

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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THESIS

**AN ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE
UNITED STATES ARMY COMMUNICATIONS-
ELECTRONICS COMMAND (CECOM) AND INDUSTRY**

by

Linda College

December 2002

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**AN ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES
ARMY COMMUNICATIONS-ELECTRONICS COMMAND (CECOM) AND
INDUSTRY**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of

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from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

This research examines the methods of communications utilized between the U. S. Army's Communications-Electronics Command (CECOM), Fort Monmouth, New Jersey and its supplier base. The primary intent is to examine the effectiveness of various communication methods. As part of this discussion of communications, this thesis will discuss various methods utilized by the CECOM Acquisition Center to interface with industry, but will specifically address the effectiveness of three methods. These three methods consist of the Joint Partnering Contractor (JPC), Technical and Industry Liaison Office (TILO) and the US Army Interagency Interactive Business Opportunities Page (IBOP). Finally, this thesis will analyze the effectiveness of the methods utilized by the CECOM Acquisition Center and make recommendations on how these methods can improve.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. DISCUSSION

Effective communications are important between buyers and suppliers. The CECOM Acquisition Center recognizes this and has established means to effectively communicate with their supplier base.

This thesis discusses the effectiveness of CECOM Acquisition Center's methods of communications and compare them to methods used by industry. To make a comparison with industry, research was conducted on a representation of CECOM's customer base. The companies researched were Lockheed Martin, Motorola, Raytheon and Harris Corporation.

As part of this discussion of communications, this thesis discusses various methods utilized by the CECOM Acquisition Center to interface with industry, but specifically addresses three methods. These three methods are the Joint Partnering Contractor (JPC), Technical and Industry Liaison Office (TILO) and the US Army Interagency Interactive Business Opportunities Page (IBOP).

Finally, this thesis analyzes the effectiveness of the methods utilized by the CECOM Acquisition Center and makes recommendations on how these methods can be improved.

B. OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the various methods utilized to interact with industry. The relative effectiveness of each method is analyzed.

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question is:

- How effective are the methods used by CECOM to communicate with industry and how might the process of interfacing with industry be improved?

In support of the primary research question, the following supplementary questions will be examined:

- What methods does CECOM use to interface with industry and what has been their experience with these methods?
- What are CECOM's primary objectives when communicating with industry?
- What is the nature of CECOM's communications with industry?
- What are the primary challenges and issues facing CECOM when they communicate with industry and how does CECOM currently address those issues?
- How do best of class commercial companies communicate with their suppliers and what initiatives have those companies taken to improve communication effectiveness?
- How does CECOM's Joint Partnering Contractor (JPC), Technical and Industry Liaison Office (TILO) and other industry outreach initiatives compare to best of class communications initiatives?
- To what extent have CECOM's Joint Partnering Contractor (JPC) representative, Technical and Industry Liaison Office (TILO), and other initiatives served to enhance communications with industry?
- How might CECOM improve its communications with industry?

D. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A research approach was employed which involved a literature review, informal interviews, website reviews, personal observations, as well as personal experience with the CECOM Acquisition Center. Initial research was conducted via a literature review to obtain insight as to

how "communications" are defined in the business context of the CECOM Acquisition Center. A more in-depth literature search was conducted which focused on the reasons why communications are important to how an Acquisition Center operates.

Informal inquiries were conducted telephonically with various representatives of CECOM's largest suppliers. This sampling represented many of CECOM Acquisition Center's major suppliers. CECOM Acquisition Center has assigned JPCs to the companies that received the largest number of contracts by dollar value. This sampling was intentionally not restricted to these companies.

The informal inquiries were conducted with industry based on the content of their websites. In all instances, companies responded to e-mail sent via their websites. Their responses were done either by e-mail or telephonically.

Interviews of personnel in the CECOM Acquisition Center were also conducted. Representatives of the following areas were informally interviewed:

- CECOM Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization Office
- CECOM Technical Industrial Liaison Office
- Joint Partnering Contract

During the final phase, surveys were developed to enable employees of the CECOM Acquisition Center and industry counterparts to comment on the effectiveness of its communications methods.

A survey was issued to contracting officers of the CECOM Acquisition Center. The survey was designed to

ascertain the extent to which contracting officers had utilized Joint Partnering Contract representatives and afforded them the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of JPCs, IBOP, and the Small Business Office. A copy of the survey is provided as Appendix A.

A listing of all CECOM contracting officers located at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey; Fort Huachuca, Arizona; Washington, D.C.; and Tobyhanna Army Depot, Pennsylvania was obtained using organizational mailing lists. The surveys were electronically disseminated. Responses were received in this manner from the majority of respondents. A few respondents replied thru interoffice mail, which allowed for anonymity. In either case, preamble instructions to the survey assured responses would be kept confidential.

A survey was issued to current and former Joint Partnering Contractor representatives. The survey was designed to obtain the JPC's opinions of their position and a self-assessment of their effectiveness. A copy of the survey is provided as Appendix B.

A listing of current and former JPCs was obtained by reviewing current and former organizational charts for the CECOM Acquisition Center. The surveys were electronically disseminated. Responses were received in this manner. Unfortunately, this method of distribution and response did not allow for the respondent's anonymity. Also contributing to a lack of anonymity was the small number of people in this data pool. Each respondent was assured in the preamble instructions to the survey that responses would be kept confidential.

A survey was issued to the JPC's industry counterparts. The survey was designed to obtain an assessment from CECOM's major suppliers of the effectiveness of the JPC concept and feedback on the IBOP. A copy of the survey is provided as Appendix C.

A list of industry points of contact was developed by contacting the TILO, JPCs and, as a last resort, the local telephone book. The surveys were electronically disseminated to almost all of these points of contact. In one instance, the local representative requested that the survey be transmitted by data fax. Responses were received either by electronic means or data fax. While neither method provided anonymity, the preamble instructions to the survey assured that responses would be kept confidential.

A survey was issued to consultant firms that had been provided business consultations by TILO. The survey was designed to obtain an assessment of the effectiveness of TILO. A copy of the survey is provided as Appendix D.

A list of points of contact was created by contacting TILO. The companies were contacted and they provided their e-mail addresses. The surveys were electronically disseminated. No responses were received. Follow-up reminders were also provided using electronic means. This reminder generated a single response.

A short survey was issued to TILO. The survey was a follow-up to an earlier interview. The survey was designed to obtain data on performance metrics. A copy of the survey is provided as Appendix E.

The survey was electronically disseminated to TILO. Anonymity could not be provided due to the size of the data pool.

After all of the survey data was collected, each question was analyzed. The analysis of the surveys, as well as all other data collected, is presented in Chapter V.

E. ASSUMPTIONS, LIMITATIONS, SCOPE AND BENEFITS

It is assumed throughout the thesis that the reader is familiar with Government contracting and acquisition procedures. For the purpose of this research effort, the words supplier, contractor and industry are assumed to have equivalent meanings and are used interchangeably throughout this study unless otherwise specified.

The scope of research was limited to a certain degree by the lack of formal information. Some of the research was dependent upon information found on various websites. Several of these websites were frequently updated and information would be restructured or replaced. Also, much of the research was dependent on the knowledge of the subject matter experts who participated in the informal interviews.

Initially one survey was planned. However, due to the broad scope of the subject matter and its functional areas, a total of five surveys were conducted.

The scope of the thesis is the identification of various methods utilized by one unique Acquisition Center and an analysis of their effectiveness. The broad framework developed in this thesis may be applicable to other acquisition activities within the public sector.

This research may benefit the CECOM Acquisition Center by providing an analysis of its communications methods. Also, this research may benefit other acquisition centers and buying activities by providing recommendations on effective communications methods. This research may additionally benefit CECOM's supplier base by providing information on how CECOM Acquisition Center interfaces with industry.

F. LITERATURE REVIEW

Much of the literature reviewed centered on the principles of partnering relationships. Other "literature" sources included the information posted on various websites.

G. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions apply.

1. Partnering

Partnering is defined as a commitment between two or more organizations for the purpose of improving communications and avoiding disputes accomplished through an informal process. [Ref. 1:p. 2]

2. Integrated Product Team (IPT)

An IPT is a group of individuals with different responsibilities and areas of expertise whose collective efforts are required for a specific purpose. It may be a highly effective and efficient means of focusing resources on a task to achieve a solution that best serves the interests of all stakeholders. [Ref. 2]

3. Joint Partnering Contractor Representative (JPC)

The JPC acts as a liaison between the CECOM Acquisition Center and assigned defense contractors. [Ref. 3]

4. US Army Interagency Interactive Business Opportunities Page

A website that allows for the electronic interchange of various documents between industry and the Government. It has been designed to capture the entire solicitation process from posting draft documents to contract award. [Ref. 4]

5. Broad Agency Announcement (BAA)

A general announcement of an agency's research interest including criteria for selecting proposals and soliciting the participation of all offerors capable of satisfying the Government's needs. [Ref. 5]

6. Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR)

A socioeconomic program to promote new ideas generated by small businesses.

7. Engineering Change Proposal (ECP)

A within scope change to the specification of a contract.

8. UNICOR

UNICOR, also referred to as Federal Prison Industries, Inc. (FPI), is a self-supporting, wholly owned Government corporation of the District of Columbia. UNICOR provides training and employment for prisoners confined in Federal penal and correctional institutions through the sale of its supplies and services to Government agencies. UNICOR diversifies its supplies and services to prevent private industry from experiencing unfair competition from prison workshops or activities. [Ref. 5]

9. Customer Representative

The Customer Representative acts as a liaison between the CECOM Acquisition Center and assigned customer activity. [Ref. 3]

The next chapter discusses the purpose of good buyer-supplier communications and why it is important, as well as the nature and methods of buyer-supplier communications, including organizational and individual communications. The chapter then discusses the communications issues and challenges encountered by the CECOM Acquisition Center, including the various restrictions imposed on preaward discussions. Finally, the next chapter discusses methods of buyer-supplier communications utilized by Lockheed Martin, Motorola, Raytheon and Harris Corporation.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the objectives and means of buyer-supplier communications and why they are important. This discussion includes issues and challenges. The specific issues confronting buyers and sellers often depend on the phase of the acquisition process. An examination of the methods used by CECOM's customers is also included.

A. PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF GOOD BUYER-SUPPLIER COMMUNICATIONS

The acquisition process can be undermined by adversarial relationships and suspicion between the Government and industry. [Ref. 6:p. 5] Good communication can avoid this pitfall by building trust. [Ref. 6:p. 25] As a result of building trust, increased cooperation between the parties may be realized.

Part of this increased cooperation is a better understanding of the Government's requirements. Industry learns more about what the Government is specifying. The Government learns more about a program's performance risk and the capabilities of the marketplace. [Ref. 7] Mutual goals and objectives are identified. This new teamwork may result in a "win-win" relationship.

B. NATURE AND METHODS OF BUYER-SUPPLIER COMMUNICATIONS

In the market survey phase of an acquisition, CECOM Acquisition Center communicates with Industry to convey future solicitations. Methods used are Advance Planning Briefings for Industry (APBIs) and the US Army Interagency Interactive Business Opportunities Page (IBOP).

APBIs are intended to encourage and promote early and effective dialogue with industry during all phases of the

acquisition planning cycle. APBIs provide industry a broad overview of long-term efforts three to five years prior to solicitation and more specific information on near-term requirements. [Ref. 8]

The IBOP allows for the electronic exchange of documents between industry and the Government. This exchange encompasses the entire solicitation process and allows for the public release of draft requirements documents. [Ref. 4] Draft requirements documents consist of Statements of Work, specifications, and draft solicitations.

In addition to these methods, some Government teams offer the opportunity to meet face-to-face with the contractor's team in a meeting commonly referred to as a "one-on-one". The one-on-one is often offered as part of the APBI or a Presolicitation Conference. Subsequent to the formal briefing, a contractor is able to convey feedback in a private setting. Presolicitation Conferences or Industry Day briefings are held early in the acquisition process to obtain feedback from industry on a single program's requirements, acquisition strategy and technical performance requirements.

