



5

BEST PRACTICES FOR PUBLIC SECTOR IT PROCUREMENT

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INTRODUCTION

In government, strategic technology deployments can increase productivity and reduce costs. Deploying new technology that meets compliance regulations is vital to the success of any organization. Purchasing and implementing the optimal solutions within a governmental body can be particularly challenging due to each department and agency's unique composition and specific security requirements.

To help navigate the complex public sector landscape, Brother outlines five Best Practices to assist acquisition professionals. This will help contract professionals to avoid pitfalls in the procurement process.

BEST PRACTICE

1

PURCHASE STRATEGICALLY

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To avoid overspending on a single solution that addresses a singular problem, procurement professionals should consider a strategic purchase. This means taking the bigger technology picture into account and evaluating full department needs, processes, and productivity as a whole.

For example, research by Brother shows that IT buyers, including those in government, can overspend by up to 90 percent each month on copier leases and managed print services. This can be resolved by assessing actual print volumes prior to making an acquisition. Efficient and effective procurements are then made according to actual print volumes needed, thus avoiding waste.

For any government body, whether federal, state, or municipal, Brother recommends conducting a full assessment of each department's existing needs before deploying new devices in order to ensure that only the necessary features, functionality, and capacity are procured.

BEST PRACTICE

2

PROACTIVELY INVEST IN SECURITY

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Private sector businesses everywhere are underinvesting in IT security—the public sector cannot afford to make the same mistake.

The seemingly unending news of 'hacks' lends the impression that there is no solution to the widespread cybersecurity problem, and what's more, proactively addressing security does equate to an expense. Fixing a security issue after a system has been breached is always more expensive than ensuring adequate protection ahead of time, and for government, the consequences afterwards can be far more severe. Procuring security measures up front will help deter, lower, and prevent hacking, as well as lower overall risk and any consequential data breach costs.

BEST PRACTICE

3

EMBRACE INNOVATION

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When it comes to IT, there is a tendency among any purchasing professionals to stick to old approaches or proven, tested technologies from the incumbent or known vendor. Learning or acquiring new technologies can be intimidating and can pose risk.

In the federal government, the adoption of cloud-based computing solutions is at the very forefront of procurement.

While most senior executives in government understand the need for cloud migration and the efficiencies and cost savings it brings, some are still wary. The learning curve required to understand implementing a federal government cloud-based approach requires knowledge of the complex compliance and security issues outlined in the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) and FedRAMP certifications.

All government agencies are faced with similar IT conditions that should, and are, prompting cloud considerations. This includes replacing dated technology and considering when a cloud-based approach will make good fiscal and logistical sense. In addition, the entire public sector owes it to taxpayers to continually strive for new ways to operate more efficiently; that alone makes a thorough consideration of cloud-based approaches very warranted.

BEST PRACTICE

4

CONSIDER EVERYONE

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While no one can predict the future, public sector procurement professionals across local, state, and federal agencies are dealing with cultural shifts in the workforce. **Strategically planning for distributed and remote workers and the need for wireless connectivity, as well as for long-term IT needs, is essential to government entities carrying out their missions.**

Public or private, the modern workforce demands flexibility in when, where, and on which device they work. Acquisition professionals need to recognize the importance of a compliant and secure wireless technology infrastructure to support an increasingly mobile or distributed workforce. Current infrastructure may not be sufficient to keep up with demand. Bandwidth is a common problem on government networks that are saturated with laptops, tablets, and smartphones. Assessing and updating wireless infrastructure can be expensive but should be part of the procurement process. Neglecting to address the issue leads to even costlier impacts on productivity.

BEST PRACTICE

5

VALUE-BASED PROCUREMENT OVER PRICE

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Lowest price technically acceptable (LPTA) acquisitions are common, yet failing to make the necessary investments up front can often lead to unnecessary downtime and security issues.

While budget limitations are a reality, government agencies can avoid the pitfalls of LPTA by approaching IT challenges with factual decision-making. More knowledge leads to better IT strategies. By linking IT functions to specific outcomes, agencies can easily justify making larger purchases or redeploying unused assets. This approach can help procurers win buy-in, thus extracting the full value from new solutions and the existing technology.

SUMMARY

Deploying optimal IT solutions anywhere can be challenging. If government procurement specialists implement best practices and maintain awareness of the pitfalls, they will be better positioned to take advantage of new approaches and technologies, as well as exceed compliance and meet increasing security regulations.

BROTHER CAN HELP

Brother can help your agency with reviews, assessments, and evaluating existing output and input infrastructure. Brother will ensure your workflows are optimized and that you get the most from your allocated budget dollars. Please visit: <https://brothersolutions.com/industry/government/>.

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