



Steps



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From the Editor

Fall is underway, and GSA is proud to announce the successful end of fiscal year 2008. Take a look at the article about General Supplies and Services' (GSS) performance measure results. Thanks to our Schedule contract holders and acquisition personnel under that business portfolio, GSS accomplished great things this past year. The Office of Acquisition Management is proud to announce the creation of the Schedules Program Office. Be sure to read more about its purpose in this edition of *Steps*. In addition to successes under the Multiple Award Schedule program, Global Supply is also accomplishing great things and making program changes. Enjoy this issue, and please direct all questions and comments to Sheri Meadema at sheri.meadema@gsa.gov



ePay Update

GSA is now in its sixth year of allowing contractors to electronically remit the Industrial Funding Fee (IFF) online, and the program is stronger than ever. Currently we receive almost 75% of our payments (over 30,000 e-payments for fiscal year 2008 alone!) online via credit cards and online checks. If you haven't had a chance to take advantage of this opportunity, we encourage you to give it a try in the next reporting month. It's fast, it's free, and it's easy to do. You can use any major credit card for payments less than \$100,000, or you can use your bank account (via online check) for any amount.

After you report your sales at the Vendor Support Center (<http://vsc.gsa.gov/>) website, simply click 'Pay Online' and you will be directed to the Treasury Department's

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secure website, pay.gov, to enter your payment information. Neither GSA nor the Treasury stores any account information that you enter.

Also check out the recently added "Pay Online Now" selection from your GSA Contract menu. This option allows you to make an electronic payment at any time, for any amount. If you owe money for previously reported sales, or you need to pay a prior balance owed, the "Pay Online Now" option is for you.

If you have any questions or would like to let us know how ePay is working for you, please contact your Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO).

General Supplies and Services Multiple Award Schedules Fiscal Year 2008 Performance Measures

The General Supplies and Services (GSS) portfolio manages thirty-four non-IT Multiple Award Schedules (MAS) across six Acquisition Centers. The GSS portfolio relies on strategic planning and performance measures to guide its operations and uses these tools to translate strategies into measurable actions and meaningful business results. Using the Balanced Scorecard approach, the organization focuses its energy and resources on improvements in four areas: financial management, customer service, internal operations and workforce initiatives.

The primary GSS fiscal year 2008 performance measures were focused on increasing the efficiency of processing modifications, improving timeliness and responsiveness, increasing use of e-tools, and refreshing the services/products available through Schedules. We also established a new measure to emphasize the criticality of timely processing of Options, a key area for us, our customers, and our industry partners.

We are proud to report that in 2008, GSS performed well on its key measures. Business volume was up by \$2.3 billion; contractor satisfaction with our responsiveness was up significantly, processing times improved; electronic contracting advanced, and we introduced over a dozen major new service areas to our Schedules. A few of these additions include acquisition support services, construction

management services, ancillary repair and alteration, social services, dry-dock services, cemetery maintenance, energy services offerings, firefighters and other protective services, and many others.

In 2008 GSS received 13,965 requests for contract modifications, an increase of over 1,200 from the year before. We also received 3,120 new offers, an increase of over 100 from the year before.

Thank you to GSS employees and our contractors for helping us achieve this level of success. Contractors can help speed the processing of modifications and options by first, ensuring they understand the data required, second, meeting key dates, and third, reading and complying with their contract and flagging key issues early.

Following is a chart illustrating the 2008 results for some of GSS's key performance measures.

GSS fiscal year 2009 performance measures, baselines, and targets are now in place. Our focus will be much the same as in 2008, but with more aggressive targets and enhanced actions plans to help exceed the targets. Look for a report of progress on our fiscal year 2009 measures in future *Steps* newsletters.

Jeff Koses, Director
Office of Acquisition Operations
General Supplies and Services

Performance Measures	FY 07 Result	FY 08 Result
Business volume	\$17.4B	\$19.7B
Percentage of electronic modifications	4.5%	6.5%
Cycle time to process modifications	16.1 days	11.8 days
Processing of Options at least 30 days before contract expiration	New	29%
External customer satisfaction	69.9	70.9
Contracting official responsiveness and effectiveness during offer process (from monthly survey)	68	84
Contracting official responsiveness and effectiveness during modification process (from monthly survey)	61	77
Cycle time to process offers	72.3 days	64.8 days
Percentage of electronic offers	5.2%	12.3%
Socioeconomic business volume	35.4%	34.9%

To Novate or Not to Novate, or What's in a Name?

In government-speak, a novation occurs when one company purchases another company. Sometimes, a company may determine a need to change their legal business name. This is known as a Change of Name Agreement. It's different than a novation, and it requires different (and less!) paperwork. In either case, the contractor must submit a written request to their Contracting Officer.

Let's go over novations first. GSA may choose to recognize a third party as the successor in interest to a contract when the third party's interest in the contract stems from the transfer of (1) all the contractor's assets, or (2) the entire portion of the assets involved in performing the contract. A novation is not necessary when there is (1) a change in the ownership of a contractor as a result of a stock purchase, (2) when it is not in the best interest of the government, or (3) there is significant organizational conflict.

What's required as part of the novation package? Three signed copies of the novation agreement with supporting documentation should be provided to the Contracting Officer for review and approval. Once approved, the Contracting Officer will issue a formal modification to the contract.

A Change of Name Agreement may be processed if only a change in name is involved, and the GSA's and the contractor's rights and obligations remain unaffected. Similar to a novation, three signed copies of the agreement with supporting documentation should be forwarded to the Contracting Officer for review and approval. Once approved, the Contracting Officer will issue a formal modification to the contract.

