Government Contract Evaluation

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Abstract
Evaluation of proposals for compliance and merit in government contracts by its very nature must be structured in order to be fair. Because of this requirement to be absolutely fair, the process is usually laborious and, time-consuming. In December 1997, the United States Postal Service (USPS) approached Battelle to assist it in the evaluation of proposals submitted for the Midrange Computer Acquisition. The criteria were detailed yet subject to interpretation by the companies submitting proposed solutions to the mission requirements. Agreement and consensus of the evaluators were critical. Saving time was essential to reach the successful completion of the task before Christmas holidays. The authors developed a methodology to produce the desired results for the meeting convener and evaluation committee. This paper presents the development and application of a methodology for evaluating government contracts using GroupSystems for Windows. The methodology has defined steps and is repeatable.

1. Introduction

The Midrange Computer Acquisition was a contract proposed by the United States Postal Service (USPS) in 1997 to acquire computers. The Statement of Work (SOW) of the contract sent to interested vendors stated that the USPS intended to “add a middle layer to its computing infrastructure through the implementation of a standardized, scaleable, midrange computer.” The SOW referred the vendors both to mandatory features of the midrange computer as well as desirable optional features which would enhance the value of the platform to the Postal Service.

The Computing Environment within the U.S. Postal Service consists of a wide variety of hardware and software with several standards predominating. The new scaleable midrange computer will play several roles within the USPS environment. Among those roles, it will be a high-performance database server, an integrator between legacy systems into new services implemented at distributed client workstations, and host for applications that require a central compute server. These roles place key demands upon this platform, most notably in the areas of high performance, scalability, reliability, and manageability.

The project manager of the Midrange Computer Acquisition contacted Battelle to assist in meeting aggressive timelines in evaluating the voluminous amount of material that the four pre-qualified bidding vendors had provided to USPS. The prequalification of the major vendors was based on annual revenue, research and development budget, market share, and other pertinent factors.

An evaluation team of 6 members from various centers in USPS had been identified to make initial comments on different aspects of the proposals. Battelle’s role was to facilitate the evaluation process and to provide collaboration technologies, as requested by the customer.

This paper outlines the methodology, the outcomes, and the lessons learned from the application of collaborative principles to the government contract evaluation process in group decision system support. The evaluation team was brought together to analyze the various input from vendors and to apply specific structured criteria to make fair comparisons.

2. Background

The federal procurement system is based on openness and competition, the primary guarantees of integrity, equity, and efficiency. To ensure that procurements are open and objective, the government has limited the discretion of its public officials. The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) is 1,600 pages, supplemented by another 2,900 pages of agency-specific procurement regulations. These thousands of pages, along with thousands more of additional agency instructions and case law involving protests, must be considered in every
acquisition process. The USPS purchasing handbook is based on the FAR, but the USPS is not subject to the FAR.

According to a report published by the National Performance Review (NPR), the generally accepted understanding of the government’s procurement policies is that the policies stress prior specification of needs, competitive bidding, and accountability through external review and appeals. Procurement personnel face strong pressure to be as objective (and defensible) as possible in selecting vendors, especially those who are not the lowest bidders. The current system demands objectivity by restricting the evaluation of proposals to criteria mandated by the agency which are published in advance. When an evaluation is conducted, the evaluators are limited to scrutinizing only the information submitted by proposing vendors (oral or written information).

A commonly held belief is that all government procurements emphasize costs with awards going to the lowest bidder. The government has imposed many controls to restrain employee discretion in choosing a winner. Many believe that the procurement system fails in purchasing information technology in not meeting its customers’ needs for timely product delivery, at reasonable prices, and with little bureaucratic interference. In private contracting, a major study concluded, organizations look for reliable suppliers of quality goods at reasonable prices. In public contracting, regulations designed to avoid political favoritism insist on a compartmentalized bidding process.

