



Leveraging Soft Skills to Influence Procurement Strategies

Mr. David Christ
Assistant Director, OSBP
U.S. Army Research Laboratory

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DoD OSBP

Agenda:

- Mission/Vision
- Soft skills
- Influencing outcomes
- Hard Vs. Soft Skills
- Soft skilled required for SBPs





Office of Small Business Programs

- Mission

We *maximize opportunities for small businesses* to contribute to national security by providing combat power for our troops and economic power for our nation

- Vision

We are a network of Small Business Professionals with common values, shared knowledge and regular communication *who partner with acquisition professionals seeking small businesses to fulfill DoD procurement requirements* and give our Service Members the competitive advantage.

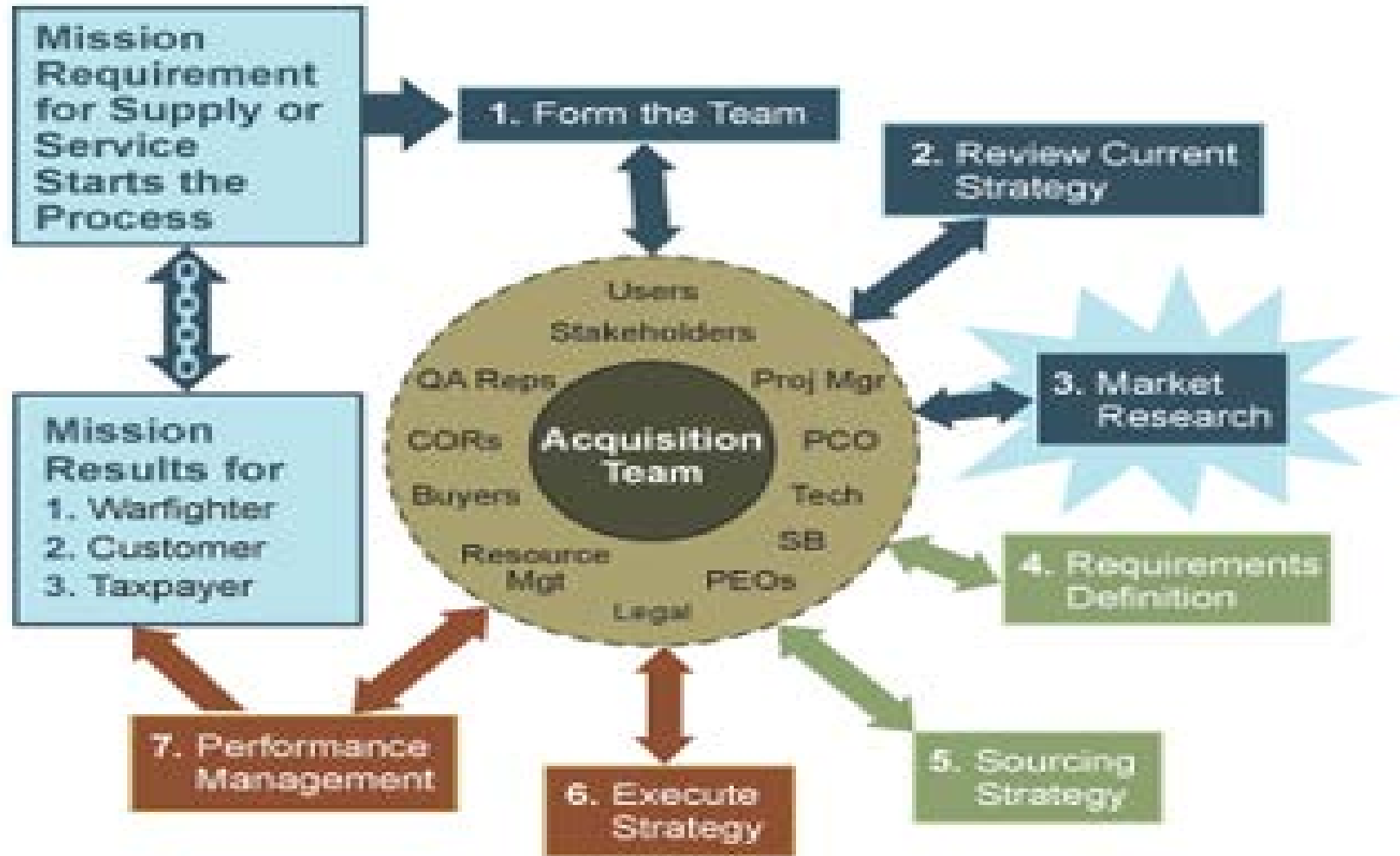
- Army OSBP Vision

To *be the premier advocacy organization committed to maximizing small business utilization* in support of rapidly fielding a trained, ready, responsive and capable force that can prevent conflict, shape the environment, and win the Nation's wars.

How do we successfully advocate for SB? Influence.



Influencing Procurement Strategies



How do you influence Procurement Strategies? Leadership!



Management Vs. Leadership

- Managers organize, plan, staff and prioritize while leaders set a direction, develop a vision, develop supporting strategies, communicate the vision and motivate and inspire others towards achieving the desired endstate.

(Adapted From *What Leaders Really Do*: John Kotter, Free Press, 1988)

- Once able to rely on your personal expertise as a Contracting Officer, now as a SBP you are responsible for implementing an agenda for a whole group. To lead in this capacity it requires a personal transformation.

(Adapted From *Becoming the Boss*: Linda Hill, HBS Press, 2007)

Employees rely on Hard Skills while leaders require Soft Skills



Use Your Soft Skills

- **Why?** As a member of an acquisition team, the effective use of Soft Skills is required to influence other Acquisition stakeholders and to successfully negotiate positive SB outcomes.
