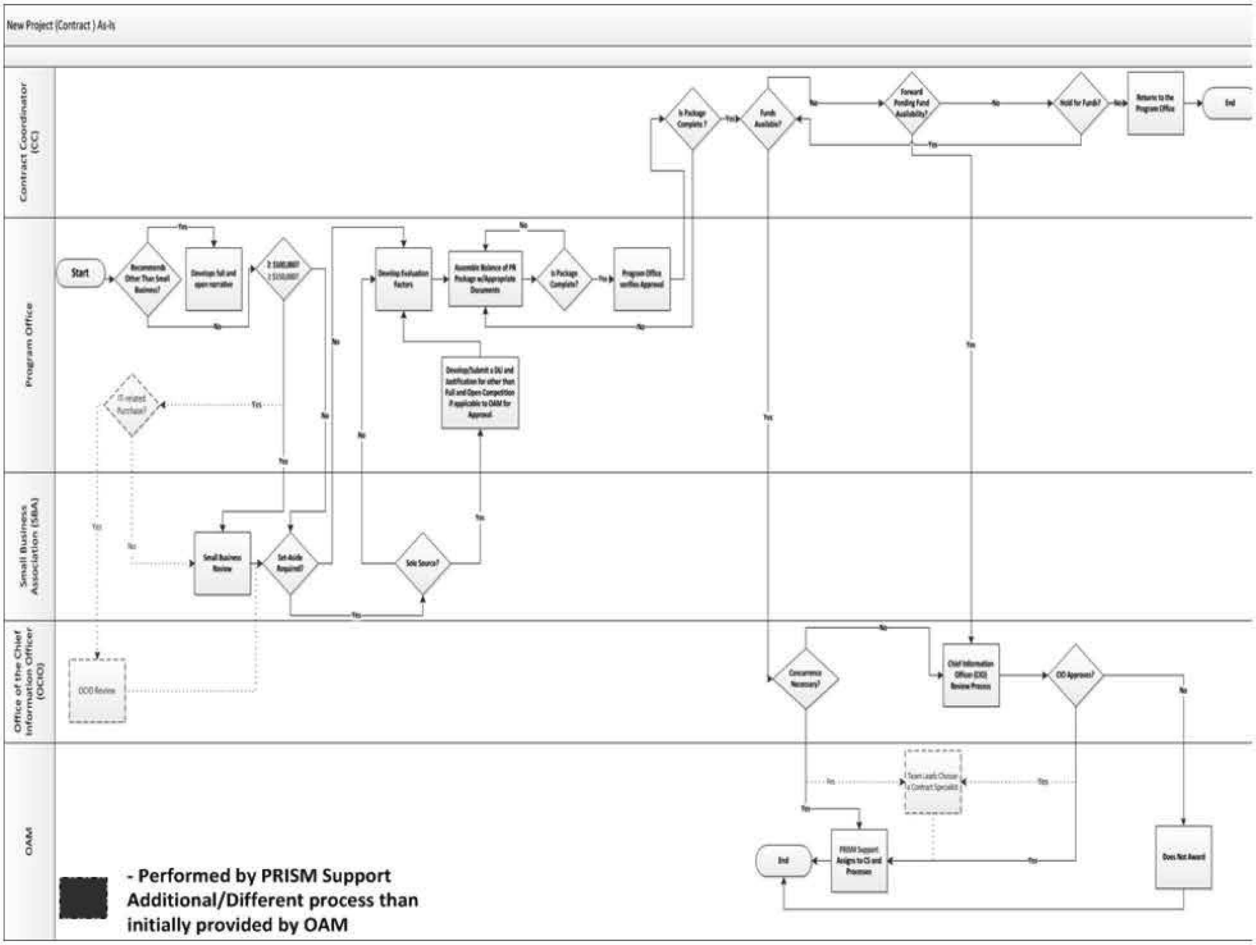
Functional Assessment: Process & Workflow cont'd