The objective of these communications is learning more about the Government's requirements, industry capabilities, and how this exchange can help in the requirements definition phase.

As an entire organization, the CECOM Acquisition Center communicates with industry. Routine suppliers are frequently afforded the opportunity to meet with CECOM's Commanding General and also meet with the Director of the

Acquisition Center. These meetings are coordinated through the CECOM Technical and Industry Liaison Office (TILO). [Ref. 9] The objective of these communications is improving and maintaining long-term relationships with suppliers.

Another method used is the JPC. The top six contractors that the CECOM Acquisition Center does business with are assigned a JPC. A JPC is a Group Chief at the GS-14 level who is the focal point for communications with that particular contractor.

Specific offices deal with contractors in person in order to provide industry more information on how to become a CECOM supplier. TILO and Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization Office (SADBUO) provide this service. An objective of this communication is to cultivate and expand the supplier base.

Specific acquisition programs interface with industry in the postaward phase by adopting the tool of partnering and including industry on integrated product teams. Both of these methods cultivate open communication to the mutual benefit of both parties. Partnering is a mandatory CECOM provision in all solicitations estimated to be valued over \$10,000,000. This solicitation clause is as follows:

Partnering

In an effort to most effectively accomplish the objectives of this contract, it is proposed that the Government, the contractor and its major subcontractors engage in the United States Army Material Command (AMC) Partnering for Success process.

Participation in the Partnering process is entirely voluntary and it based upon a mutual commitment between Government and industry to work cooperatively as a team to identify and resolve problems and facilitate contract performance. The primary objective of the process is to acquire the highest quality supplies/services on time and at a reasonable price. Partnering requires the parties to look beyond the strict bounds of the contract in order to formulate actions that promote their common goals and objectives. It is a relationship that is based upon open and continuous communication, mutual trust and respect and the replacement of the "us vs. them" mentality of the past with a "win-win" philosophy for the future. Partnering also promotes synergy, creative thinking, pride in performance, effective conflict management and the creation of a shared vision for success.

After contract award, the Government and the successful offeror will decide whether or not to engage in the Partnering process. Accordingly, offerors shall not include any anticipated costs associated with the implementation of the Partnering process in their proposed cost/price (e.g., cost of hiring a facilitator and conducting the Partnering Workshop.) If the parties elect to partner, any costs associated with that process shall be identified and agreed to after contract award.

The establishment of the Partnering arrangement does not affect the legal responsibilities or relationship of the parties and cannot be used to alter, supplement or deviate from the terms of the contract. Any changes to the contract must be executed in writing by the Contracting Officer.

Implementation of this Partnering relationship will be based upon the AMC Model Partnering for Success Process, as well as the principles and procedures set forth in the AMC Partnering for Success Guide. The principal Government representatives for this effort will be _____ (include names, positions, and roles in contract

administration.)

(End of clause) [Ref. 10]

C. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

1. Presolicitation

The General Accounting Office (GAO) has recognized that the Government benefits greatly from preprocurement discussions with industry. The GAO has held that discussions with potential suppliers are often necessary and beneficial for an agency to determine just what its minimum needs are. An agency cannot accomplish the definition of its requirements in a vacuum.

Government personnel need to know the actual capabilities of the marketplace so that they can better define their requirements and prepare statements of work in a way that does not restrict competition. To understand the marketplace, Government personnel must gather information from industry, but to do that, they first must give information. For example, if a Government engineer asks a contractor, "What can your company do for us?," the likely response will be, "Well, what do you need?" [Ref. 7]

How are presolicitation communications restricted? Pursuant to Public Law 101-189, National Defense Authorization Act of 1990, the Department of Defense (DOD) published an interim rule on the release of information, identified as DOD Directive 5200.xx, Release of Acquisition Related Information. This rule established a policy to make the maximum amount of acquisition-related information available to the public. This rule restricts the release of certain categories of information. These restrictions are outlined below.

a. Classified Information

Release of classified information needs to be accomplished in accordance with the regulations for safeguarding classified information. Complying with these regulations should not inhibit effective communication between the Government and contractor personnel concerning future requirements.

b. Planning, Programming, and Budgetary System (PPBS)

This information consists of financial documentation supporting the annual budget process. This information is restricted to the comptroller community. The restriction is designed to protect the budgetary process. Examples of such financial documentation are Government cost estimates and appropriations requests. Should acquisition information that is releasable be included in the PPBS documentation, its disclosure is acceptable as long as it is not identified as PPBS information.

c. Proprietary Information

Government personnel cannot disclose proprietary information to unauthorized persons. This restriction is not difficult to comply with if proprietary material is properly marked with its restriction. This area is of particular concern during contractor discussions on their unique technical approach to a Government requirement.
[Ref. 7]

d. Source Selection Information

Under the provisions of Procurement Integrity, source selection information cannot be disclosed. Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 3.104-3 Definitions

defines source selection information as any of the following information which is prepared for use by a Federal agency for the purpose of evaluating a bid or proposal to enter into a Federal agency procurement contract, if that information has not been previously made available to the public or disclosed publicly.

- bid prices submitted in response to a Government solicitation for sealed bids prior to opening, or lists of such bid prices
- proposed costs or prices submitted in response to a solicitation for other than sealed bids, or lists of those proposed costs or prices prior to award
- source selection plans
- technical evaluation plans
- technical evaluations of proposals
- cost or price evaluations of proposals
- competitive range determinations that identify proposals that have a reasonable chance of being selected for award of a contract
- Rankings of bids, proposals, or competitors
- Reports and evaluations of source selection panels, boards, or advisory councils
- Other information marked as "Source Selection Information - See FAR 3.104" based on a case-by-case determination by the head of the agency or designee, or the contracting officer, that its disclosure would jeopardize the integrity or successful completion of the procurement to which the information relates. [Ref. 5] This category covers information which would provide an unfair competitive advantage or jeopardize the integrity of the procurement.

e. Unfair Competitive Advantage

Disclosure of specific information cannot give one or more potential offerors an unfair competitive

advantage. This restriction is perhaps the most difficult to apply. This is a judgment call and needs to be exercised on a case-by-case basis. A critical factor to consider in this determination includes the effect that release of the information will have on the competition. [Ref. 7]

2. Postaward

Once a contract is awarded, the Government and industry tend to take an adversarial position. This mindset can result in a lack of effective communications. One method for avoiding this is to adopt the principles of partnering. Partnering when properly implemented allows for the conduct of open and honest communication. [Ref. 6]

Partnering agreements can be executed at the corporate level between the Commanding General (CG) and a contractor. This agreement is called an "Overarching Partnering Agreement". This agreement would include all contracts between CECOM and a contractor. There are currently eleven such agreements between CECOM and industry. [Ref. 11] Partnering agreements can also be program specific between the program managers of both parties. Nothing precludes having both agreements in place.

Challenges to communication during the postaward phase include the burden on the contractor to maintain their budget. Often a contractor is concerned that a change to his proposed technical approach will increase his costs.

Another challenge to communication in the postaward phase is the presence of support contractors. Many program reviews and IPTs include the participation of support

contractors. A contractor is concerned about the extent of information revealed to another contractor.

While challenges to effective communications exist, the consequences for lack of communication can be great. Many contractual disputes could have been avoided with better communication between the Government and contractor. The following cases illustrate some of the consequences of poor communication.

Armed Services Board of Contract Appeals (ASBCA) Case Numbers 51259 and 51359 illustrate the pitfalls of misunderstanding contract requirements. The contractor and the Government disagreed on the interpretation of certain symbols on the contract drawings. As a result, the contractor failed to deliver contractually compliant communications cable. While in this instance the Government prevailed, both parties would have benefited from a clear understanding of the contract requirements and acceptable performance. [Ref. 12]

ASBCA Case Number 51658 also illustrates the pitfalls of misunderstanding the contract requirements. However, in this case, the misunderstanding centered on the specification instead of a drawing. This case involved a license agreement between the contractor and the Government. The contractor had signed a license agreement with the Government for services to provide a network intended to establish electronic commerce. The license agreement referred to the Process Action Team (PAT) report as the specification or implementation plan. However, the Government failed to fulfill its obligation under the implementation plan. The Government had anticipated "a

single face to industry" approach, which entailed deploying the electronic commerce network to the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines, and Defense Agencies. However, the actual number of users fell short of this. In all likelihood, the PAT report reflected an ideal or goal while, what the Government was able to achieve or provide, was less. The Government should have prepared an implementation plan, instead of merely attaching the PAT report as the plan. The Government failed to adequately communicate its requirements to industry. [Ref. 13]

ASBCA Case No. 51596 illustrates the importance of continuing good communication throughout contract performance. In this case, the Government had a contract with a catering company to provide cafeteria services. The Government furnished facilities was provided "as is". The prospective bidders were allowed to inspect the facilities and the initial condition of the area was not in dispute. However, during contract performance, the condition of the area deteriorated further. The ceiling leaked and the heating and cooling systems failed to work properly. While the contracting officer indicated that repairs would be made, this never happened within the period of performance.

As a result of the poor conditions, the contractor was unable to establish a customer base. Actual cafeteria sales fell far short of his projections. The contractor requested a reduction in the contract price, which the contracting officer denied. [Ref. 14]

In this case, it appears that had the parties been able to effectively communicate with each other, these issues would have been resolved to the satisfaction of both

parties. This also appears to be true in the other cases. The reliance on the written documents and formal exchanges failed to fully communicate the contract requirements.

D. BEST OF CLASS COMMERCIAL COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

1. Lockheed Martin

Lockheed Martin has established a program called Star Supplier Program. Lockheed Martin works together with suppliers to tie performance to key factors. Lockheed Martin procurement and quality representatives nominate suppliers who meet the criteria for performance.

The Star Supplier program includes the websites called SupplierNet. Supplier Net is a corporate-wide website dedicated to communications with suppliers. The website contains important business information like standard terms and conditions, shipping instructions, electronic commerce material, and accounts payable information. The SupplierNet website is an effort to broadcast the latest information to their supplier base.

Part of this website is a link to information on the "Aerospace and Defense Global Trading Exchange". This website is an online purchasing tool that includes electronics catalogs from their supplier base.

Lockheed Martin's efforts for more effective communications include partnering. The following excerpt is from their website:

STAR Supplier Program Overview - 'Partnering for Success' is a phrase that you hear often at Lockheed Martin these days. Partnerships are how we want to work with key suppliers in meeting goals and expectations of our Corporation and customers. By working closely with key suppliers

on process improvements and cost savings, Lockheed Martin can continually improve its products, processes and services. Our LM21 Best Practices Program, formally introduced in 1998, has been recognized as one of the largest productivity and change management initiatives ever undertaken by a major corporation. Involving suppliers as partners helps extend the impact of our strategic practices for driving Mission Success. Mission Success is a hallmark of Lockheed Martin. It is one of our corporate values. It is our promise to customers. Mission Success equates with world class performance by our suppliers and us. High quality, low cost and on-time delivery all contribute to this outcome. That's why it's critical for us to establish solid partnerships with suppliers. [Ref. 15]

2. Motorola

Motorola also relies on the Internet to communicate with its suppliers. Motorola has a program called Preferred Partner Program. This program affords Motorola's suppliers financial assistance, discounts on equipment and training, and technical support. Preferred Partners are kept abreast of program development and new product introductions through e-mail communications.

Also, Motorola's website contains numerous press releases which publicize its successful partnerships with its supplier base. [Ref. 16]

3. Raytheon

Raytheon also uses the Internet to communicate with their suppliers. Raytheon has a program called "The Raytheon Consortium Program". The Raytheon Consortium Program offers participating companies and suppliers significant cost savings through partnership. Savings are a direct result of volume purchasing. All participants benefit from Raytheon's technologies and processes.

