Partnership Process for Electronic Warfare Acquisition

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The complete version of this article can be found on the CROSSTALK
Web site at http://www.stsc.hill.af.mil/CrossTalk/crostalk.html.

The Partnership Process is an acquisition reform initiative that has emerged from the electronic warfare (EW) community. The new process draws on lessons learned from world-class companies to re-engineer EW acquisition. These companies are customer-driven, so the lesson for Air Force acquisition is to respond to the voice of the war fighter by using military worth as the procurement criterion. Top companies maintain open dialog with their suppliers so the Partnership Process emphasizes new ways to foster communication with industry. The best organizations achieve their results through continuous optimization, so we must adopt methods to converge on best solutions.

The new acquisition process can be summarized by six activities (see Table 1) that consistently put superior solutions into the hands of our war fighters as quickly and inexpensively as possible.

These results were achieved through a series of intensive integrated process team meetings that included broad representation from Air Force organizations and the contractor community. Our new process is described in a comprehensive report now available on our Web home page (http://ewio.wpafb.af.mil) and on a CD-ROM available free while supplies last. Currently, our focus is on laying the groundwork for process implementation through a war fighter-led pilot program, the development of an Internet-based training course, and the release of a quick-turn, PC-based decision aid known as the Measures of Effectiveness Tool. The pilot program will demonstrate the application of partnership principles in an area of interest designated by a major command requirements office. The training course will be developed with both government and industry audiences in mind and include the latest reform initiatives (such as the Lightning Bolts) within the holistic view of the partnership. ◆

Table 1. *Measuring military worth forms the foundation for our reformed acquisition process.*

Activity	Innovative Theme
Quantify mission deficiencies.	Base deficiency analysis on war fighter stategy-to-task.
Establish requirements.	Frame the requirement in terms of airspace bought back.
Convey requirements.	Structure Request for Proposal to ask for military worth, not specifications.
Select the source.	Incentivize the contractor to reach beyond thresholds.
Develop the solution.	Continuously optimize the trades to converge to a solution.
Evaluate the result.	Link test and evaluation directly to war fighter needs.

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