2.1. Statement of Work

Adherence to well-developed procurement regulations meant that the Midrange Computer Acquisition SOW was formulated along rigid guidelines. Various requirements were either mandatory, optional, or in the general scope of the project. With the vast array of requirements and the detailed input provided by the evaluators, the USPS desired a logical and fair way to sort through the large amount of evaluation comments. Both oral interviews and written supporting documentation comprised the bidders’ submissions about the requirements. The vendor oral presentations were an actual part of the proposal, and not just a supplement. They were used to give offerors a chance to “tell their own story” face-to-face.

2.2. Mandatory Requirements

The SOW outlined certain discrete components for the proposal evaluation purposes. The proposal had to meet the following mandatory requirements “to the satisfaction of the USPS.”

1) Hardware: to include 64-bit architecture (enclosure and bus, memory, disk storage, utility disk storage), Computer Processing Unit (CPU) (enclosure and bus, memory, disk storage, utility disk storage), file backup, connectivity, uninterruptible power supply, future upgrades, system console, system completeness, reliability, operational environment, office environment, factory environment, and hardware improvements.

2) Software: to include operating system and utility software, virus protection tools, system backup tools, system management tools, uninterruptible power supply tools, server software, front end tools, world wide web tools, application software configuration management tools, integrated development environment tools, application building blocks, development support tools, system test tools, Oracle software, transaction processing monitors, software improvements.

3) Communications: to include protocols.

4) Computer system performance: to include benchmarking.

5) Scalability: to include single workload scalability, mixed workload scalability, and specifically identified applications.

6) Hardware Maintenance: to include on-call maintenance and USPS maintenance.

7) Installation: to include USPS installation and contractor installation.

8) Documentation.

9) Training.

10) System Evaluation Configurations: to include medium, standard and large system, and data warehousing.

11) Support Services: to include UNIX system administrator, database administrator, programmers, system configuration specialists, security analysts, telecommunications analysts, and administrative personnel.

12) Security: to include encryption and security software.


The SOW discussed each one of these criteria in sufficient detail that each vendor had to respond to each one. The ultimate goal was for the evaluation process to capture the evaluation of each one of these criteria in some fashion.
2.3. Optional Requirements

The optional requirements which represented items which could be “of benefit to the USPS” were listed as follows.

1) Hardware: to include memory, bus, disk storage, initial evaluation systems.
2) Software: to include operating system, remote system management, database software and tools, database administrator support, database performance management and monitoring, query tools, report writers, project management tools, CASE tools, TCP/IP capability, system scheduler, web tools.
3) Security
4) Performance

2.3. Other Requirements

The SOW also listed other requirements which were not listed as mandatory or optional, but as part of the project scope. A sampling of these requirements is as follows.

1) English language requirement
2) Availability of equipment or software
3) Training
4) Manuals and publications
5) Software furnished
6) Modifications and revisions of software
7) Operating system software
8) Maintenance responsibilities of the contractor
9) On-call maintenance
10) Non-chargeable maintenance items
11) Operating performance
12) Security clearance procedures
13) Year 2000 warranty
14) Remedial maintenance
15) Movement of equipment

2.4. USPS Evaluation Criteria

The meeting convener who was the head of the evaluation team had definite contractual guidelines and past experience in proposal evaluations which he passed to the facilitation team. Four vendors had made complete submissions to the proposal process. The document which was provided to the offerors described the evaluation process. Requirements for written and oral submissions were described in detail for the offerors. The document explained that the evaluation would be structured according to the vendors’ ability to meet the following factors and subfactors of requirements:

Criteria 1. Past performance (written)
Criteria 2. Hardware (written/oral)
   • Disk storage
   • File backup
   • 64-bit architecture
   • CPU
   • Enclosure and bus
   • Memory
   • System Console
   • System completeness
   • Uninterruptible power supply
   • Reliability
   • Operational environment
   • Connectivity
   • Future hardware upgrade plans
   • Optional hardware
   • Hardware improvements
Criteria 3. Software (written/oral)
   • Operating system software
   • Server software
   • Developmental software
   • Oracle software
   • Future software upgrade plans
   • Protocols
   • Remote system management
   • Security
   • Optional software
   • Optional security
   • Transaction processing monitor
Criteria 4. Vendor Supplied Support (written/oral)
   • Support services
   • Maintenance
   • Contract management
   • Installation
   • Training
   • Documentation
Criteria 5. Computer System performance and scalability (written)
   • Single workload
   • Mixed workload
   • Benchmarking
   • Optional performance