Raytheon's Consortium Program was launched in 1996 as part of Raytheon's supply chain strategy. "Open communication, confidentiality, and trust were the cornerstone of the relations we [Raytheon] developed and the foundation of the resulting consortium program."

Since being launched, the program has built relationships with sixteen strategic suppliers and partnered with nineteen companies. [Ref. 17]

4. Harris Corporation

Harris Corporation's website included a reference to a Supplier Workshop Day held on 12 October 2000. In briefing slides from this workshop, Harris acknowledges that communications with suppliers is weak. The slides continue to offer some of the following recommendations to correct this weakness:

- Harris Engineers should visit supplier facilities
- Suppliers should be involved early in the development process
- Harris Corporation should leverage their purchasing power on behalf of their suppliers
- Harris Corporation should hold a workshop for achieving effective communication
- Suppliers need to present to Harris current status and activities for a better understanding [Ref. 18]

This researcher contacted Harris Corporation to try to gain some insight into these supplier communication initiatives. The Harris representative indicated that each Program Manager is empowered to partner with their suppliers. There is no formal Harris Corporation policy with respect to how to conduct communications with suppliers. The only formal supplier information is a

vendor database, which deals mostly with past performance information. [Ref. 19]

E. CHAPTER SUMMARY

Effective communication is important for a buyer-supplier relationship. Without effective communications, goals and objectives cannot be conveyed to the parties and the potential for misunderstanding by the participants exists.

Effective communication is one of the benefits of partnering. However, partnering is not a prerequisite to effective communication.

Supplier communications takes on many forms. The Government seems to rely on face-to-face communications, especially early in the acquisition process or business relationship. Increasingly though, the Government is relying on the Internet. Industry also seems to rely on the Internet for the publicizing of information.

The Government restricts what information can be shared with industry to preserve the integrity of the acquisition process. The restrictions should in no way prevent effective communications from occurring.

Many companies conduct effective communications using the Internet. Companies enter into long-term relationships with their supplier base. The challenges of effective communication with suppliers are not restricted to the Government.

The next chapter will discuss three methods used by CECOM Acquisition Center to communicate with industry. The three methods consist of the JPC, TILO and IBOP. These

three methods will be discussed with respect to background, objective, role in the organization and function.

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III. OVERVIEW OF CECOM COMMUNICATIONS AND INDUSTRY OUTREACH PROGRAMS

This chapter discusses three methods used by CECOM Acquisition Center to communicate with industry. The three methods are the JPC, TILO and IBOP. The JPC is a position that was recently established to improve industry relationships. The TILO is a long established liaison office. The IBOP began as a quicker means to transmit solicitation documents, but its use has expanded to more applications. These three methods will be discussed with respect to background, objective, role in the organization and function.

A. OVERVIEW OF JOINT PARTNERING CONTRACTOR REPRESENTATIVE (JPC) CONCEPT

1. Background

During the spring of 1999, the CECOM Acquisition Center underwent a reorganization designed to infuse flexibility into what used to be a traditional "box" structure. The organization's goal was to anticipate and respond to customers' needs with organizational flexibility. As part of this new organization, the JPC position was created. [Ref. 3]

2. Objective of JPC Concept

The JPC is assigned to work with industry to find common solutions to common problems. The JPC is charged with streamlining the acquisition process, promoting partnering relationships, and fostering innovation. JPCs are tasked with eliminating the outmoded concept that the relationship between Government and industry is inherently

adversarial. The JPC provides one face to industry. [Ref. 3]

The objective of this "single face approach" was to establish long-term partnering with CECOM's major suppliers. JPCs would serve as high level contacts for companies should difficulties arise in resolving contractual issues. The intervention of the JPC would help avoid disputes between the contractor and the Government that could have detrimental effects on the program. [Ref. 11]

Another objective of the JPC position was to eliminate inconsistencies. Inconsistencies addressed were how different CECOM contracting teams had different relationships with the same contractor. By standardizing how CECOM addressed Government requirements, the award of future acquisitions should reflect reduced cycle time. [Ref. 11]

3. Role in the Organization

There are three JPCs assigned to CECOM's six largest contractors, determined by dollar value of awarded contracts. Managers at the GS-14 level fill this position. The six contractors are:

- ITT Industries
- Raytheon
- General Dynamics
- Motorola
- Lockheed Martin
- Litton Industries [Ref. 20]

4. Function of the JPC

For the CECOM Acquisition Center's benefit, JPCs are tasked with resolving systemic contractual and programmatic issues with major defense contractors. JPCs serve as the industry point of contact to help streamline current and future acquisitions. They also serve as the safety mechanism to insure that smart decisions are being made by CECOM contracting officers. [Ref. 11] JPCs have opened the lines of communications, strengthened contractor-customer relationship, and promoted acquisition streamlining. [Ref. 3]

B. OVERVIEW OF TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRY LIAISON OFFICE (TILO)

1. Background

AMC maintains the Headquarters AMC TILO and eight field TILOs. One of the field TILOs is located at CECOM.

2. Objective of TILO Concept

The introduction to AMC Pamphlet 70-6, Technical & Industrial Liaison Office, R&D Opportunities for Industry, states that the Army is dependent on the industrial sector for most of their research and development and almost all of their materiel acquisition. It is to the Army's advantage to provide information that will help business be aware of prospective Army procurements and be prepared in anticipation of those procurements. By providing information to industry, the Army gains access to existing and emerging technologies and benefits from increased competition during development and acquisition. To accomplish this, TILO is tasked with publicizing information on programs to benefit industry. [Ref. 8]

3. Role in the Organization

The CECOM TILO is part of the CECOM Acquisition Center. The TILO office is located in the front reception area of the building that houses the CECOM Acquisition Center. This building is next to the headquarters building making it easy for contractors to find. For the most part, TILO operates separately from the organization. However, TILO does monitor the status of CECOM's solicitations. They look for business opportunities for new contractors. They also anticipate contract issues that contractors may want to discuss with the CG or the director of the CEOM Acquisition Center.

4. Function of TILO

TILO is tasked with the following functions:

a. Business Consultations

A business overview is provided, which includes CECOM's mission, structure, business opportunities and business practices.

b. Very Important Person (VIP) Industrial Visits

Industrial visits with the CECOM Commanding General (CG), Deputy and CECOM Directors are coordinated through TILO. TILO must determine whether granting the visit request is in CECOM's best interest. While most visit requests are granted, a number of requests are denied. Approval of visit requests is usually restricted to current suppliers. If a major evaluation is underway, a visit request submitted by a bidder is delayed until after award for appearance sake. Visits of a marketing nature are seldom approved and usually referred to the appropriate

requiring activity. TILO coordinates the date and time of the visit with the VIP's calendar. In preparation of the visit, TILO obtains the visitors' biographies and the company's background. TILO also develops a fact sheet, which outlines a summary of CECOM's business base with the visiting company and possible issues. TILO will routinely issue data calls to Acquisition Center personnel in order to obtain the most current information on possible issues and agenda items. [Ref. 21]

c. Army Potential Contractors Program (APCP)

The APCP has been established to register non-Government organizations for access to controlled scientific and technical information. This includes information on Army needs, requirements, programs, funding, and advance planning associated with research, development, and acquisition. TILO assists contractors with obtaining sponsorship for access to controlled scientific and technical information. [Ref. 8]

d. Industrial Product Demonstrations

TILO coordinates demonstrations with the appropriate requiring activity for specific technology. TILO will typically arrange for a product demonstration at the Officers' Club. TILO will advertise the demonstration on the CECOM General Interest Bulletin Board and in the "Monmouth Message". The CECOM General Interest Bulletin Board is an internal website. The "Monmouth Message" is a weekly newspaper containing news stories related to Army, CECOM and Fort Monmouth-based Program Executive Office (PEO) activities.

In some instances where a product demonstration is directed at a small audience, TILO may determine a one-

on-one is more beneficial and coordinate this between the company and the specific requiring activity.

e. Unsolicited Proposals

TILO provides an avenue to industry for the submission of unique and innovative ideas, suggestions, and concepts related to the CECOM mission. [Ref. 21] When an unsolicited proposal is received, TILO will evaluate the proposal to see if it qualifies as an unsolicited proposal in accordance with FAR 15.603(c). If it does qualify, TILO determines which customer activity would most likely utilize the proposed concept. In most cases, unsolicited proposals are for research and development.

C. OVERVIEW OF THE US ARMY INTERAGENCY INTERACTIVE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES PAGE (IBOP)

1. Background

The CECOM Acquisition Center established an Electronic Bulletin Board (EBB) during 1995. The EBB was used to issue solicitations and amendments electronically. Contractors, who had obtained passwords, could download documents from the EBB. The only equipment necessary was a computer with a modem. The EBB was not user-friendly and was never mandated to be the sole method for issuing documents to industry.

In October 1997, the EBB was replaced with the CECOM Acquisition Center's Business Opportunities Page (ABOP). The ABOP provided a web-based method for releasing documents to industry. Industry could browse through the website and decide whether a solicitation was of interest prior to actually downloading it.

The current website, the Interagency Interactive Business Opportunities Page (IBOP) replaced the ABOP on May

14, 1999. This database is designed to allow guest access to view and download draft and final solicitation documents without requiring a special password or user identification. This feature provides total access to the public.

There is a secured portion that requires a password and login. This portion is designed to allow for electronic proposal submission and any correspondence that follows proposal submission. Also included in the secure portion is a postaward section for posting electronic copies of the awarded, plus contract modification and/or delivery orders. This feature allows postaward contract distribution to be totally paperless.

2. Objective

The original objective was to provide for quicker distribution of solicitations. The IBOP has evolved into an electronic means to provide all contractual documents from requirements generation until contract completion. Some contracting officers utilize the IBOP for the distribution of routine correspondence.

3. Role in the Organization

The Secretary of Defense directed that each Service modernize its acquisition process in the areas of contract writing as well as other areas before January 1, 2000. The goal of this initiative was to eliminate all paper transactions from the contracting process, from requirement handoff through contract closeout. While the purpose of this directive was the adoption of Standard Procurement System (SPS), CECOM Acquisition Center has achieved the objective of paperless procurement by other methods. [Ref. 22]

4. Function of the IBOP

Using the IBOP is the rule, not the exception. CECOM Acquisition Center issued a Policy Alert in March 1999, which in part mandated the following:

This policy alert directs all contracting personnel to utilize automated tools in order to achieve the 100% paperless goal. By 15 March 1999, all solicitations (100%) will be electronically issued.

In connection with the above, CECOM's commitment to implement paperless contracting is as follows:

a. All solicitations (including BAAs, SBIRs, Other Transactions, Cooperative Agreements and Grants) in pre-award phase, both competitive and non-competitive, that are new work, shall be posted to the Business Opportunity Page (BOP) regardless of dollar value.

b. All post award actions (contract awards, within-scope mod[ification]s, ECPs, delivery orders, correspondence, etc.) shall utilize e-mail for distributing documentation and fax for the signature page.

c. Exceptions for use of the BOP are as follows:

- (i) Acquisitions which utilize International Merchant Purchase Authorization Card (IMPAC) cards
- (ii) Oral Solicitations
- (iii) Synopsis and Posting Requirements per FAR 13.105
- (iv) UNICOR Web Site
- (v) Digital Switch Systems Modernization Program (DSSMP)
- (vi) Special Access Programs (SAPs)

d. All responses to solicitations (offers, bids, quotes, etc.) shall be obtained through the Business Opportunity Page (BOP). [Ref. 23]

While synopses are still posted to the Federal Business Opportunities website, formerly the Commerce Business Daily, in order to comply with the FAR requirement, synopses are also posted to the IBOP. By complying with the above policy, the workforce routinely utilizes the IBOP to communicate with industry.

D. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The CECOM Acquisition Center utilizes various methods to communicate with industry. There are established offices and positions whose primary objective is the preservation of good business relations with the supplier base. The IBOP provides fast and efficient means to publicize information, but other business relationships require the personal contact of the JPC and TILO.

Chapter IV presents and discusses the results of informal interviews and provides the results of the surveys identified in the introduction. Data from all five surveys is presented. The next chapter discusses the information that resulted from the research. Most of this information was obtained from industry websites.

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IV. METHODOLOGY AND DATA PRESENTATION

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the data collected via literature reviews, interviews, informal discussions, Internet websites and surveys. It presents data gathered by the researcher regarding the CECOM Acquisition Center and industry communication initiatives. Lastly, it presents data gathered via three surveys: Contracting Officers, JPCs, JPC Industry Counterparts, TILO and recipients of TILO business consultations.

B. METHODOLOGY

To collect and obtain the data necessary for this thesis, several methods were used. The initial phase involved a thorough review of literature concerning partnership and government-industry communications. Government regulations, such as the FAR and AMC pamphlets, were reviewed. The researcher reviewed magazine articles and other miscellaneous publications.

In addition, the CECOM organization and the Acquisition Center were reviewed in an effort to understand the structure in which communications are conducted.

In the next phase of the research, interviews and informal discussions were conducted. Employees of the Small Business Office and TILO were interviewed. Communications methods and ways of improving industry relations were discussed.

Industry websites were thoroughly reviewed to ascertain what methods were used by CECOM's supplier base to communicate with their vendors.

During the final phase, surveys were developed to enable Contracting Officers, JPCs, TILO and industry counterparts to comment on communications methods and their effectiveness.

A survey was issued to contracting officers of the CECOM Acquisition Center. The survey was designed to ascertain the extent to which contracting officers had utilized Joint Partnering Contract representatives and afforded them the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of JPCs, IBOP, and the Small Business Office. A copy of the survey is provided as Appendix A.

A listing of all CECOM contracting officers located at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey; Fort Huachuca, Arizona; Washington, D.C.; and Tobyhanna Army Depot, Pennsylvania was obtained using organizational mailing lists. The surveys were electronically disseminated. Responses were received in this manner from the majority of respondents. A few respondents replied thru interoffice mail, which allowed for anonymity. In either case, preamble instructions to the survey assured responses would be kept confidential.

A survey was issued to current and former Joint Partnering Contractor representatives. The survey was designed to obtain the JPC's opinion of their position and a self-assessment of their effectiveness. A copy of the survey is provided as Appendix B.

A listing of current and former JPCs was obtained by reviewing current and former organizational charts for the CECOM Acquisition Center. The surveys were electronically disseminated. Responses were received in this manner.

Unfortunately, this method of distribution and response did not allow for the anonymity of the respondent. Also contributing to a lack of anonymity was the small number of people in this data pool. Each respondent was assured in the preamble instructions to the survey that responses would be kept confidential.

A survey was issued to the JPC's industry counterparts. The survey was designed to obtain an assessment from CECOM's major suppliers of the effectiveness of the JPC concept and feedback on the IBOP. A copy of the survey is provided as Appendix C.

A list of industry points of contact was developed by contacting the TILO, JPCs and, as a last resort, the local telephone book. The surveys were electronically disseminated to almost all points of contacts. In one instance, the local representative requested that the survey be transmitted by data fax. Responses were received either by electronic means or data fax. While neither method provided anonymity, the preamble instructions to the survey assured that responses would be kept confidential.

A survey was issued to consultant firms that had been provided business consultations by TILO. The survey was designed to obtain an assessment of the effectiveness of TILO. A copy of the survey is provided as Appendix D.

A list of points of contact was developed by contacting TILO. The companies were contacted and they provided their e-mail addresses. The surveys were electronically disseminated. No responses were received. Follow-up reminders were also provided using electronic means. This reminder generated a single response.

A short survey was issued to TILO. The survey was a follow-up to an earlier extensive interview. The survey was designed to obtain data on performance metrics. A copy of the survey is provided as Appendix E.

The survey was electronically disseminated to TILO. Anonymity could not be provided due to the size of the data pool.

C. REVIEW OF THE ORGANIZATION

The organizational structure of the CECOM was reviewed. CECOM, Fort Monmouth, New Jersey is a major subordinate command of the Army Materiel Command, Alexandria, Virginia.

The CECOM mission, fully defined in CECOM Regulation 10-1, is detailed below:

To exercise life cycle integrated management, project management, and systems acquisition, including research, development, engineering, product assurance, fielding, testing, production, materiel acquisition, readiness, and integrated logistics support of assigned DOD/Army tactical strategic and sustaining based information technology; command, control, communications, computers and intelligence; electronic warfare, sensors (IT/C4IEWS) systems and equipment. [Ref. 24]

To fulfill this mission, the CECOM Fort Monmouth elements consist of the Commanding General and his staff (i.e., Resource Management, Personnel, Legal, Corporation Information, etc.), the U. S. Army Garrison Commander and his staff (i.e., Department of Public Works, Transportation, Garrison Budget Housing, etc.) and five Centers (Logistics and Readiness; Systems Management; Research, Development and Engineering; Software Engineering

and Acquisition). In addition, this mission is supported by five PEOs: Command, Control, Communications systems; Intelligence Electronic Warfare and Sensors; and Reserve Component Automation Systems and Aviation. These PEOs are supported by a multitude of Program Managers who are physically resident at Fort Monmouth and are supported by the CECOM Commanding General, the Garrison Commander and their staffs.

D. REVIEW OF THE ACQUISITION CENTER

The CECOM Acquisition Center is headquartered at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey with primary subsidiary offices in Fort Huachuca, Arizona, and Washington, D.C. There are several small remote offices in the U. S. and overseas. The Acquisition Center provides acquisition services in support of Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Warfare and Sensors (Team C4IEWS), and the Army Signal Mission.

There are five Sectors, each led by a GS-15 Chief reporting to the Deputy Director, who reports to the Director. There are three "buying" Sectors physically located at Fort Monmouth, one "buying" Sector physically located in Washington, D.C. and one Acquisition Business Process Sector. Each of the buying sectors has an individual designated as a JPC.

E. CONTRACTING OFFICER SURVEY RESULTS

After reference to organizational mailing lists, a listing of GS-13s assigned to the CECOM Acquisition Center was developed. While every GS-13 in the CECOM Acquisition Center is a warranted contracting officer, not every GS-13 is in a position that requires the use of this authority. For example, the CECOM Acquisition Center includes a number

of GS-13 Procurement Analysts, all of which are warranted contracting officers.

Surveys were sent electronically to the seventy-nine (79) GS-13s at Fort Monmouth; ten (10) GS-13s at Fort Huachuca; twenty-nine (29) GS-13s at Washington, D.C. and one (1) GS-13 at the Tobyhanna Army Depot.

The survey included questions on the JPCs and IBOP. The survey asked participants to rate the efficiency and effectiveness of the IBOP, the assistance provided by JPCs and the assistance provided by Small Business Office on a scale of one to five, five being the highest rating.

Question 1. How often do JPCs get involved in your contractual issues?

Results. Ninety-one (91) percent of those responding answered this question. Ratings are displayed in Table 1. As displayed below, the majority of contracting officers responded that JPCs never or seldom get involved in their contracting issues.

Rating	Percentage
Never	42
Seldom	48
Occasionally	10
Frequently	0

Table 1. Frequency of JPC Involvement.

Question 2. How often does such an issue get raised to a higher level within the contractor's organization?

Results. Eighty-two (82) percent of those responding answered this question. Ratings are displayed in Table 2. As displayed below, the majority of contracting officers responded that these issues do not get elevated within the contractor's organization.

Rating	Percentage
Never	22
Seldom	50
Occasionally	16
Frequently	6
Don't Know	6

Table 2. Frequency of Contractor Issue Elevation.

Question 3. What is usually the nature of such an issue?

Results. Sixty-eight (68) percent of those responding answered this question. Responses are displayed in Table 3. As displayed below, the majority of contracting officers responded that the nature of these issues is programmatic, which involve the customer activity.

Nature of Issue	Percentage
Contractual Clause (terms and conditions)	8
Payment Issues	8
Programmatic Issues (involves customer activity)	60
Other (please specify)	23

Table 3. Nature of Issues.

One of the responses specified that payment issues involved the contractor not receiving award fees in a timely manner. Responses to "Other" specified the following comments:

Contractors frequently use their internal processes and ignore contractual requirements. This results in delivery and payment problems that are required to be elevated to senior levels within the Government and Contractor chain of command.

I had occasion to raise the issue of Alpha Contracting to the Management Level of Lockheed Martin. As an aside, I also brought to their attention problems in getting proposals in a timely manner.

Negotiations.

IPT issues, new work negotiations.

Question 4. How would you rate the effectiveness of the Interactive Business Opportunities Page on a scale of one to five, five being the highest rating?

Results. Eighty-two (82) percent responded to this question. Ratings are displayed below in Table 4. As

displayed below, the majority of contracting officers responded that the IBOP is highly efficient.

Rating	Percentage
1	0
2	6
3	19
4	50
5	25

Table 4. IBOP Efficiency.

Question 5. How would you rate the effectiveness of the Interactive Business Opportunities Pages on a scale of one to five, five being the highest rating?

Results. Eighty-two (82) percent responded to this question. Ratings are displayed below in Table 5. As displayed below, the majority of contracting officers responded that the IBOP is highly effective.

Rating	Percentage
1	0
2	6
3	13
4	50
5	31

Table 5. IBOP Effectiveness.

Question 6. To what extent are you using the IBOP?

Results. Again, eighty-two (82) percent responded to this question. The majority of contracting officers responded that the IBOP is used to issue **all** solicitations and preaward communications. The remainder provided the following comments:

I have used it frequently in getting market information as well as conducting best value procurements.

Only when absolutely mandatory. I used it during the past year for a Best Value. There were numerous problems with using it that have not been addressed in training for either the Government people or the contractor people.

Significant. Entirely for pre-award actions, communications, somewhat less for post-award communications.

Question 7. When or in what instances is the IBOP most useful?

Results. The majority of contracting officers found the IBOP to be most useful in distributing large documents to multiple recipients, especially competitive solicitations. A smaller number found the IBOP to be most useful as a market research tool. The following comment was also received:

There are required uses and optional uses. Usefulness isn't a consideration when you have no choice. The value of the IBOP is diminished by the frequent communication problems, such as, no access, slow access, and long or impossible upload and download times. Another problem is the extent of daisy chaining where we have to link the IBOP to the Army Single Face to Industry and FedBizOps. There is no telling how many vendors are being confused by the proliferation

of web sites, or what types of problems they may be having using these sites as routes to the IBOP.

Question 8. Do you use the IBOP for other types of communications beyond what is mandated by CECOM regulation?

Results. Sixty-one (61) percent responded negatively to this question.

Question 9. What other communication mechanisms are also used?

Results. The majority of the contracting officers responded that telephone and electronic mail are the most frequently used communication mechanisms. Other responses received were:

- Video teleconference
- Data fax
- Sametime (instant messenger system)
- Industry forums, meetings, APBIs, etc.
- FEDBIZOPS

Question 10. To what extent does the JPC help you in your job on a scale of one to five, five being the highest rating?

Results. Only sixty-four (64) percent responded to this question. Ratings are displayed below in Table 6.

Rating	Percentage
1	56
2	24
3	0
4	8
5	8

Table 6. Extent of Help Provided by JPC.

One response did not include a rating but the following comment: "It depends on which JPC we are talking about. It ranges from one to five."

Question 11. To what extent does the Small Business Office help you in your job on a scale of one to five, five being the highest rating?

Results. Only sixty-four (64) percent responded to this question. Ratings are displayed below in Table 7.

Rating	Percentage
1	16
2	16
3	33
4	8
5	16

Table 7. Extent of help provided by Small Business Office.

