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### **Analysis of the Marine Corps Expeditionary Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment**

December 2021

**Capt. Bradley A. Hoover, USMC**

Thesis Advisors: Dr. Rene G. Rendon, Associate Professor  
Kelley Poree, Lecturer

Acquisition Research Program

**Naval Postgraduate School**

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



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

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## ABSTRACT

This research provides an analysis of competency assessment results obtained from the contracting workforce that makes up the three Marine Corps Expeditionary Contracting Platoons and co-located Regional Contracting Offices. The data analyzed were collected through a Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment based on the new Department of Defense Contracting Competency Model. The purpose of this research was to establish a baseline of current workforce competency in two areas: proficiency in performing buyer activities and knowledge in seller activities. The research revealed a buyer proficiency rating of Intermediate in the pre-award and post-award phases, and Basic in the award phase of the contract life cycle. The research also revealed seller knowledge rating of Aware for all three phases of the contract life cycle. These results indicate the need for additional or supplemental contract management training. Recommendations provided could help shape future training for the Marine Corps contracting workforce members procuring goods and services for Marines deployed or training to deploy.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Captain Bradley Hoover** is a Supply Officer. He was commissioned through the Marine Corps Enlisted Commissioning Program in 2016 after completing his Bachelor of Science with Southern Illinois University. He is married to KC Velez, and they have a one-year-old son named Lucas. After graduating from the Naval Postgraduate School, he will be reporting to Marine Corps Base Quantico for duty as a Contracting Officer.



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank God because none of this would be possible without You.

Next, I would like to thank Dr. Rene Rendon of the Naval Postgraduate School. You are an inspiration to everyone you teach, and your tireless work ethic serves as evidence that you are not only passionate about teaching but also the Department of Defense getting the right stuff, for the right price, at the right time to support our warfighters.

I would also like to thank Headquarters Marine Corps, Installations and Logistics, Contracts Division, for not only sponsoring this research but also for serving as an advocate of it. I hope results obtained can be used to create actionable objectives to better the Marine Corps contracting workforce.

Lastly, I would like to thank my wife, KC, and son, Lucas. Your commitment is unwavering, and the constant laughter serves as a beacon of light on cloudy days.



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACC-ORL	Army Contracting Command-Orlando
ANSI	American National Standard Institute
ASD	Accredited Standard Developer
AWF	Acquisition Workforce
BOK-C	Body of Knowledge and Competency
BtB	Back-to-Basics
CCCM	Certified Commercial Contract Manager
CFCM	Certified Federal Contract Manager
CMBOK	Contract Management Body of Knowledge
CMS	Contract Management Standard
CPCM	Certified Professional Contract Manager
DASN-P	Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Acquisitions and Procurement
DAU	Defense Acquisition University
DAWIA	Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act
DFARS	Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement
DOD	Department of Defense
DON	Department of the Navy
DPC	Office of the Acting Principal Director, Defense Pricing and Contracting
ECP	Expeditionary Contracting Platoon
FAC-C	Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting
FAI	Federal Acquisition Institute
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulation
FITREP	Fitness Report
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	General Accounting Office
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GCE	Ground Combat Element
GS	General Schedule
HCA	Head of Contracting Activity



HQMC	Headquarters Marine Corps
IG	Inspector General
I&L	Installations and Logistics
IRB	Institution Review Board
KO	Contracting Officer
MICC FDO-FSH	Mission and Installation Contracting Command Field Directorate Office-Fort Sam Houston
MCFCs	Marine Corps Field Contracting System
MCI	Marine Corps Installations
MCICOM	Marine Corps Installations Command
MCSC	Marine Corps Systems Command
MCTIMS	Marine Corps Training Information Management System
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force
MLG	Marine Logistics Group
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NCMA	National Contract Management Association
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NGB	National Guard Bureau
NMCARS	Navy Marine Corps Acquisition Regulation Supplement
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
OCS	Operational Contract Support
OUSD[AT&L]	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics
PCO	Procuring Contracting Officer
RCO	Regional Contracting Office
SAT	Simplified Acquisition Threshold
T&R	Training and Readiness
UCC	Uniformed Commercial Code
UPPCC	Universal Public Procurement Certification Council
USMC	United States Marine Corps



