NPS-CM-21-033

ACQUISITION RESEARCH PROGRAM
SPONSORED REPORT SERIES

Analysis of the User Feedback Mechanism in the Army Service Contract Acquisition Process

December 2020

CAPT Cynthia M. Rodriguez, USA
MAJ Robert J. Puente, USA

Thesis Advisors: Dr. Robert F. Mortlock, Professor
Kelley Poree, Lecturer

Graduate School of Defense Management

Naval Postgraduate School

Prepared for the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA 93943.

ACQUISITION RESEARCH PROGRAM
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DEFENSE MANAGEMENT
NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

The research presented in this report was supported by the Acquisition Research Program of the Graduate School of Defense Management at the Naval Postgraduate School.

To request defense acquisition research, to become a research sponsor, or to print additional copies of reports, please contact the Acquisition Research Program (ARP) via email, arp@nps.edu or at 831-656-3793.

Acquisition Research Program
Graduate School of Defense Management
Naval Postgraduate School

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to examine how end user feedback for Army service contracts could be standardized and streamlined to better inform the requirements managers. We examine how three Army requirement managers from a MICC, PEO and combat theater currently collect, evaluate, document, and disseminate end user feedback for service contracts and what considerations they use in their evaluations to improve those contracts so that we may identify shortfalls and possible alternate processes that could improve results. We then use process analysis and a lean assessment to identify how these alternate processes could improve Army service contract operations. Based on the participants answers, process mapping and Lean assessment, we conclude that there are several inefficiencies within the Army's customer feedback process. The inefficiencies lie within the capacity or availability of the appointed individual conducting surveillance, Type One Muda derived from reports waiting for further action, and the bottleneck created by the TOR/CORs/KO reviewing and combining reports. Additionally, the Lean assessment found a lack of flow and pull through all three processes. We conclude the project by making a recommendation for an incremental release of a smart phone application (app) that can be leveraged by all ranks, agencies, and service contracts. We recommend further research into the COR nomination process, and on the variances in quality of surveillance and customer feedback.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Major (Promotable) Robert Puente of Lansing, Michigan initially enlisted in the Army in 1994 as a Single Channel Radio Operator. He entered the United States Army Reserve in 1995 and served in various positions until 2004. He entered the simultaneous membership program in 2001 and received his commission in 2004 from Michigan State University. His assignments include one year as a staff officer for 1-504 Parachute Infantry Regiment 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He served for over two years as an AH-64D "Apache" helicopter aviator, Company Executive Officer, and Platoon Leader and one additional year as the Battalion S4 for 3-159th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion located in Illeshiem, Germany. MAJ Puente commanded Charlie Company while assigned to 4-501st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion as part of the 1st Armored Division, Iron Eagle Brigade. MAJ Puente deployed with the 1-504th PIR in 2005-06, the 3-159th ARB in 2008-09, and the 4-501st ARB 2012-13. Each of his first two deployments were in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. While in command he deployed a third time in 2012-2013 in support of Operation Spartan Shield. His most recent assignment was the Assistant Product Manager of Cargo Aerial Delivery Systems located at the Army Soldier Systems Laboratory Complex in Natick, Massachusetts. He is a recent graduate of the Naval Post Graduate school in Monterey, California.

MAJ Puente's military education includes the Chemical Officer Basic Course, Aviation Officer Basic Course, IERW, FS XXI, AH-64D Qualification Course, UH-60A/L Qualification Course, UH-60M Transition Course, Aviation Maintenance Managers Course, Aviation Instrument Examiners Pre-Course, DCMA Aviation Safety Officer's Course, Joint Fire Power Course, Survival Evasion Resistance & Escape (High Risk), Airborne School, Parachute Rigger Course, Military Intelligence Captain Career Course, Command and General Staff College, and the Intermediate Qualification Course.

MAJ Puente's most recent assignment was the completion of a Defense Acquisition Program Management MBA at the Naval Post Graduate School, Monterey, California. Additionally, he is DAWIA certified Level 3 contracting and level 3 program management.

MAJ Puente has been happily married for 16 years to the love of his life and former HHC Commander, Nicele E. Puente M.D. of Springfield, VA. Nicele served 7 years as an Army Engineer officer alongside Robert from 2004-2011. They welcomed their first child, Lincoln in August 2017.

Captain (Promotable) Cynthia M. Rodriguez-Herndon was born in Greely, Colorado on August 21, 1988 to Jose Luis and Hilda Rodriguez. After graduating Mission High School in 2006, CPT Rodriguez earned an academic scholarship to the University of Texas Pan American and commissioned as a Military Intelligence Officer in 2010.

Captain Rodriguez-Herndon has served in a number of staff and leadership positions in support of operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Her most recent assignments include, Assistant Program Manager for Army Special Operations Forces Fires, PEO-STRI (Orlando, Florida), Military Intelligence Team Chief, 1-409 Brigade Engineer Battalion (Fort Knox); Company Commander, 3d Recruiting Brigade, USAREC (Fort Knox); Battalion Assistant S2, 3-82 Field Artillery Battalion (Bagram, Afghanistan); Assistant Operations Officer, 2d Brigade Special Troops Battalion (Fort Hood, TX); Executive Officer, A Company 2BSTB (Fort Hood, TX); Analysis and Integration Platoon Leader, A Company 2BSTB (Fort Hood, TX), Collection Manager, HHC, 2d ABCT (Diyala, Iraq).

She attended University of Pan American where she earned her Bachelor of Science Degree. Captain Rodriguez-Herndon's military education includes the Military Intelligence Basic Officer Course, the Military Intelligence Captains Career Course, Army Basic Contracting Course, Army Intermediate Program Management Course and the Army Acquisition Foundation Course.

Captain Rodriguez-Herndon's most recent assignments include MBA- Acquisition and Contract Management Candidate at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to first thank my Heavenly Father for the many blessings he has bestowed on my family and me.

I am grateful for the time, dedication and support my advisors, Dr. Robert Mortlock and Mr. Kelley Poree, have provided us. These gentlemen mentored and encouraged us through not only the writing of our thesis but also our MBA coursework.

I am grateful to my son, Archie, for although only three years old, he knew this thesis was a challenge to his momma. You also contributed to this thesis, for it was your smile and tight hugs that encouraged me to keep going when I was tired. Thank you, my dear boy, for giving me a reason to work hard and excel.

I would like to thank my parents, Jose Luis and Hilda, and my brother Freddy. Your unconditional love and support throughout the pursuit of my MBA is truly appreciated. My achievements are our family's achievements and I plan on continuing to make you proud.

Lastly, thanks to Major Robert Puente and his beautiful family. We worked so hard on this thesis and I could not have chosen a better battle buddy to conquer this mountain. Thank you, brother.

Cynthia Rodriguez

I would first like to thank Cynthia "Valley" Rodriguez for inviting me and carrying the lion's-share of the load on this thesis journey. You have been the example of what a solid partner, parent, friend, student, and leader should be. I am so proud of all we have accomplished and all we have supported each other through over the past 18 months. You are the strongest battle buddy I have ever served with. Thank you for always being there sis.

I am equally grateful to my family. Both my son Lincoln who is my inspiration for all that I do and my wife Nicele who through her brilliance has sacrificed time and time again to support our family during difficult times. Lincoln, you challenged Daddy throughout this past year, but you always lifted me up with your love, devotion, and

snuggles. Nicele, you sacrificed everything for our family and we made it through the past year apart but never separated, and we are stronger on the other side. I am so proud of you Dr. Nicele Puente. I love you both dearly.

Lastly, I would like to thank my thesis advisors Dr. Robert Mortlock and Mr. Kelley Poree for the pointed advice and counsel they provided in shaping our thesis and helping us to reach our full potential with this effort. Mr. Poree, thank you for your real-world perspective from an accomplished contracting professional. Dr. Mortlock, where to even start… You are simply the most professional and squared away instructor I have ever had the pleasure of learning from. You truly know what is important and what to prioritize. I greatly enjoyed your perspective and endless writing assignments (LOL) during class but have also truly appreciated your counsel outside of work hours. Thank you for your dedication to your students, your skill craft, and the institution. No one at NPS does it better.

Robert Puente

NPS-CM-21-033

ACQUISITION RESEARCH PROGRAM
SPONSORED REPORT SERIES

Analysis of the User Feedback Mechanism in the Army Service Contract Acquisition Process

December 2020

CAPT Cynthia M. Rodriguez, USA
MAJ Robert J. Puente, USA

Thesis Advisors: Dr. Robert F. Mortlock, Professor
Kelley Poree, Lecturer

Graduate School of Defense Management

Naval Postgraduate School

Prepared for the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA 93943.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF FIGURES

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACOR	Alternate Contracting Officer
AFARS	Army Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement
AFMC	Air Force Materiel Command
AIM	Assignment Interactive Module
APM	Assistant Product Manager
ARRT	Acquisition Requirement Roadmap Tool
ARRT–PA	Acquisition Requirements Roadmap Tool Suite–Performance Assessment
ASA(ALT)	Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology
ATEC	Army Test and Evaluation Command
CONUS	Contiguous United States
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CPARS	Contract Performance Assessment Reporting System
DAG	Defense Acquisition Guidebook
DAU	Defense Acquisition University
DFARS	Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement
DLA	Defense Logistics Agency
DoD	Department of Defense
DoDI	Department of Defense Instruction
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulation
FSM	Functional Services Manager
HRC	Human Resources Command
ICE	Interactive Customer Evaluation
IMCOM	Installation Management Command
GAO	Government Accountability Office
KO	Contracting Officer
OCONUS	Outside the Contiguous United States
ODASA[P]	Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Procurement
MFT	Multifunctional Team

MICC	Military and Installation Contracting Command
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
OCONUS	Outside the Contiguous United States
ODASA(P)	Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Procurement
PEO	Program Executive Office
PIEE	Procurement Integrated Enterprise Environment
PMR	Procurement Management Review
PWS	Performance Work Statement
QAR	Quality Assurance Report
QASP	Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan
SAM	Service Acquisition Mall
SOO	Statement of Objectives
TCOR	Task Order Contracting Officer
TOR	Technical Oversight Representative

I. OVERVIEW

In this chapter, we provide an overview of our MBA project. We present background information on the subject, our problem statement, and the potential impacts on the Army. Additionally, we include the research objectives and questions this study answers, as well as the methodology and benefits of our project. Finally, the chapter concludes with the limitations, definitions, delimitations, and assumptions of our research. This chapter is intended to stipulate for the reader our perspective in each of the different areas discussed and how we addressed the research questions. It gives brief descriptions and definitions of processes as they pertain to specifics of the study.

A. BACKGROUND

The Department of Defense (DoD) faces challenges in how it strategically manages and budgets for its contracted services, with the U.S. Army allocating over $50 billion of that budget to services (DiNapoli, 2019; McCormick, 2019). Reports from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics, and technology (ASA[ALT]) demonstrate how the DoD and the Army are continuing to improve service acquisition processes but are still confronting issues (DiNapoli, 2019; U.S. Army, n.d.).

The continued spending increase for contracts has placed contract management on the GAO's high risk report since 1992, with additional focus on services acquisition (DiNapoli, 2019). The GAO uses a rating system in the report to make assessments of five criteria: leadership commitment, capacity, action plan, monitoring, and demonstrated progress.

The only criterion that has been met since the 2017 report was published is the leadership commitment, while the other four criteria have varied between partially met or not met at all, as depicted in Figure 1 (DiNapoli, 2019).

Figure 1. GAO Analysis of Service Acquisitions. Source: DiNapoli (2019).

The leadership commitment criterion was met due to the DoD's continued demonstration of support from leadership. According to DiNapoli (2019) leadership addressed challenges in service acquisitions by "established policy, assigned responsibilities, and provided procedures for defining, assessing, reviewing, and validating requirements for service acquisitions" (p. 229). The capacity criterion was partially met due to individuals who manage service acquisitions having multiple responsibilities and limited capacity to fulfill them. Additionally, the action plan criteria were not met because the DoD does not have a comprehensive action plan to improve how it acquires services (DiNapoli, 2019). The DoD made an effort to improve the acquisition of services through the January 2016 services acquisition instruction (DiNapoli, 2019). DiNapoli (2019) stated that the instruction required leaders "to use portfolio metrics and data to effectively monitor cost and post award performance to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the contracted services" (p. 230) The instruction, however, produced limited results, which has led to further revisions of the instruction (DiNapoli, 2019). The monitoring and demonstrated progress criteria were also partially met. Therefore, the lack of a comprehensive plan prohibits the GAO from

determining the DoD's progress in improving service acquisition overall (DiNapoli, 2019).

The 2019 GAO high risk report recommended several actions to improve the acquisition of services, one specifically related to customer-based assessments (DiNapoli, 2019). Aside from recommending the revision of the requirements review process and the January 2016 instruction, DiNapoli (2019) writes that the GAO also recommended that the DoD "define the desired outcomes for service acquisitions by establishing goals and measures and obtaining data needed to measure progress" (p. 231)

The U.S. Army (n.d.) understands the importance of service acquisitions and prioritizes providing Soldiers with a "decisive advantage in any mission by maintaining quality acquisition professionals to develop, acquire, field, and sustain the world's best equipment and services" (para 1). One method the Army uses to comply with GAO recommendations and ensure that Soldiers receive world-class services is customer feedback to evaluate contractor performance in Army service contracts. The high risk and increased obligations for service contracts, however, require a streamlined and effective process for the customer feedback assessment process.

B. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Although customer feedback is frequently used as an assessment method for contractor performance in Army service contracts, there is no standard approach for the collection, evaluation, documentation, dissemination, and delivery of user feedback to the acquisition team and the requirement manager.

C. IMPACTS ON ARMY

The lack of a standardized and streamlined approach to collect, evaluate, document, and disseminate customer feedback for service contracts causes several short- and long-term impacts on Army's acquisition. The immediate impact of this issue is the failure to identify risks that affect Soldiers and government property. Failure to identify, evaluate, and document these risks promptly can lead to damages to government property or in worst-case scenarios, injuries to personnel. Unidentified customer feedback can affect the cost and performance of the service contract, leading to unnecessary costs to

repair damages or payment for performances that are not meeting requirements. Additionally, post-award performance that is not assessed in a standard and streamlined approach may lead to inefficient and ineffective contracted services.

The lack of customer-based evaluation feedback also causes long-term impacts on the Army's acquisition of service contracts. These impacts include the award and continuation of contracts that are not aligned with end user requirements. According to the Defense Acquisition University [DAU] (2020) "documented performance trends and results to enable an open and honest discussion with the contractor concerning the results achieved" (p. 48). A lack of customer-based evaluations would only amplify the communication issues that already exist in the contract management workforce. Undocumented performance also affects the ratings entered the Contract Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS). Ratings that do not reflect actual performance assessments from customers may lead, in the future, to the award of contracts that do not benefit the Army.

D. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this research is to examine how end user feedback for Army service contracts could be standardized and streamlined to better inform the requirement managers. We examine how Army requirement managers currently collect, evaluate, document, and disseminate end user feedback for service contracts and what considerations they use in their evaluations to improve those contracts so that we may identify shortfalls and possible alternate processes that could improve results. We then use process analysis to identify how these alternate processes could improve Army service contract operations. We conclude the project by identifying the efficiency of current processes, making recommendations for improvements, and discussing areas for further research.

E. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following are the questions our research answers:

- **Are Army agencies using customer feedback as an assessment method?**

- **What is the current process for Army requirement managers to collect customer feedback?**
- **How can the Army service contract customer feedback be standardized and streamlined to better inform the requirement managers?**

F. METHODOLOGY

Our methodology included a survey of three select Army participants that have completed service contract end user interaction and feedback operations. The data collected allowed for the development of process mapping and a critical analysis of the customer feedback process. We concluded with a Lean assessment to determine process efficiencies or inefficiencies.

G. BENEFITS OF RESEARCH

The high risk and cost associated with the acquisition of services budget demands an effective customer feedback assessment process for Army service contracts. A standardized process would be a Lean solution that streamlines customer feedback to requirement managers while ensuring that service contract costs and performance expectations and the Warfighter's service requirements are met. An assessment of our findings will help with Warfighter satisfaction, improve contract performance, give leaders insight into contract performance, and— most importantly— help program managers make more informed decisions.

H. LIMITATIONS AND DEFINITION OF RESEARCH

A limitation of our research is the number of Army organizations sampled and the size of the study. Due to the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic and all of the challenges it presented to both travel and communication, our research was limited to a much smaller sample size than if we had not experienced the worldwide health crisis. Despite these challenges, an appropriate methodology was used to gain valuable results. To the extent this research was conducted, our recommendations and conclusions were intended to support Army service contracting at the contracting officer (KO) or contracting officer's representative (COR) level. To address customer satisfaction at the activity level, additional research would need to be conducted, although the findings in this study could be a source for beginning that research. The data from our research

provided generalizable results that reflect the level of feedback from the end user that both requirement managers and KOs experience. Our research adopted both a qualitative and quantitative methodology. The qualitative methodology was used to understand a complex set of processes and the effects a lack of customer feedback had and to give context to those results. On the other hand, the quantitative methodology was implemented to obtain accurate and reliable measurements that allowed a statistical analysis. We conducted a comparative analysis of the most relevant and adopted methods to understand the main strengths and limitations of each one. Additionally, this preliminary work was intended to be a fundamental reference for the accomplishment of the research study. Through the analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each method, it became possible to formulate a more accurate, informed, and complete choice for recommendations. Additionally, the lack of strategic planning for service contracts and the fiduciary responsibility possibly being ignored was hard to quantify without large repositories of data to support that claim. Other limitations we faced were the manner in which data were collected in the past and that the fact that the current operating environment that service contracts function within is very different from even those contracts from the recent past. Comprehensive interviews and surveys do not exist on the subject matter within Army acquisition.

I. DELIMITATIONS

Our delimitations were those characteristics that limited the scope and defined the boundaries of our study. Delimiting factors included the conscious choice to restrict our research to only Army service contracts, which was born from a need to narrow our focus and provide research complexity and evidence-based results. The population we chose to use was another delimiting factor of our project. We deliberately selected Army programs that were based in both the contiguous United States (CONUS) and outside the contiguous United States (OCONUS) locations to give a broader perspective of the problem statement and identify any unintended differences between the processes. Our first delimitation was the choice of the problem itself; service contracts are not unique to the Army or even the DoD in general. However, a decision to focus on one service helped us to clearly define the application boundaries of the results. Our research established a

starting point for future researchers with similar questions about the service contract feedback processes in other Army operational-level organizations. Future researchers should view methodologies based on the limitations of this research. The results of our surveys may be somewhat specific to the Army due to its unique culture and principles. The recommendations made based on the results of our research may not be appropriate for any other organization without first considering the delimiting factors of our approach.