Question 12. How might the JPC and IBOP be improved?

Results. The following responses were received:

The JPCs need to be given specific job descriptions and the contracting officers need to be informed as to what they are and how and when the JPCs need to be involved. The IBOP is a valuable tool that is underutilized. I have found it to be very useful in the procurement process. Contractors have just started to understand the process and feeling a comfort level that information they send via the IBOP is secure and not being disseminated to their competitors.

JPC could assume more active role with corporate officers to resolve sensitive contractual issues. IBOP could use more extensive reporting features (export to spreadsheet) and more robust interfaces with CECOM legacy software.

JPC needs to get more involved with their groups.

The JPCs need to drop some of their other duties (supervisory, etc.) so that they can concentrate on their duties as JPC.

JPC should concentrate on overall issues, i.e., contingency clauses, property disposal, etc., with the contractor not individual contracts.

IBOP needs software improvements (i.e., navigation between pages). JPC need to make contracting officers aware of practices that may have worked or not worked on other programs. Establishing common guidelines to use with contractor. Perhaps establishing pre-set representations and certifications, small business plans, clauses, negotiation guidelines, etc.

JPC should encourage their contractors to cooperate with the Government on regulations that the Government must adhere to when contracting. The IBOP should be modified to accept drawing files. Files containing drawings often exceed

size limitation.

Eliminate JPCs. IBOP is fine as it is.

The JPCs need to be more closely associated with their Contractors. I believe the JPCs, TILO, and possibly the Solicitation Ombudsman should be located in an External Group/Office along with a few other functions. The JPCs should be accessible by and identifiable to both the Government and contractor personnel.

The JPC could occasionally ask the floor if they need help, and if so, how. Specifically, it would be helpful if the JPCs would get involved in the negotiations, where so many of us are trying to negotiate with companies who are citing "corporate policy" as to why they should or shouldn't get something in negotiations. My opinion is that the JPCs have not accomplished anything, but of course I have no real knowledge of what they do. The one time I tried to get the Lockheed Martin JPC involved in the Alpha Contracting, he was consistently busy and never did make it to any meeting. We got the matter resolved without him.

The IBOP needs clearer instructions for both Government and contractor personnel. Some files can be found by going in via different routes, i.e., you go in under solicitation number and you'll find files you won't necessarily find if you go in under the contracting officer's number. It needs to be more compartmented for ease in finding things. It needs to quit making you loop so much when you post a change to it. There's no ease of finding information and files associated with a particular solicitation. It needs to be cleaned up, there's a lot of old stuff out there. There should be a separate folder established for each contractor responding to a solicitation, and their IFNs responses to track to that folder. There needs to be direction given that amendments to a solicitation HAVE to be incorporated into the solicitation document and that the revised solicitation file gets uploaded, you can't just send out the amendment only. Primarily, the IBOP

needs much better instructions and directions for everyone involved.

I see no value in having a JPC...eliminate the position. The IBOP is really only problematic when you can't get access.

I don't know enough about the JPC to offer a suggestion. The IBOP might be improved with different communication topography, e.g., use of satellites for dial-in access instead of landlines.

F. JOINT PARTNERING CONTRACTOR REPRESENTATIVE (JPC) SURVEY RESULTS

After reference to organization charts, a list of current and former JPCs was developed. Surveys were distributed electronically. Responses were received from all five surveyed.

Question 1. Describe your job to a newcomer.

Results. The following comments were received in response:

Overarching view of contractor efforts. Strategic partnering with industry. Analyze for commonality between PCOs and contractors so to improve efficiency.

Direct link between ITT and CECOM and Raytheon and CECOM. Establish strategic, long term partnering with ITT and Raytheon. Form internal IPT with contracting officer and customer representative from among all business sectors. Develop agreements with contractor to standardize clauses, terms and conditions, establish business relation process and partnership. Formulate close relationship with Defense Contract Management Command (DCMC)/Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA). Attend contractor reviews. Meet with other JPCs. Publish good news stories. Leverage and share evolving technologies and business practices. One face to industry, open

lines of communication, develops strong contractor client relationship, and reduces cycle time and contractor bid and proposal costs. Partner with our industrial base.

As a JPC, I served as the Acquisition Center's Contracting Champion with Lockheed Martin, Motorola and Litton.

The JPC position was developed as part of a CECOM Acquisition Center re-engineering effort to implement a higher level of customer satisfaction for internal and external customers. The JPC position was envisioned to be the Government enabler between Contracting Officers and selected contractors when roadblocks or stalemates offered potential mission failures. These positions are comprised of senior acquisition personnel. The individuals assigned to these radical new positions were to work one-on-one with industry to find common solutions to common problems. The JPC representative is authorized to streamline the acquisition process, to promote partnering relationships and to foster innovation. These individuals are empowered to assist industry and break the age-old concept that industry and the Government are separate entities operating under different agendas. The JPC and Customer Representative were to operate in unison, to provide added measures of business solutions.

The JPC position is the business manager intermediary between the contracting officer and the industry partner. Typically, the JPC interfaces at the Director/Vice-President level in an effort to solve problems before they escalate and impact the program. The JPC is also a warranted contracting officer, so their expertise in designing better contracting methods is critical to program success and industry success.

Question 2. How do you define your job?

Results. Only two responded to this question. Two responded that the answer to question 1 also covered this question. The following comments were received:

To be the focal point between any individual within any of the three assigned Contractors and Government personnel (whether PM or Acquisition Center). Basic premise: streamline acquisition processes (i.e., uniform proposal formats as well as uniform solicitation formats from the government side); initiate single process initiatives (SPIs), not from a manufacturing perspective but from an administrative process viewpoint; facilitate contract closeouts; eliminate unliquidated obligations.

The JPC position was envisioned to be the Government enabler between Contracting Officers and selected contractors when roadblocks or stalemates offered potential mission failures. These positions are comprised of senior acquisition personnel. The individuals assigned to these radical new positions were to work one-on-one with industry to find common solutions to common problems. The JPC representative is authorized to streamline the acquisition process, to promote partnering relationships and to foster innovation.

Question 3. Describe some significant actions you have taken as part of your job.

Results. All responded to this questions. The following comments were received:

As JPC to ITT Industries I was asked to complete the negotiation of the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio System (SINCGARS) program. This negotiation was stalemated for eighteen (18) months, with neither side able to break the barriers keeping the parties from coming to agreement. I formed a team of FMS specialists, engineers, logisticians

and contracting people and in five (5) weeks negotiated and awarded this program.

Negotiated a mutual agreement which offset the lost of government furnished equipment with a claim for bid and proposals costs. Also, established a baseline to identify all unliquidated obligations early. Developed draw down strategies with General Dynamics (GD), DCMC and DFAS. Met with local DCMC representative and GD corporate closeout team. We had 100% success in each of the last two fiscal years.

Expedited contract proposals. Gathered CECOM contract information for a visit between the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Raytheon and the CG. Explained contested PCO decision to Raytheon. Raytheon wanted a logic pattern for the PCO's decision. Participated in negotiations to continue a program that may have been terminated. Participated in internal discussions and negotiations with a program that was terminated. Moved the contractors-go-to-war clause through Raytheon. Worked with PCO and Raytheon to establish the allowances and differentials for living costs abroad.

Partnering agreements. Examined deteriorated business relationships - facilitated "bridge building".

Attended SPI Management Councils at Motorola. Briefed DCMC representatives at all locations on functions of JPC.

Question 4. What actions have you taken, if any, in order to obtain feedback from industry?

Results. The following comments were received:

Personal contact with local representatives helped with feedback mechanism.

Asked for feedback. Asked for best practices used by other government organization that CECOM could adopt.

Get feedback weekly or as required from contractors on open items and current issues.

Various visits to contractor facilities, numerous telephone calls regarding contracts and contract issues, obtain results of a customer survey performed by GD.

I designed a tool called Perceptual Mapping. This tool, which looked much like a survey, asked several questions that compared and contrasted our performance with the performance of our competitors. This information was plotted to indicate our weak areas.

Question 5. Do you know whether the contractor under your purview uses the IBOP?

Results. All responded affirmatively to this question. All contractors used the IBOP.

Question 6. What is your contribution to the organization?

Results. The following three comments were received:

As JPC, my contribution was very limited because I also had supervisory/contractual control of two Base Operations teams. There was not enough time to truly devote to the JPC function.

One face to industry.

My contribution really lies in the building of relationships with customers. My interactions with customers instill a sense of confidence in the Acquisition Center and thereby help to increase our obligations. As a supervisor, I work closely with my specialists and contracting officers to increase probability of success.

Question 7. How would you rate your contribution to the organization on a scale of one to five, five being the highest rating?

Results. Four responded to this question. One of the responses was a rating of 4.5, not one of the choices. The remaining three responses resulted in one vote for each of the ratings 3-5 as displayed in Table 8 below.

Rating	Number
1	0
2	0
3	1
4	1
5	1

Table 8. JPC Self-Assessment.

Question 8. In your experience as a JPC, how many times have you seen a contract problem elevated within a company's organization?

Results. Three responses were received.

Less than 5 - 1
 5-10 - 1
 11-20 - 0
 More than 20 - 1

One respondent felt he had been in the position too short of a time period to respond.

Question 9. What has been the nature of the elevated problem?

Results. Four responses were received.

Usually these problems are cost issues and issues of company investment.

Resolving differences between the contractor and Government.

Contractual issues, e.g., anthrax shots prior to deployment; partnering agreement formation; and ways to improve business relationships.

A termination for default, a dramatic pricing problem, and the robustness of technical program.

Question 10. What changes would you recommend to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the JPC?

Results. Five responses were received.

Clear guidance on mediating differences of judgment with other JPCs and Customer Representatives.

More time to devote to the job.

Have our executive management sell it to the corporate executives.

Keep them empowered to make the hard decisions. Give them the ability to overrule existing decisions (non-Contracting Officer decisions).

The JPC needs to be a sole entity with no supervisory or other contractual responsibilities. To make this work, this individual should be on the road visiting contractors' plants learning their business acumen. They may have great ideas for us - ones we've never considered. As we, the Government, moves forward toward a more businesslike approach in our way of doing business, who better to learn from than those who have been successful in business for many years? Constant, consistent face time can only improve any working relationship. The JPC should also be invited to major program reviews - the problems surface at these. By attending reviews of all (in this case, three) contractors, common threads/problem

areas can be noted and shared with the other JPCs in an effort to provide more effective and efficient contracting.

G. SURVEY RESULTS - SURVEY TO INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES (COMPANIES WHICH ARE ASSIGNED JPCS)

After contacting the JPCs and TILO, a list of industry representatives was developed. Surveys were distributed electronically. Six responses were received.

Question 1. How would you measure the JPC concept's contribution to facilitating communications between CECOM and your company?

Results. Six responses were received.

Don't know	- 0
Minor Impact	- 5
Major Impact	- 1
No Impact	- 0

Question 2. How often does a contract issue get elevated within your company's organization?

Results. Six responses were received.

Don't know	- 0
Never	- 0
Seldom	- 0
Occasionally	- 5
Frequently	- 1

Question 3. Is your company's decision to elevate an issue affected by whether a JPC is involved?

Results. Six responses were received.

Don't know - 0
Never - 2
Seldom - 2
Occasionally - 2
Frequently - 0

Question 4. What is the nature of issues that get elevated within your company's organization?

Results. Multiple responses were received.

Contract clauses, terms and conditions - 3

Payment issues - 4

Programmatic issues (involves the customer activity)
- 5

Other (please specify) - The following specific responses were received:

Type of contract (Recently, cost plus fixed fee versus firm fixed price)

Procuring Contracting Officer workload, prioritizations, communications, and contract definitizations.

Question 5. Have you ever been asked about your perception of the Government as a customer?

Results. Six responses were received.

