March is Procurement Month!!!

Celebrate the awesome job you do every day.
-National Institute of Governmental Purchasing

A good purchase is valuable. More than just cost, a good purchase not only defines the item specifically and its value, but when, where, & how it is delivered. A good purchase outlines proper payment practices, provides protection against indiscriminate charges, and resolution should disputes occur. Gold Stars to all the savvy procurement people across the University.

Equipment Specification Writing

How many of you know the acronym “KISS”? I just found out via Wikipedia that “Keep It Simple Stupid” is a design principle noted in the U.S. Navy back in 1960. One of my first bosses lived by this creed. Even with the other variations of “keep it simple silly” or “keep it short & simple” or “keep it simple and straight forward” or “keep it small and simple”, the meaning is don’t clutter the information with immaterial details.

In specification writing, five lines of well written specifications are more beneficial than five paragraphs of mediocre specifications. When writing equipment specifications, points to consider are:

- Identify the equipment. Brand name & model help identify the desired level of performance of the equipment but doesn’t eliminate competition.
- Size / footprint – does it need to fit in a special area?
- Special environment needed for the equipment, such as water, drain, electrical, ventilation, etc. May need to contact Facilities for assistance in adapting the room.
- Consumables? Help lock in consumable costs if identified as part of equipment package.
- Warranty? Be reasonable in expectations.
- Extended Warranty / Maintenance. Depending on the complexity of the equipment, an on-going maintenance agreement bid along with the equipment can help with price and budgeting.
- Freight / Delivery. Third party freight lines can help save shipping costs. Is a dock, forklift, extra assistance, etc. needed.
- Installation. Is the equipment a “plug & play” type? Or will the manufacturer need to set up and calibrate the equipment before K-State accepts?
- Training – if needed, how many people for how many hours?

Don’t provide brochure or quote in lieu of specifications. This is the salesman telling Purchasing what they want to sell, not what the department needs. Brochures and quotes are good information but the department needs to provide specifications in its own words.

Summary – Don’t Overthink It but Do Think It Through.