J. ASSUMPTIONS

Assumptions in our study were aspects we considered out of our control. Our research assumes that readers are acquainted with the Army service acquisition process. In addition, we assume that readers' knowledge on contract quality assurance and evaluation processes includes CPARS. We assume that a survey of three select Army participants is enough to represent the larger population of Army service contract end users at the operational level. We also expect for surveys to be answered truthfully and without fear of reprisal. A non-attribution environment is stressed to support truthful and open responses to survey questions. The assumptions we adopted as the foundation of our research had to be accepted as probable truths, or the study could not progress. Anonymity and confidentiality were preserved so that the volunteer participants could have withdrawn from the study at any time with no ramifications. We took all necessary measures during the administration of surveys to assure accuracy and to ensure that the answers we received addressed the heart of our research problem and enabled us to answer the research question properly. A proper framing of the problem set was established early to accomplish this. There were also numerous paradigmatic assumptions we considered to make the study even more relevant and relatable. The Army culture and unique service processes are examples of these paradigmatic assumptions.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Chapter II provides a background of the DoD and industry's service acquisition process and end user feedback, a summary of the current Army efforts to improve the customer feedback method, and an overview of other agencies' and industry's customer feedback processes. In Chapter III, we provide a comprehensive literature review on the customer feedback assessment

method. In Chapter IV, we discuss the methodology and process used for our research. Chapter V provides the results, analysis, and findings of our research. Finally, in Chapter VI, we provide our recommended solution and recommendations for further research.

II. BACKGROUND

This chapter presents a comprehensive background of the service acquisition process and the end user feedback assessment method. This background chapter begins by outlining the current service acquisition process. Then, the current policies and regulations regarding customer feedback assessments are reviewed. Next, we discuss current Army efforts to improve the customer feedback method. Last, we discuss how other agencies and industry are standardizing and streamlining their customer feedback processes.

A. WHAT IS THE CURRENT SERVICE ACQUISITION PROCESS?

The DoD has established a structure that outlines the process for the acquisition of services from private sectors at or above the simplified acquisition threshold. Services acquisition includes all non-product procurements and involves the performance of specific activities that enable the Army and its Warfighter (DAU, 2020). Non-product procurements include equipment, facilities, product support, construction, electronics, and knowledge-based services (OUSD[A&S], 2020b). The service contracts referenced throughout this study can be defined as a business agreement between a contractor and the United States Army covering the maintenance and servicing of equipment or provisions over a specified period. The Army's current service acquisition contracting process consists of seven steps (OUSD[A&S], 2020a). The steps outlined in Figure 2 were developed and mandated by the OUSD[A&S] (2020a) "to ensure the use of proven, repeatable processes and procedures contributing to successful service acquisitions" (p. 5).

Figure 2. Seven Steps to the Services Acquisition Process.
Source: OUSD(A&S) (2020a).

The steps are categorized into three phases: plan, develop, and execute (DAU, 2020). The planning phase includes the first three steps of the process: form the team, review the current strategy, and perform market research (DAU, 2020). In the first step, the multifunctional team (MFT) is brought together by the functional services manager (FSM). The FSM ensures that the MFT understands the services acquisition process, roles and responsibilities, and service requirements (DAU, 2020). This first step also includes the identification of stakeholders, which include the end users and the COR (DAU, n.d.). A COR assists in the technical monitoring or administration of a contract (FAR 1.604, 2020). The MFT then proceeds to step two and analyzes the current service strategy with the assistance of the stakeholders and end users (DAU, n.d.). During this step, the MFT captures any current risks, cost and performance outcomes, stakeholder concerns, and priorities and projected requirements that enable the development and refinement of the acquisition strategy (DAU, 2020). The last step in the planning phase, Step 3, requires the MFT to perform market research. Market research is conducted to collect, determine, and document information about current industry capabilities that satisfy the customer requirements (DAU, 2020).

The next phase in the services acquisition process is development and includes Step 4, define the requirements and Step 5, develop the acquisition strategy (DAU, 2020). Step 4 of the services acquisition process is when the acquisition team analyzes risk, analyzes and defines the requirement(s), and develops the performance assessment strategies as depicted in Figure 3 (DAU, 2020). During this step, the MFT develops the performance work statement (PWS) or the statement of objectives (SOO) and the quality assurance surveillance plan (QASP) that supports either the PWS or SOO (DAU, 2020). DAU (2020) prescribes the use of the QASP "to manage contractor performance by

ensuring that systematic quality assurance methods validate that the contractor's quality control efforts are timely and effective and are delivering the required results" (p. 11).

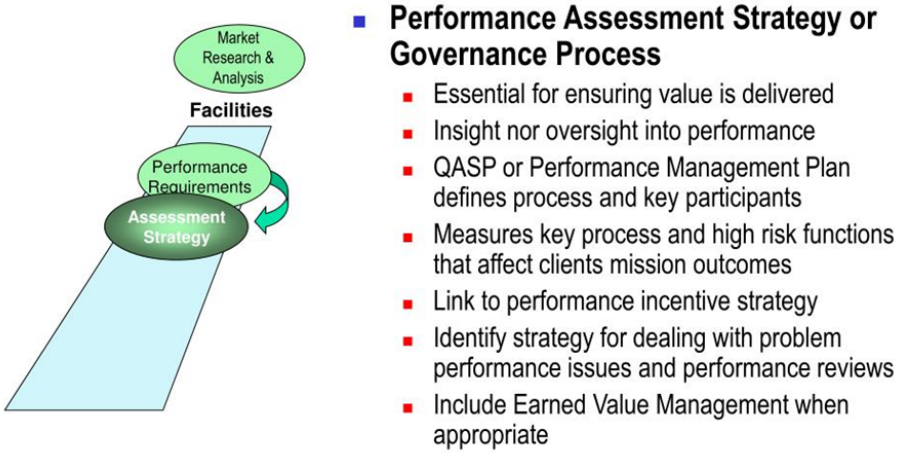

Figure 3. Tailored Assessment Strategies and Performance Metrics. Source: Eesley (2007).

A variety of methods can be exercised to ensure that the contractor's performance is accurately assessed and documented, and that value is delivered. The proper assessment method identifies a strategy for dealing with performance problems and reviews (Eesley, 2007). Examples of methods include periodic sampling, trend analysis, customer feedback, and third-party audits (DAU, 2020). The assessment strategy used to assess contractors must measure key processes and high-risk functions that affect the end user's mission outcome, as the entire purpose of service contracts is to enable and support the end user (Eesley, 2007).

The development phase also includes Step 5: develop the acquisition strategy (DAU, 2020). The information derived from the research and analysis conducted in the planning phase and in Step 4 help to develop the acquisition strategy (DAU, 2020). The acquisition strategy describes the approach to meet the goals set within the service acquisition life cycle (DAU, 2020).

The last phase of the service acquisition process is execution and includes Step 6, execute strategy, and Step 7, manage performance (DAU, 2020). At this phase, the MFT releases the solicitation, receives, and evaluates the proposals, negotiates, determines the

competitive range, awards the contract, and conducts the post-award conference (DAU, 2020). Once the contract is awarded, the administrative team prioritizes managing the performance of the contract (DAU, 2020). According to DAU (2020) "management includes the process for how data is collected and reported annually, reported, and the inventory of contracted services requirements" (p. 16).

B. WHAT DO CURRENT POLICIES AND REGULATIONS STATE ABOUT THE CUSTOMER FEEDBACK ASSESSMENT METHOD?

To map and analyze the Army customer feedback assessment method, a review of the current policies and regulations is necessary. The DoD has published several regulations, instructions, guidebooks, and policies that either prescribe or recommend procedures for the customer feedback assessment method.

1. National Defense Authorization Act

The following excerpt is from the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2020 and describes Congress directing the secretary of defense in coordination with the undersecretary of defense for acquisition and sustainment to work directly with the chief management officer, undersecretary of defense (Comptroller), and director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation to find the most efficient ways to use data analytics to improve the process and efficiency of service contracts acquired by the DoD (United States Congress, 2019). Additionally, the improved management of service contracts is mentioned as a cost saving strategy to be adopted in the review of nuclear deterrence postures (U.S. Congress, 2019). Specifically, U.S. Congress (2019) directs that "the secretary of defense shall seek to enter into agreements with two federally funded research and development centers for the conduct of independent reviews of alternative defense postures that achieve United States national security objectives and could produce cost savings" (p. 665). Each such review shall include: … options for reducing service contracts in the DoD (U.S. Congress, 2019). The following is an excerpt of the NDAA that covers its efforts to improve the overall service contract oversight process:

> The Senate recedes with a technical amendment. The conferees note that Senate Report 116–48 accompanying S. 1790 directs the Secretary of

> Defense, in consultation with the Chief Management Officer, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, and the Secretaries of the military departments, to identify updated approaches for overseeing service contracts and address how these will support the oversight, data analytics, and outcome measures specified in section 2329 of title 10, United States Code. The Senate Report further directs the Department to leverage the expertise of the Chief Data Officer, to ensure that the approaches identified align with and support the Department's analytic capabilities. The conferees direct the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) and Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation to coordinate with the parties identified as they carry out the efforts specified in Senate Report 116–48. (U.S. Congress, 2019, p. 226)

2. Federal Acquisition Regulation

The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) provides direction, guidance and prescribes policies and procedures for the federal acquisition community. Several FAR parts give direction that pertains to the customer feedback assessment method for contractor performance in Army service contracts.

The FAR commences by explaining the systems' vision, customer, and customer satisfaction in service contracts. The regulation (2020) states:

- The vision for the Federal Acquisition System is to deliver on a timely basis the best value product or service to the customer.
- The Federal Acquisition System will- satisfy the customer in terms of cost, quality, and timeliness of the delivered product or service.
- The principal customers for the product or service provided by the System are the users and line managers.
- The System must be responsive and adaptive to customer needs, concerns, and feedback.
- prescribes the responsiveness and adaptation to customer needs, concerns, perspective, and feedback. (Part 1.102)

In FAR Part 37, the regulation focuses on service contracting and gives some direction on assessing service contracts using customer feedback. In this part the FAR (2020) prescribes the following:

- Solicitations may use either a performance work statement or a statement of objectives.
- Measurable performance standards (i.e., in terms of quality, timeliness, quantity, etc.) and the method of assessing contractor performance against performance standards.

- A Performance work statement (PWS) may be prepared by the Government or result from a Statement of objectives (SOO) prepared by the Government where the offeror proposes the PWS.
- Agencies shall, to the maximum extent practicable- enable assessment of work performance against measurable performance standards.
- Performance standards establish the performance level required by the Government to meet the contract requirements. The standards shall be measurable and structured to permit an assessment of the contractor's performance.
- The Government may either prepare the quality assurance surveillance plan or require the offerors to submit a proposed quality assurance surveillance plan for the Government's consideration in development of the Government's plan. (Part 37.6)

In regard to quality assurance the FAR addresses government contract quality assurance in FAR Part 46. The regulation (2020) ensures quality assurance through "inspection, acceptance, warranty, and other measures associated with quality requirements" (Part 46.). The FAR (2020) also recommends that the QASP specify "the method of surveillance" (Part 46.4).

The FAR also provides guidance for how to document contractor performance information. In this Part, the regulation (2020) requires:

- Past performance evaluations shall be prepared at least annually and at the time the work under a contract or order is completed.
- Agencies shall assign responsibility and management accountability for the completeness of past performance submissions.
- Agency procedures for the past performance evaluation system shall-
- Generally, provide for input to the evaluations from the technical office, contracting office, program management office, and where appropriate, quality assurance and end users of the product or service.
- Identify and assign past performance evaluation roles and responsibilities to those individuals responsible for preparing and reviewing interim evaluations, if prepared, and final evaluations (e.g., contracting officers, contracting officer representatives, project managers, and program managers). Those individuals identified may obtain information for the evaluation of performance from the program office, administrative contracting office, audit office, end users of the product or service, and any other technical or business advisor, as appropriate; and from those individuals responsible for preparing and
- Address management controls and appropriate management reviews of past performance evaluations, to include accountability for documenting past performance on CPARS.

- The evaluation should include a clear, non-technical description of the principal purpose of the contract or order. The evaluation should reflect how the contractor performed. The evaluation should include clear relevant information that accurately depicts the contractor's performance and be based on objective facts supported by program and contract or order performance data. The evaluations should be tailored to the contract type, size, content, and complexity of the contractual requirements.
- Agencies shall require frequent evaluation (*e.g.*, monthly, quarterly) of agency compliance with the reporting requirements in 42.1502, so agencies can readily identify delinquent past performance reports and monitor their reports for quality control
- Agencies are required to prepare and submit all past performance evaluations electronically in CPARS. (Part 42.15)

In addition to the guidance stated for contractor performance information, the FAR also outlines how to evaluate performance. Performance is evaluated using a five-scale rating system as reflected in Figure 4, Evaluation Rating Definitions.

Rating	Definition	Note
(a) Exceptional	Performance meets contractual requirements and exceeds many to the Government's benefit. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element being evaluated was accomplished with few minor problems for which corrective actions taken by the contractor were highly effective.	To justify an Exceptional rating, identify multiple significant events and state how they were of benefit to the Government. A singular benefit, however, could be of such magnitude that it alone constitutes an Exceptional rating. Also, there should have been NO significant weaknesses identified.
(b) Very Good	Performance meets contractual requirements and exceeds some to the Government's benefit. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element being evaluated was accomplished with some minor problems for which corrective actions taken by the contractor were effective.	To justify a Very Good rating, identify a significant event and state how it was a benefit to the Government. There should have been no significant weaknesses identified.
(c) Satisfactory	Performance meets contractual requirements. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element contains some minor problems for which corrective actions taken by the contractor appear or were satisfactory.	To justify a Satisfactory rating, there should have been only minor problems, or major problems the contractor recovered from without impact to the contract/order. There should have been NO significant weaknesses identified. A fundamental principle of assigning ratings is that contractors will not be evaluated with a rating lower than Satisfactory solely for not performing beyond the requirements of the contract/order.
(d) Marginal	Performance does not meet some contractual requirements. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element being evaluated reflects a serious problem for which the contractor has not yet identified corrective actions. The contractor's proposed actions appear only marginally effective or were not fully implemented.	To justify Marginal performance, identify a significant event in each category that the contractor had trouble overcoming and state how it impacted the Government. A Marginal rating should be supported by referencing the management tool that notified the contractor of the contractual deficiency (e.g., management, quality, safety, or environmental deficiency report or letter).

Rating	Definition	Note
(e) Unsatisfactory	Performance does not meet most contractual requirements and recovery is not likely in a timely manner. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element contains a serious problem(s) for which the contractor's corrective actions appear or were ineffective.	To justify an Unsatisfactory rating, identify multiple significant events in each category that the contractor had trouble overcoming and state how it impacted the Government. A singular problem, however, could be of such serious magnitude that it alone constitutes an unsatisfactory rating. An Unsatisfactory rating should be supported by referencing the management tools used to notify the contractor of the contractual deficiencies (e.g., management, quality, safety, or environmental deficiency reports, or letters).

Figure 4. Evaluation Rating Definitions. Source: FAR 42.15, 2020.

3. Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement

The Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) also includes guidance and requirements for the acquisition of services. The DFARS (2020) prescribes the following:

- See PGI 237.102-75 for information on the Defense Acquisition Guidebook, Chapter 10, Acquisition of Services
- See PGI 237.102-77 for guidance on using the Acquisition Requirements Roadmap Tool to develop and organize performance requirements into draft versions of the performance work statement, the quality assurance surveillance plan, and the performance requirements summary. (Part 237)

4. Army Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement

The Army Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (AFARS) augments the FAR. The AFAR covers policies and procedures for Army service contracting, contract administration and audit services, and the procurement management review program.

The AFAR (2019) requires the acquisition team to "address the cost, the schedule and the performance metrics to include the plan for measuring service acquisition

outcomes against requirements" (Part 5137). Additionally, the AFARS (2019) prescribes the requirement for

- Contracting officer s representatives (CORs) will assist the contracting officer with entering objective performance information in the Contractor Performance Assessment Reports System (CPARS) for each contract or order assigned. The contracting officer may assign the COR the role of assessing official representative in CPARS.
- Include the contracting officer in the assessment process prior to forwarding a report to the contractor for review.
- The AO shall support the rating assigned to an element or sub-element with narrative rationale. Narratives shall clearly convey the rationale behind the rating to the contractor, as well as to a Government source selection official who is not familiar with the instant contract. This is especially important for any rating above or below satisfactory. The AO should support narratives with quantifiable or verifiable documentation. (Part 5142)

The AFARS proceeds to address procurement management review for the Army in Appendix CC. The AFARS (2014) establishes the following requirement:

- Assess, analyze, and communicate the health of Army contracting to senior Army leadership.
- Ensure management oversight and control of contracting related issues.
- At a minimum head of contracting activities or their senior contracting official (SCO) will conduct PMRs on contracting activities, to include subordinate contracting offices, regardless of the level, at least once every 36 months.
- The activity shall provide the following in advance: metrics, specified statistics, lists of contracts, orientation data (such as vision and mission statements and standard operating procedures), logistical support, and copies of previous review reports and previous corrective action plans. (Appendix CC)

5. Department of Defense Instruction 5000.74

The Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 5000.74 establishes policies and provides procedures for the acquisition of services at or above the simplified acquisition threshold (OUSD[A&S], 2020a). The instruction sets the requirement for data collection and reporting of support metrics and performance tracking (OUSD[A&S], 2020a). In addition, DoDI 5000.74 establishes procedures for an independent management review of contracts worth a total of $100 million or more with the intent of evaluating contract

performance in terms of cost, schedule, and requirements (OUSD[A&S], 2020a). The DoDI focuses on total contract spending and best practices and lessons learned, and it links to the DAG and Service Acquisition Mall (SAM); however, no additional guidance is given on end user assessments.

The DoDI 5000.74 directs requirement managers to the DAG for guidance on how to lead a team through services acquisition (OUSD[A&S], 2020a). The DAG prescribes the use of a communication plan with stakeholders and the use of a QASP in accordance with FAR Part 46 (OUSD[A&S], 2020a). The DAG recommends varying methods of surveillance, which include customer feedback, and states that the method of performance assessment may change over time (DAU, 2020). The DAG also outlines the importance of how performance information is captured and reported. The guidebook states that performance information "keeps your stakeholders well informed ... [and] provides the documented performance trends and results to have an open and honest discussion with your contractor" (DAU, 2020, p. 48). The DAG also states that performance reviews are held on a regular basis with stakeholders and prescribes a minimum of quarterly performance reviews with stakeholders or monthly reviews for more complex contracts (DAU, 2020).