## I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the transformative changes leading up to the restructure of the Department of Defense (DOD) Contracting Competency Model. The purpose of the research will be covered, followed by questions that this research aims to answer. Organization of this report and methodology used to conduct the research will be discussed. Benefits and limitations of the research are discussed after the methodology section. Lastly, a brief summary is provided before moving into Chapter II.

### A. BACKGROUND

This section discusses the transformative changes that brought about the restructure of the DOD Contracting Competency Model and certification program almost three decades after its first implementation. Congress has always been concerned with the way the Defense Acquisition Workforce is trained and educated. There have been many committees established with the intent of bettering defense acquisition and/or its workforce. The President's Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management was the first, which captured the need for an acquisition workforce that was trained, experienced, and paid comparably with industry counterparts (Packard, 1986). Congress took this recommendation and began implementing changes. "In response to continuing concerns about the DOD's ability to effectively manage its acquisition programs, Congress enacted the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act on November 5, 1990" (General Accounting Office [GAO], 1993, p. 1). A summary of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) history can be seen in Figure 1.

With focus on improving the defense acquisition workforce, DAWIA required the establishment of an Acquisition Corps, the professionalization of the acquisition workforce through the establishment of centralized training, descriptions of the education and certification requirements, and the establishment of the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) structure (Rendon & Snider, 2019). The DAU develops the certification standards and curriculum for each acquisition career field (both military and civilian) to include education, training, and experience required, based on the complexities of each career field (Rendon & Snider, 2019). DAU training courses



provide students with acquisition knowledge for specific jobs, assignments, or positions (Rendon & Snider, 2019). DAU courses are designed and developed to help acquisition workforce members maintain pace with current legislation, regulation, and policy, as it pertains to defense acquisition (Rendon & Snider, 2019). The contracting and purchasing career fields within the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Department of Energy also use the DAU’s curriculum to train and certify their workforce (Rendon & Snider, 2019).

Date	History
November 1990	Congress enacts the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA, Title 10, U.S.C., Chapter 87)
October 2000	FY2001 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) amends DAWIA, revising the education requirements for 1102s and contracting officers with warrants above the simplified acquisition threshold to require a baccalaureate degree and 24 semester hours in specified disciplines.
December 2002	FY2002 NDAA amends DAWIA, expands the 1102 education requirements to members of the armed forces in equivalent occupational specialties, and provides for limited expectations to include exceptions for the contingency contracting force and for individuals in developmental positions. The law establishes alternative minimum education requirements for the contingency contracting force and provides authority to establish developmental programs.
November 2003	FY2004 NDAA amends DAWIA, providing a number of flexibilities to enable the DoD to more effectively develop and manage the AT&L workforce.
October 2004	FY2005 NDAA amends DAWIA, changing Acquisition Corps membership requirements and providing flexibility in the designation of Critical Acquisition Positions (CAPs).
January 2005	OSD issues revised DoDD 5000.52.
December 2005	OSD issues DoDI 5000.66 and the DoD Desk Guide for AT&L.
January 2006	Workforce Career Management incorporates statutory changes resulting from FY2004 and FY2005 NDAA.

Figure 1. Summary of DAWIA History. Source: Rendon and Snider (2019).