The offerors were also given an example of an evaluation rating sheet. The rating for each subfactor would be one of the following:

• Unacceptable
• Deficient
• Acceptable
• Superior
• Outstanding
The rating also allows a documentation of the Strengths and Weaknesses of each of the evaluation criteria. Also, the evaluators would rank the Risks as High, Medium, or Low and document any noticeable risks found in the offerors’ approach. The evaluation team leader also asked that the evaluation workshop have an additional capability to give an overall technical score.

All this information was passed to the facilitation team. The team had to consider possible methodologies to meet the needs of the evaluation team to document all the comments, to rank and rate each offeror’s proposal, to gain consensus from the evaluation team, and to meet the time constraints of two weeks before the Christmas holidays. The team decided that USPS evaluation criteria could be satisfied by the various tools and activities in GroupSystems for Windows (Ventana Corporation) (GSWIN). Although this team had evaluated many government contracts, they had never used a group decision support tool. The facilitation team explained to them that GSWin could help in empowering team members by its built-in features of parallel communication, structured processes, idea triggering, anonymity, and consensus building.

3. Approach/Methodology

The team had to follow the guidance of the evaluation team and create the activities to be in exact alignment with the procurement documents which had been developed without any group decision tool in mind and which had been distributed to all the competing vendors. The authors approached the design in the following manner.

Using the USPS evaluation criteria document as a framework, one of the co-facilitators proposed a framework to use. The other co-facilitator tested the logic of the tool. Then the team presented the design to the evaluation team leader and explained how it would work. The first design which used the Alternative Analysis tool did not meet with the approval of the evaluation team leader. Based on the feedback from the evaluation team leader, the team had to adjust the tools to meet the expectations of the evaluation team exactly. The option to adjust the tools as the process proceeded was available and explained to the evaluation team leader.

3.1. Evaluation Team Constraints

Certain constraints mandated the evaluation team’s activities. The evaluation had to be segmented with each separate assessment done independently and not as a comparative exercise. The evaluators had to focus on one factor and one vendor at a time.

The overall factor appraisal had to be substantiated with documentation and cites to portions of the proposal and cross-referenced to the SOW. Therefore, each factor had to reflect evaluation comments from evaluators for each of the subfactors listed in section 2.4. above. The initial vote had to match the published ratings as Unacceptable, Deficient, Acceptable, Superior, or Outstanding.

Another aspect of the rating for each factor for each vendor was an overall estimate of the risks involved in using this vendor for the specific factor. The risks were listed as high risk, medium risk, and low risk.

The overall score on each factor had to fit a numerical weight which had been specified ahead of time. For example, (not exact numbers per the procurement process, but here for illustration purposes), past performance had a total of 20 points; hardware, 15 points, etc., to total 100 points for the entire score.

3.2. Selection of Tools

The facilitation team created the sessions by the evaluation criteria factors: vendor supplied support, hardware, software, computer system performance and scalability, and past performance. For each factor, an activity was created for each vendor for the following subdivisions: Strengths, Weaknesses, Vote, Risk, and Overall score.

The selection of tools for the various subdivisions was as follows:

- Strengths = Categorizer
- Weaknesses = Categorizer
- Vote = Vote
- Risk = Vote
- Overall Score = Alternative Analysis

In the Strengths and Weaknesses activities, for each of the factors (vendor supplied support, hardware, software, computer system performance and scalability, and past performance) all subfactors listed in section 2.4 were identified as the “buckets” for each one. As an answer to the needs of the evaluation team for the session activity, the facilitation team created a place to put the evaluators’ comments.

The vote tools were matched with the required ratings and risk levels. The first Vote tool took the same subfactors directly from the Strengths and Weaknesses as the voting items. The ratings were Unacceptable,
Deficient, Acceptable, Superior, or Outstanding for each of the subfactors. Unacceptable was assigned a weight of 1; Deficient, 2; Acceptable, 3; Superior, 4; and Outstanding, 5. For the Risk Rating Vote tool, high risk was assigned a weight of 3; medium risk, 2; and low risk, 1.