6. Service Acquisition Mall

DoDI 5000.74 also directs requirement managers to the DAU's Service Acquisition Mall (SAM) for further guidance (OUSD[A&S], 2020a). SAM bases its guidance on the DoD seven-step service acquisition process and provides suggested actions, tools, and links to assist the acquisition community (DAU, n.d.). SAM mirrors the guidance provided by DoDI 5000.74 and provides a template for a QASP, a surveillance matrix, and a customer complaint form. The purpose of the QASP, shown in the Appendix, is to ensure that the contractor's compliance with the contracts requirements is documented and monitored (DAU, n.d.). The surveillance matrix, shown in the Appendix of the QASP, lists the performance objectives and standards for the contractor to meet, in addition to the details of the method and the frequency of surveillance (DAU, n.d.). The customer complaint form, shown in Appendix A of the QASP, facilitates the customer's ability to annotate the nature of their complaint and

include all the pertinent administrative information. It also includes a section for the COR or KO to annotate the validation and action taken.

SAM facilitates the service acquisition process by providing detailed steps and tools for the acquisition community to effectively plan, develop, and execute a service contract. SAM helps to standardize the performance assessments by providing templates to establish assessment procedures and facilitate the documentation of customer feedback. The customer complaint form, however, does not include the performance standards or ratings provided in the surveillance matrix that would standardize and quantify the customer's feedback and allow for an objective assessment. If the COR or assessing official decide to use the provided customer complaint form to support the contractor's performance, they will have to filter the subjective customer annotations and then transcribe and format the end user's complaint to input into CPARS. No form to annotate positive end user feedback is provided by SAM.

C. ARE THERE ANY CURRENT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE CUSTOMER FEEDBACK METHOD?

The Interactive Customer Evaluation (ICE) system is a web-based tool that collects feedback on services provided by various organizations throughout the DoD (ICE, n.d.). A DoD Washington Headquarters Services policy from 2009 is the overarching regulatory document that governs the use of ICE (ICE, n.d.). The policy explicitly states that ICE is a customer feedback system that must be made available to all DoD components, but its use is not mandatory (ICE, n.d.). Instead, an agency or department must request a subscription to the web-based service, and the resulting program access provides the parameters upon which the agency or department should operate the system. The ICE (n.d.) system provides the following:

- Submit online comment cards to provide feedback to the service providers they have encountered at military installations and related facilities around the world.
- It is designed to improve customer service by allowing managers to monitor the satisfaction levels of services provided through reports and customer comments.
- Allows DoD customers to provide feedback quickly and easily to service provider managers.

- Gives leadership timely data on service quality.
- Allows managers to benchmark the performance of their service providers against like services in other DoD organizations.
- Saves money by providing an enterprise-wide capability to manage the resources necessary to collect and report on customer feedback and satisfaction ratings. (para 1)

As ICE (n.d.) regulators note, "organizations using ICE are responsible for maintaining their service providers/comment cards" (para 1). According to an article by Laura Kreider (2019) "ICE, is Installation Management Command's principal resource of receiving comments directly from the community" (para 1). Kreider (2019) adds that "Installation Management Command (IMCOM) receives approximately a half million customer comments that bring up issues and suggestions that provide significant feedback to local leadership. Comments help in reviewing installation services, focus on improving them and, consequently, better meet community needs" (para 2).

D. HOW HAS THE ARMY STREAMLINED OTHER PROCESSES?

Research was conducted to determine how other Army organizations and branches streamline their processes. The Acquisition Corps, Human Resources Command and Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) were identified as organizations that have leveraged technology to streamline their processes.

1. Acquisition Requirement Roadmap Tool Suite—Performance Assessment

To help KOs who work in the contract functional area better utilize the Army CPARS system, the Acquisition Requirements Roadmap Tool Suite–Performance Assessment (ARRT–PA) was created to streamline inputs and clarify submitted feedback. ARRT–PA is a detailed, process-oriented, software-centric desktop program that is not tailorable; instead, it is a plug-and-play application that produces a 99% solution for CPARS input. ARRT–PA is referenced in both DFARS 237.102-77 (2020) and DoDI 5000.74 (OUSD[A&S], 2020a) as the preferred tool to be used within the new SAM website. DoDI 5000.74 states that this tool should be used to the maximum extent practical (OUSD[A&S], 2020a). This program is a very typical input/output application in which the quality of the information that is submitted greatly influences the quality of

the reports that are produced. This type of streamlining has significant benefits, including standardizing the information collected while still allowing for independent feedback to be captured and ease of use for all skill levels. Its output is a strong example of a value-added process in the feedback loop for the Army contracting system. One possible drawback is that the information feedback outliers may require a more tailorable system to provide valuable responses to questions posed by both users and requirement managers.

2. Army Talent Management

In recent years, the Army talent management has transitioned to the Assignment Interactive Module (AIM). According to an article written by Nicole Hawk (2019):

> AIM is a web-based system designed to advance Army talent management while ensuring readiness. AIM provides the data and tools to help the Army Human Resources Command (HRC) place officers in the right position at the right time. (para 2)

AIM is the quintessential example of the Army's attempt at refining a useful customer feedback loop intended to improve the process of talent management. Hawk (2019) adds that "the AIM marketplace encourages communication between officers and units and enables them to voice their preferences for one another. Officers get more control over their careers while considering family considerations. And for the first time, units get a say in who fills which positions" (para 3). This model is heavily patterned after the match day program used for decades in the medical school selection process. Students from around the country choose their "Top Five" in hopes that one of those schools also chooses them (Hawk, 2019). Matches are heavily determined on personal interviews and scholastic metrics that are evaluated by both student and school. The process is greatly dependent upon both a feedback loop from the school—which publishes its desired requirements of a candidate—and a response to those requirements from the student in the form of an interview and résumé submission. This process streamlines who applies where and who is accepted to which school. In the Army's effort to both retain talent and streamline an otherwise maligned process that has gone on for years, it has gone to a system of feedback and response with the AIM program (Hawk, 2019). In much the same way the match day system works, Soldiers now create résumés

and highlight skillsets for units to browse. In turn, units provide feedback to prospective officers on expectations and desired attributes to better help the prospective leaders make responsive choices as to where they aspire to be placed.

3. Defense Logistics Agency Customer Feedback

To better serve DoD customers, in 20002 the GAO published an investigative report titled *Defense Logistics: Improving Customer Feedback Program Could Enhance DLA'S [Defense Logistics Agency's] Delivery of Services (GAO, 2002)*. Much like the acquisition community, DLA also supports Soldiers with consumable items. The GAO (2002) report found that the "agency management acknowledged that the agency has not been customer focused and has been slow to respond to customer support concerns" (p. 2). Due to this finding GAO (2002) recommended that DLA:

- Develop a comprehensive customer-feedback plan to better determine customer needs and solutions to the needs.
- Determine who its customers are and their needs.
- Clarify guidance for customer representatives to help create a "single face" for customers. (p. 2)

E. HOW IS INDUSTRY STREAMLINING CUSTOMER FEEDBACK?

Research was conducted to determine how companies with the best customer service streamline their customer feedback. Yelp for Business, Amazon and USAA were identified as companies that leverage continuous customer feedback.

1. YELP for Business

Yelp is a well-known platform that leverages customer feedback for business ratings. Recently Yelp launched a new platform called Yelp for Business. In a blog, Along Shiran (2020) explained that this "is an entirely reimagined platform designed to improve the business owner experience with a fresh, new user interface that gives business owners more transparency and insight into their Yelp for Business Pages" (para 1). Shiran (2020) added that "this release is the first step in the company's plans to completely overhaul the business owner experience to increase customization and efficiency on the Yelp platform by the end of 2020" (para 1). Yelp's new customer

process is depicted in Figure 5. Shiran (2020) added the updated and new features of the platform:

- Recommendation Cards: This new feature will help business owners with step by step prompts on what they should set up to make their profile as comprehensive as possible.
- Tips: Business owners will find updated "tips" sprinkled throughout the home page that will provide insights to guide them toward the next best steps to reach consumers and enhance their existing profile through ads.
- Content Feed: The new integrated content feed shares relevant information to business owners based on their category and industry. At first, business owners will be directed toward COVID-19 related content specifically geared toward helping them get through this time.
- Faster load and response time: The platform has been upgraded with new technology, resulting in an experience that is 30% faster than the previous Business Owner Account. The new platform leverages GraphQL, a modern architecture that allows clients to fetch their own data efficiently. GraphQL allows us to manage multiple data requests at the same time, creating a more streamlined experience for the user. (para 2)

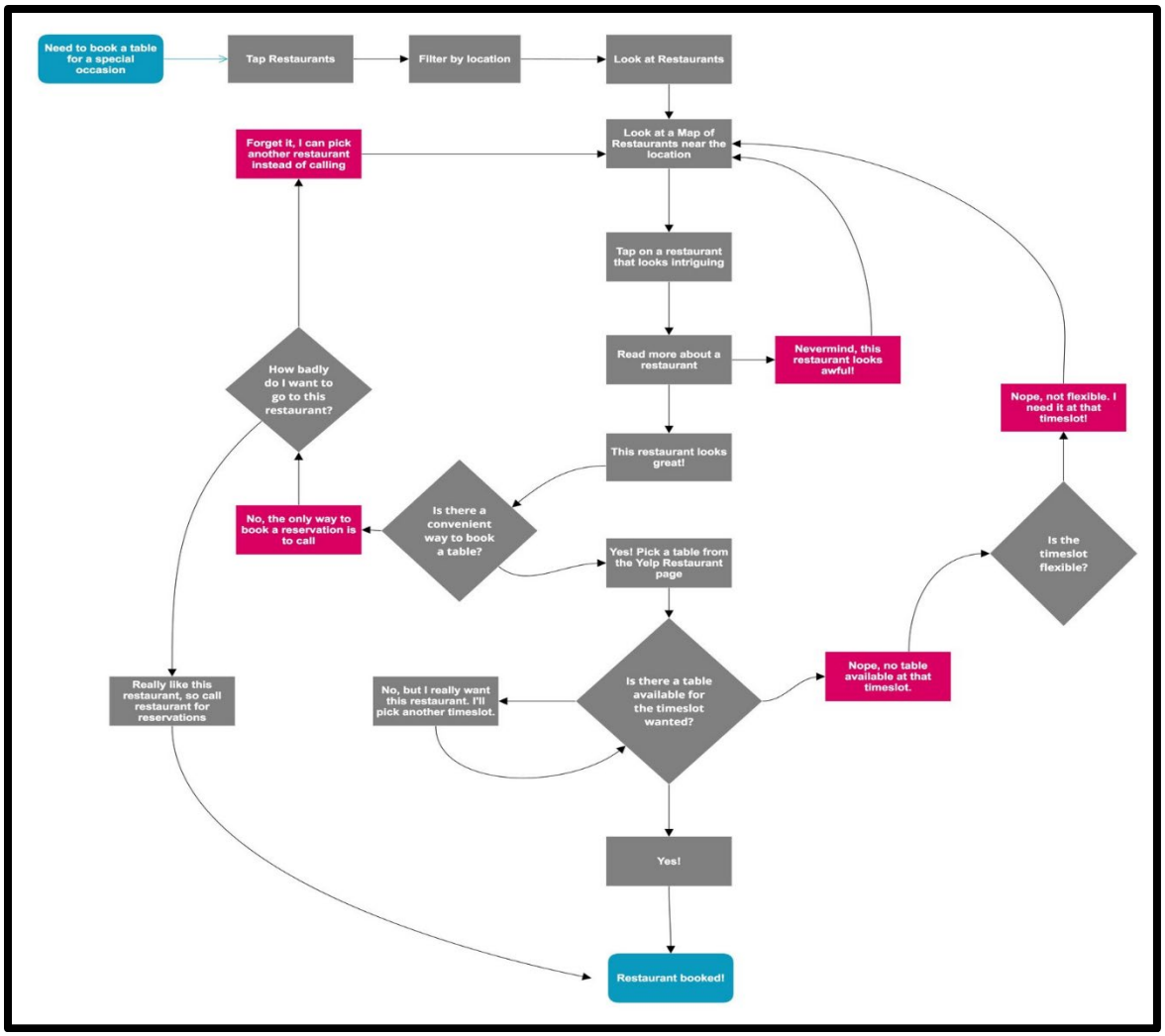

Figure 5. Yelp Customer Process Map. Source: Luc (n.d.).

2. Gastronome

An additional application that leverages customer feedback is Gastronome. According to Nabil Mir (n.d.) "Gastronome is a food service application that was created by Fumiko Katsuki, Lisa Roxby, and Nabil Mir for Fashion Institute of Technology's UX Design Certificate Spring 2019 program" (para 1). This team found that customers considered the Yelp application to be unhelpful and lacking quality (Mir, n.d.). Mir (2020) adds that the team "created a way to incentivize users to write reviews by giving them coupons" (para 1). Figure 6 depicts Gastronome's customer journey process.

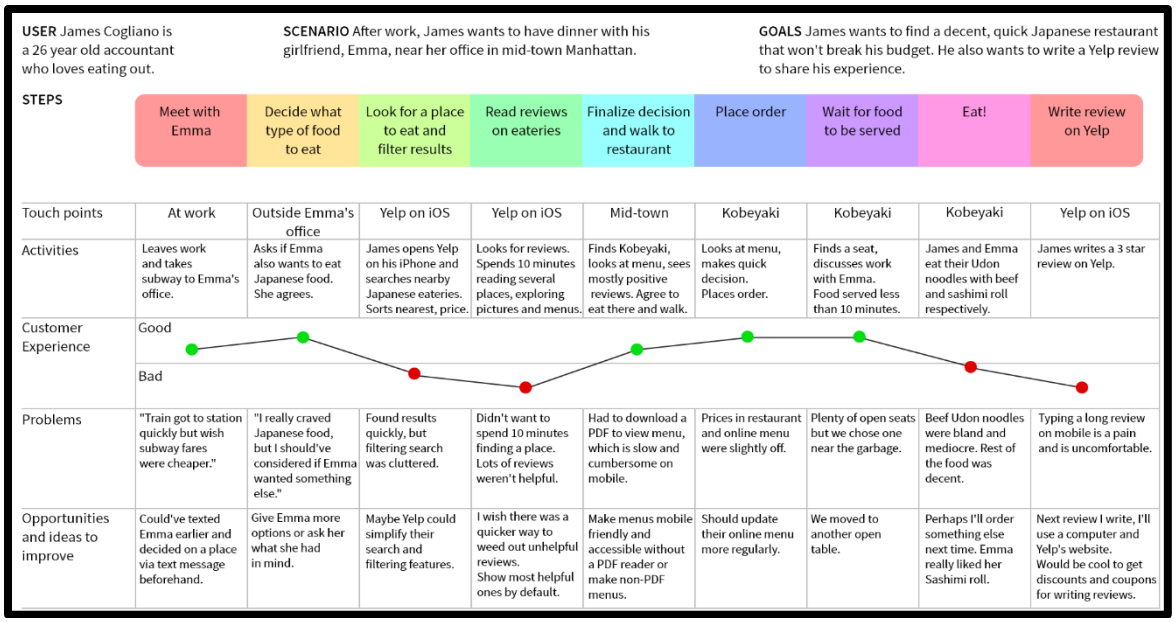

Figure 6. Gastronome Customer Journey Process Map. Source: Mir, (n.d.).

The Gastronome creators found a weakness within Yelp's customer feedback loop and improved upon the existing application by incentivizing customers to write reviews by offering discounts (Mir, n.d.). This type of forward thinking is exactly the innovation we seek to implement while providing our proposed solution to the service contract streamlining problem set (Mir, n.d.). Figure 7 depicts Gastronome's application Process.

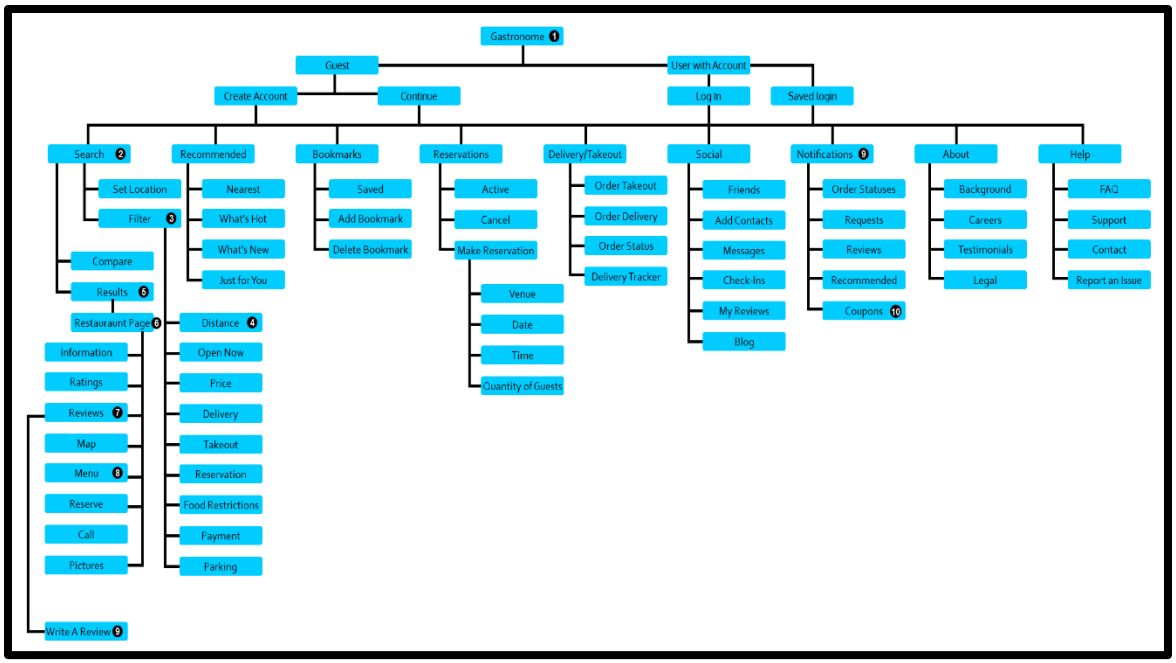

Figure 7. Gastronome Application Process Map Source: Mir(n.d.).

3. Amazon

Amazon has based an entire corporation's success on the ability to continue to meet customers' needs where they are. It is founded on six basic principles that the company uses year in and year out to ensure that customer focus is its number-one priority. Amazon's mission is "to be Earth's most customer-centric company" (Amazon, n.d.). According to an article written by Hinshaw (n.d.) Amazon's six focus strategies are as follows:

1. Start everything with a core commitment to the customer.
2. Build a corporate culture that knows how to listen.
3. Give your users the power of DIY service.
4. Nurture a community of fellow customer support.
5. Make personal interactions an easy option.
6. Help your buyer stay connected—wherever they are, whenever they want. (**para 4**)

Specific practices include a robust customer feedback apparatus that not only allows for the customer to interact with the seller, but also to give feedback regarding the Amazon platform that they used to purchase the item (Hinshaw, n.d.). Figure 8 demonstrates Amazon's customer journey and how they implement the six focus

strategies. This type of attention to detail and use of simplicity through technology are amongst the reasons Amazon continues to be one of the most profitable and successful companies in the world. The DoD in all aspects has several parallel programs that could be developed in support of a better feedback loop based on the software applications Amazon leverages.