- **Policy & Guidance**
  - COTR Communiques are in place to and capture changes or updates relevant to the COTR.
    - Very valuable and appreciated by all
    - This is the duty of only one (1) individual, not a dedicated OAM policy office, who is already over tasked.
    - The Communiques are not readily available, in a structured searchable archive
  - There is no readily visible written policy nor guidance in place. Policies that are available are in various states of update.
  - Multiple documents and forms appear in multiple versions, outdated; inconsistently utilized, modified.
    - Requisition forms and some documents are left to Program Office interpretation/modification
  - Most policy updates/procedures, guidance are conveyed verbally or via email:
    - Information is not archived in OAM portal
  - PRISM Support role to OAM does not have OAM-Specific SOPs available.


New Project (Contract) As-Is
Contract Coordinator (CC)
Program Office
Small Business Association (SBA)
Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)
OAM
Start
Recommends Other Than Small Business?
Develops full and open narrative
Develop Evaluation Factors
Assemble Balance of PR Package w/Appropriate Documents
Is Package Complete?
Program Office verifies Approval
Develop/Submit a D&J and Justification for other than Full and Open Competition if applicable to OAM for Approval
IT-related Purchase?
Small Business Review
Set-Aside Required?
Sole Source?
OCIO Review
Is Package Complete ?
Funds Available?
Forward Pending Fund Availability?
Hold for Funds?
Returns to the Program Office
End
Concurrence Necessary?
Chief Information Officer (CIO) Review Process
CIO Approves?
Team Leads Choose a Contract Specialist
PRISM Support Assigns to CS and Processes
Does Not Award
Yes
No
- Performed by PRISM Support
Additional/Different process than
initially provided by OAM

Functional Assessment: Communication

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- **OAM (Leadership) to Team**
  - Leadership team very open to meeting to discuss direction of OAM
  - Possible gap in unified communication and direction among leadership and Team Leads
  - There is no readily visible written policy nor guidance provided to staff.
  - Outward appearance of a gap in leadership as a result of inconsistent information
  - The technology available to the team is not being fully utilized
- **Team to Team (intra-team)**
  - 2 New Team Leads, currently **NO** intra-team meetings, communications
  - Team Members are not aware of actions across teams, collaboration is minimal
  - The technology available to the team is not being optimally utilized
  - Customers appears to be lacking consistent/updated information and not readily available/source of info for customers

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Functional Assessment: Communication cont'd

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- **Lead to Lead**
  - Team Leads work together on CS assignment and support.
  - Team Lead and Director meetings are in place, have not been used to enact official, documented, standards
  - Do not appear to have shared/synchronized workflow; staff communications.

- **Lead to Team Staff**
  - Team standards, team-level SOPs are not synchronized - appear to be uncoordinated
  - Team does not provide a regular status to leadership and staff meetings are not being effectively utilized
  - Team does not feel they can communicate with leadership, and if they are given the opportunity they are not heard.

- **Staff to Staff:**
  - Friendly, cordial, and family like atmosphere
  - Helpful amongst each other;
  - Receptive of individual needs
  - (informal) Staff mentor/mentee relationship is not readily visible
  - Roles and Responsibilities blurred/unclear

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Functional Assessment: Communication cont'd

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- **OAM to Customer**
  - Meetings are held between PMO and OAM, "CS/CTRS" not typically included
    - Meetings are not governed by agenda facilitation(i.e. Purpose, Expectations. Outcomes. Action Items with set timeframe)
  - Values/Concepts of Customer Service can be improved
    - Common perception is several CS are nice and friendly
    - Adequate communication and follow through is inconsistent
    - Customers feel they need to micromanage or act as teachers to some of OAM
  - OAM Guidance, Direction, Instruction to PMOs on how to do NHTSA requirements is not readily available/consistent, updated
- **Leadership to Customer**
  - Monthly/Bi-Monthly Status Meetings Held
  - Customers desire consistent guidance; better understanding of OAM and OAM process
- **Team (CO/CS) to Customer**
  - CS feels frustrated. overwhelmed by lack of COTR understanding
  - CS responsible to provide milestone plan to PMO
  - CS communication to PMO, inconsistent