The evaluation team had a need to reach consensus on the overall score. The alternative analysis tool was chosen. Consensus in the minds of this evaluation team was agreement as to an exact score. The facilitation team accommodated the evaluation team on this request and implemented the method of voting as Allocation of points.

### 3.3. Pre-Session Preparations

Pre-loading the data was an essential building block to success in this project. Each evaluator had large text files worth of comments on each factor and subfactors. This data was pre-loaded into the tools before the start of each session.

When the evaluation team convened, the framework of the evaluation criteria appeared the same for each of the four vendors and for each factor and sub-factor. The difference on each activity was that the evaluator’s comments were already resident in the tool for the other team members to review.

A representative agenda is seen in Figure 1 below. No times were attached to the agenda due to the uncertain nature of the length of time required to discuss each factor completely. The facilitation team estimated that the evaluation of two factors for all four vendors could be completed in one working day. After one factor was finished totally for all four vendors, the team would move to the next factor and repeated the process.

For the Categorizer tools, the facilitation team put the corresponding subfactors as the “buckets.” Each major factor had a unique set of subfactors. The same subfactors became the ballot items in the Vote tool which immediately followed the discussion of the strengths and weaknesses.

A representative illustration of the major factor with subfactors is shown in Figure 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VENDOR SUPPLIED SUPPORT</th>
<th>SUBFACTORS (“BUCKETS”)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VENDOR #1</td>
<td>SUPPORT SERVICES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MAINTENANCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VENDOR #2</td>
<td>CONTRACT MANAGEMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INSTALLATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TRAINING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DOCUMENTATION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2. Detail of Categorizer Activity for Vendor #1 for Vendor Supplied Support**

The design of the risk rating is described in Section 3.2. The design for the Alternative Analysis was minimal; each team member only had to enter a value from 0 to the maximum allowed number of points for that major factor.

The design included the logic that the evaluation for each factor for each vendor was exactly the same. Therefore, the initial design for each of the factors, subfactors, risks, and overall score were exactly the same for each vendor. This uniformity guaranteed the USPS fairness and equity in evaluating each offeror using the published criteria.

The facilitators used a feedback instrument to get information from the evaluators as to their expectations and concerns. The evaluation team members had an opportunity to express their opinions as to the effectiveness of the work, the activities, or any other comments they wanted to make. The group had the opportunity to review their own products and recommend self-improvement activities.

### 4. Results

The first session was held on 2 December 1997. The original plan was to complete and document all the vendors against all the factors in 3 days and continue the next week, if needed. GroupSystems for Windows was used at all these meetings. The length of time required to complete all the original agenda items which was the complete evaluation of the proposals took a total of six working sessions.
The team realized in the second day that they would be unable to finish all the required work even with the aid of the decision support software. The work was continued in January 1998 for a combined total of eight working days. The additional working days in January were the result of the need to evaluate answers to questions that had been posed to the offerors.

4.1. First Meeting

The first meeting was held 2 December 1997 with 6 participant workstations using GroupSystems for Windows. Since the process was repeatable, the facilitation team created a training exercise for the evaluation team using the skeleton framework of all the GSWin tools for the factors and the votes. However, the exercise “problem” was to evaluate a well-known vendor for the “acquisition of an office copier.”

The evaluation team quickly and easily saw how their larger problem of evaluating the four offerors in the Midrange Computer Acquisition would be handled. The evaluation team had time to pose questions about how comments would be handled, where their summary comments could be place, and to get a feel for how the process would work.

4.1.1. Significant Events. The warm-up exercise helped to get the meeting off to a good start. The ability to read the comments of all the participants quickly, to recognize that the input was anonymous, and to understand that all the comments were in writing greatly satisfied them. This recognition gave the group confidence in the tools and gave an energetic start to the work session.

The rest of the activities for the day included actual evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the Vendor Supplied Support. Comments that they had recorded earlier had been transferred to the tools. As they worked on each section, they had a baseline of information against which to read, question, and analyze the various points previously made by an evaluator.