- **What are “Soft Skills”?** They are character traits and [interpersonal skills](#) that characterize a person's [relationships with other people](#). In the workplace, soft skills are considered a complement to hard skills, which refer to a person's knowledge and occupational skills. Sociologists may use the term soft skills to describe a person's "EQ" or "Emotional Intelligence Quotient," as opposed to "IQ" or "Intelligence Quotient."

Read more: [Soft Skills https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/soft-skills.asp#ixzz59dzoJxmP](https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/soft-skills.asp#ixzz59dzoJxmP)



When asked, employers what skills are most important and Soft Skills are in higher demand than Hard Skills.

Hard Skills

- Written communication skills (73.4%)
- Technical skills (67.5%)
- Analytical/quantitative skills (68%)
- Oral communication skills (67.0%)
- Computer skills (62.6%)
- Detail-oriented (57.6%)
- Organizational ability (42.4%)
- Strategic planning skills (35%)
- Entrepreneurial skills/risk-taker (25.1%)

Soft Skills

- Ability to work in a team (77.8%)
- Leadership (77.8%)
- Problem-solving skills (70.9%)
- Strong work ethic (70.4%)
- Initiative (66.5%)
- Flexibility/adaptability (62.1%)
- Interpersonal skills (60.6%)
- Tactfulness (23.2%)
- Creativity (18.2%).
- Friendly/outgoing personality (29.1%)

Hard Skills

VS

Soft Skills



The balance between them is the key for success



Hard skills include the specific knowledge and abilities required for success in a job.



By definition

Soft skills characterize your relationships with other people, or are about how you approach life and work.

Hard skills are teachable abilities that can be defined and measured much more than soft skills. Hard abilities are easy to quantify.

Measurable or not?

Soft abilities are personal-driven and subjective skills. They are really hard to measure.



Hard skills are easy to prove with certificates, education degree, awards and etc.

How to prove them?

Soft skills related to your personal characteristics and traits and are difficult to prove.

- Basic computer skills
- Data analysis skills
- Mathematical and numeracy skills
- Knowing foreign languages
- Physics knowledge

Examples

- Communication skills
- Leadership skills
- Flexibility and adaptability skills
- Decision-making skills
- Creativity



Let's take software developers. Their hard skills are the knowledge of development language such as Java and C++.

