

# Complying with Contracting Procedures and Legal Requirements

## *Custom Development Approach Overcomes Participant Resistance and Addresses IG Findings of Contracting Deficiencies and Serious Misconduct*

### The Challenge

A small training organization that provides executive in-resident training to GS-15s and Senior Executive Service (SES) employees was dealing with the fallout from an audit and ongoing investigation by the Office of Personal Management Inspector General (IG). The IG had uncovered serious misconduct and deficiencies in the organization's contracting process.

The organization offers an on-campus training program at its school as well as customized off-campus training, which is delivered by 150 adjunct faculty members who have blanket purchase agreements with the school. To address deficiencies identified in the IG audit, the organization needed to conduct training for both the contracting office staff and the adjunct faculty. It was anticipated that the faculty members who would be required to attend would be hostile to the training.

### The Process

Management Concepts design staff worked with the client and an experienced instructor and subject matter expert to create a customized one-day training course. This instructor was selected based on his successful track record and experience delivering training in similar situations involving potentially hostile audiences.

Because the investigation was ongoing, the IG report was unavailable. As a result, the instructor and instructional designer interviewed the contracting officer (CO) to gather in-depth information about the contracting environment. This process provided the necessary background and data to identify training objectives, determine the most effective design for the course, and prepare the instructor to facilitate the training.

### The Solution

Management Concepts worked collaboratively with the CO to arrive at a customized solution that would communicate the proper contracting procedures, the rationale for these procedures, and the legal ramifications if the procedures are not followed. The training schedule also included time for Q&A sessions to give participants the opportunity to raise any lingering questions or concerns directly with the instructor.

### The Results

Within six weeks of the initial discussions with the CO, the first customized one-day course was delivered with a total of 21 participants from the faculty and contracting office. Participants rated the learning experience and the instructor an average of 4.7 on a 5-point scale. It was clear from course evaluations that the instructor's participation in the analysis phase of training development led to an open, interactive training environment that encouraged participant involvement.

Although many were resistant to the training initially, participants said they appreciated that the instructor created the opportunity for them to be heard, ask questions and get answers. They respected the instructor's thorough knowledge of the subject matter and ability to relate that knowledge to their organization's issues. Some even commented that the training was too short, saying they would have liked more time to explore how they could meet their needs within the contracting rules and legal constraints.

## KEY FACTS

### CLIENT

Organization providing executive in-resident training to GS-15s and Senior Executive Service employees

### PROGRAM GOALS

- Implement training to address contracting deficiencies
- Overcome participant resistance to ensure learning objectives would be achieved

### SIZE OF TARGET AUDIENCE

40 participants have completed training

### KEY OUTCOMES

- Development process and approach enabled rapid rollout of training and fostered active participant engagement
- Learning experience and instructor received 4.7 rating on a 5-point scale
- Course has been recommended to other campuses

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