In 1992, the General Accounting Office (GAO) released a report that cited DOD Contract Management as one of 17 high-risk federal government program areas and concluded, “despite the existence of laws and regulations designed to protect the government, the overpricing of defense contracts remains both significant and widespread and costs the taxpayer billions of dollars” (GAO, 1992, p. 7). In 1993, the



GAO released *Acquisition Management: Implementation of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act*, noting that the DOD was successful in its establishment of the DAU (GAO, 1993). Despite the DOD fully incorporating the DAWIA requirements, DOD Contract Management remained on the GAO high-risk list for years. A 1999 RAND report titled *Marine Corps Sourcing Competitions: Historical Performance and Directions for Improvement* cited a lack of training and experience of the people preparing Performance Work Statements and in-house Most Efficient Organization bids as the reason why the acquisition process timeline from announcement date to contract start date were over double what the industry standard was at the time (Moore et al., 1999). In 2007, the U.S. Army published a report titled *Urgent Reform Required: Army Expeditionary Contracting*, where Gansler et al. (2007) identified four key areas of improvement. To

increase the stature, quantity, and career development of contracting personnel; restructure organization and restore responsibility to facilitate contracting and contract management; provide training and tools for overall contracting activities in expeditionary operations; and, most importantly, obtain legislative, regulatory, and policy assistance to enable contracting effectiveness in expeditionary operations. (p. 5)

The U.S. Army, like all other departments in the DOD, were subject to the regulatory and competency framework at hand, and any change would need to be systemic in nature, attacking the root of the problem.

In 2013, the Government Accountability Office (GAO; same office, different name) again reminded policy-makers in a high-risk series update that DOD Contract Management was added to the GAO's high-risk list in 1992, and

the lack of an adequate number of trained acquisition and contract oversight personnel, the use of ill-suited contracting arrangements, and the absence of a strategic approach for acquiring services placed DOD at risk of not getting needed goods and services in a timely manner or potentially paying more than necessary. (Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2013, p. 213)

In the same report, the GAO stated that the DOD had done competency assessments to identify current workforce skill and areas of improvement but then stated, "Until DOD determines its future workforce needs (at the strategic level), it will be



difficult to determine what funding levels will be necessary to achieve the departments planned Acquisition Workforce (AWF) growth and implement associated training initiatives” (GAO, 2013, p. 213). In 2014, the United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs published a report titled *Defense Acquisition Reform: Where Do We Go From Here?*, which stated that two-thirds of the experts who contributed to building the report felt “training and recruiting of the acquisition workforce must be improved” (Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, 2014, p. 1). In Section 809 of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), Congress charged the secretary of defense with establishing a panel of experts to advise on ways to reduce barriers in acquisition regulation under the sponsorship of the DAU and the National Defense University (National Defense Authorization Act [NDAA], 2015). Within the *Fiscal Year 2019 Top DOD Management Challenges*, “Acquisition and Contract Management: Ensuring that the DOD Gets What it Pays For On Time, at a Fair Price, and with the Right Capabilities” made it to the top 10 list (Fine, 2018, p. 3). Within the Contract Management and Oversight section of this 110-page DOD Inspector General (IG) report, analysts painted a grim picture, leaving the reader feeling as though there were more than a few instances of gross negligence.

The Section 809 Panel concluded their research and put together a comprehensive report delivered in February 2019. “Enable the workforce” was one of the five overarching concepts chosen by the panel to reshape defense acquisition (Section 809 Panel, 2019). With enabling the workforce in mind, Recommendation 59 of the panel stated, “DOD’s implementation of DAWIA needs to be overhauled to introduce professional qualifications (demonstrated occupational competencies and proficiencies) in addition to certifications” (Section 809 Panel, 2019, p. 16). The panel then went on to suggest that developing highly qualified workforce members “requires a career development model that continuously deepens” (p. 16) their understanding throughout their career (Section 809 Panel, 2019). Ten months later, in December 2019, Congress passed the NDAA for FY 2020, tasking the secretary of defense to “implement a certification program to provide for a professional certification requirement for all members of the acquisition workforce” (National Defense Authorization Act [NDAA], 2019, Section 861). Section 861 then went on to state, “The certification requirement for





any acquisition workforce career field shall be based on standards developed by a third-party accredited program based on nationally or internationally recognized standards” (NDAA, 2019).