PREMIER Proprietary 9

Team Administration

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- **Supervision & Development of Staff**
  - Minimal tangible Supervision/Development of staff (aside from mandatory training)
    - There is no value place in career progression, mentoring, building people
    - Training is encouraged, but no budget; not pushed as a priority and needed for career progression
  - CSs are not on a formal Career Development, IDP
  - OAM staff has been impacted by severe transition in recent years
    - Relatively High Attrition/Return rate. Director has had to work in multiple roles
    - Unclear Standards/Accountability system
- **Work Distribution**
  - Team Leads intimately know the capabilities and workload of their staff and assign accordingly.
  - PRISM Support is heavily integrated in OAM processes.
  - Full capabilities of OAM technology not being fully utilized.
  - Unclear baseline of Team competency

Team Administration

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- **Risk Management Coordination Practices**
  - Still qualifying data
- **Staff Skill Levels**
  - Staff Members are not skilled to the level necessary to complete actions efficiently
  - There is no incentive to get qualified, promotion not directly effected by lack of training
  - DAWIA/FAC-C levels are not adequate: all training has not been maintained (80hrs)
  - Warranting issue: Still qualifying data
  - Consistent Accountability low
- **Process Flows/Use of Technology**
  - Inadequate use of technology:
    - No visible team (accountability) management tool utilized (e.g. MS Projects, MS Team Manager)
    - Appears that PRISM is not being fully utilized (OBE? iPRISM coming soon?)
    - CS are required to create Contracts Manually
  - OAM team leads choose/indicate a contract specialist, PRISM Support assigns the requisitions to CS within PRISM

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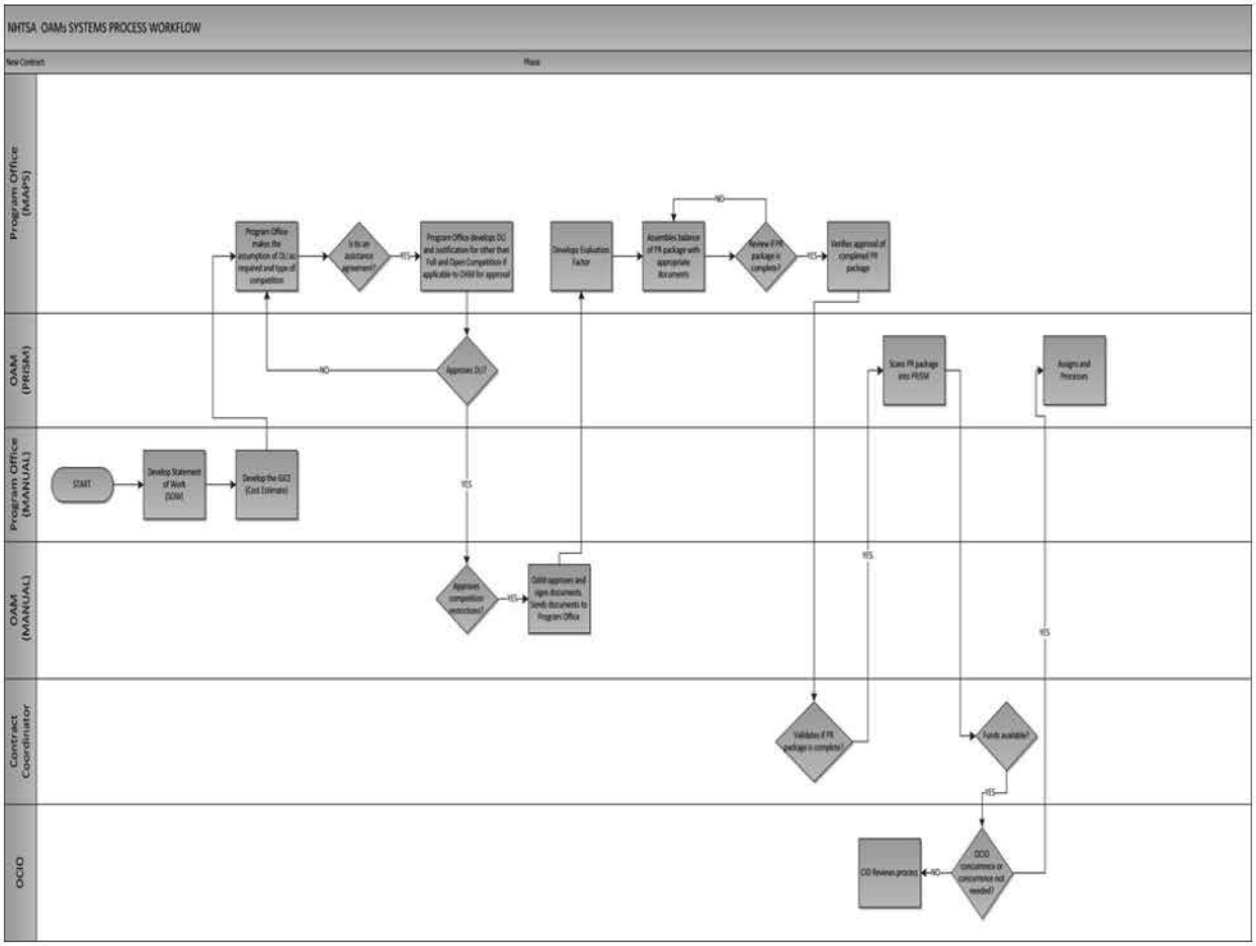
NHTSA OAM Tools & Technology: PRISM

