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# Writing Specifications for Results

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# Objectives

- Definition and Purpose Specifications
- How to Get Started Writing Specifications
- Types of Specifications Used in State of Georgia
- Resources Available
- Content
- Managing Risk Potential
- Determining Effectiveness





# Definition and Purpose



# Definition of Specifications

- A precise description of the physical or functional characteristics of a product, good or construction item
- A description of what the purchaser seeks to buy (bidder must be responsive in order to be considered for award of contract)
- Includes contract terms and conditions





# Purpose of Specifications

- Used to compare offers of products or services to stated requirements
- Should not restrict competition
- Serves as the heart of the competitive sourcing selection process
- Critical statement of what the government seeks to meet its needs



# Exercise



## Exercise



- Partners will sit back to back of each other
- Partner A will describe to Partner B the object/process in the picture (without saying what the item is)
- Partner B will write a description of the item being describe to them
- After all 3 items are described, partners will match description to picture



# How to Get Started





# How to Get Started

- Review or research similar solicitations
  - think outside the box
  - look at other states for suggestions
- Identify who should be involved in the preparation
- Strive for brevity when applicable
- Identify acceptable level of performance
- Focus on completeness, consistence, and correctness





# Types of Specifications



# Types of Specifications Used in GA

Performance	Design
Sole Brand	Sole Source
Brand or Trade Name	Qualified Product List (QPL)

Identifying the type of specification to use, depends on the commodity, its characteristics, and what is needed.



# Performance Specifications

A description of a product or service that provides a general functional recital of performance characteristics required to achieve an end result or outcome desired.





# Design Specifications

- A specification that establishes the characteristics an item must possess, including detail indicating how it is to be manufactured
- Details physical characteristics, appearance, connectivity, size, weight, etc.
- Often restrict competition or are proprietary
- Frequently used in contracting for the construction of infrastructure projects and highly technical or specialized projects





# Sole Brand Specifications

- Identify by name, model number or other details or designations, a specific product manufactured by a specific manufacture
- Simplifies the responsibility of procurement professional
- Reduces competition
- Commonly used when buying replacement parts for equipment and standardization



# Sole Source Specifications

- A unique item or service available from only one supplier
- Commonly used when a supplier is a patent holder
- Obtained through non-competitive bidding
- Requires strong justification and research
  - Compatibility
  - Existing Contract
  - Uniqueness





# Qualified Product List (QPL) Specifications



- A list of items or services that have been examined and tested, and have satisfied all applicable qualification requirements
- Restricts bidders to those product/services on the list
- Tends to limit competition to only those pre-approved products/services for that particular bid





# Brand or Trade Name Specifications

- Use of one or more manufacturers' brand name with identifying model number to describe the standards of quality, performance and other characteristics needed to meet the requirements of the solicitation
- Invites bids for equivalent products from any manufacture
- End-user reserves the right to determine equivalency



# Resources Available



## Resources Available

- Georgia Procurement Registry  
([https://ssl.doas.state.ga.us/PRSapp/PR\\_login.jsp](https://ssl.doas.state.ga.us/PRSapp/PR_login.jsp))
- National Institute of Government Purchasing  
(<http://www.nigp.org/>)
- Other States ([naspo.org](http://naspo.org))
- Professional Societies



# Contents



# Contents

- Background and context
- Scope of Work
- Target Groups
- Delivery timelines
- Payment terms and incentives
- Risk Identification and responsible party
- Performance measures
- Progress Reporting
- Contact Person



# Manage Risk Potential



# Manage Risk Potential

- Consider:
  - Future Probability
  - Probability or likelihood
  - Consequence
- Key Activities:
  - Reduction (treat)
  - Removal
  - Transfer
  - Retention
  - Share
- Consider Need for Bonds and/or Insurance





# Determining Effectiveness





# Determining Effectiveness

- Step back, request different set of eyes to review
- Consider flexibility options
- Assess competitiveness
- Consider current:
  - Market
  - Design
  - Manufacturing





## Determining Effectiveness

- Outcomes – what are you trying to achieve
- Outputs – what are the measurable services or activities the supplier must deliver to achieve outcome
- Inputs – details of how to meet outcome



# Determining Effectiveness

- Are there loopholes
- Can the capabilities be verified
- Are tolerances reasonable
- Can requirements be met by multiple suppliers
- Is language used concise and understandable
- Are mandatory requirements included
- Have system, design, and staffing needs/support been addressed
- Reporting requirement



## The Genesis of a Specification

In the beginning is the **Need**, and the **Need** is without form, and void. The purchasing agent and the end user, working in close cooperation, **define that need and create a description** of the physical or functional characteristics of a product or service **to meet the need** – thus is born a **specification** in its simplest form.



# Citations

- State of Idaho. Division of Purchasing. Guidelines for Writing Effective Specifications, August 2010
- Department of Administrative Services State Purchasing. Writing Specifications, June 2005
- Georgia Procurement Manual, January 2016
- Risk Management Guide for DOD Acquisitions, August 2006
- Effective Specification Writing, Dr. J. Gordon Murray