Never - 1
Seldom - 3
Occasionally - 0
Frequently - 2

Question 6. Have you ever been asked to provide feedback on Government requirements?

Results. Six responses were received.

Never - 1

Seldom - 0

Occasionally - 0

Frequently - 5

Question 7. Does your company use the Interactive Business Opportunities Page website?

Results. All six responded affirmatively.

Question 8. How did you initially learn of the website?

Results. Six responses were received.

Don't remember. We've been using it for several years now.

At a CECOM Advance Planning Briefing for Industry.

It seems like I've always known about it from the time of the Electronic Bulletin Boards and the transition to the Army Business Opportunity Page. Being part of this community, one just knows.

From the Procuring Contracting Officers.

Question 9. What other communication devices does your company utilize to communicate with industry?

Results. Five responses were received.

We communicate with industry via telephone, e-mail, trade shows, advertisements in periodicals, and field marketing representatives.

Trade shows, customer visits, and professional luncheons.

Active in a majority of the Professional Associations (Association of the United States Army, Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association, Association of Old Crows, Army Aviation Association of America, Signal Corps Regimental Association, etc., along with e-mail, advertisements in professional journals, telephone, and external website.

Face-to-face visits, e-mail, APBI, and telephone.

Participation in related industry associations and at industry trade shows.

Question 10. Is the Interactive Business Opportunities Page website a useful tool?

Results. All responses were affirmative.

Question 11. How might the IBOP website be improved?

Results.

Copies of contracts with all modifications and delivery orders should be loaded on to it.

None that I can think of.

CECOM needs to standardize the way the various contracting officers use the tool. For example, it's not always clear what has been updated on the IBOP. I receive an electronic notification that something has changed, and in rare situations, the electronic notification tells me what has changed but most of the time it is just a general note. Once one gets into the list of folders it's usually easy to see updates by the dates next to file however, in some cases, contracting officers don't place all updates in the folder. They list them at the bottom of the Home Page pertaining to that solicitation. When they do that, there is no corresponding date so one has to look at each file all over again to find out which one was added. Very time

consuming. Its very nice when you click on the e-mail notification hyperlink which would take you to a specific website that address the change and lists the document at the bottom of that website page. It should also be carried in the general list of folders as well.

H. INTERVIEW AND SURVEY OF TECHNICAL INDUSTRIAL LIAISON OFFICER

Interviews were conducted with personnel of CECOM TILO, CECOM Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization Office (SADBUO), and various JPCs. Questions posed dealt with the purpose and nature of industry communications. Interviewed personnel consistently stressed the importance of their communications with industry and the use of the Internet.

During an interview, TILO provided the following responses:

- **What is your most critical function?**

The industry aspect is utmost. Providing assistance to new contractors is the most critical function.

- **What types of guidance does TILO provide to industry?**

TILO provides business consultation, which will walk the contractor through the IBOP or provide information as basic as necessary to inform a new contractor.

- **What types of information is provided to industry?**

Some contractors are looking for information on new acquisition processes, such as, reverse auctioning. Also, TILO tries to match a company's capabilities with a possible customer activity. Some companies find information about small business initiatives useful regardless of whether the company is small or large. Large

businesses are interested in small business teaming possibilities.

TILO will walk a company thru the various web pages. The CECOM home page or the C4IEWS page is particularly helpful.

During the AFCEA Technology Network (TechNet) shows, TILO always has a booth. The booth seems to generate industry interest.

- **What is the procedure for the coordination of VIP visits?**

The visit to the CG is function that gets a great deal of attention. TILO tries to weed out people. Some contractors request to visit the CG, but actually could benefit more from a visit with the director of their customer activity.

TILO is tasked with the calendar coordination for the CG and the visitor. This can also include the Deputy CG and various directors of CECOM functional areas. TILO prepares a fact sheet, which includes the following information:

- Biographies of the visitors
- Company background
- Whether the company is involved in a major CECOM program or a summary of CECOM business
- Information obtain from the Contracting Officers of CECOM Acquisition Center regarding possible contract issues
- **What is the procedure for receipt of unsolicited proposals?**

TILO takes receipt of unsolicited proposals. The proposal is initially evaluated to see if it qualifies as

an unsolicited proposal. If it does, TILO determines what customer activity would most likely benefit from the proposal, most likely the Research and Development Engineering Center (RDEC). From that point, the proposal is treated the same as a Government generated requirement.

- **How are product demonstrations coordinated?**

Companies interested in demonstrating new products approach TILO. A product demonstration is usually held at the Officer's Club. The demonstration is advertised in the "Monmouth Message". If the product does not have a broad application, a one-on-one meeting with the appropriate customer activity may be held in place of a public demonstration. Product demonstrations have become more difficult to arrange since 11 September 2001 due to increased security constraints.

- **How might CECOM's communications with industry improve?**

TILO's most pressing need is for improvement is the website. The website is missing useful information and is poorly organized. Making the website more user friendly is TILO's first priority.

- **What websites provide additional information?**

The AMC TILO website contains useful information including the AMC TILO pamphlet. [Ref. 9]

TILO completed a follow-up survey, which included the following questions and responses:

Question 1. Have you ever requested feedback from industry?

Results. The following response was received: When we direct industry to different sources for marketing

purposes, we usually ask them to keep us posted with how they make out. This way we know if we are directing them to the right areas. There is nothing formal and not all get back to us. For other areas (i.e., unsolicited proposal, industry visits), I have not requested any feedback.

Question 2. Are any metrics used to monitor unsolicited proposals?

Results. The following response was received: Yes, but not sure if it is helpful other than to show that we are doing work down here.

Question 3. If yes, what do the metrics address?

Results. The following response was received: Number of Proposals.

I. SURVEY OF TECHNICAL INDUSTRIAL LIAISON OFFICE CUSTOMERS

TILO provided information on two companies that had recently been provided a business consultation. Surveys were provided to both companies. A response was received from one of the companies.

Question 1. What communication devices does your company use to communicate with suppliers?

Results. The following response was received: My company uses primarily e-mails.

Question 2. What have you learned from a CECOM TILO consultation?

Results. The following response was received: I received information about the structure of the CECOM organization, who does what, and where opportunities may

become available - these are all very valuable for planning purposes.

Question 3. In what ways have your communications with the Government been enhanced as a result of a CECOM TILO consultation?

Results. The following response was received: It allowed me to understand Government's requirements a little better.

Question 4. What improvements have your company realized due to a TILO consultation?

Results. The following response was received: None at present.

Question 5. How effective would you rate TILO on a scale of one to five, five being the highest rating?

Results. The response received gave TILO a rating of five.

Question 6. How might the TILO be improved?

Results. The following response was received: I found the TILO personnel to be highly customer service oriented, and very helpful. Would appreciate receiving updates of information - thus, my recommendation would be for TILO to develop either a newsletter that they send out to the companies that visit them, as a start.

J. INTERVIEW OF SMALL AND DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS UTILIZATION OFFICE

During an interview, SADBUO provided the following responses:

- **What ways are utilized to interface with industry?**

SADBUO personnel attend small business conferences. SADBUO conduct site visits of various CECOM small business suppliers. SADBUO have been asked to speak at various Government and small business associations.

- **What media is used to interface with industry?**

SADBUO combines with the APBI to meet with small business and provide the newest information on Government regulations and programs. Also, SADBUO will meet one-on-one with company technical points of contact. Also, there are many useful websites, such as, Central Contractor Registration (CCR), IBOP, Federal Business Opportunities (FEDBIZ), and Small Business Mall.

SADBUO also monitors company visits to TILO. SADBUO may also recommend meeting the same companies to insure adequate information has been provided to the company.

Attending conferences is very popular. Too many conferences are held to attend them all. In addition to APBI, there are conferences held by National Contract Management Association (NCMA), Military Communications (MILCOM), Armed Forces Communication-Electronics Association (AFCEA) and Small Business Administration (SBA).

- **What has been the impact of the Internet?**

Electronic information has broadened the opportunities for small businesses. There is a great deal of information out there. It is now easier to locate useful points of contact. [Refs. 25 and 26]

JPCs were asked the following questions:

- **What companies have been assigned to you as JPC?**

JPCs have been assigned to the following companies: Lockheed Martin, Motorola, Raytheon, ITT, Litton and. Interviews were conducted with the JPCs for Raytheon, ITT, and Lockheed Martin.

- **How do you interface with your industry counterparts?**

One respondent indicated that the JPC would get involved whenever representatives of the company would visit CECOM. These company visits could be with the CG, the director of CECOM Acquisition Center, or a speaking engagement at a National Contract Management Association (NCMA) meeting.

Another respondent issued letters to companies requesting industry feedback on business relations regarding performance and creativity. This respondent had also been asked to speak on the JPC concept at a NCMA breakfast.

- **What is your role within the organization?**

One respondent indicated that although one aspect may be to deal with representatives from companies, the purpose really lies in the partnering with the JPC companies. The JPC position was envisioned to be a high level contact for companies to have should contractual be unresolved or if stalemates occurred that could have detrimental effects on the program.

- **What benefits does the organization derive from your position?**

One respondent recognized the value of sharing information on organizational initiatives. By sharing knowledge, both parties can take advantage of it. Another benefit is the personal touch of attending meeting with

industry, program managers, and contracting officer in order to assist in the resolution of potential issues. An objective of the JPC position was to standardize contract provisions in order that future acquisitions would expend less cycle time. This aspect never really materialized.

- **How might CECOM's communications with industry improve?**

One respondent felt that the "dual role" the JPC plays in the organization detracts from their effectiveness. The JPCs are also group chiefs. This respondent feels torn between the two roles. Without the added responsibility of the group chief role, more time could be dedicated to industry communications.

Another respondent felt that the JPC should be the industry point of contact to help streamline current and future acquisitions, while ensuring that smart decisions are made on existing contracts. [Refs. 11 and 27]

K. INDUSTRY WEBSITE RESULTS

1. Background

Company websites were reviewed and a list of contacts developed. E-mail messages were sent to company websites that offered a link for e-mail. This link was usually called "Contact Us". Responses to e-mail messages were received via e-mail and telephone. Varying degrees of helpfulness was encountered. An e-mail message from Motorola simply referred this researcher back to the Motorola website.

When this researcher initially referred to the website for Harris Corporation, the website was not informative. This researcher sent an e-mail message and received a telephonic response. While the response provided only a

small amount of information, this researcher was impressed by the human touch of a verbal response. A subsequent visit to the website showed significant improvement in the quantity and quality of information.

As part of the research of industry websites, the website's search engine was used. Searches were conducted on the following terms:

- Communications
- Buyer-Supplier relations
- Partnering
- Business opportunities
- Supplier management
- Supply chain

In almost every instance, relevant information was located on Industry websites under the heading "Partnering". A few times no relevant information was located on an Industry website.

2. Lockheed Martin

The Lockheed Martin website contains information on global supply chain management. The website is called "SupplierNet". The website contains links to more specific information, such as, accounts payable, ethics, forms, industry information, single process initiatives, small business development, and STAR Supplier Program.

The STAR Supplier Program is a partnering program established in 1998. The program promises high quality, low cost and on-delivery through the establishment of solid partnerships with suppliers.

The STAR Supplier Program web page also included a section called "Frequently Asked Questions". This section

included how to enter the program, the program's benefits and points of contact. [Ref. 15]

3. Motorola

The Motorola website contains information on a program called "Preferred Partner Program". This program includes a benefit called "Co-operative Marketing Program". The program web page includes Motorola's offer to suppliers of technical support, equipment discounts, training discounts, and use of Motorola logos.