Particular Example

The soft skills of a software developer are his abilities to work successfully in a team and to communicate.





Hard Skills for the SBP

SBP Hard skills Are teachable abilities that can be defined and measured and are easy to quantify (Certifications, Warrant, Degrees, etc.)

EXAMPLES:

- Knowledge of the Acquisition planning process
- Expertise with contract writing process
- Understanding of statutory and regulatory requirements: CFR, FAR, DFAR,
- SB Laws and Regulations
- SB Program Rules
- Contract Clauses
- Writing Skills
- Contract writing Systems
- Other Business Applications

[\(https://www.businessphrases.net/hard-skills-list/\)](https://www.businessphrases.net/hard-skills-list/)





Soft skills are character traits and interpersonal skills that characterize a person's relationships with other people. In the workplace, soft skills are considered a complement to hard skills,

U.S. DOL list of Soft Skills

Soft Skill #1: Communication

Soft Skill #2: Enthusiasm & Attitude

Soft Skill #3: Teamwork

Soft Skill #4: Networking

Soft Skill #5: Problem Solving & Critical Thinking

Soft Skill #6: Professionalism



More Soft Skills

- Self-Mgmt.
- Adaptability
- Growth mindset
- ✓ Self-awareness
- Emotion Regulation
- Self-Confidence
- Stress Mgmt.
- Resilience
- Forgiveness
- ✓ Persistence
- Perceptiveness
- People
- ✓ Communication
- Teamwork
- Interpersonal Meeting Management
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Coaching
- Tribal
- Managing upward
- Self-promotion
- ✓ Dealing with difficult people
- ✓ Political savvy
- ✓ Influence & Persuasion
- ✓ Negotiation
- ✓ Networking

Which Soft Skills apply to implementing and agenda or vision?



Communication:

- verbal (sounds, language, and tone of voice)
- aural (listening and hearing)
- non-verbal (facial expressions, body language, and posture)
- written (journals, emails, blogs, and text messages)
- visual (signs, symbols, and pictures)





Enthusiasm & Attitude:

- Facial Expressions
- Posture
- Tone of Voice
- Willingness to accept additional tasks
- Responding well to direction
- Accepting constructive criticism





Influence and Persuasion:

- Must Demonstrate Character- the intention to do the right thing
- Must Demonstrate competence to establish credibility
- Need to demonstrate influence-their ability to deliver and execute the right strategy (Past work)
- Requires the development of one-on-one relationships building trust with various stakeholders
- Persuasion, different from influence, leverages credibility built on hard skills but uses communication skills and enthusiasm to move stakeholders to a position closer to your own
- Persuasion is critical to successful negotiation but can occur without influence



Negotiating



- 1. Identify situations that call for extra vigilance.** Periodically, perhaps, once a month, make a list of important upcoming negotiations for major acquisitions, complex strategies, multiple parties, key strategic partners, or a new SB policy or procedure for your organization and prepare positions and fall back positions.
- 2. Don't let time pressure affect your decisions.** Its critical you impart on them that they must provide you adequate time to review and provide sufficient input to the strategy. Let their time crunch be your leverage!
- 3. Partition the negotiation starting with easy topics first.** Get agreement on some smaller matters and show your willingness to compromise. (winning the battle doesn't always help you win the war)
- 4. Adopt the Outsider Lens.** We know our biases so try to remove them from your bargaining position and instead focus on being an unbiased. (Explain how you are being unbiased)

(Adapted from Non-intuitive Negotiating; H. Bazerman, D. Malhotra, HBS)



Summary

- To be a successful Small Business Professional you must take up a leadership role in the Acquisition Planning Process
- Successful leaders must undergo a personal transformation moving from relying primarily on Hard Skills to developing and effectively using Soft Skills
- Accomplishment of your vision requires you to create coalitions effectively influencing others to move in the direction of your vision