In September 2020, the under secretary of defense for acquisition and sustainment published a memorandum titled *Back-to-Basics for the Defense Acquisition Workforce*—where she announced the phased implementation of the Back-to-Basics (BtB) 21st Century AWF talent management framework to be fully deployed by October 1, 2021 (Lord, 2020). She also placed “achieving streamlined and restructured certification requirements, identifying prioritized credentials, and providing for continuous learning” (Lord, 2020, p. 2) as the functional area outcomes for each service acquisition executive to carry out on her behalf. The restructuring of certification requirements was a much-needed breath of fresh air since the previous certification program, which stemmed from the DAWIA enacted by Congress in 1990, was outdated and could not perform at the pace which technology has enabled society to perform. In November 2020, the deputy under secretary of defense for acquisition and sustainment and the president of the DAU published a memorandum titled *Defense Acquisition University Reform: The Intersection with Back-to-Basics*. Within it, Shaffer and Woolsey (2020) wrote,

Our current three-level certification requires extensive training time—most of it early in a professional’s career—to achieve certification. The certification program is highly structured and overly comprehensive, making it inflexible and inefficient. Too often, training is provided to the wrong people, or at the wrong time. (p. 2)

The DAWIA’s three-tier certification program is just one of many reasons cited for the U.S. government’s acquisition and sustainment struggle to maintain pace in the great power competition with China and Russia.

On February 17, 2021, the principal director for defense pricing and contracting (DPC) published a memorandum titled *Restructuring of the Certification Program for the Contracting Functional Area*. The DPC memo outlined the restructuring of the DOD Contracting Professional Certification Program and Contracting Competency Model, based on the American National Standard Institute (ANSI) / National Contract Management Association (NCMA) Accredited Standards Developer (ASD) 1-2019



accredited Contract Management Standard (CMS; Tenaglia, 2021). Tenaglia also noted that this standard complies with Section 861 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2020 (2019; Tenaglia, 2021). Two days later, the United States Marine Corps (USMC) Installations and Logistics (I&L; 2021) released Contracting Advisory 21-25, which echoed training specific highlights for the contracting workforce, as provided in the DPC memo. Highlights included

- the restructuring of AWF career fields, which maintained contracting as one of the six fields;
- the DOD single-level certification program with foundational training and examination;
- the reduction of mandatory training for contracting certification from 650 hours to just 200 hours and four classes;
- the requirements for grandfathering DAWIA-certified contracting personnel into the new DOD Contracting Professional Certification Program; and
- a reemphasis on the requirement for 80 continuous learning points within two years (I&L, 2021).

The transformative changes leading up to this point pose a requirement for the DOD contracting workforce at the most basic level: an initial competency assessment is needed to determine where the contracting workforce sits in terms of contracting competency—as it pertains to the new standard unveiled in the DPC memo above.

## **B. PURPOSE**

Legislative initiatives have finally brought light to the cumbersome defense AWF, in an effort to strip away layers of bureaucracy, preserve taxpayer dollars, and breathe life back into the aging American defense machine. Contract management–specific changes include changing the DOD Contracting Competency Model to a nationally recognized standard for greater transparency in interfacing with industry and revamping the certification program for the defense contracting workforce. Before completely gutting the current contract management curriculum for the Marine Corps expeditionary contracting workforce, also known as the Marine Corps Field Contracting System (MCFCS), an effort must be made to first determine the workforce’s competency as it pertains to the new framework. The primary purpose of this research is to establish a



contract management competency baseline on the workforce that makes up the three Marine Corps Expeditionary Contracting Platoons (ECPs) and co-located Regional Contracting Offices (RCOs), since these forces directly support Marines deployed or training to deploy. The intent of this analysis is to provide the USMC I&L Head of Contracting Agency (HCA) with data that can be used to help shape future training as it pertains to the new standard. The Marine Corps System Command (MCSC) contracting workforce conducted a competency assessment based on the NCMA CMS in 2020, but the Marine Corps expeditionary contracting workforce and contract specialists that support the First, Second, and Third Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) with base contracting services have not been analyzed. This research also adds to the stream of competency assessment research performed on various units throughout the DOD to help give DPC a better understanding of where the total force lies in terms of strengths and possible areas of improvement as it pertains to the new contracting competency model.

