



Customer Success Story
Army MEDCOM

Acquisition Platform Brings Efficiency and Transparency to Service Contracts

Developing an Effective Acquisition Plan with Acquisition Management Workflow

Army MEDCOM G-8 is responsible for service contracting for the US Army Medical Command, which provides health care in both traditional and field facilities for active and retired soldiers and their families. These service contracts are usually IDIQ (indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity) for healthcare staff across a fixed period of performance with an option for renewal.

Subject to the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) oversight, MEDCOM service acquisition requires many checks and balances. A typical service contract has up to 12 related documents in the review package, each reviewed by a specific functional area and finally by the Senior Executive Service (SES) or GEO.

Without transparency over when contracts would renew, acquisition planning was often reactive, contributing to stress and operational inefficiency. Stakeholder reviews were disjointed, with little transparency over what comments or questions had been asked by others in previous meetings or over email. Roger Cassius joined MEDCOM as Business Office Chief to improve acquisition planning. With a history of improving acquisition planning for other organizations, Roger's first task was to find a partner to help solve MEDCOM's specific acquisition challenges.

"Everything was an emergency," notes Roger, "I was hired to rectify the acquisition process so that the Chief of Staff would have the confidence that the contract was fully staffed and vetted and that it fit within the campaign plan and the medical command."

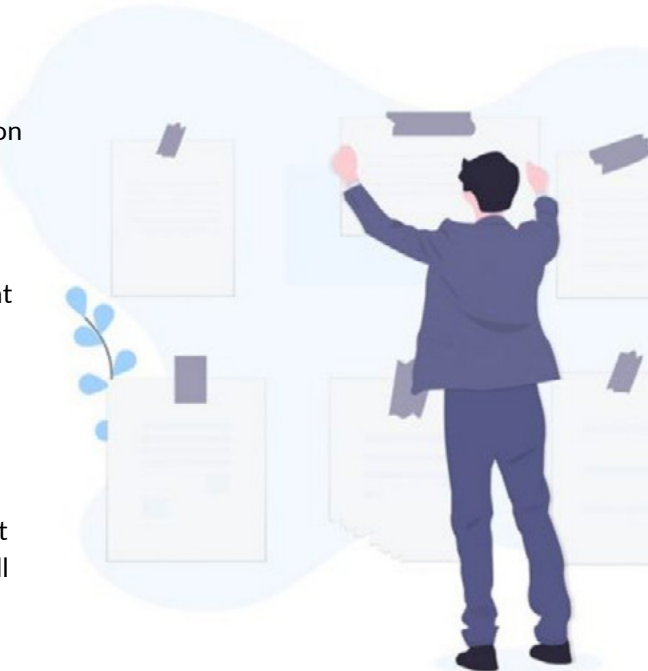
Roger's vision was to create a central repository for contract management supported by a dashboard that would provide a common operating picture of the contract lifecycle. Roger worked with Idea Entity to create Acquisition Management Workflow, a customizable acquisition solution that automates the review of contracts against CARE standards and provides full transparency over current and past contracts.

"Acquisition Management Workflow helps minimize the time required to put together an acquisition plan."

16% Reduction in Contract Costs

Hours Saved on Acquisition Planning

Increased Transparency





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Informed Decision

Roger explains that when he joined MEDCOM, high dollar contracts were being reviewed at the last minute under the threat of a loss in critical services. Documents were prepared with a rush order, then reviewed over email with little time to read, review, or understand the documents or project requirements. This process did not allow for a contract to be staffed prior to being vetted. Roger notes, “It might have been faster, but it wasn’t the right process.”

With Acquisition Management Workflow, MEDCOM staff have a holistic picture of all contracts, including who is responsible for each contract, when it is up for renewal, and where there could potentially be overlap between contracts or between contracts and internal capabilities. With this information in hand, acquisition planning now allows for MEDCOM to properly staff and vet each contract to ensure it fits with the campaign plan and the medical command.

Acquisition Management Workflow streamlines the workflows associated with contract creation, review, and signature to support collaboration and accelerate value. The person responsible for the contract will meet in-person or virtually to brief senior decision makers on the contract and answer decisions. These leaders will then vote to accept, reduce the level of effort, or terminate each contract based upon that presentation and their own review of Acquisition Management Workflow documentation. All of this is re-codified into Acquisition Management Workflow and presented as a report to the SES or GEO for review. Once a contract is signed within Acquisition Management Workflow, the final contract can be printed and sent to contracting for acquisition.

“With Acquisition Management Workflow, we were able to create a deliberate acquisition schedule” notes Roger, “We know which contracts should be presented during the

month.” Contracts are now reviewed four to five months before a decision is needed versus two days before.

With a central repository for contracts, documents, and prior briefs, MEDCOM is able to avoid the loss of knowledge that was associated with email and paper-based workflows, staffing changes, or even just to memory. For example, the review board had decided that a contract should be cut off after one more year. “Next year that contract came up again and nobody remembered,” notes Roger. In this case, the decision to end the contract was not left to memory, it was codified and documented in Acquisition Management Workflow in an easy-to-use dashboard.



“The beauty of Acquisition Management Workflow is that it can be massaged to meet whatever your mission set is.”



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Gaining Efficiency with a Common Operating Picture

With manual contract review, it can be difficult to spot overlaps between contracts or potential cost savings opportunities. For MEDCOM, contracts are the second largest cost driver in the command, making it vitally important to improve the visibility and situational awareness over all contracts to ensure that money is allocated both efficiently and effectively.

The common operating picture within Acquisition Management Workflow allowed the team to make better staffing decisions. For example, staff were able to identify areas where contracts overlapped or where internal capabilities were available to avoid a contract altogether. As a result of these discussions, MEDCOM was able to reduce costs by several million dollars over the first year - a 16% reduction in contract costs.

“When coordination was happening via email, that discussion around better ways to acquire a capability were not taking place. These solutions were not presenting themselves.”

Aside from the hard costs associated with contracts themselves, process efficiencies have led to internal savings in the acquisition process. Instead of digging through paper filing cabinets to understand what kind of documents need to be created for each contract, staff can refer to and simply update previous documents and presentations, saving a great deal of time. As Roger notes, “you’re not recreating the wheel for something that had already been created.”

Satisfy Compliance Requirements

Like other federal agencies, MEDCOM had to meet the OSD requirement for a GEO or SES review of every contract. This requirement is tracked as a key performance metric and is briefed to the Army every month in the care brief. While MEDCOM satisfied this requirement with unstaffed contract reviews, if the process were inspected it would not be backed with sufficient documentation of the discussion or staff work that informed the GEO that signed the contract.

“You can send a very poor product and get a general signature on it, and you can meet that metric, or you can staff it thoroughly and make sure you’re contracting for valid requirements that meet your mission, your campaign plan, and get that.”

With Acquisition Management Workflow, MEDCOM is able to satisfy the requirement over both the review as well as the intent of the requirement, which is a rich decision-making process. “Now if they come, they see the deliberate process before we agree to allocate millions of dollars for specific services.”

Acquisition Management Workflow provides trained MEDCOM staff to enhance their effectiveness inside the acquisition process. Since its initial development for MEDCOM, Acquisition Management Workflow has been tailored to the needs of other clients, cutting down overall acquisition processes for products and services from 6 months to 2 months, with a minimum 15% net savings on contract costs.