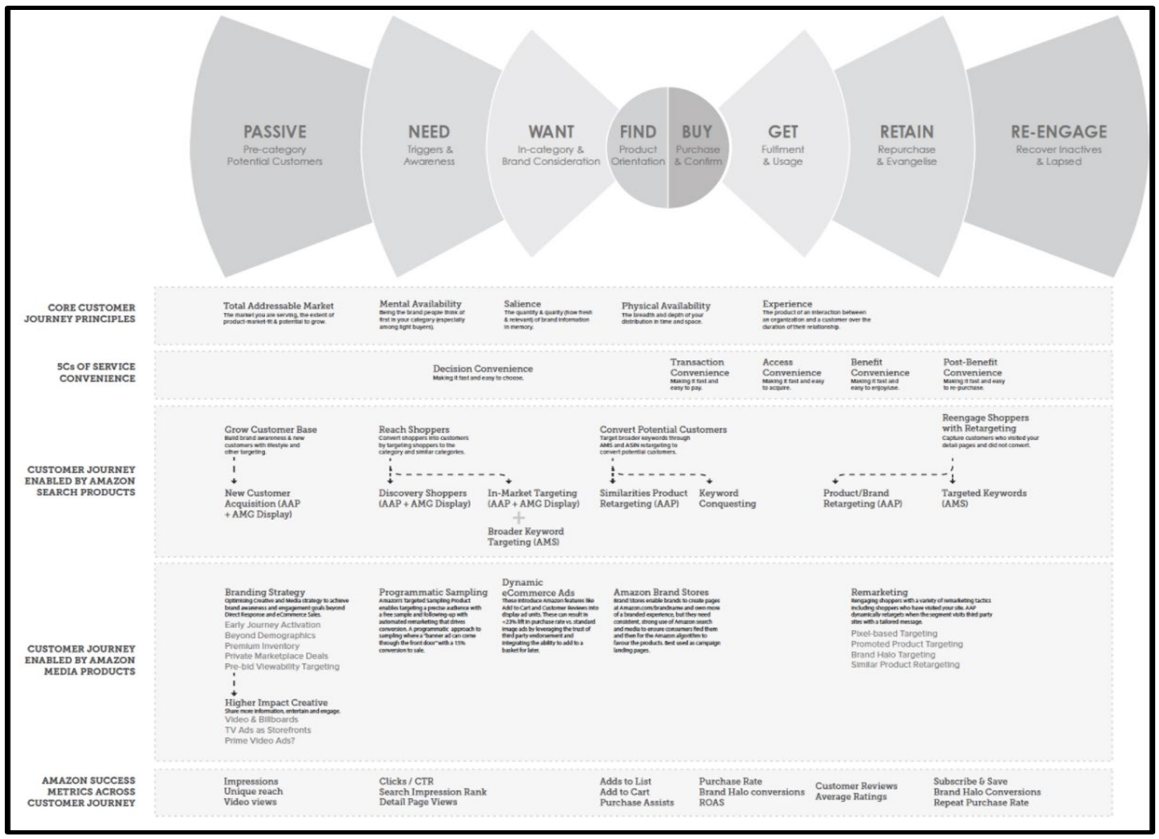

Figure 8. An Amazon Customer Journey Process Map. Source: Digitas (n.d.).

4. USAA

USAA is a bank that caters to the military community and has a renowned reputation for its customer service. In an article written by Bill Streeter (2018) it states that "USAA's net promoter score was more than four times higher than the average score among banking providers, and it has had the best net promoter score in the financial industry for 8 years straight" (para 1). Streeter (2018) continues to say that "in study after study, credit unions have historically ranked higher than banks, but USAA tops them all.

A phenomenal 64% of USAA members are "very satisfied," which is 50% better than credit unions" (p. para 2). This type of brand loyalty does not come without innovation, streamlining, and intense customer feedback focus. Figure 9 demonstrates the USAA process map for customer claims which mirrors a feedback loop for satisfaction while leveraging innovative technology.

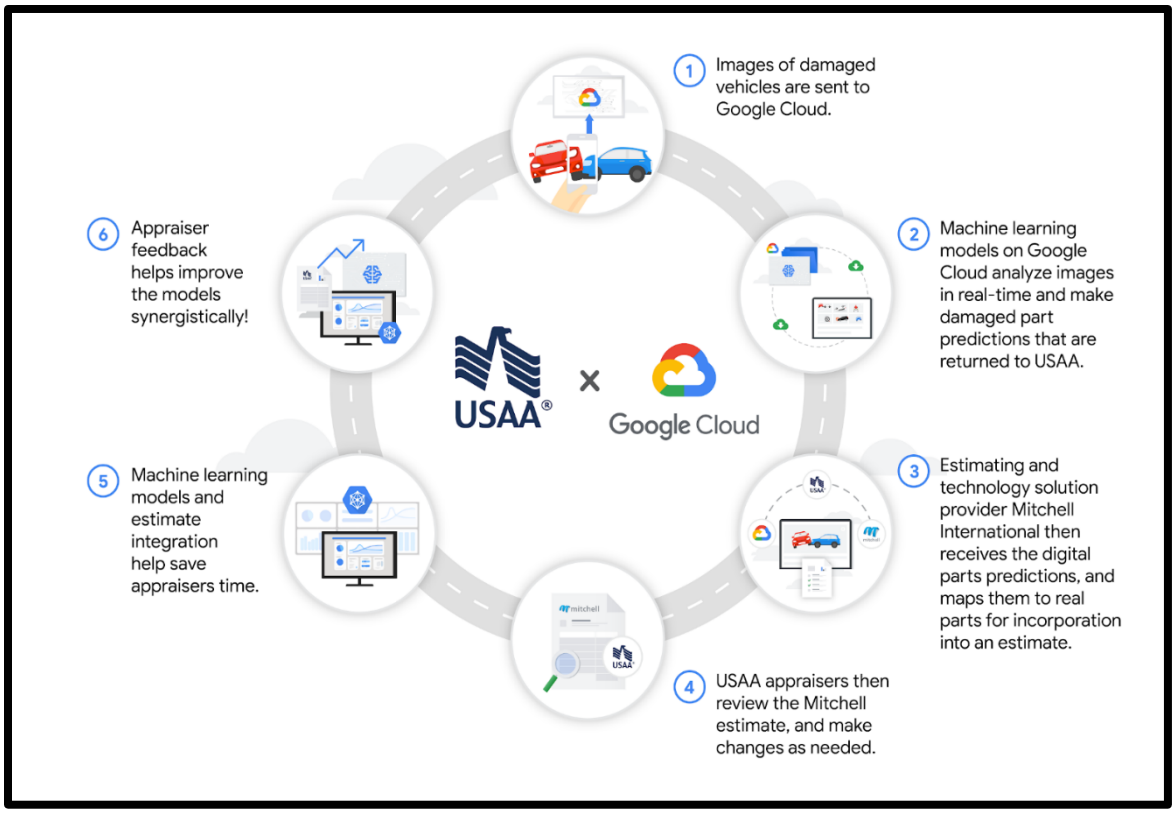

Figure 9. A USAA Process Map for Customer Claims. Source: Shaukat (2019).

F. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A review of current DoD and Army policies and regulations appears to provide limited guidance to address the issues with standardization and a streamlined approach to collect, evaluate, and disseminate customer feedback. As crucial as customer feedback is to the service acquisition assessment, there is no standardized method to collect this feedback.

Our analysis of the NDAA, FAR, DFARS, AFARS, DoDI 5000.74, DAG, and SAM in this chapter establishes the critical nature of assessment strategies and

communicating with stakeholders; however, these resources failed to provide guidance or standardization proposals that would lead to a streamlined customer feedback process. In general, the policies and regulations give the acquisition team flexibility on formatting, methods, and degree of performance assessments. No standardized or streamlined processes are required or prescribed by these policies that would aid in the approach to collect, evaluate, and disseminate customer feedback. The best practices and requirements do not outline a standard for agencies to use for the documentation of performance assessments.

Additionally, we examined several customer feedback initiatives both inside and outside the DoD. Many of these programs leverage technology, and some are even solely based on the advantage that technology can lend to the feedback loop that is necessary to innovate and standardize the information that provides a more precise output of service or product. Industry giants like Amazon have made technology the center of all operations and future visions of the company to commit all available resources to improving the customer feedback cycle. The DoD has made significant strides over the past decade on improving its customer feedback tools available and using the information collected to leverage better processes and policies that regulate the way goods and services are received through contract acquisitions.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, we provide a comprehensive literature review on the customer feedback assessment method. The literature review summarizes previous research, surveys, scholarly articles, books, and other sources relevant to this research. The review enumerates, describes, summarizes, objectively evaluates, and clarifies previous research found.

A. AIR FORCE

The Air Force is making an effort to leverage technology to further advance their capabilities. An example of this effort can be noted in an article written by Marisa Alia-Novobilski (2020) from the Air Force Materiel Command. Novobilski (2020) writes that "the organization has launched a new digital campaign to modernize and streamline the life-cycle process of Air Force platforms and systems, ensuring Warfighters have the technology required to maintain a competitive advantage over adversaries" (para 1). Novobilski (2020) adds that:

> the campaign is focused on six lines of effort to achieve a digital ecosystem that supports agility, flexibility, and speed in delivery of Air Force current and future needs. These lines of effort include integrated information technology infrastructure; models and tools; standards, data and architectures; lifecycle strategies and processes; policy and guidance; and workforce and culture. (para 5)

Additionally, Novobilski (2020) states that:

> a number of defense and many non-defense industries have made a culture shift to incorporating digital tools and processes in every part of their organizations to deliver capabilities at ever-increasing speed and efficiency. They do this by designing, sustaining, and modernizing capabilities in an integrated digital ecosystem. The Air Force needs to embrace 21st century capabilities to be faster, more efficient, and more effective throughout the entire acquisition life cycle. (para 7)

This focus on a continuous feedback loop between the customer and requirement manager with the integration of 21st century technology to track and improve the processes that most hinder streamlined results is an excellent example of how other

services are investing the time and resources to improve the acquisition system from within.

B. WING FEEDBACK APPLICATION

As an example of the Air Force's commitment to improving specific acquisition performance in all areas, a request for proposal (RFP) for a mobile feedback application (app) was solicited from the public in mid-2019. The focus of the source selection was to identify a materiel solution mobile app that could provide commands with vital and necessary customer reviews of services. In their solicitation DeHart & Landale (2019) request that the app:

> (1) comprehensively monitor contracted and organic service performance, (2) assess where service performance is exceptional/poor and reward/institute improvements appropriately, and (3) determine where AF-designed performance standards may be incorrect (i.e., where AF standards are off-the-mark) in order to adjust them to better meet mission needs. Feedback will be used by (1) Wing/Installation Commanders and their supported units, (2) Contracting Officer Representatives and Contracting Officers (i.e., those who monitor contracted services), (3) contracted service providers (i.e., those performing the services), and (4) other interested parties. The Wing Feedback App is intended to be used at all 79 Air Force installations using individuals' smart devices and commercial cellular networks or commercial WiFi. The end product needs to be able to be used on iOS and Android devices. (para 1)

C. NAVY/MARINES

In a separate and published thesis by Sean Black, Jarred Henley, and Mathew Clute (2014) of the U.S. Navy, they state the following:

> The Department of Defense (DoD) has seen unprecedented growth in spending for service contracts since 1990 during the same period in which there has been a general reduction in the DoD acquisition workforce (Ellman et al., 2011). The department is attempting to do more with less, year after year. The level of scrutiny focused upon DoD service contracts by the upper echelons of the DoD, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), and Congress has increased as the spending on service contracts continues to increase relative to both inflation and the percentage of the entire DoD contracting budget (Hart, Stover & Wilhite, 2013). Project Management Levers That Drive Services Contracting Success conducted by Hart et al. (2013), which explored the relationship between CPARS objective scores. This report focuses on the quality of narratives in

> CPARS and their value to the acquisition process. This report used statistical analysis to examine 715 Army service contractor performance reports in CPARS in order to answer the following questions: (1) To what degree are government contracting professionals submitting to CPARS contractor performance narratives in accordance with the guidelines provided in the CPARS user's manual (2) What is the added value of the contractor performance narratives beyond the value of the objective scores for performance? (3) What is the statistical relationship between the sentiment contained in the narratives and the objective scores for contractor evaluations? Further, contracting professionals were interviewed in order to determine answers to the following two additional questions: (4) To what degree do the interview findings contradict, support, or enhance the findings for the three previous research questions? (p. 5)

What the trio found in their qualitative research was that the professionals within the acquisition community that specifically address service contract–related assessments through the current CPARS system do certain things well. The acquisition professionals did not do as well at other things that directly affect the relevance of the data collected. For example, the contracting professionals included within the study did not address all the performance areas requested to be evaluated, nor did they ensure that narratives were based on objective data. Additionally, Black et al. (2014) wrote that comprehensive narratives meant to ensure that anyone without a contracting background could better understand the process, were written very poorly. Their conclusion was that contracting management or requirement management professional that need to access past performance ratings in CPARS would have a very difficult time using the data collected and submitted to improve processes or contractor performance (Black et al., 2014).

D. JOURNAL OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

In 2007, Buchanan and Klingner published an article in the *Journal of Public Procurement* titled "Performance-Based Contracting: Are We Following the Mandate?" Buchanan and Klinger (20017) argued that:

> the performance-based service contracts (PBSC) concept came to life more than a decade ago when the federal government in general and DoD in particular were looking for better and more efficient ways to do source selection and contract award and administration. Specific policies and regulations were proposed and enacted...Most publications on PBSC and PBSA (primarily government and proprietary) deal, in general terms, with

> the ways to change the language of SOW (Statement of Work) to incorporate measurable performance requirements and how the measurements will be done. When developing the performance work statement (PWS), government procurement officials need to be well schooled in the methodology for arriving at measurable metrics and acceptable quality levels. (p. 4)

In addition to the many Air Force sources that Buchanan and Klingner (2007) used to draw comparisons about metric based and qualitative measurements for performance requirements dealing with service contracts, they also examined what a published RAND study found about performance-based services acquisition practices. Buchanan and Klingner (2007) found that:

> The RAND study concludes that Air Force training in performance-based services acquisition practices needs to be improved. The study's interviews indicate that what is desired is training that provides "a better understanding of how commercial firms do things"; "a hands-on explanation of how performance-based services acquisition work in the Air Force setting, preferably illustrated with suitable case studies"; and "a better understanding of where to turn to get the best and most up-to-date information on performance-based services acquisition in the Air Force. (p. 7)

This is further evidence that even in the most proficient contracting squadrons, there is a problem with customer quality–based metrics data, and this has been a problem for quite some time. Training and frank discussions about process improvement between leadership, contracting professionals, and stakeholders need to take place. Solutions to an effective customer feedback loop will only occur if the capable professionals that are struggling with the processes are canvassed for their suggestions.

E. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE (GAO)

The GAO has weighed in on the process improvement that needs to take place within the contracted service acquisition systems throughout the DoD many times. Their overall assessment is that, irrespective of the military branch of service or DoD agency, training is sorely lacking in the areas of (a) the understanding needed to improve quality metrics and (b) the feedback necessary to enact performance improvement of contracted services. Multiple recommendations have been made to enhance the processes by which DoD collect, correlate, and evaluate through technological applications or software

designed to assist in each performance area. In separate but equally damning reports, the GAO repeatedly states that a uniform system that is designed with simplicity of use throughout the DoD is needed to streamline the process of improving the quality of services that the government contracts for. GAO (2009) writes that:

> In fiscal year 2007, federal agencies worked with over 160,000 contractors, obligating over $456 billion, to help accomplish federal missions. This reliance on contractors makes it critical that agencies have the information necessary to properly evaluate a contractor's prior history of performance and better inform agencies' contract award decisions. While actions have been taken to improve the sharing of past performance information and its use--including the development of the Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS)--concerns remain about this information. (p. 2)

The GAO has been is a strong advocate the development of system tools and metrics for agencies to use in monitoring and managing the documenting of contractor performance (GAO, 2009).

F. RAND

In 2017, the RAND Corporation published a report titled *A Review of Alternative Methods to Inventory Contracted Services in the Department of Defense* (Moore et al., 2017). Among the RAND (2017) report's findings, it was identified that:

> U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) spending on private-sector services has increased steadily over the past several decades to more than 60 percent of its overall budget. This growth has led to greater congressional interest in DoD's contracting practices, including the number of contracts for inherently governmental functions, contract management, contractor accountability, and contract waste, fraud, and abuse. Specifically, it has sought more oversight of the services purchased and the labor used to provide them, with the goal of increasing DoD's buying leverage and improving contractor performance. (p. 164)

Within this study RAND focuses on the increased use of services within the DoD but makes it a point to highlight that the DoD was falling short of meeting stakeholders' needs due to a lack of service feedback loop process improvements. RAND used analysis testing to evaluate the validity of data collected to improve customer satisfaction and efficiency of contract support. Some of their key findings were predictable but alarming. The RAND (2017) states that:

> Congress has expressed concern about the methods DoD uses to collect this information and whether the ICS is useful to policymakers and DoD stakeholders. RAND was asked to conduct the congressionally mandated review of the system's data, gaps between the ICS data and congressional and other stakeholder needs, and whether the same or more useful information could be obtained from other sources. (p. 165)

One of the key findings of the study was that ICS data are collected using various methods and data sources, calling into question their accuracy and thoroughness (Moore et al., 2017). Another shortcoming included in the key findings was that the ICS failed to improve contractor performance as congressionally mandated. This leaves a lot of room for improvement recommendations in the way of process mapping and specific solutions to receive and influence feedback focused on contractor improvement of services. One of the most important recommendations this study proposes seemingly focuses on spending but opens the door to establish a uniform and qualitative method for customer feedback for contract performance improvement. The study (2017) states:

> Policymakers should institutionalize the development and reporting of DoD-wide spend analyses of services, including analyses of trends, forecasts, and FTEs. This would entail issuing a detailed requirement for an institutionalized capability to analyze data on DoD service contracts and providing the necessary funding for its development. (p. 21)

IV. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used to complete this research. The chapter begins by examining what a process is and how to analyze one. The chapter then describes what a process improvement consists of and defines the methodology applied during our research: Lean. We proceed to discuss how this research identified the current customer feedback assessment method used for Army service contracts. Finally, we conclude the chapter by discussing how we applied the appropriate analysis to determine process efficiencies.