- **PRISM**
  - Has capability of supporting electronic routing and approval. requisitioning, electronic notifications, contract management, post award and processing close out
  - Upgrades are made to PRISM periodically. PRISM was upgraded to version 7.1 last October
  - OAM must request training for PRISM
    - Staff must go through training sessions to get accustomed to "new look" of the upgraded version
  - Requisitions are created within PRISM by Program Office
  - Can automate CS assign data
  - All documentation within award folder is usually stored as an attachment within the award document in PRISM
  - "Clause" functionality is turned off NHTSA's PRISM system


NHTSA OAMs SYSTEMS PROCESS WORKFLOW
New Contract
Phase
Program Office (MAPS)
OAM (PRISM)
Program Office (MANUAL)
OAM (MANUAL)
Contract Coordinator
OCIO
START
Develop Statement of Work (SOW)
Develop the IGCE (Cost Estimate)
Is it an assistance agreement?
Develops Evaluation Factor
Assembles balance of PR package with appropriate documents
Review if PR package is complete?
Verifies approval of completed PR package
Scans PR package into PRISM
Assigns and Processes
Approves competition restrictions?
OAM approves and signs documents. Sends documents to Program Office
Validates if PR package is complete?
Funds available?
OCIO concurrence or concurrence not needed?
CIO Reviews process
YES
NO

NHTSA OAM Tools & Technology: MAPS

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- **MAPS**
- Tracks project starting from the concept through its procurement cycle, awarding cycle, post award, and project close out
- Displays status of project
- All projects are kept and remain in the MAPS System. There are hundreds of projects currently in system
- PRISM has the capability to interact with MAPS
- Fields can be taken from active projects in PRISM
- capable of doing relational databases
- NTI believes MAPS could be used for acquisition tracking; NTI believes MAPS is intuitive and easy to use
- OCIO – Office of Systems Integration believes MAPS is difficult to use and learn
- General: MAPS is not user friendly
  - There are several logins required
  - doesn't give much visibility of workflow
  - A lot of manual corrections have to be made when inputting and/or changing data