### **C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

A competency assessment is needed to provide organizational policy-makers with the expeditionary contract management workforce's current strengths and possible areas of improvement in accordance with the new contracting competency model. Assessment results obtained could be used to help shape training and education for the entire defense contracting workforce. With this in mind, the primary questions for this research are:

- 1. What are the buyer competency proficiency ratings for the Marine Expeditionary Contracting Workforce based on the CMS assessment?**
- 2. What are the seller competency knowledge ratings for the Marine Expeditionary Contracting Workforce based on the CMS assessment?**
- 3. What recommendations can be made for improving the contract management competencies for the Marine Expeditionary Contracting Workforce based on the CMS assessment?**

### **D. ORGANIZATION OF REPORT**

This report is broken down into six chapters. Chapter I provides a historical account of the transformative changes that have resulted in the restructure of the defense contracting workforce. The purpose, research questions, methodology, benefits, and limitations of the research are also summarized in Chapter I. Chapter II covers the



literature review, including a discussion on competency theory, competency modeling, and contracting competency models currently in use today. Also included in Chapter II is an overview of the DOD's most recent actions in transitioning to the CMS, a breakdown of the ANSI/NCMA CMS, and a brief comparison of the previous DOD Contracting Competency Model and the new one. Chapter III provides an overview of Marine Corps contracting, lines of authority in contracting, and the operational chain of command as it pertains to Marine Corps contracting. Chapter IV provides the research methodology, a comprehensive look at how the competency survey was developed, and how it was deployed to Marine Corps contracting workforce members across the globe. Chapter V provides the Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment results and recommendations for training and competency development. Chapter VI serves as the conclusion of the research conducted, provides a final summary on the findings, and provides areas for further research.

## **E. METHODOLOGY**

This research project uses the competencies contained in the NCMA CMS to assess the Marine Corps expeditionary contracting workforce competency as it pertains to the new standard. The competency assessment to be distributed contains 125 questions covering all three phases of the contracting life cycle. Both buyer and seller job tasks are covered; however, questions pertaining to buyer competencies assess the participants' proficiency, and questions pertaining to seller competencies assess the participants' knowledge of the subject. Data obtained through the competency assessment are in the form of qualitative data and are used to establish a baseline of the Marine Corps expeditionary contracting workforce competency in proficiency and knowledge ratings. Results are used to provide recommendations to Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC) Installations and Logistics (I&L) Contracts Division on areas that can improve not just the expeditionary contracting workforce but the Marine Corps contracting workforce as a whole.



## **F. BENEFITS OF THE RESEARCH**

There are several benefits to conducting this research that HQMC I&L Contracts Division stands to gain. First, the competency assessment introduces members of the Marine Corps expeditionary contracting workforce to the new DOD Contracting Competency Model derived from the nationally accredited ANSI/NCMA CMS. Second, the competency assessment establishes a baseline of competency for the contracting workforce surveyed that can be used for subsequent competency analysis once training curriculum currently in development has been incorporated. Third, results obtained from the competency assessment can identify strengths and areas of improvement in competency comprehension as it pertains to the new standard, which can be used to tailor future training. Finally, DPC and the DAU could benefit from the results obtained from this research as it can be added to results from similar research conducted on Army, Navy, and Air Force contracting members for a holistic view of competency in contracting as it pertains to the new standard across the DOD.