A. WHAT IS PROCESS ANALYSIS?

To examine how the end user feedback process for Army service contracts could be streamlined, it is necessary to define and understand what a process is and how to analyze one. A process is a set of interrelated work activities performed by resources that take one or more kinds of inputs (such as information) and transform them into one or more outputs that are of value to external (and/or internal) customers (U. M. Apte, personal communication, 2020). According to Uday Apte (2020), an analytical framework for analyzing a process involves gaining a detailed understanding of the process, analyzing the process, and then generating a plan for its improvement (p. 1). A prerequisite to commence the process analysis is having a clear understanding of the objectives of the organization (U. M. Apte, personal communication, 2020). The objectives will enable organizations to focus and evaluate specific measures of process performance, such as cost, timeliness, and quality (U. M. Apte, personal communication, 2020).

Once the organizations' objectives are prioritized, the analytical framework for analyzing a process is applied. The identification and depiction of the detailed steps of the process allow an organization to gain an understanding of the process. The process can be depicted through a process flow chart or map. The flow chart identifies the detailed steps of a process, its customers, and the inputs, transformation, and outputs of each step of the process (U. M. Apte, personal communication, 2020). The flow chart also includes the amount of time required for each step and for the entire process from

start to finish. The depiction in the flow chart allows the organizations to see and understand how information flows, and it allows the organization to visualize all the resources needed to execute the process from start to finish. Once the process has been mapped, an organization can then analyze it by considering the objectives identified in the previous phase. Analysis can identify value-added activities, waste, and bottlenecks. Lastly, the possible courses of action for efficiency and performance improvement are developed (U. M. Apte, personal communication, 2020). The feasibility, acceptability, and sustainability of each course of action are reviewed to determine how to best improve the process.

B. WHAT IS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT?

Once a process is broken down into detailed steps and analyzed, an organization can seek methods to improve the process. Two common methodologies for process improvement are Lean and Six Sigma (U. M. Apte, personal communication, 2020). Both methodologies were developed separately in the 20th century (U. M. Apte, personal communication, 2020). Industry, government agencies, and academia often chose to integrate these methodologies into their processes improvement efforts.

1. Lean Six Sigma

According to Dr. Apte (2020) "Lean Six Sigma is a process improvement methodology designed to eliminate problems, remove waste and inefficiency, and improve working conditions to provide a better response to customers' needs" (personal communication). Dr. Apte (2020) adds that Lean Six Sigma "combines the tools, methods, and principles of Lean and Six Sigma into one methodology for improving an organization's operations. Lean Six Sigma's team-oriented approach aims to maximize efficiency and improve profitability for businesses" (personal communication). Lean is the process improvement methodology leveraged for this research. The Lean methodology of continuous improvement through the elimination of waste aligns with the purpose of this research, to examine how end user feedback for Army service contracts could be standardized and streamlined (Behn, 2016).

2. Lean Thinking

The Lean approach methodology derives from the Toyota Production System's focus on increasing process speed and eliminating waste (Jones, 2014). Dr. Apte (2020) notes that "Lean was developed in Toyota as part of the Toyota Production System and the fundamental driver of Lean is the elimination of waste" (personal communication). The Lean approach consists of specifying value, identifying the value stream, creating flow in the process, letting customers pull value from the organization, and making continuous efforts to perfect the process (Jones & Womack, 1996).

The initial point for the Lean thinking methodology is specifying value accurately (Jones & Womack, 1996). Value is defined by the final customer but is generated by the producer (Jones & Womack, 1996). Not accurately specifying value will lead to providing the wrong service to the customer in the right way and lead to Muda instead (Jones & Womack, 1996). According to Jones and Womack (1996), waste is also referred to as Muda—specifically, human activity that expends resources but does not create value. Muda can include mistakes that require refinement, unnecessary processing steps, and even groups of people at the end of a process standing around waiting because people at the beginning of the process have not delivered on time (Behn, 2016).

The next step in the Lean thinking methodology is identifying the value stream for each activity for every service (Jones & Womack, 1996). The value stream analysis is intended to find value, Type One Muda or Type Two Muda (Jones & Womack, 1996). According to Womack and Jones (1996), waste is also referred to as Muda, specifically human activity that expends resources but does not create value. Muda can include mistakes that require refinement, unnecessary processing steps, and even groups of people at the end of a process standing around waiting because people at the beginning of the process have not delivered on time (Behn, 2016).

- **Type One Muda:** No-value-added work; but unavoidable
- **Type Two Muda:** No-value; immediately avoidable (Jones & Womack, 1996).

The third step in the Lean thinking methodology is creating flow in the process (Jones & Womack, 1996). After specifying the value for the customer and identifying the

value stream, an organization must make the remaining value-adding activities flow (Jones & Womack, 1996). Most agencies' and organizations' processes are executed by batches or departments instead of grouping by type so they can be performed efficiently. Lean thinking recommends a continuous flow by working on a service or product from start to finish (Jones, 2014). This flow prevents the need for members of department from being busy, equipment running hard and high-speed equipment (Jones & Womack, 1996). This new flow also dramatically reduces the time required to go from concept to launch (Jones & Womack, 1996).

Now that the process is more efficient and has a continuous flow, the organizations can do away with from producing unwanted products and services by letting customers pull value from the organization (Jones & Womack, 1996). This means that organizations can focus on only producing services and products as customers demand them, versus relying on sales forecasts (Jones & Womack, 1996).

The Lean thinking methodology steps conclude with perfection (Jones & Womack, 1996). With the four initial steps continuously synching, reducing Muda, creating flow, and letting customers pull value, perfecting of the process becomes feasible. The continuous application of the first four steps and evaluation of the process allow organizations to pursue perfection and yield products or services of high value, cost, and quantity.

C. IDENTIFY THE CURRENT PROCESS

To analyze the current processes utilized by Army requirement managers, determine potential streamline opportunities, and identify value we used qualitative and quantitative surveys. We conducted a review to form a basis for understanding what the current policies and regulations state about the customer feedback assessment method and to identify any reform initiatives and other efforts that can streamline the process. Additional reviews covered how the Army has streamlined other processes and mechanisms, and how other agencies and industrial partners are utilizing streamlined customer feedback.

D. SAMPLE SELECTION PROCESS

As stated in Chapter I, our methodology was to survey select Army organizations that have completed service contracts with extensive end user interaction and feedback operations. Our methodology included a survey of three participants from differing organizations that have completed service contract end user interaction and feedback operations. The three participants also vary in rank so that the research encompassed a broader perspective.

E. DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

The data collection process consisted of questionnaires that determined elements such as time and cost expended, collection methodology, locations, communication methodology, customer satisfaction elements, and feedback type. This data allowed for the development of process mapping and a critical analysis of the process.

The questionnaire was developed to gather data needed to analyze and map the current customer feedback process. It consisted of 20 questions with the first 14 questions concentrating on the organizations' collection practices and the last six concentrating on the process activities.

The questionnaire was deployed via email to the three participants for their consideration in September 2020. The participants took 1 to 2 weeks to reply with their answers. The questions were open ended, and participants could answer questions as it pertained to their respective organizations. In addition, we included a section in the questionnaire for participants to add any comments or recommendations that they thought might assist our research.

F. APPROPRIATE ANALYSIS

We concluded our research by conducting a process analysis and a Lean assessment on the data collected. We evaluated and mapped the detailed steps, customers, inputs, transformations, and outputs of each step of the customer feedback process for service contracts. We also identified the amount of time that each step and the entire process takes and included that information in a flow chart. A Lean assessment was

conducted by identifying any of the three types of waste in the process to determine process efficiencies and inefficiencies.

G. SUMMARY

In this chapter, we described the methodology used to complete this research. We commenced by defining and outlining what a process is and how to analyze one. We then explained what process improvement consists of and described the Lean and Six Sigma methodologies. We proceeded to discuss how we employed process mapping, Lean thinking, and qualitative and quantitative surveys to identify the current customer feedback assessment method used for Army service contracts. Our methodology included a survey of select Army participants that have completed service contract end user interaction and feedback operations. We concluded with a Lean assessment and alternative solutions to determine process efficiencies.

V. RESULTS, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter details the results and analysis of the data derived from the questionnaires. We commence by discussing the participants demographics. Next, we present and describe the results of each questionnaire and employing process mapping for each different demographic. We then analyze the results and conduct a Lean assessment of the processes. The chapter concludes with a trend analysis and presentation of variances and findings.

A. DEMOGRAPHICS

Three individuals participated in this research. The participants were selected as the research sample due to their everyday interaction with customers and due to their oversight of Army service contracts. Additionally, all three participants varied in rank and in the acquisition command in which they serve. The participants serve Army organizations that consist of a Military and Installation Contracting Command (MICC), a Program Executive Office (PEO), and an International Programs Directorate in a combat theater. Although the research was limited to three participants, the variation in ranks and organizations represents a broad range of the Army service contract user community. All the participants serve as KOs, CORs, or program managers in their respective Army organizations.

B. QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

All three participants replied to all 20 questions and included additional notes that they felt added benefits to the research. Tables 1-20 below provide the participants' answers and their respective organizations.

Table 1. Question #1: What Process Has Your Organization Found to Be Most Useful for Collecting User Feedback?

Military Installation Contracting Command	CPARS
Program Executive Office	Face to face
Combat Theater	Direct user assessments

Table 2. Question #2: What Tool Has Your Organization Found to Be Most Useful for Collecting Feedback?

Military Installation Contracting Command	CPARS
Program Executive Office	Face to face
Combat Theater	Email/phone call

Table 3. Question #3: Has Your Organization Found the Amount of Feedback Adequate to Enact Change or Affect Customer Satisfaction?

Military Installation Contracting Command	Yes
Program Executive Office	No
Combat Theater	No

Table 4. Question #4: What Resource(s) Does Your Organization Lack?

Military Installation Contracting Command	Proper staffing and time to perform adequate contract administration
Program Executive Office	Ability to present questions and receive, store, analyze real-time feedback after every training event.
Combat Theater	Consistent user representative willing to take the time and be responsible for monthly input to Task Order Contracting Officer [TCOR]

Table 5. Question #5: What Resources Are Redundant or Unhelpful?

Military Installation Contracting Command	CORs that do not understand or neglect their surveillance responsibilities
Program Executive Office	Standard questionnaire forms
Combat Theater	None

Table 6. Question #6: What Information Collected from The Feedback Process Has Your Organization Found to Be Most Important?

Military Installation Contracting Command	Contractor non-compliance with contract requirements
Program Executive Office	What could improve training, experience levels of users, amount of time spent training, tasks trained.
Combat Theater	All user feedback is important. Examples include gaps in life-support services, security standdowns, medical emergencies

Table 7. Question #7: Has Your Organization Identified Any Specific Pieces of Equipment or Software That Would Be Helpful to The Process? If So, What?

Military Installation Contracting Command	No
Program Executive Office	No
Combat Theater	A less restrictive PIEE [Procurement Integrated Enterprise Environment] that allows user representatives direct access and more open communication between COR and KO.

Table 8. Question #8: Has Your Organization Identified Any Bottlenecks in The Feedback Process? If So, What Are They?

Military Installation Contracting Command	COR Capacity
Program Executive Office	COR Capacity
Combat Theater	Lack of appointed TOR [technical oversight representative]

Table 9. Question #9: Has Your Organization Identified Any Regulation or Lack Thereof That Negatively Affects the Feedback Process?

Military Installation Contracting Command	No
Program Executive Office	No
Combat Theater	No

Table 10. Question #10: Has Your Organization Identified Any Elements of The Process as Important to Change? What Are They?

Military Installation Contracting Command	COR appointment/Capacity
Program Executive Office	Need a streamline technology to receive feedback data rapidly and effectively from all customers receiving service, not just alternate contracting officer [ACOR]/COR.
Combat Theater	COR Appointment/Capacity

Table 11. Question #11: Who Are Your Organization's Customers?

Military Installation Contracting Command	IMCOM [Installation Management Command], ATEC [Army Test and Evaluation Command], FORSCOM [Forces Command], AFC [Army Futures Command]
Program Executive Office	28 U.S. Army bases
Combat Theater	Afghan nationals, NATO Forces

Table 12. Question #12: How Many Customers Does Your Organization Collect (Or Derive) Feedback From?

Military Installation Contracting Command	4
Program Executive Office	28
Combat Theater	12

Table 13. Question #13: What Positions (Not Names) In Your Organization Collect Customer Feedback?

Military Installation Contracting Command	COR and contracting officer. The COR appointed will be a Soldier, officer, or a civilian from customer organization.
Program Executive Office	Military analysts, project coordinators, and assistant product managers [APMs]. The COR appointed will be the APM or systems engineer of the program.
Combat Theater	Technical oversight representative (TOR), TCOR and COR. The TOR appointed is a government employee who is a Soldier in the requirements owner chain of command. The TO COR and COR are part of the PEO.

Table 14. Question #14: How Does Your Organization Collect Feedback from Your Customer?

Military Installation Contracting Command	Surveillance and performance monitoring (SPM) and PIEE
Program Executive Office	Forms, face to face, email, reports
Combat Theater	Forms, email, phone calls

Table 15. Question #15: How Long Does It Take for Your Organization to Collect Feedback from Your Customer?

Military Installation Contracting Command	1 month
Program Executive Office	1 month
Combat Theater	1 month

Table 16. Question #16: Are There Any Current Policies in Your Organization That Prescribe Guidelines for Customer Feedback Assessment Method?

Military Installation Contracting Command	No
Program Executive Office	QASP
Combat Theater	QASP

Table 17. Question #17: What Is the Process from Start to Finish to Collect Customer Feedback and Input Into CPARS?

Military Installation Contracting Command	Surveillance conducted by COR, COR inputs feedback into SPM/PIEE, KO inputs info into CPARS
Program Executive Office	Ask Soldiers for their input by on service during AARs; consolidate notes and translate to meet CPARS rating
Combat Theater	Customer feedback flows from TOR, to TCOR, COR, KO. KO finalizes feedback and inputs into CPARS

Table 18. Question #18: How Long Does That Process Take?

Military Installation Contracting Command	1 month
Program Executive Office	2–3 weeks
Combat Theater	TCOR reports took 30 minutes per report to generate if the connection to PIEE was stable. 12 contracts took 6 hours to produce. I did not do CPARS, so I have no knowledge of how long it took to produce that product.

Table 19. Question #19: How Often Does Your Organization Collect Feedback from Your Customer?

Military Installation Contracting Command	Monthly
Program Executive Office	Monthly
Combat Theater	Monthly

Table 20. Question #20: Once Collected, How Long Does It Take the Requirement Manager to Convert Customer Feedback to Actionable Data?

Military Installation Contracting Command	2 hours
Program Executive Office	4 hours
Combat Theater	Simple feedback not requiring a contract modification took 30 minutes. Contract modifications took anywhere from 1 week for a simple modification (i.e., no change to cost, schedule, or contractor head count) to 4 months for a complex modification.

In addition to answering these 20 questions, each participant provided additional comments or recommendations that they thought might assist our research. Their responses are recorded below.

1. Comments from MICC:

The COR will be a Soldier or an officer or a Department of the Army (DA) civilian from the organization/unit the service contract is servicing. This individual is never a member of contracting or a contractor employee. The unit needs to identify, name, and train this person before the contract gets awarded by the KO. The COR works for the unit, not the contracting office.

The major emphasis has always been placed on pre-award and getting the money spent. When we do award, it is far more often than not that the proper oversight of not only contractor performance, but also government-furnished property is not completed adequately. The surveillance not being performed correctly leads to fraud, waste, and abuse. Any surveillance program is only going to be as good as the person that a customer selects to be the COR.

2. Comments from Program Executive Office:

Although the process of combining and inputting customer feedback into CPARS was cumbersome, our organization found that the biggest issue was with collecting authentic customer feedback. Our contract served 28 different CONUS and OCONUS Army locations. We appointed an administrative contracting officer's representative (ACOR) for each location to assist with the contract surveillance. The reports were always completed on time and did have important and actionable information. We did, however, find that when the COR visited the locations and asked customers (aside from the ACOR) for feedback it differed from what was reported. Some of the feedback was subjective, but other feedback allowed us to go back to the KO and requirement manager and seek changes in the contract. Due to the limited tools, funding and scheduling the COR could not get more feedback from additional users every month.

Additionally, we realize most that ACORs also served as ACORs for multiple contracts, and/or had additional duties. It was difficult for them to focus on just our contract and conduct daily/consistent surveillance.

3. Comments from Combat Theater:

In practice, users [technical oversight representatives (TORs)] rotated out every 6 to 9 months. I had trouble getting user peers to accept responsibility for producing the monthly input. Foreign officers were far more likely to reliably provide input. Information systems were a mix of NATO and U.S.

Additionally, email was the only viable documentation source. Phone calls had to be followed up in writing in order to capture information in an actionable form. COR/KO communication were pretty much e-mail or phone. Issues generally had to be dealt with as they occurred. To my knowledge, the KO seldom reads the TCOR reports, and their approval could be given months after reports were written.

Procurement Integrated Enterprise Environment (PIEE) forms were dictated by the Army Contracting Command, and CORs were offered no flexibility. The TOR acts as the COR's eyes and ears at the various sites and locations. The TOR's duties cannot be delegated. Good communication is the first line of defense against a poorly performing contractor.

C. PROCESS MAPPING

The data from the questionnaires were extracted and mapped to conduct process analysis on the three organizations. We evaluated and mapped the detailed steps, the customers, and the inputs, transformation, and outputs of each step of the customer feedback process for service contracts. The amount of time needed for each step and for the entire process takes was also identified and included in the flow chart.

1. MICC

The MICC customer feedback process commences with the COR. Customers, including IMCOM and Army Test Evaluation Command (ATEC), assign multiple CORs to provide oversight for specific areas. For example, one COR is assigned for plumbing

services, one for lawn mowing, one for barracks repair management, and so on. Each COR submits their feedback into PIEE, which take approximately 30 minutes. The output is a COR report, which then awaits action from the KO. The KO reviews, revises, and combines the COR reports. This takes approximately 1 hour. The output of this activity is the contractor performance rating. Lastly, a CPARS report is initiated by the KO so that the total performance of the contract can be reviewed and notated annually in the CPARS website. This input takes approximately 1 hour. Figure 10 demonstrates the process map for the MICC's customer feedback process.