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Next Steps

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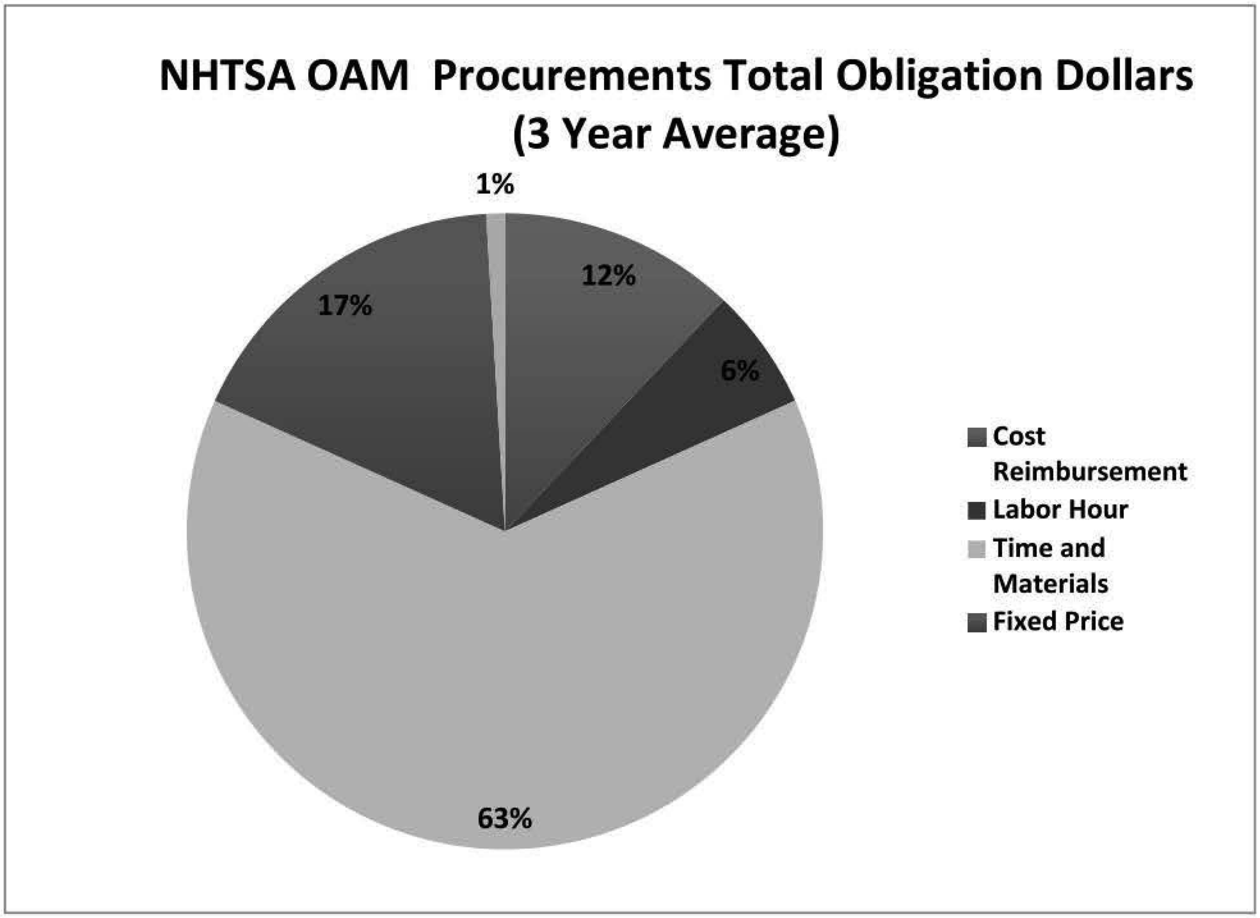
- Qualify Performance Measures
- Continue Benchmarking and Gap Analysis + findings Integration
- Develop value stream map
- Identify efficient uses of OAM's current technology

SDVOSB


NHTSA OAM Procurements Total Obligation Dollars
(3 Year Average)
1%
12%
17%
6%
63%
Cost Reimbursement
Labor Hour
Time and Materials
Fixed Price