4.1.2. Analysis. For the factor, Vendor Supplied Support, the numbers of comments collected and those included in the summary are noted for Vendor #1 in Figure 3. This table illustrates the complexity of the factor and serves as a representative of the other factors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VENDOR</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUPPLIED SPT</td>
<td>Strengths 31 Comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weaknesses 0 Comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vote 4 Scale of 1-5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall Score 13 Allocation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Risk Rating 1 Scale of 1-5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary 21 Comments transferred</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Results for Vendor #1
Vendor Supplied Support

Vendor #1 received many comments and a low risk factor. Although the evaluation team did not compare at all, Vendor #4 had a different score and fewer numbers of comments as shown in Figure 4 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VENDOR</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUPPLIED SPT</td>
<td>Strengths 7 Comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weaknesses 1 Comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vote 3 Scale of 1-5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall Score 10 Allocation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Risk Rating 1 Scale of 1-5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary 16 Comments transferred</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. Results for Vendor #4
Vendor Supplied Support

The first day had the evaluation team working out the process to their satisfaction. The nature of the evaluation process was standard and the groupware put a structure in place for the criteria. Very few changes were made. The major shift was towards the ease of documentation, the realization of how fair the process was, and the understanding that verbal discussion was key in coming to consensus.

4.2 Subsequent Meetings

In all, eight electronic meetings were held. Meetings were held from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. A routine became established as to how the meetings were run. Each evaluator who had “specialized” in the major factor acted as the lead when the discussion occurred for each factor.

4.2.1. Significant Events. The evaluation team got into a rhythm of reviewing the comments for the Strengths
and Weaknesses. All valid comments with which they agreed were transferred to a Microsoft Word file where they were compiled for the evaluator in a “Summary” to use when writing the justification for the score. This part was the most painstaking since discussions and questions had to be documented and answered. Details of where and how the evaluator had determined the comments were important to the group. The next sections on Vote, Risks, and Overall Score were less time-consuming since the basic discussion occurred during the discussion of the Strengths and the Weaknesses.

4.2 Analysis. The group input was the area of greatest discussion. Evaluation comments on which the group could not agree were discarded. Other comments were rewritten to the satisfaction of the entire group. Many comments were transferred to the “Summary.”

The validation of the Strengths and Weaknesses came when the Vote came on each of the subfactors. If a score seemed low and the number of comments did not justify that score, the evaluation team had a “check and balance” to ensure that the score was valid. The facilitation team required justification for each score and adjustments were made as the evaluators discussed each discrepancy.

The technographer/co-facilitator became the focus of the management of the agreed-upon information. Consensus had to be reached on all the comments. Comments that were not relevant were discarded. The agenda had the basic pieces for each factor: Strengths, Weaknesses, Vote, Risks, and Overall Score.

The sharing of all the data on the overhead projection kept the group focused on the comments and the facilitator encouraged the evaluators to discuss openly their varying opinions and ideas.

5. Benefits of the collaborative approach

In this evaluation project, the following were the major benefits gained: documentation, group memory, team cohesiveness, and equity and integrity in the evaluation process.

5.1. Documentation

The evaluation team gained a tremendous advantage towards finalizing their report by having all the agreed-upon comments and ideas in electronic form at the completion of each factor. Team members were able to take a diskette with the information on the factor and begin to work on their report immediately. All the votes and scores were also in electronic form and available to pass to the procurement office, if necessary.

5.2. Group Memory

The evaluation team immediately had a record of what was accomplished. The ability to see in a report what had been done hours or days before kept the group in tune on what had been agreed upon, the decisions the group wanted to carry forth, and uniformity in applying the criteria to the various offerors.

5.3. Team Cohesiveness

This evaluation team had worked together on other projects in other combinations. The camaraderie and fun that resulted as a consequence from this extremely structured evaluation made it easy to dispense with difficult matters.

5.4. Equity and Integrity in the Evaluation Process

The greatest strength of the collaboration was the standard, parallel input that the group could develop in the groupware tools. The ability to see comments, to agree upon the wording, to have instant access to group decisions, and to have all the evaluation in exactly the same format added to the facility of the evaluation process.