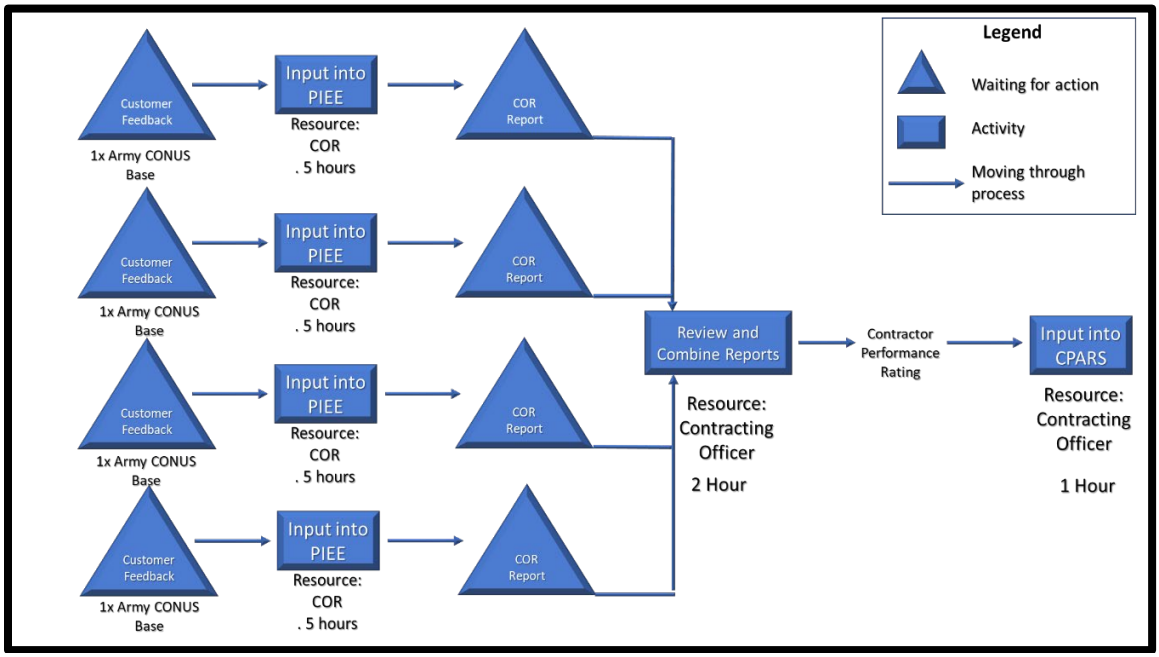

Figure 10. Military Installation Contracting Command Process

2. PEO

The PEO customer feedback process commences with the ACORs. The customers consist of 28 different Army CONUS and OCONUS bases. An ACOR is appointed at each one of the 28 different locations. The ACOR inputs their feedback into a quality assurance report (QAR), which takes 1 hour. The output of this activity is a QAR, and it is e-mailed to the COR. The COR then reviews, combines, and inputs all the QARs into PIEE, which takes approximately 6 hours. The COR report is reviewed and inputted into

CPARS in 1 hour. Figure 11 demonstrates the process map for the PEO customer feedback process.

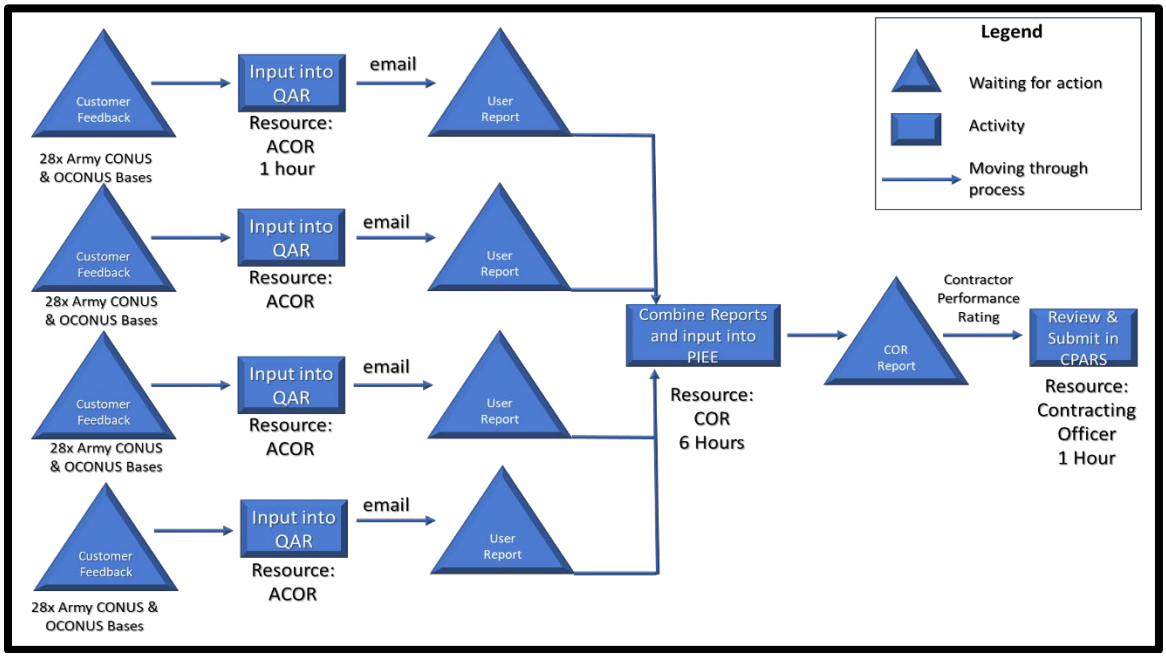

Figure 11. Program Executive Office Process

3. Combat Theater

The combat theater customer feedback process commences with the TORs. The customers consist of 12 different task orders serving NATO forces and Afghanistan nationals. The TOR is appointed for each task order. The TOR inputs their feedback into forms in approximately half an hour. The output is the user report, and it is emailed to the TCOR. The 12 user reports are then reviewed, combined, and inputted into PIEE by the TCOR. This activity takes up to 6 hours. The TCOR reports then await review and submission into CPARS by the COR and KO. The review and approval of the reports takes up to 2 hours. Figure 12 demonstrates the customer feedback process for the Combat Theater organization.

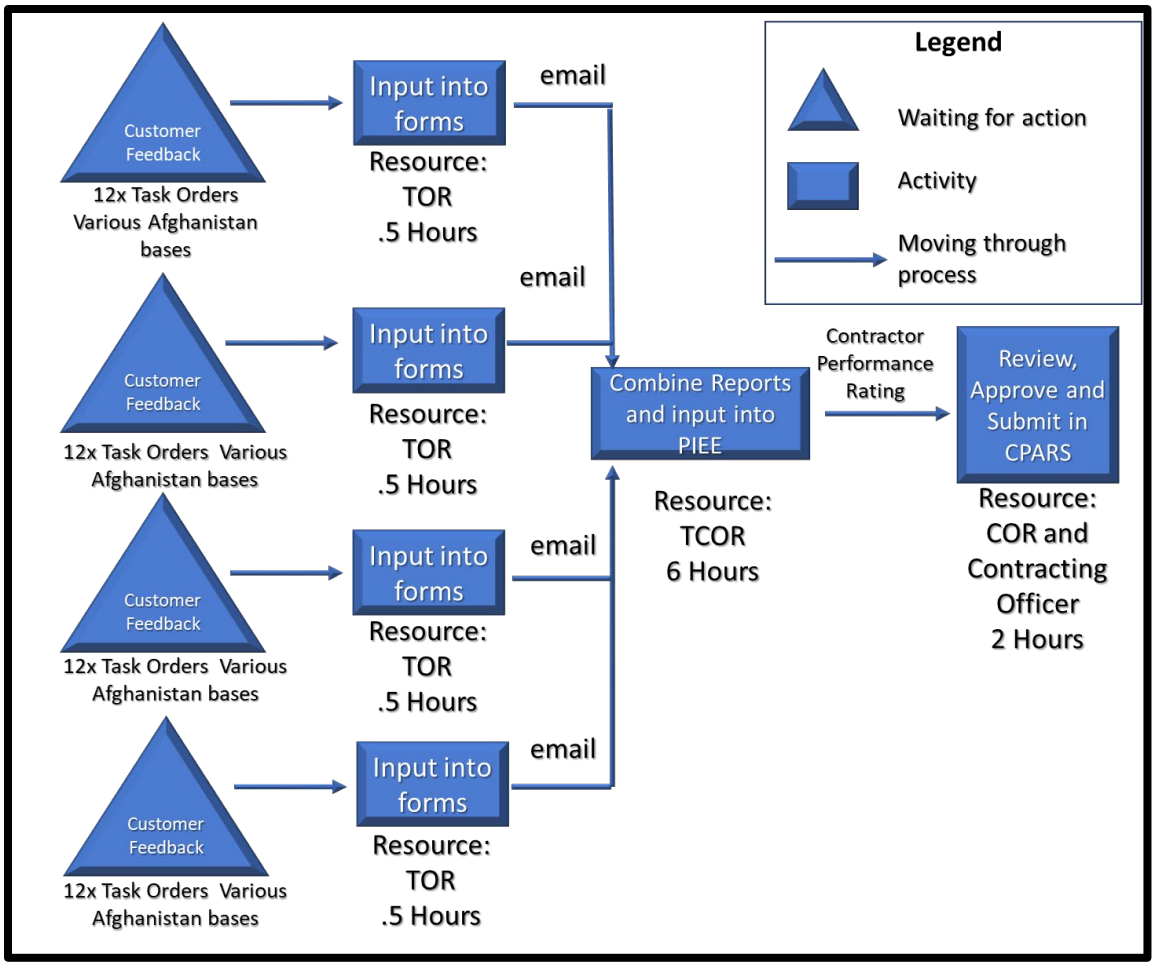

Figure 12. Combat Theater Process

D. LEAN ASSESSMENT

Process analysis begins by identifying the organizations' objectives or values, mapping out the process and then analyzing the information by conducting a Lean assessment. The organizations' objectives or values are identified, and the process is mapped out with the results of the questionnaire. A Lean assessment of each organizations' process can identify the value stream, waste, and bottlenecks. The results of our Lean assessment are presented below.

1. MICC:

The participant from the MICC identified the contractor's noncompliance with contract requirements as the objective or specific value the process needs to identify. The

process map for the MICC identified the COR report awaiting action from the KO as Type One Muda. Although this Muda adds no value to the process and prohibits the specified value from getting from the CORs to the KO, it is unavoidable due to the production assets available: one KO appointed to review and combine reports. The questionnaire and the process map yielded two different bottlenecks. The participant annotated the COR's capacity as the bottleneck of the process. Based on time of each activity, the Lean assessment yields the COR reviewing and combining the reports as the bottleneck. The bottleneck directly correlates with the Type One Muda identified. An increased capacity at the activity of reviewing and combining reports would eliminate the Type One Muda and the bottleneck. Figure 13 demonstrates what the MICC's customer feedback would look like without the Type One Muda. What is not depicted is the decrease in time expended with the increase in capacity augmented by either additional personnel or technology.

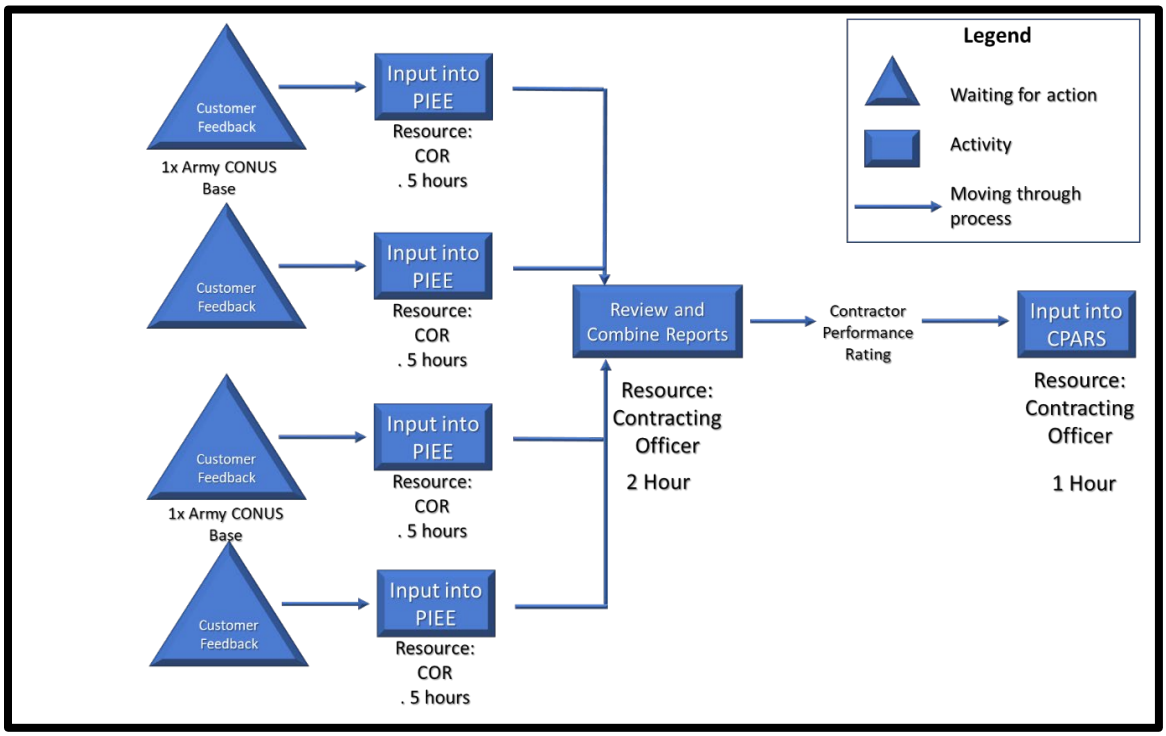

Figure 13. Military Installation Contracting Command Lean Assessment

2. PEO:

The participant from the PEO identified training improvement as the objective or specific value the process needs to identify. The process map for the PEO identified the QAR and COR report awaiting action from the COR and KO, respectively, as Type One Muda. The waiting action adds no value to the process and prohibits the PEO's specified value of training improvement feedback from getting from the ACORs to the KO. This Muda is unavoidable due to the production assets available: one COR and one KO appointed to review and combine reports. The questionnaire and the process map yielded two different bottlenecks. The participant annotated the COR's capacity as the bottleneck of the process. Based on the time of each activity, the Lean assessment yields the COR reviewing and combining the reports as the bottleneck. The bottleneck directly correlates with the Type One Muda identified. An increased capacity at the activity of reviewing and combining reports would eliminate one of the steps that leads to Muda and the bottleneck. Figure 14 demonstrates what the PEO's customer feedback would look like without the Type One Muda. What is not depicted is the decrease in time expended with the increase in capacity augmented by either additional personnel or technology.

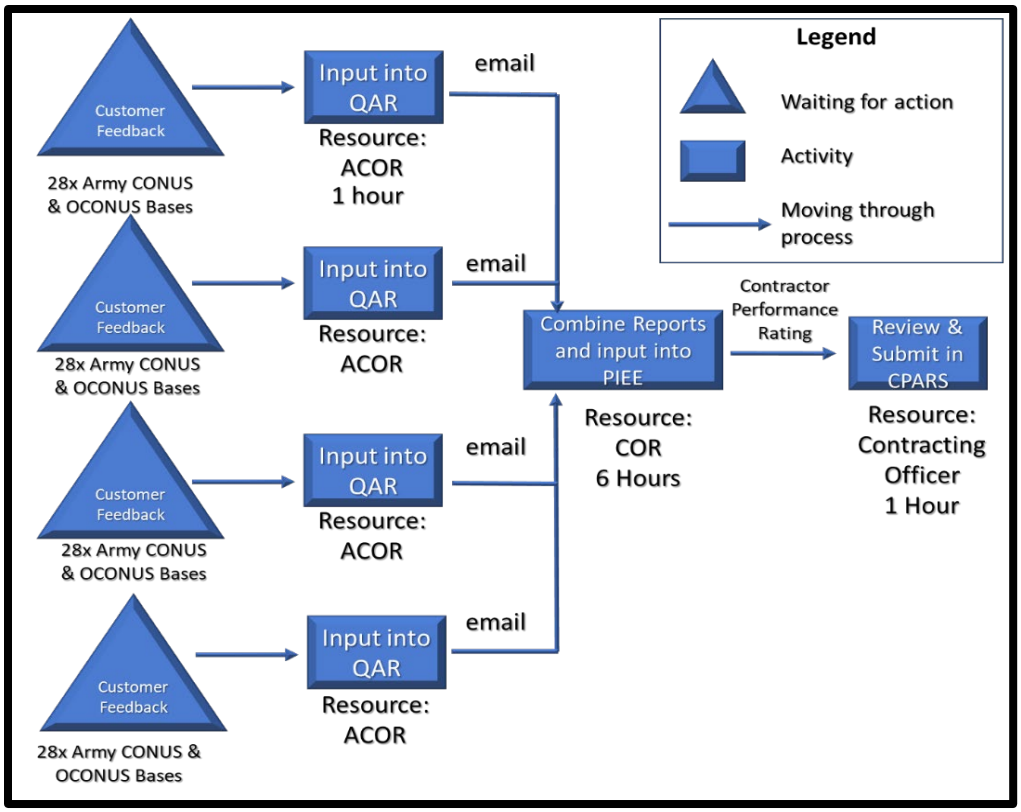

Figure 14. PEO Lean Assessment

3. Combat Theater:

The participant from the combat theater organization identified gaps in life-support services, security standdowns and medical emergencies as the objective or specific values the process needs to identify. The process map for the combat theater identified the user and TCOR report awaiting action from the TCOR and COR/KO, respectively, as Type One Muda. Just as in the other two Lean assessments, the waiting action adds no value to the process and prohibits the crucial customer feedback from getting from the TORs to the KO. This Muda is unavoidable due to the production assets available: one TCOR and one KO appointed to review and combine reports. The questionnaire and the process map yielded two different bottlenecks. The participant annotated the lack of an appointed TOR as the bottleneck of the process. Based on the time of each activity, the Lean assessment yields the TCOR combining the report and inputting into PIEE as the bottleneck. Again, the assessment directly correlates the bottleneck with the Type One Muda identified. An increased capacity at the activity of

reviewing and combining reports would eliminate the one of the steps that leads to Muda and the bottleneck. Figure 15 demonstrates what the combat theater's customer feedback would look like without the Type One Muda. What is not depicted is the decrease in time expended with the increase in capacity augmented by either additional personnel or technology.