## **G. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

Limitations of this research include anonymity of survey respondents. Participants are strictly volunteers, and the survey itself is a self-rated skill assessment. It is assumed that applicants filled out the survey questions accurately and honestly; however, the data obtained are subject to human fallibility. The anonymous nature of the survey could result in inaccurate responses in demographic data and knowledge data. The voluntary nature of this survey could bring a lower number of overall participants, thus reducing the accuracy of representation on behalf of the Marine Corps expeditionary contracting workforce. The aspect of obtaining the data from a self-rated skill assessment is also a limiting factor. Individual biases, workforce experience, and opinions can all be limiting factors that cause fluctuation in responses. Competency results could be different than results obtained from other competency-based testing. Regardless of these limitations, the value placed on conducting this research is threefold. First, the survey has already been successfully deployed to multiple organizations across the DOD and delivered actionable results. Second, it does not cost any additional taxpayer dollars to gain credible intelligence on the Marine Corps expeditionary contracting workforce competency.



Third, this research could open the door for further research into the Marine Corps expeditionary contracting workforce as it pertains to the new DOD Contracting Competency Model.

## **H. SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed the historical background information leading up to the overhaul of the DOD Contracting Competency Model and the DOD Contracting Professional Certification Program. The primary purpose of this research is to establish a contract management competency baseline on the workforce that makes up the three Marine Corps ECPs and RCOs that support deployable service members of the Fleet Marine Forces. The questions that the research aims to answer were discussed, the organization of the research was presented, and the methodology behind the competency assessment tool were all presented in this chapter. Benefits and limitations of the research were also laid out to present an unbiased assessment of the contributing factors of the research.



## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins with the theoretical foundation that forms this research. A brief discussion on auditability theory and competency theory set the foundation for the research, then modeling, and models surrounding competency are discussed, which serve as the basis of the research questions. Contracting competency models that are in use today are discussed, along with some of their strengths and areas of improvement. Next, the chapter discusses the paradigm shift that led to the overhaul of the DOD Contracting Professional Certification Program. The new DOD Contracting Competency Model, the ANSI/NCMA Contract Management Standard, then is discussed along with the associated framework that streamlines each phase of the contracting life cycle. A comparison of the previous DOD Contracting Competency Model and the 2021 DOD Contracting Competency Model takes place. A comparison between the CMS, regulation contained in the FAR and code contained in the UCC will be discussed, as well as past research on the CMS.

### A. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

“Auditability theory incorporates governance components related to competent personnel, capable processes and effective internal controls” (Rendon & Rendon, 2016, p. 754). Auditability theory was used in a 2016 article written by Juanita Rendon and Rene Rendon titled “Procurement Fraud in the U.S. Department of Defense: Implications for Contracting Processes and Internal Controls” to analyze procurement fraud incidents within the DOD. This research showed that a lack of any one of these three components that form the auditability triangle (Figure 2) will hinder success of the organization. The research contained in this report focuses on the competent people aspect of auditability theory, which will be discussed further in the next paragraph on competency theory.



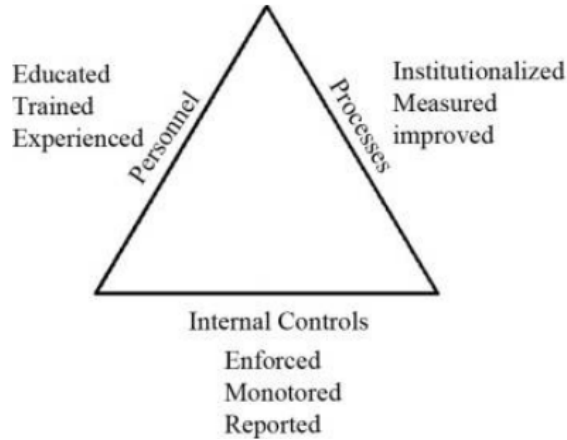


Figure 2. Auditability Triangle. Source: Rendon and Rendon (2016).