The Motorola website also included numerous press releases of successful partnering. Five of the press releases were reviewed in detail. The press releases were similar in nature and proclaimed the benefits of supplier relationships and how it results in program success. [Ref. 16]

4. ITT

The ITT website was reviewed and the search engine was also utilized. The website did not contain any information on supplier relationships. The following terms were searched: communications, buyer-supplier relations, partnering, business opportunities, supplier management and supply chain. These searches yielded no information. [Ref. 28]

5. Harris Corporation

The first time the researcher reviewed the website it yielded very little information. However, it did include a link called "Contact Us". [Ref. 18] The researcher sent an e-mail message to Harris Corporation using this feature. A representative of Harris Corporation telephoned the researcher and participated in a short informal interview as follows:

- **Are there any programs at Harris Corporation for supplier relationships?**

There is no formal program at Harris Corporation for supplier relationships. Each program manager has the flexibility to enter into long-term relations with specific suppliers. There is a program at Harris Corporation called the Vendor Database to monitor supplier information.

- **What types of information is contained in this database?**

The database tracks past performance information regarding delivery and performance.

- **Is performance information the only type of information that is maintained by Harris Corporation?**

The only types of information monitored are past performance and business size. [Ref. 16]

A second visit to the Harris Corporation website yielded information on a Supplier Day Workshop. The objective of this workshop was improved supplier relations. [Ref. 18]

6. Raytheon

The Raytheon website contained information on a program called "The Raytheon Consortium Program". The Raytheon Consortium Program offers participating companies and suppliers significant cost savings through partnership. Savings are as a direct result of volume purchasing. All participants benefit from Raytheon's technologies and processes.

The Raytheon website also included numerous press releases of successful partnering. Five of the press releases were reviewed in detail. The press releases were

similar in nature and proclaimed the benefits of supplier relationships. [Ref. 17]

L. GOVERNMENT WEBSITE RESULTS

1. TILO

The TILO website was very informative. It included names, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, business hours and driving directions. It contained twenty-six links to other Government websites. All of which contained relevant information. Also, the AMC TILO Pamphlet was available for downloading. [Ref. 21]

2. IBOP

Is the Internet effective as a communications tool? In the case of the IBOP, it seems to be the case. The IBOP lists over two hundred solicitations in an organized manner. This listing can be sorted by the following categories:

- Solicitation number
- Status
- Requiring Activity
- Date Posted
- Title
- CBD Category
- SIC Codes
- NAICS Codes
- Type of Action
- Contracting Officer
- Contract Specialist

A contractor possessing very little information about an upcoming solicitation should be able to locate the solicitation on the IBOP with little trouble. In fact, a

contractor should be able to isolate all solicitations in a specific field. The website is very well organized.

By opening any of the solicitation folders, a contractor is able to contact the contracting officer and/or the contract specialist by clicking on their name. An e-mail template automatically pops up on the screen. In this way, the IBOP is user-friendly. [Ref. 4]

M. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the results of the surveys issued by the researcher: The Contracting Officer survey, the JPC survey, the survey of companies assigned a JPC, the TILO survey, and a survey of TILO customers. It also presented data derived from informal interviews with employees of the CECOM Acquisition Center. Finally, the chapter presented the results of research conducted on Internet websites for both commercial and Government activities.

The next chapter analyzes and interprets the data presented in this research effort.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter analyzes and interprets the data presented in the previous chapters.

A. BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES PAGE

The CECOM Acquisition Center has made great strides in facilitating communications with Industry. The use of the Internet speeds up the issuance and transmission of documents to their industry counterparts. This is a vast improvement over the traditional reproduction and mailing of solicitations, contracts, correspondence, etc. Now, receipt of information is almost immediate. In particular, industry in the past would use the telephone to contact the Government with regard to the status of pending solicitations and anticipated receipt via the mail. Now, industry only needs to log on to the IBOP to learn the status and download documents. The use of the Internet increases efficiency of communications for both the Government and Industry.

Based upon survey results, the IBOP received favorable ratings from both contracting officers and industry. Contracting officers complained about technical problems dealing with the website availability. This complaint centers more on the age and reliability of the server and the file size limitations. Any computer network problems experienced at CECOM affects the availability of the IBOP. The ability to rapidly communication with industry is degraded when there are computer system problems.

A negative response received from industry dealt with the organization of information, not the media. It is left

up to the contracting officer how to organize documentation pertaining to a specific solicitation number. Personal preferences can dictate how a particular solicitation record looks and this may not resemble how other solicitation records are structured. Industry requested consistency in solicitation record organization. This issue probably deals only with large best value competitive solicitations. For small or sole-source solicitations, structure is not an issue. There is seldom the quantity of documents associated with a solicitation that would impact the ease in navigating the website.

Another negative response dealt with the electronic e-mail feature of the IBOP. When a contracting officer updates a solicitation record by either the addition or deletion of documents, an e-mail message can be sent to all industry members that have elected to subscribe to this feature. Industry felt that contracting officers were not using this feature to explain solicitation record updates. As this is a rather recently added feature, contracting officers may just becoming accustomed to using it.

Most of Industry could not remember how they first heard of the IBOP. In fact, one response stated that if you wanted to do business with the CECOM Acquisition Center then the IBOP was a fact of life. The survey results confirmed this as all six companies surveyed responded positively to whether they used the IBOP. One respondent reveals learning about the IBOP at an APBI. In any regard, industry seems very comfortable with the IBOP.

The IBOP is an example of one of the functions the CECOM Acquisition Center does correctly. The CECOM

Acquisition Center was one of the first Government buying activities to utilize the Internet. Initially, the CECOM Acquisition Center had instituted an electronic bulletin board. The electronic bulletin board allowed for the posting of solicitations, without the other features a web-based system allows. Due to the success of the IBOP, the website has become the model that the Army has chosen to adopt as the Army's business opportunities page.

B. JOINT PARTNERING CONTRACTOR REPRESENTATIVE (JPC)

The JPC concept was an initiative to improve communications with Industry. An outgrowth of the concept of partnering, the JPC could approach a company as an entire entity.

Surveys consistently revealed that the JPCs are aware of what they have been tasked to accomplish. Some of the responses received were redundant. However, the actual implementation of this position was inconsistent. Some JPCs were able to list many significant accomplishments in the short time the position has been established. Other JPCs seemed to have trouble responding to the question.

This disparity was also apparent in the responses to the question asked about industry feedback. Some JPCs were very aggressive in their efforts to obtain feedback. In fact, one JPC designed a perceptual mapping tool to compare CECOM to our competitors. Another JPC restricted his attempt to obtain feedback to sporadic contact with local contractor representatives.

The same disparity was apparent in the responses to the question asked about contribution to the organization. Responses ranged from a limited contribution to merely

paraphrasing the JPC job description. However, when asked to provide a self-assessment, responses ranged from the mid-point to the highest rating.

Certain JPCs appear to have taken the initiative to develop the position of JPC and its role in the organization. Other JPCs seemed to be mired in the lack of clear and precise direction or other duties and responsibilities. Part of the problem is that this is an ad hoc position (i.e., an additional duty).

Despite the inconsistency in the JPC survey results, industry feedback on the JPC was more consistent. All responses felt the JPC had a minor impact on facilitating communications. One respondent, however, felt it had a major impact. Again, this could be due to how that specific JPC responded to the position.

While responses indicated that contract issues are elevated occasionally to frequently, JPC involvement has little or no impact on this decision. Survey responses indicate that companies do not take into account whether CECOM has decided to elevate a contract issue to upper management. This researcher is skeptical that this is in fact the case. An obvious assumption is that companies would like to discuss issues with their CECOM counterparts and that this assumption may be one of the reasons to establish the JPC position.

In the past when issues became difficult to resolve, contractors would often elevate issues to the attention of the Director of the CECOM Acquisition Center and sometimes the Commanding General. Now when an issue is brought to the attention of the JPC, resolution is achieved at a

working level among Government and contractor personnel with first hand program experience and a vested interest in the outcome of the contract.

Contracting Officers found little value in the JPC concept in helping the contracting officer perform their job. Again, this result could be based on the inconsistency of how each JPC approaches their position and with which JPC the contracting officers had to specifically interface. A couple of responses gave higher ratings than the norm or indicated that the rating varied depended on the JPC.

C. SMALL BUSINESS OFFICE

Survey responses were somewhat evenly spread throughout the ratings. These results could be based on a number of issues. Some Contracting Officers may work exclusively on large programs with little exposure to small businesses as prime contractors. Some Contracting Officers may already be well aware through market survey efforts of what small business capabilities exist. Some Contracting Officers may rely on the Small Business Office to identify sources for small, non-recurring requirements for spare items. All could be possible explanations for the survey results.

D. TILO OFFICE

As only one response was received to the TILO survey, it is difficult to draw any conclusions based on such a small sampling. However, the survey response was highly favorable with regard to their experience with the TILO Office. While the TILO Office emphasized their assistance to new companies during an interview, TILO was unable to provide more than two names of companies that had actually

had business consultations. Despite the emphasis placed on helping new business, one of TILO's main functions seems to be coordinating the Commanding General's calendar. This coordination is strictly in the area of visits by companies. The Commanding General's staff manages the remainder of his calendar. Companies normally afforded an opportunity to meet with the Commanding General are CECOM's major suppliers. **Companies not in need of the one-on-one assistance provided to new companies.**

There is some overlap between what the Small Business Office and TILO does, mainly in the area of attracting new small businesses. Both the Small Business Office and TILO mentioned how they work with each other. However, it must be noted that the Small Business Office will advise a small business to seek out other Government agencies. TILO provides information on how to do business specifically with CECOM. This information includes instructions and demonstrations of the IBOP and reverse auction tool. Also, TILO does not restrict its business consultations to only small businesses.

E. INDUSTRY WEBSITE RESULTS

1. Lockheed Martin

The Lockheed Martin website represented the best of the various industry websites researched. It was well organized and user friendly. It was filled with useful information. The section entitled "Frequently Asked Questions" was especially user friendly.

2. Motorola

The Motorola website was not as well organized. The website was mainly a repository of numerous press releases. There are many instances of partnering posted on the

website, but little information on the methods used to establish and maintain these partnerships. A response from Motorola failed to provide any additional information. The website appeared to be focused more on current partners not as a means of attracting new partners.

3. ITT

There was not any partnering information on the ITT website. While ITT may partner on specific Government programs, ITT does not use the Internet to publicize it.

4. Harris Corporation

Harris Corporation leaves partnering up to the discretion of the individual program manager. While this may result in consistency, this policy may also allow the program manager the flexibility to match the partnering techniques with the desired outcome. As previously stated, business relationships are dependent on the situation and the business objective.

5. Raytheon

The Raytheon website was almost as good as Lockheed Martin's website. It was as well organized and slightly less user friendly. It was filled with useful information. This website also was a repository of numerous press releases of successful partnering, similar to the Motorola website.

Industry's use of the websites differed from CECOM Acquisition Center. CECOM Acquisition Center uses the website as an introduction to new suppliers and an efficient means of distribution. Industry websites seem more focused are nurturing suppliers already in the business base. The websites advertise opportunities and assistance to suppliers. Industry websites offer financing

to suppliers and business programs with preferential treatment as part of a long-term business relationship. As a Government agency, CECOM Acquisition Center cannot provide preferential treatment to suppliers due to the Competition in Contracting Act. Of course, financing to suppliers is often provided in accordance with Progress Payments or Milestone Billing.

Another difference between industry and Government websites is the advertising of business opportunities. CECOM Acquisition Center has an entire website dedicated to the issuance of solicitations. Industry does not advertise to its suppliers in this manner. Again, this may be due to a lack of full and open competition requirement among their vendor base. It appears that acceptance into any of the preferred supplier programs is lucrative.

It is highly unlikely that a new business would find an abundance of useful information on any of the industry websites. However, the Government websites provide enough information to bid on a solicitation and receive a contract award.

F. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Internet serves at a great tool for getting information out to suppliers easily and quickly. The Internet in some instances is sufficient as a communications method. However, it is not a substitute for face-to-face communications, especially in new or unstable business relations.