6. LESSONS LEARNED

Although the evaluation team did not document specific lessons learned, the authors identified five specific areas on which to focus:
1) Evaluators must prepare written documentation before the team convenes;
2) The evaluation team and the facilitation team must know the rules and guidelines before beginning the process;
3) The facilitation team must be flexible and not rush the evaluators;
4) The evaluation team has to agree upon, for documentation purposes, the information that will be disclosed to the vendors;
5) The facilitation team must educate the evaluators on how the “electronic” evaluation process is conducted.

The first area to focus on involves each individual on the evaluation team preparing written comments regarding each vendor before convening with the
facilitation team and the rest of the evaluation team. Evaluators were given a packet of information which contained the criteria and were instructed to document their objective thoughts and opinions as to the merit of the proposal. The preparation time allowed each evaluator to review the proposal, the SOW, and reflect on the different criteria at his/her own pace. The evaluators were prepared once they entered the room with the facilitation team. The compilation of comments saved time for the team to accomplish their goals in six working days.

Second, the authors studied the SOW, the traditional USPS evaluation process, and all supporting documentation that was available. One participant’s comment in the feedback report stated, “the facilitators were well organized and familiar with the groupware and the evaluation process (so) we did not have to educate them or ‘wait’ for them to catch up.” The evaluators must also know the guidelines in which they need to follow. Several times after a decision was reached, the evaluation team had consult with the contracts officer to verify the guidelines. If rules and guidelines were clear during the preparation time, the time spent in the groupware sessions perhaps could be reduced.

The third lesson that is integral to the evaluation process is the ability to be flexible and not rush the evaluators. Several times the evaluation team would need to spend extra time on one criterion or the other. The evaluation process is so delicate that each specific criteria had to be given ample discussion time and thought.

On many occasions, the evaluators could not reach consensus during the first recorded vote. Therefore, the evaluators would have a verbal discussion and vote one or more times again. The Alternative Analysis tool with its supporting graphic results proved to be extremely helpful for the group to see the discrepancies in voting. Looking to the documented strengths and weaknesses also aided the group in seeing if the vote was valid or not. Documenting only the final vote and final agreed upon comments alleviates confusion. The team only needed to pass to Procurement the final decisions of the evaluation team. So rather than save every vote, raw comment, and idea, which would have meant sifting through pages and pages of text in order to find final decisions, the facilitation team with the evaluators combed through every line and finalized them before moving to the next tool.

Even though the evaluation team was given a demonstration the first day on how the evaluation process would proceed, they did not know what to expect before the first day. Educating the evaluators on the process before they begin their preparatory work is critical. One evaluator commented, “Would have been helpful to get a demonstration of this tool before we started our evaluation, so everyone would have been more prepared with their written comments.”

7. Conclusions

At the conclusion of the sessions, the feedback from the USPS evaluation team for Midrange Computer Acquisition complimented the Battelle team for their joint electronic collaborative effort. They all agreed that the use of EMS was a critical success factor in managing the work of this team.

Selected comments from the evaluation team were as follows:

- “The evaluation worked well together and a great deal of useful information was exchanged. The groupware was a valuable tool. The group session was enhanced by good facilitation.”
- “Groupware provided organization to the evaluation process, so that all evaluation factors were well discussed and documented. Battelle facilitators were well organized and familiar with the groupware and the evaluation process we were using.”
- “Groupware is very useful when you have a collection of people working on a collection of areas. It documents the results well and allows for both anonymous voting, and makes it easy to see when you have consensus.”

Based on the eight meetings that were held and the comments provided by the evaluation team, the authors can conclude that electronic support of the meetings did have an important effect on the successful evaluation of the proposals.

Using the lessons learned, other efforts in evaluating government contract proposals are possible replicating the methodology developed here. The methodology is repeatable, reliable, structured, and equitable. Customizing the tools to each SOW and its evaluation criteria is a must, but the basic foundations and underlying logic will guide the facilitation team in a faster preparation time.

Note: The views contained in this article are solely the views of the authors and do not represent the official opinions of the United States Postal Service.
References