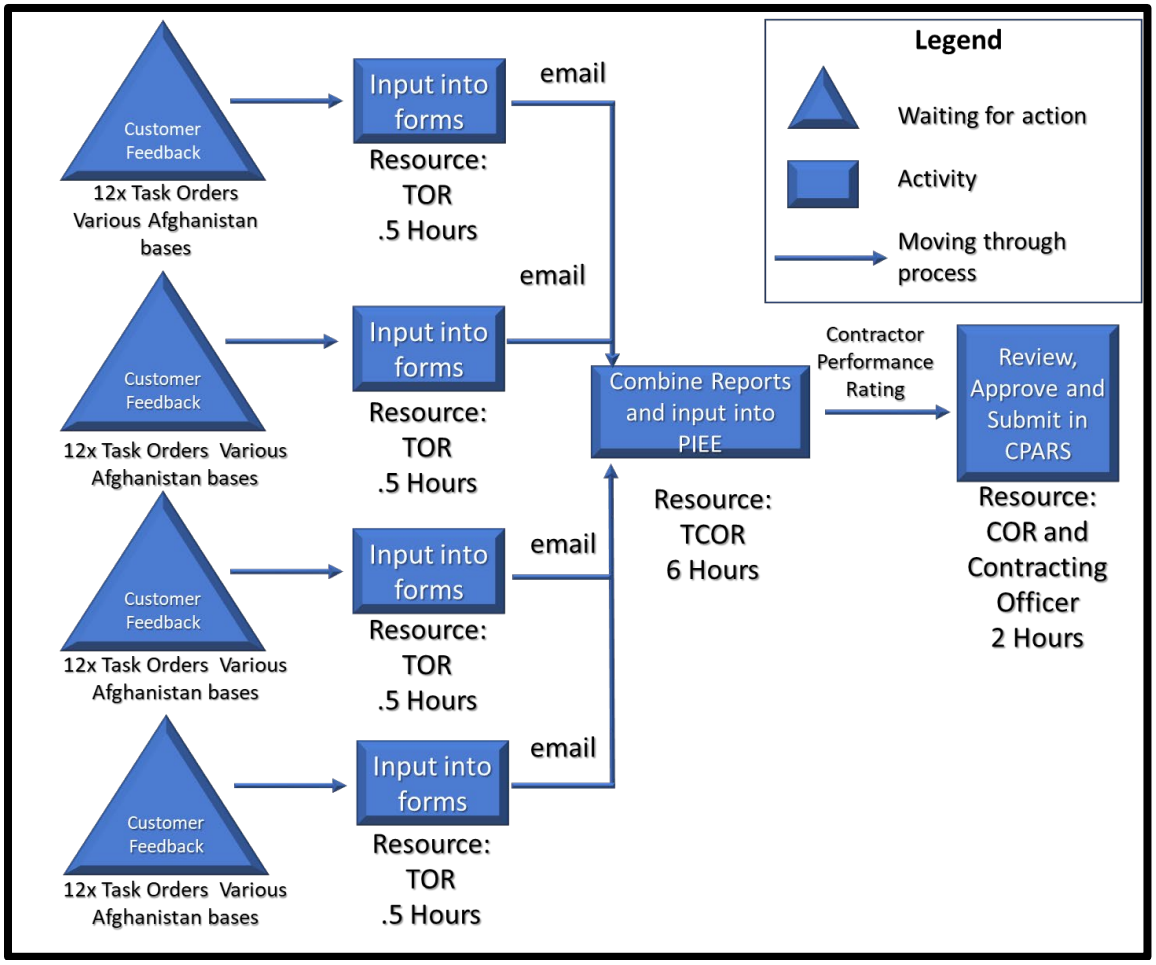

Figure 15. Combat Theater Lean Assessment

E. TREND ANALYSIS

Several trends are annotated between the participants' questionnaire results and the mapped processes. This research highlights four trends that were found to play a critical role in the customer feedback process.

First, the analysis found that all three organizations have multiple customers inputting feedback for one contract. The MICC KO appoints and uses multiple CORs that specialize in various functions of the service contracts. The PEO KO appoints and uses multiple ACORs at each one of the Army bases that the service contract serves. The combat theater KO appoints a TOR and TCOR for every task order and one COR for every base contract.

Furthermore, the Lean assessment found that all three of the processes have Type One Muda, which create no value but are unavoidable with current technologies (Jones& Womack, 1996). The three process maps include the customer feedback reports waiting to be combined and reviewed by the TCOR or COR or the KO. The time expended while reports wait for action is unavoidable with a lack of either automation or increased COR and KO capacity.

Another trend the Lean assessment found is that all three process maps yielded the same bottleneck. In all three organizations, the TCOR or COR reviewing and combining the reports takes the longest time to complete. This activity takes 2 hours in the MICC process, and 6 hours for both the PEO and combat theater process.

The last trend found was the stated bottlenecks of the participants' respective organizations all focused on the capacity or availability of the appointed individual conducting surveillance. The MICC and PEO participant noted the COR's capacity as their bottleneck. The combat theater noted the lack of an appointed TOR as their bottleneck.

F. VARIANCES

The process mapping also allowed us to observe two crucial variances between the processes. The first variance highlighted is the difference in how information is documented and collected. In the MICC process, the CORs submit their feedback directly into PIEE. The PEO and combat theater use a QAR or a user assessment report to document surveillance and then combined and inputted that info into PIEE. Inputting the customer feedback and contractor rating into PIEE is consistent across the organizations, but the forms or reports that the surveillance is initially documented on varies.

Additionally, the process mapping shows the difference in customer locations. The MICC service contracts and surveillance are concentrated in one Army base. The PEO and combat theater surveillance occurred in various Army bases.

G. FINDINGS

Based on the participants answers, process mapping and Lean assessment, we conclude that there are several inefficiencies within the Army's customer feedback process. The inefficiencies lie within the capacity or availability of the appointed individual conducting surveillance, Type One Muda derived from reports waiting for further action, and the bottleneck created by the TOR/CORs/KO reviewing and combining reports.

Additionally, the Lean assessment found a lack of flow through all three processes. The current customer feedback process for all three organizations cycles one customer feedback report per month. Lean thinking recommends a continuous flow by working on a service or product from start to finish (Jones & Womack, 1996). The customer feedback is submitted only once a month, instead of having a continuous flow of information from the customers to the KO. As annotated by the Lean assessments and in accordance with the Lean thinking literature, the reporting "sits patiently awaiting the department's changeover to the type of activity the product needs next" (Jones & Womack, 1996, p. 21). Also, the participants at the end of the process cannot access the information until the supervisors upstream sign off on the report.

For the Lean Thinking principle pull, we also found the current customer feedback inefficient. In this research, the current customer feedback process has a unique cycle in that the customer is pushing information to the KO, unlike conventional organizations that push products to the customer. For this process, the KO becomes the customer, and the customers receiving services from industrial contractors are the producers of the customer feedback. As it stands, the producer's push the value through the customer feedback process through one report once a month. As stated by the participant requirement managers from the MICC, PEO, and combat theater, they are unable to pull customer feedback upon demand unless they stop using the current process, PIEE and CPARS, and use other resources: e-mail, phone, and face to face.

The last step to a Lean assessment is perfection. The Army acquisition community is making an effort to perfect the customer feedback process through SAM, ICE, and ARRT–PA. Although there are benefits from the current effort to perfect the customer feedback process, the efforts are assessed to work parallel with each other and lack synchronization. The different processes derived from SAM, ICE, ARRT–PA, PIEE, and CPARS efforts do not allow for substantial improvements. Until the Army combines the processes and allows the systems to collaborate, the customer feedback will not reach the possibility of perfection.

H. SUMMARY

This chapter presented the results and analysis of the three participants' questionnaires. The chapter began with a discussion of the participants' demographics. The three participants serve in three different Army acquisition organizations and are of three different ranks. Next, we presented and described the process mapping that we utilized for each different demographic. We then analyzed the customer feedback data by conducting a Lean assessment and identified specific values, waste, and bottlenecks for each process. Additionally, in this chapter we presented a trend analysis, variances and findings that we discovered found through the process mapping and Lean assessment.

VI. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we conclude this research by presenting a technological solution that can make the customer feedback process more efficient and effective. Next, we recommend areas for future research that may further benefit the acquisition community and service contract management.

A. RECOMMENDED SOLUTION

Now that the process analysis and Lean assessment have been completed, we recommend a technology solution for process improvements. Based on the findings, we recommend a technological solution that alleviates the workload for the COR/TCOR/KO, standardizes how surveillance is documented and collected, and reduces the bottlenecks created by the COR's reviewing and combining reports.

As stated in the previous chapter, the inefficiencies lie within the capacity or availability of the appointed individual conducting surveillance, the Type One Muda derived from reports waiting for further action, and the bottleneck created by the TOR/CORs/KO reviewing and combining reports.

A solution that enables a streamlined approach to the collection, evaluation, documentation, and dissemination of user feedback to the KO consists of an incremental release of a smart phone application (app) that can be leveraged by all ranks, agencies, and service contracts. The app would consist of an operating system that mirrors industry, like customer rating surveys such as Yelp. The app would allow multiple customers to upload their feedback onto the software. The software would combine, summarize, and report the feedback. The information would be readily available for requirement managers, leaders, contractors, and the public to see. It is recommended that the development of the app ensures interoperability with PIEE, CPARS, ARRT–PA and SAM. Figure 16 depicts the new customer feedback process with the use of the recommended software app.

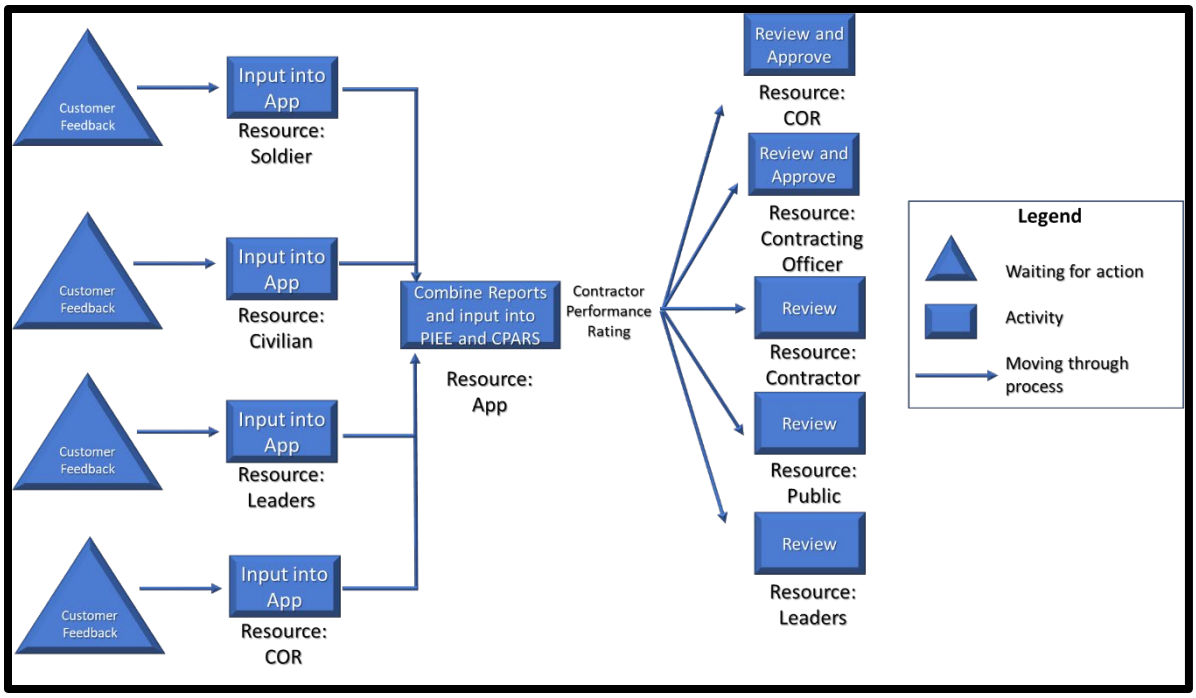

Figure 16. Army Customer Feedback Process with App

1. Capacity

The app would increase the capacity or availability of the appointed individual conducting surveillance. The app would be easily downloaded onto any smartphone or would allow users to log in from a desktop. This allows multiple customers from the organization receiving contractor services—of various ranks, perspectives, and experiences—to download the app. The app would augment the COR's capacity by allowing multiple customers, and not just the appointed ACOR, TOR, or COR, to submit feedback.

2. Flow

To add flow to process, the recommended solution would do away with the submission of one report a month. Instead, customers would continuously submit their feedback through the app. The app would collect the data and combine the customer feedback into a report that summarizes the contractors' performance rating. Leveraging algorithms and technology would eliminate the bottleneck created by the TOR/COR/KO combining reports.

3. Standardization and Metrics

The lack of standardization and issues with subjective customer feedback is also addressed by this solution. The current process and ongoing efforts to improve the customer feedback assessment method does not have a solution to filter the subjective customer annotations and then transcribe and format the end user's complaints to input into CPARS. There is also no form to annotate positive end user feedback. The recommended application would allow the requirement managers to set specific areas of surveillance and performance rating parameters. This would ensure that customers are augmenting the surveillance activity in accordance with the FAR 37.6 and the respective QASP. We recommend that the app include an additional comments section, where customers can also provide specific feedback, they feel is important. Customers would still be able to voice their opinions on the current contract, identify risks, and recommend changes to make the contract better without having to search for the requirement manager, or interfere with the surveillance process. Customers could immediately identify risks that would impose additional costs, schedule delays, or failures to meet performance standards. It is not feasible for a KO, program manager or COR to immediately identify risks at all locations or to capture a lack of performance.

4. Pull

The software storing the combined customer feedback and summarized contractor perforce rating would also allow for the customers of this process (KO/requirement manager) to pull the necessary information as needed. KOs are currently unable to pull customer feedback upon demand unless they stop using the current process, PIEE and CPARS, and use other resources: email, phone, face to face. The readily available data stored through the software eliminates the Type One Muda identified, as now multiple requirement managers can pull the readily available data to review or process.

5. Transparency and Contract Performance

The app would also improve contract performance and transparency with the various stakeholders of the service contracts. The everyday user and recipient of service contracts would be able to monitor and rate the contractor performance. The insight given

to leaders and requirement managers would also place pressure on contractors to continuously meet contract requirements. Last, the app would allow the current and future acquisition teams to make more informed and metric-based decisions on extending, terminating, or awarding new contracts.

6. Perfection

To ensure continuous efforts for perfection, we recommend an incremental deployment of the solution is recommended. The deployment would consist of three phases that allow the capability to provide an effective and efficient process to the acquisition community while also receiving endorsement from our leaders and end users. The endorsement from our leaders and end users would allow for this innovation to bypass the difficulties derived from the disruptive nature a change in process presents.

Phase 1 of the solution would focus on the award of a firm-fixed-price, performance-based contract for a smartphone app prototype. The app would be used as a pilot program and tested on one agency and one base. The base recommended to pilot the program is Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, AL. This base is the home to the U.S. Army Contracting Command (ACC) and the Army Acquisition Center of Excellence. Piloting the program there would allow communication and input from the leaders of the Army acquisition community while also testing the effectiveness of the app. This phase would allow the award of 1 base year with 4 option years. Soldiers and DoD civilians could use the app to provide feedback on the app itself and on base service contracts to commence the pilot program. Leaders and customers can provide input on what can make the app better or if it needs to be terminated. In this phase, the data, satisfaction, and performance rates would serve as just situational awareness on the performance of service contracts for the requirement managers.

In Phase 2 the app would become available to all bases and agencies. Each base would have the option to award a contract. The app would continue to focus on service contracts and would enable the customer feedback of service contracts that serve more than one base. This would allow requirement managers to receive customer feedback from all locations their contracts serve while cutting back on temporary duty assignment expenses. This phase would also serve to standardize the customer feedback process via

the app. At this point the app can serve as documentation to support customer feedback assessments, contract modification, and termination of contracts.

Phase 3 would proceed to the interoperability of the app with PIEE and CPARS. The requirement manager would not have to input the ratings from the app into PIEE or CPARS, as the app would execute the data for them. All the data would still be available for requirement managers and leaders to see and use for other contracting actions.

B. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Are Army agencies using customer feedback as an assessment method?

Army agencies are using customer feedback as an assessment method. Various DoD and Army policies and regulations prescribe the establishment of performance metrics in the services acquisition strategy, including the plan for measuring service acquisition outcomes against requirements. The input for the evaluations is generally provided from the end users of the service through surveillance and a five-scale rating system. The evaluations are required to prepare and submit electronically in CPARS.

What is the current process for Army requirement managers to collect customer feedback?

According to our research, the current process for Army requirement managers to collect customer feedback is through surveillance reports produced by CORs. The CORs—or, or in some organizations the TORs, ACORs, or TCORs—are appointed by the KO. These CORs conduct contract surveillance and input their recommended ratings and other critical feedback into PIEE, QARs or user reports. These reports are then channeled to the KO through various activities and resources. The KO finalizes the feedback and inputs the data into CPARS.

How can the Army service contract customer feedback be standardized and streamlined to better inform the requirement managers?

The Army service contract customer feedback can be standardized and streamlined by leveraging technology that increases capacity and eliminates waste and bottlenecks in the process. A solution that enables a streamlined approach to the collection, evaluation, documentation, and dissemination of user feedback to the KO

consists of an incremental release of a smart phone application (app) that can be leveraged by all ranks, agencies, and service contracts.

C. FUTURE RESEARCH AREAS

This research is primarily focused on the collection, evaluation, documentation, dissemination, and delivery of user feedback to the acquisition team and the requirement manager. Based on the participants' responses and the finding from the analysis, we recommend two areas for further research.

First, we recommend research into the COR nomination process is recommended. Appointing CORs that know and understand their responsibilities and have a vested interest in the service contract is crucial in the customer feedback process. The issues of bottleneck with the COR capacity aligns with the GAO high risk reports documented Chapters II and III, which annotate issues with the acquisition workforce capacity. Research that focuses on the details of COR qualification and appointment could give the acquisition community insight into any deficiencies or risks in that process.

Additionally, we recommend further research on the variances in quality of surveillance and customer feedback. The lack of standardization in the collection and documentation of customer feedback is presumed to deliver varying customer feedback.

APPENDIX. QUALITY ASSURANCE SURVEILLANCE PLAN TEMPLATE

Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP) Version
Source: (DAU, n.d.)

For <enter contract title>
Contract Number: < upon award, enter contract number>
Contract Description: < enter contract description >
Contractor's Name: < upon award, enter name of contractor >
(hereafter referred to as the contractor).

1. Vision (import from ARRT or Charter)

2. Mission (import from ARRT or Charter)

3. Purpose

This Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan is a government-developed document used to determine if the contractor's performance meets the performance standards contained in the contract. The QASP establishes procedures on how this assessment/inspection process will be conducted. It provides the detailed process for a continuous oversight process:

- What will be monitored
- How monitoring will take place
- Who will conduct the monitoring
- How monitoring efforts and results will be documented

The contractor is responsible for implementing and delivering performance that meets contract standards using its Quality Control Plan. The QASP provides the structure for the government's surveillance of the contractor's performance and their Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) actions to assure they meet contract standards. It is the government's responsibility to be objective, fair and consistent in evaluating contractor performance.

The QASP is not part of the contract nor is it intended to duplicate the contractor's quality control plan. This QASP is a living document. Flexibility in the QASP is required to allow for an increase or decrease in the level of surveillance necessary based on contractor performance.

The government may provide a copy of the QASP to the contractor to facilitate open communication. In addition, the QASP should recognize that unforeseen or uncontrollable circumstances might occur that are outside the control of the contractor.