For additional details, including the template required for Novation Agreements, please see FAR Subpart 42.12—Novation and Change of Name Agreements. Please direct all questions to your Procurement Contracting Officer (PCO) or Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO).

12 Sources Sought Notices – Tips for Success

As an industry partner seeking federal opportunities, you probably have seen or responded to a Sources Sought notice on the FedBizOpps website. A Sources Sought notice is a way for federal agencies to survey the marketplace for companies or solutions that can meet their requirements or validate their proposed approach to a solution.

In responding to Sources Sought notices, here are some tips to keep in mind:

1. Read the notice carefully.
2. Be sure to clarify any items or language that is unclear prior to preparing your response.
3. Ask the requesting Contracting Officer and Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization for information regarding the acquisition strategy. Many organizations post their small business office or representative's e-mail address on their website so this information is publicly available to you.
4. Know the customer and context of the potential acquisition. Let it inform your response.
5. Offer evidence of your company's technical approach when proposing the organization pursue a particular technical solution or direction.
6. Proofread your response for technical clarity, spelling and organization.
7. Inform them of the GSA contracts held by your company that fit their requirement. These may include Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) contracts, Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs) for information technology, or GSA contracts for network services.
8. Offer to meet with them to follow up.
9. If responding via e-mail, include the organization's small business specialist or office as a 'cc' addressee so they are aware of the Sources Sought notice and of your company's response.
10. Make sure your response is timely.
11. Be persuasive and persistent, but don't spam the designated point(s) of contact.
12. Inform your GSA Contracting Officer if you have questions, issues or concerns pertaining to your MAS or GWAC contract language or policy.

MAS Vendors Will No Longer be Permitted to Place NSNs in the NSN Field on GSA Advantage!

National Stock Numbers (NSNs) are government assigned and technically managed part numbers based on design/performance specifications associated with the contract awarded and specifications in place at the time of award. GSA managed NSNs are supplied by GSA Global Supply ONLY. GSA Global Supply's sale of items at www.GSAglobalsupply.gsa.gov and *GSA Advantage!* implies an expressed "warranty" to the customer that the items purchased with reference to the NSN meet all technical, packaging/marketing, and safety requirements for the supply item.

Multiple Award Schedule contracts are not

awarded to provide NSN requirements. In order to best serve our customers and maintain the integrity of the NSN products offered by Global Supply, GSA will no longer accept NSNs for MAS products in the NSN field on *GSA Advantage!* The display of an NSN will only be allowed when the vendor is GSA Global Supply or when the supplier is Ability One.

Please note that the current data in *GSA Advantage!* will be screened to remove NSN references and prevent use in future SIP loads. Please contact Michele Broccolino on 703-605-2821 or at michele.broccolino@gsa.gov with any questions.

Keep it Moving!

The General Services Administration (GSA) has within its supply chain two distribution centers, one located in French Camp, California and the other located in Burlington, New Jersey to fulfill our customers' supply requirements in a timely manner.

In order for GSA to meet our customers' needs, we must expeditiously process all incoming freight into our inventory so it may be available for issue. This begins with the carrier providing our GSA receiving personnel with the necessary documentation, consisting of the



Bill of Lading (BOL) identifying the material with its National Stock Number (NSN), shipper, consignee, Purchase Order Number, weight, quantity, BOL Number, and shipping freight cost. This information is entered into the inventory database to track material that is available for issue to our customers.

Please ensure that the carrier has a copy of the BOL in hand to give to our receiving personnel so the incoming freight may be processed quickly into our inventory, as well as payment to our vendors.

Packaging, Packing, and Marking Information Posted

Packaging, packing, and marking information is now posted on the Vendor Support Center (VSC) website. Stock and SOP suppliers can find the current version of Fed Std 123, Mil Std 129, and sample shipping labels, along with convenient information that helps them comply with these often-misunderstood requirements.

You can view these materials on the VSC website at <http://vsc.gsa.gov/> Under the "Contract Administration" tab, select "GSA Stock and SOP."

Creation of the New MAS Program Office

In July 2008, the Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) created the Multiple Award Schedules (MAS) Program Office. This new office is devoted to MAS program improvement and will champion the program's overall success by:

- Ensuring strategic alignment across the program
- Serving as the central focal point for coordinating with key government stakeholders on program-wide issues
- Developing and implementing MAS acquisition implementation policy and guidance
- Defining system requirements for key shared applications
- Coordinating innovative program-wide improvements
- Coordinating the development of new and updated offerings under the program
- Providing strategic messaging content for MAS-based communications and training

General Supplies and Services (GS&S), Integrated Technology Services (ITS), and Travel, Motor Vehicle, and Card Services (TMVCS) will retain management control and operational responsibility for the Schedules within their portfolios. The Program Office will partner with these business portfolios, as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs through a Governance Council to foster collaboration and mutual goals.

The Desks aim to increase the quality of modification data, improve workload management capabilities, and introduce even more automation into our processes.

Mr. Robin Bourne serves as the Director of the MAS PO, which resides in the Office of Acquisition Management in Crystal City, Virginia.

So, what does this mean for you? In mid-November, Central Intake Desks are being established to improve the contract modification process. The Desks aim to increase the quality of modification data, improve workload management capabilities, and introduce even more automation into our processes. Near the end of the fiscal year, look for additional modification improvement efforts to streamline the process for addition products and fixed priced services to schedules contracts, which should result in improved availability of offerings under the MAS program. Other efforts in the future include improving the exercise of contract options and improving customer ordering flexibilities. On the policy side, we will be looking toward greater transparency and consistency in guidance and implementation.

More to come...stay tuned!