The next chapter provides this researcher's answers to the research questions as well as the researcher's conclusions and recommendations.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter addresses conclusions, research questions and recommendations.

A. CONCLUSIONS

It is a challenge for an organization to establish long-term relationships. Relationships are based on how well the personnel of the various organizations work with one another. This, in turn, is based on how well the organization has established a framework for interaction.

A framework is required because of the constant change in organizational structure, personnel and external influences. The CECOM Acquisition Center has taken steps by putting the organizational structure in place and adopting electronic initiatives.

B. ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Principal Research Question

- **How effective are the methods used by the CECOM to communicate with industry and how might the process of interfacing with industry be improved?**

CECOM uses the position of JPC, the TILO, and the Internet to communicate with industry. These positions represent varying degrees of effectiveness as a means of informing and communicating with industry. The JPC position is plagued by inconsistency in approach. This inconsistency is coupled with the workforce's opinion of questioning whether the JPC position represents a value to the organization.

The TILO provides highly effective communication to a very small audience. With such a narrow focus, TILO is

able to match the method of communication with the objective of the communication.

2. Subsidiary Research Questions

- **What methods does CECOM use to interface with industry and what has been their experience with these methods?**

The methods used by CECOM include the JPC, IBOP, Small Business Office and TILO. CECOM has had some success with the JPC. For example, with assistance from the JPC, the award of the Enhanced Third Generation Night Vision Devices took only 53 days from solicitation release. This contract is potentially valued at \$367 million. [Ref. 3] Much of the credit for this expedient award was given to the JPC and the actions taken by the JPC to facilitate the acquisition process.

The IBOP has been used as the vehicle for paperless solicitation distribution. Contractors can now obtain copies of solicitations in mere minutes. The IBOP is also used to distribute questions, technical clarification and post award documents, including correspondence and contract modifications. The IBOP is an effective and highly efficient method of communications.

Along with the Small Business Office, TILO has helped cultivate new contractors. These efforts may result in an expansion of the supplier base to the mutual benefit of the Government and industry.

- **What are CECOM's primary objectives when communicating with industry?**

CECOM's primary objective is to provide information and inform industry of potential business opportunities. The IBOP provides information organized by a specific

acquisition. The IBOP insures consistent information and quick distribution. The IBOP also serves as a paperless archive of contractual documents.

Along with the IBOP and Small Business Office, TILO provides information to industry in an effort to cultivate additional suppliers. TILO can provide the one-on-one communications that the electronic means lack.

JPCs also provide information, but they are interested in maintaining long-term relations with major suppliers. The JPC are also interested in feedback and learning more about contractors' priorities and constraints.

- **What is the nature of CECOM's communications with industry?**

CECOM communicates with Industry to inform potential contractors of upcoming acquisition opportunities. CECOM will publicize Government requirements early in the acquisition process. This publicizing is done early in order to obtain industry feedback prior to finalizing requirements documents.

CECOM communicates with industry as an organization through the positions of JPC and TILO. These are positions established for the promotion of good industry relationships. The office of TILO and SADBUE provide more specific customized communications based on the particular needs of one unique contractor.

CECOM promotes the use of partnering between contractors and Government teams during the postaward phase. Another method utilized by CECEOM that promotes effective communications is allowing contractors to be members of CECOM's IPTs. By allowing the contractors to be

part of the team, technical challenges can be identified earlier and hopefully solved by mutual participation.

- **What are the primary challenges and issues facing CECOM when they communicate with industry and how does CECOM currently address those issues?**

Traditionally, an adversarial relationship has existed between the Government and industry. This mindset is the primary challenge. CECOM Acquisition Center addresses this challenge by establishment of the JPC position. The major purpose of this position is to communicate with industry and maintain a long-term relationship.

A primary challenge to maintaining a long-term relationship is the Competition in Contracting Act. No matter how well a contractor performs or how effective a working relationship with the Government is, the Government has a responsibility to compete requirements. In this way, the Government's goals differ with industry.

Effective communications takes time and effort; time and effort that may have not been budgeted by the contractor. In a profit-motivated environment, a contractor cannot be forced to put forth the effort to develop effective communications. A benefit to both parties must be or should be realized.

- **How do best of class commercial companies communicate with their suppliers and what initiatives have those companies taken to improve communication effectiveness?**

Lockheed Martin, Motorola and Raytheon use the Internet to communicate with their suppliers. ITT and Harris Corporation allow their program managers to determine how to communicate with industry and the extent to which long-term business relationships are established.

Lockheed Martin, Motorola and Raytheon also have formal programs to enter into long-term business relationships with qualified suppliers. Benefits range from preferred treatment as a vendor, funding assistance, and technical assistance.

- **How does CECOM's JPC, TILO and other industry outreach initiatives compare to best of class communications initiatives?**

CECOM's outreach initiatives compare favorably with the initiatives being used by industry. This is especially true with the accessibility of the people assigned to these initiatives. If industry desires to contact a person, one is easily available and this availability is advertised to industry. As compared to the Government, only Harris Corporation chose to telephone in response to e-mail.

CECOM's emphasis on partnering compares favorably with industry initiatives to foster long-term relationships with subcontractors.

- **To what extent have CECOM's JPC representative, TILO and other initiatives served to enhance communications with industry?**

CECOM's initiatives enhance communication with industry by tailoring the communications approach to the appropriate method. When the Internet is all a contractor needs, CECOM Acquisition Center has several websites filled with useful information. When speaking directly to a person is more appropriate, CECOM Acquisition Center has several positions established where this is their primary function.

- **How might CECOM improve its communications with industry?**

CECOM Acquisition Center can improve its communications with industry by providing feedback to the workforce. Currently, there is no vehicle in place to advise the workforce as to which methods work or how well they work.

Also, JPCs need to be consistent in their approach to industry. Several methods have been found to work with specific contractors. These methods and their implementation need to be adopted by all JPCs. While not all methods will work with all companies, some JPCs seemed to have been successful and others have not. By sharing ideas among JPCs, CECOM Acquisition Center may be able to achieve effective communications with its major suppliers.

The IBOP is being used to provide so much information that it may be overwhelming. Industry would like to see consistency in the organization of information on the IBOP. This can easily be accomplished by adopting a standard framework.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

Currently, the JPC concept is restricted to the six largest suppliers by dollar value. This concept ignores the role that service contractors play in the defense industry. With an ever-increasing reliance on service contractors, JPCs should be expanded beyond hardware suppliers. Good communications with this segment of the industry will become even more critical due to acquisition initiatives like performance-based services. More research should be conducted on how the JPC concept can apply to service contractors.

Cross training of JPCs should be adopted. Quarterly meetings should be held between JPCs and other senior managers of the CECOM Acquisition Center. The purpose of these meetings should be to share information between JPCs and to obtain a total picture of CECOM's relations with the major contractors. Also, from time to time, contractors should be invited to participate.

Feedback should be provided to the workforce. The workforce should be made aware of industry comments, complaints and compliments. Without feedback, the workforce cannot improve their communication methods. Also, an added benefit is possibly the workforce would recognize the JPCs' contribution to the organization.

This feedback should be provided not only from the JPC, but also from TILO. The workforce should be aware of what contractual requirements have discouraged industry from participating. **When contractors visit the CG, what issues are they surfacing and what suggestions are they making.**

The information on the IBOP appeared to be out of date at times. Solicitations which appeared to be old were still posted on the website. Also, the status of some of the solicitations appeared to be out of date. The IBOP can be improved by the addition of an automatic reminder feature. This reminder feature should be designed as a computer software change. It can send a message to the contracting officer or contract specialist reminding them that the file has not been revised within the last thirty days. This feature would help keep information up to date. Leaving old information on the website can only discourage

contractors from relying on any of the posted data. The addition of this feature would remind the workforce to periodically review the website for accuracy.

After contractors have met with the Commanding General, TILO should be tasked with providing feedback to specific acquisition teams. Acquisition personnel are seldom made aware of concerns industry has voiced to the Commanding General. Often industry will choose this forum to complain or criticize decisions made at the working level. Without feedback, the acquisition team works in a vacuum.

Finally, effective communications is not something that once established can be left unattended. Maintaining this standard requires frequent follow-up. Communications is a dynamic function, and as such, is ever changing. Current approaches can quickly lose their effectiveness. This can be avoided by persistent, diligent re-examination of the communication methods utilized by the CECOM Acquisition Center.

**APPENDIX A. SURVEY OF CONTRACTING OFFICERS OF
CECOM ACQUISITION CENTER**

1. How often do JPCs get involved in your contractual issues?
- Never Seldom Occasionally Frequently
2. How often does such an issue get raised to a higher level within the contractor's organization?
- Never Seldom Occasionally Frequently
Don't know
3. What is usually the nature of such an issue?
- Contractual Clause (terms and conditions) _____
- Payment Issues _____
- Programmatic Issues (involves customer activity) _____
- Other (please specify) _____
4. How would you rate the efficiency of the Interactive Business Opportunities Page on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest rating?
- 1 2 3 4 5
5. How would you rate the effectiveness of the Interactive Business Opportunities Page on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest rating?
- 1 2 3 4 5
6. To what extent are you using the IBOP?
7. When or in what instances is the IBOP most useful?
8. Do you use the IBOP for other types of communications beyond what is mandated by CECOM regulation?
- No _____ Yes _____

9. What other communication mechanisms are also used?
10. To what extent does the JPC help you in your job on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest rating?

1 2 3 4 5

11. To what extent does the Small Business Office help you in your job on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest rating?

1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX B. SURVEY TO JOINT PARTNERING CONTRACTOR REPRESENTATIVES

1. How do you perceive your job?
2. How do you define your job?
3. What actions have you taken to respond to the job?
4. What actions have you taken, if any, in order to obtain feedback from industry?
5. Do you know whether the contractor under your purview uses the IBOP?
6. How would you measure your contribution to the organization?
7. How would you rate your contribution to the organization on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest rating?

1	2	3	4	5
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8. In your experience as a JPC, how many times have you seen a contract problem elevated within a company's organization?

Less than 5	5-10	11-20	More than 20
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9. What have been the nature of the elevated problems?

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**APPENDIX C. SURVEY TO INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE
(COMPANIES WHICH ARE ASSIGNED JPCS)**

1. How would you measure the JPC concept's contribution to facilitating communications between CECOM and your company?

Don't know Minor Impact Major Impact No Impact

2. How often does a contract issue get elevated within your company's organization?

Don't know Never Seldom Occasionally Frequently

3. Is your company's decision to elevate an issue affected by whether a JPC is involved?

Don't know Never Seldom Occasionally Frequently

4. What is the nature of issues that get elevated within your company's organization?

Contract clauses, terms and conditions _____

Payment issues _____

Programmatic issues (involves the customer activity)

Other (please specify) _____

5. Have you ever been asked about your perception of the Government as a customer?

Never Seldom Occasionally Frequently

6. Have you ever been asked to provide feedback on government requirements?

Never Seldom Occasionally Frequently

7. Does your company use the Interactive Business Opportunities Page website?

Yes _____ No _____

8. How did you initially learn of the website?
9. What other communication devices does your company utilize to communicate with industry?
10. Is the Interactive Business Opportunities Page website a useful tool?

Yes _____ No _____

APPENDIX D. SURVEY OF TILO CUSTOMERS

1. What communication devices does your company use to communicate with suppliers?
2. What have you learned from a CECOM TILO consultation?
3. In what ways have your communications with the Government been enhanced as a result of a CECOM TILO consultation?
4. What improvements have your company realize due to a TILO consultation?
5. How effective would you rate TILO on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest rating?

1 2 3 4 5

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APPENDIX E. SURVEY OF TILO

1. Have you ever requested feedback from industry?

2. Are any metrics used to monitor unsolicited proposals?

3. If yes, what do the metrics address?
Number of proposals _____
Submitted by which contractors _____
Whether the proposal resulted in a contract _____
Other (please specify) _____

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