Bottom line, the QASP should ensure early identification and resolution of performance issues to minimize impact on mission performance.

4. Authority

Authority for issuance of this QASP is provided under Part 46 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation, Inspection of Services Clauses, which provides for inspection, acceptance and documentation of the service called for in the contract or order. This acceptance is to be executed by the contracting officer or a duly authorized representative.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The following personnel shall oversee and coordinate surveillance activities.

Program/Project Manager (PM) or Functional Services Manager (FSM) – The PM/FSM provides primary program oversight, nominates the COR, ensures the COR is trained before performing any COR duties and supports the COR's performance assessment activities. While the PM/FSM may serve as a direct conduit to provide Government guidance and feedback to the Contractor on technical matters, they are not empowered to make any contractual commitments or any contract changes on the government's behalf.

Assigned PM/FSM: <enter name>
Organization or Agency: <enter organization or Agency name>
Telephone: <enter number>
Email: <enter address>

Contracting Officer (KO) – The KO shall ensure performance of all necessary actions for effective contracting, ensure compliance with the contract terms, and shall safeguard the interests of the United States in the contractual relationship. The KO shall also ensure that the contractor receives impartial, fair, and equitable treatment under this contract. Determine the final assessment of the contractor's performance.

Assigned KO: <enter name>
Organization or Agency: <enter organization or Agency name>
Telephone: <enter number>
Email: <enter address>

Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) – The COR is responsible for providing continuous technical oversight of the contractor's performance. The COR uses the QASP to conduct the oversight/surveillance process. The COR shall keep a Quality Assurance file that accurately documents the contractor's actual performance. The purpose is to ensure that the contractor meets the performance standards contained in the contract. The COR is responsible for reporting early identification of performance problems to the KO. The COR is required to provide an annual performance assessment to the KO, which will be used in documenting past performance. The QASP is the primary tool for surveillance of the contractor's quality program and help the COR to document contractor performance. The COR is not empowered to make any contractual commitments or to authorize any contractual change on the Government's behalf.

Other Key Government Personnel (enter name or delete this line if not applicable) This may include performance monitors, inspectors, technical experts, or others who provide information that helps the COR monitor contractor performance.

Contractor Representatives

The following employees of the contractor serve as the contractor's Program Manager and Task Manager for this contract. (Complete this section after the contract award)

Contractor Program Manager - <upon award, enter name>
Telephone: <enter number>
Email: <enter address>

Contractor Task Manager - <upon award, enter name>
Telephone: <enter number>
Email: <enter address>

Other Key Contractor Personnel - <upon award, enter name or delete these lines if not applicable>
Title: <enter title>
Telephone: <enter number>
Email: <enter address>

6. Performance Requirements and Method of Surveillance

6.1. Contract Surveillance

The goal of the QASP is to ensure that contractor performance is effectively monitored and documented. The COR's contribution is their professional, non-adversarial relationships with the KO, PM and the contractor, which enables positive, open and timely communications. The foundation of this relationship is built upon objective, fair, and consistent COR evaluations of contractor performance against contract requirements. The COR uses the methods contained in this QASP to ensure the contractor is in compliance with contract requirements. The COR function is responsible for a wide range of surveillance requirements that effectively measure and evaluate the contractor's performance. Additionally, this QASP is based on the premise that the contractor, not the government, is responsible for management and QC/QA actions to successfully meet the terms of the contract.

6.2. Surveillance Matrix

The Surveillance Matrix (see sample at Attachment 1) is the list of performance objectives and standards that must be performed by the contractor. This matrix details the method of surveillance and frequency the COR will use to validate and inspect these performance elements. Inspection of each element will be documented in the COR file.

DFARS 222.17 mandates including surveillance for ensuring compliance with Combatting Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) in the QASP. Use the CTIP sample checklist from PGI 222.17. See the DoD CTIP website.

Performance objectives define the desired outcomes. Performance Standards define the level of service required under the contract to successfully meet the performance objective. The inspection methodology defines how, when, and what will be assessed in measuring performance. The Government performs surveillance, using this QASP, to determine the quality of the contractor's performance as it relates to the performance element standards. The Performance Requirement Summary (PRS) should be used to form the foundation of the COR's inspection checklist.

6.3. Performance Rating Definitions

The performance ratings below reflect definitions at FAR 42.1503 Table 42–1. The COR will use these rating to evaluate the quality of contractor's performance. *[If your organization requires that you use a different rating mechanism, insert it here.]*

Performance Rating	Definition
Exceptional	Performance meets contractual requirements and exceeds many to the government's benefit. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element being evaluated was accomplished with few minor problems for which corrective actions taken by the contractor were highly effective.
Very Good	Performance meets contractual requirements and exceeds some to the Government's benefit. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element being evaluated was accomplished with some minor problems for which corrective actions taken by the contractor were effective.
Satisfactory	Performance meets contractual requirements. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element contains some minor problems for which corrective actions taken by the contractor appear or were satisfactory.
Marginal	Performance does not meet some contractual requirements. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element being evaluated reflects a serious problem for which the contractor has not yet identified corrective actions. The contractor's proposed actions appear only marginally effective or were not fully implemented.
Unsatisfactory	Performance does not meet most contractual requirements and recovery is not likely in a timely manner. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element contains a serious problem(s) for which the contractor's corrective actions appear or were ineffective.

Note 1: Plus or minus signs may be used to indicate an improving (+) or worsening (-) trend insufficient to change the evaluation status.

Note 2: N/A (not applicable) should be used if the ratings are not going to be applied to a particular area for evaluation.

7. Performance Reporting

7.1. Corrective Action Report (CAR)

Describes how discrepancies are reported and resolved (see sample CAR below).

7.2. Customer Complaint Form

(See sample customer complaint form below)

7.3. Performance Assessment Report (PAR) (See sample customer PAR below)

Surveillance Matrix

Statements	Standards/AQLs	Inspections	Ratings
C.3.1 Maintain and repair elevators for XYZ Organization.			
C.3.1.1 The Contractor shall inspect, maintain, and test elevators for passenger and cargo elevator systems. <u>Deliverables:</u> A01 Reports	**a)** Standard commercial practice for the specific elevator system, consistent with technical manuals. **b)** Downtime for required schedule maintenance is met **AQL:** 99.2% of the time	**What:** Elevators Documents **How:** 100% review of documents Continuous observation Customer feedback trouble reports **Who:** Users, Technical engineers, and COR **Incentive:** $100 deduct for out of compliance documentation $50 deduct for failure to perform preventive maintenance on schedule **Standard(s): Incentive** applies to standard (a) only	
C.3.1.2 The Contractor shall conduct preventive maintenance for elevator systems.	**a)** Preventive maintenance performed IAW the manufacturer's manual 100% of the time **b)** Meets all warranty requirements	**What:** Preventive Maintenance Records Log Books Inspection Deficiency Write-up resolutions **How:** Records and Visual Inspection On-site periodic inspections **Who:** Mechanical Staff Engineer **Incentive:** $100 deduct for each PM procedure not performed IAW manufacturer manuals **Standard(s):** Inspection applies to all standards	

C.3.1.3 The Contractor shall assure parts availability for continuous operation. <u>Deliverables:</u> A02 Parts Inventory List	**a)** Sufficient parts are available to support the required Ao and the mandated parts list **AQL:** Ao is maintained Mandated Parts List is complete 98.8% of the time	**What:** Parts Inventories Availability Records **How:** Records and Visual Inspection On-site periodic inspections **Frequency:** After completion of each inventory **Who:** COR for Ao Mechanics Staff for parts **Standard(s):** Inspection applies to all standards	

Inspection Metrologies:

M1: Inspection of Reports. All reports shall be reviewed upon receipt. The reviewer will report any flaws in the document and categorize the flaws (Editorial, Format, and/or Substance).

CORRECTIVE ACTION REPORT (CAR)

(If more space is needed, use reverse and identify by number)

1. CONTRACTOR	2. CONTRACT NUMBER	3. TYPE OF SERVICES •

4. FUNCTIONAL AREA	5. SUSPENSE DATE	6. CONTROL NUMBER

7. DEFICIENCY ☐ MAJOR ☐ MINOR

FINDING:

FINDING IMPACT:

Please respond with a written corrective action plan that details the corrective action of the cited deficiency, the cause of the deficiency, and actions taken to prevent recurrence by Suspense Date in Block 5. If date was not entered in Block 5, the contractor is not required to provide a response.

1. 8. QUALITY ASSURANCE PERSONNEL (COR)

2. TYPED NAME AND GRADE	3. SIGNATURE AND DATE

4. 9. ISSUING AUTHORITY

5. TYPED NAME AND GRADE	6. SIGNATURE AND DATE

10. COR RESPONSE TO CONTRACTOR CORRECTIVE ACTION AND ACTION TAKEN TO PREVENT RECURRENCE

11. COR DETERMINATION ☐ ACCEPTED ☐ REJECTED	12. CLOSE DATE

CUSTOMER COMPLAINT RECORD

DATE/TIME OF COMPLAINT

SOURCE OF COMPLAINT

ORGANIZATION	BUILDING NUMBER	INDIVIDUAL	PHONE NUMBER

NATURE OF COMPLAINT

- CONTRACT REFERENCE

- VALIDATION

- DATE/TIME CONTRACTOR INFORMED OF COMPLAINT

- ACTION TAKEN BY CONTRACTOR

RECEIVED/VALIDATED BY

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT REPORT (PAR)

(If more space is needed, use reverse and identify by number)

1. CONTRACT/TASK ORDER NUMBER	2. CONTRACTOR	3. TYPE OF SERVICES

7. 4. QUALITY ASSURANCE PERSONNEL (COR) SIGNATURE AND DATE 8.	9. 5. COR PHONE	10. 6. SUSPENSE DATE

11. I. PERFORMANCE

7. ☐ DEFICIENCY (CHECK ALL BOXES THAT APPLY) ☐ NEW ☐ REPEAT ☐ NO DEFICIENCY NOTED	8. SERVICES SUMMARY or PWS PARAGRAPH ITEM REVIEWED
9. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEFICIENCY (IF DEFICIENCY BOX WAS CHECKED)	10. DETAILED PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

12. II. CONTRACTOR VALIDATION

11. CONTRACTOR REPRESENTATIVE ☐ CONCUR ☐ NON-CONCUR	12. CORRECTIVE ACTION ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE

13. CONTRACTOR REPRESENTATIVE CORRECTIVE ACTION AND PREVENTION OF RECURRENCE OR REASON FOR NON-CONCURRENCE OF COR CITED DEFICIENCY

13. III. ACTION CORRECTED

14. ☐ CONCUR ☐ NON-CONCUR COR SIGNATURE AND DATE

15. COR REMARKS (REQUIRED)

6. CONTRACTOR REPRESENTATIVE REMARKS

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF REFERENCES

Alia-Novobilski, M. (2020, June 8) *AFMC digital campaign aims to modernize, streamline life cycle process*. U.S. Air Force. https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2210996/afmc-digital-campaign-aims-to-modernize-streamline-life-cycle-process/.

Shiran, A. (2020, May 4). *Yelp launches an all new modernized and enhanced experience for business owners.* Yelp. https://blog.yelp.com/2020/05/yelp-launches-an-all-new-modernized-and-enhanced-experience-for-business-owners

Amazon. (n.d.) *Come build the future with us*. Amazon Jobs. Retrieved October 30,2020, from https://www.amazon.jobs/en/working/working-amazon

AFARS 5142, Contract Administration and Audit Services (2019). https://www.acquisition.gov/afars/contract-administration-and-audit-services

AFARS 5137, Service Contracting (2019). https://www.acquisition.gov/afars/service-contracting

AFARS Appendix CC, Army Procurement Management Review Program (2014). https://www.acquisition.gov/afars/army-procurement-management-review-program

Ausink, J. A., Camm, F., & Cannon, C. (2001). Performance-based contracting in the air force: A report on experiences in the field (Report No. DB342). RAND. https://www.rand.org/pubs/documented_briefings/DB342.html

Behn, R. (2016, January 8). *Real lean is not just about cutting costs*. Government Executive. https://www.govexec.com/management/2016/01/real-lean-not-just-about-cutting-costs/124969/

Black, S., Henley, J., and Clute, M. **(**2014) *Determining the value of contractor performance assessment reporting system (CPARS) narratives for the acquisition process* [Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School]. NPS Archive: https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA625259

Buchanan, N., & Klingner, D. E. (2007). Performance-based contracting: Are we following the mandate? *Journal of Public Procurement, 7*(3), pp. 301–332. https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JOPP-07-03-2007-B001/full/html

Defense Acquisition University. (2020). *Defense acquisition guidebook*. [Handbook]. https://www.dau.edu/tools/dag

Defense Acquisition University. (n.d.). *Service acquisition steps*. DAU Service Acquisition Mall. Retrieved September 15, 2020, from https://www.dau.edu/tools/Documents/SAM/home.html

DFARS 237, Service Contracting (2020). https://www.acquisition.gov/dfars/part-237-service-contracting

DFARS 246, Quality Assurance (2020). https://www.acquisition.gov/dfars/part-246-quality-assurance

DeHart, B., & Landale, K. (2019, June 12) Areas of interest (aoi): wing feedback app**. AFWERX. https://www.afwerx.af.mil/resources/Wing_Feedback_App.pdf**

Digitas. (n.d.). *Amazon customer journey framework*. Hackernoon. Retrieved October 30, 2020, from https://hackernoon.com/hn-images/1*aaqj5k8Exz5mInbwIzyUgg.png

DiNapoli, T. J. (2019). *High risk series: Substantial efforts needed to achieve greater progress on high-risk areas* (GAO-19-157). Government Accountability Office. https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-19-157SP

Eesley, L. (2007, April 26). Mission aligned acquisition: Creating a customer-focused value chain [PowerPoint slides]. SlideServe. https://www.slideserve.com/elma/mission-aligned-acquisition-creating-a-customer-focused-value-chain

Ellman, J., Livergood, R., Morrow, D., & Sanders, G. (2011, May 6). *Defense contract trends: U.S. department of defense contract spending and the supporting industrial base.* Center for Strategic & International Studies. https://www.csis.org/analysis/defense-contract-trends-0

FAR 1.102, Statement of guiding principles for the Federal Acquisition System (2020). https://www.acquisition.gov/far/part-1#FAR_1_102

FAR 1.604, Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) (2020). https://www.acquisition.gov/far/part-1#FAR_1_604

FAR 37, Service Contracting (2020). https://www.acquisition.gov/far/part-37

FAR 37.6, Performance-Based Acquisition (2020). https://www.acquisition.gov/far/part-37#FAR_Subpart_37_6

FAR 42.15, Contractor Performance Information (2020). https://www.acquisition.gov/far/part-42#FAR_Subpart_42_15

FAR 46.4, Government Contract Quality Assurance (2020). https://www.acquisition.gov/far/part-46#FAR_Subpart_46_4

GoSkills. (n.d.). *What is Lean Six Sigma?* GoSkills. Retrieved September 15, 2020, from https://www.goskills.com/Lean-Six-Sigma

Woods, W. (2007). *Federal contracting: Use of contractor performance information* (GAO-07-1111T). Government Accountability Office. https://www.gao.gov/assets/120/117379.pdf

Woods, W. (2013). *Contractor performance: DoD actions to improve the reporting of past performance information* (GAO13-589). Government Accountability Office. https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-589

Government Accountability Office. (2002). *Defense logistics: Improving customer feedback program could enhance DLA's delivery of service* (GAO-02-776). Government Accountability Office. https://www.gao.gov/assets/240/235075.pdf

Government Accountability Office. (2009). *Better performance information needed to support agency contract award decisions* (GAO-09-374). Government Accountability Office. https://www.gao.gov/assets/290/288994.pdf

Hawk, N. (2019, May 16). *Five things Army officers and units should know about the assignment interactive module.* U.S. Army. https://www.army.mil/article/221843/five_things_army_officers_and_units_should_know_about_the_assignment_interactive_module

Hinshaw, M. (n.d.). *8 Customer service strategies you can steal from Amazon.* Mcorp.cx. Retrieved October 30, 2020, from https://www.mcorpcx.com/articles/8-customer-service-strategies-can-steal-amazon

ICE (n.d.). *About ice*. ICE. Retrieved August 18, 2020, from https://ice.disa.mil/index.cfm?fa=about_ice&dep=DoD

Jones, D., & Womack, J. (1996). *Lean thinking: Banish waste and create wealth in your corporation.* Simon & Schuster.

Jones, E. (2014). *Quality management for organizations using Lean Six Sigma techniques*. CRC Press.

Kreider, L. (2019, August 15) *Let your voice be heard with ICE*. U.S. Army. https://www.army.mil/article/225733/let_your_voice_be_heard_with_ice

Luc, C. (n.d.). *Yelp reservations case study*. Christine Luc. Retrieved October 30, 2020, from https://www.christineluc.com/yelp-reservations-case-study

McCormick, R. (2019, November 5). *Defense acquisition trends 2019: Army contract trends*. Center for Strategic & International Studies. https://www.csis.org/analysis/defense-acquisition-trends-2019-army-contract-trends

Mir, N. (n.d.). *Gastronome.* Nabil Mir. Retrieved October 30,2020, from https://www.nabilmir.com/gastronome.html

Moore, N., Dunigan, M., Camm, F., Cherney, S., Grammich, C., Mele, J., ... Szafran, A. (2017). *A review of alternative methods to inventory contracted services in the Department of Defense* (Report No. TRR1704). RAND. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1700/RR1704/RAND_RR1704.pdf

United States Congress. (2019). *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (*Pub. L. No. 116–92, 133 Stat. 1198). https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/s1790/text

Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment. (2020a, January 10). *Defense acquisition of services* (DoD Instruction 5000.74). Department of Defense. https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/500074p.pdf

Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment. (2020b, January 23). *Operation of the adaptive acquisition framework* (DoD Instruction 5000.02). Department of Defense. https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/500002p.pdf?ver=2019-05-01-151755-110

Shaukat, T. (2019, September 24). U*SAA and Google Cloud work together to speed auto claims.* Google Cloud Blog. https://cloud.google.com/blog/topics/customers/usaa-and-google-cloud-work-together-to-speed-auto-claims/

Streeter, B. (2018, September 10). *Why USAA is the most beloved financial brand on Earth.* The Financial Brand. https://thefinancialbrand.com/75192/usaa-financial-brand-loyalty-customer-satisfaction/

U.S. Army. (n.d.). *About.* Assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics, and technology (ASA[ALT]). Retrieved October 30,2020, from https://www.army.mil/asaalt#org-about

Acquisition Research Program
Graduate School of Defense Management
Naval Postgraduate School
555 Dyer Road, Ingersoll Hall
Monterey, CA 93943

www.acquisitionresearch.net