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines *competence* as “the quality or state of having sufficient knowledge, judgement, skill, or strength (as for a particular duty or in a particular respect)” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). While doing his research, Hoffmann (1999) utilized competence as a standard, starting with the term *competency* to express a person’s demonstrated behaviors and then the term *competencies* to express behavioral standards, both of which use the person’s performance as a metric. The application of competency as a standard could be used to forecast minimum acceptable levels of performance in a workplace, forming the grounds for which competency theory is based (Hoffman, 1999). Azemikhah (2006) defined *competency theory* as “the transposition of competency and learning” (p. 9). Figure 3 provides a visual example of competency theory as the transposition between the stages of competency and learning. When the learner reaches the point of transposition, the learner enters the new stage of learning where “learning becomes the function of the competency itself” (Azemikhah, 2006, p. 10).



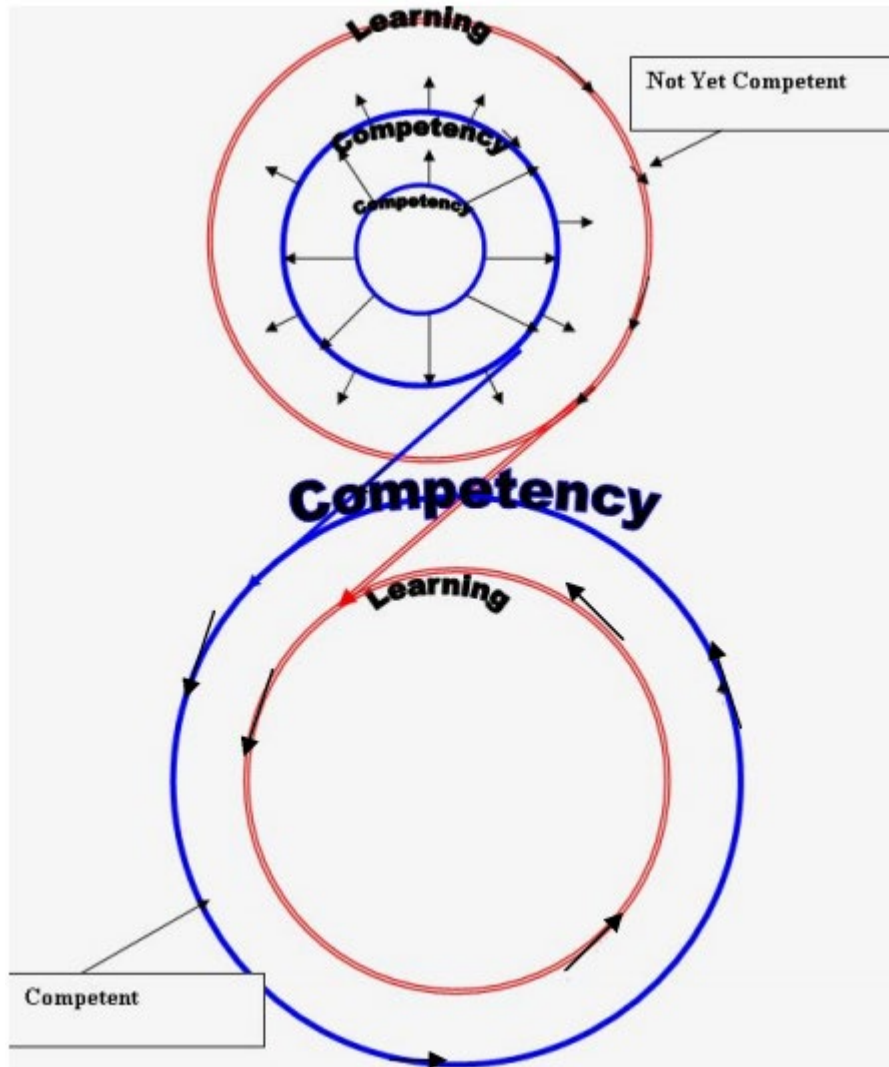


Figure 3. The Transposition of Competency and Learning (Competency Theory). Source: Azemikhah (2006).

Competency theory can be applied in the development of competencies for all disciplines that make up the acquisition workforce, such as contract management, program management, and logistics management. An example of the application of competency theory can be seen in the development of competency in leadership through its applicability in measuring manager performance for leadership potential, organizational leadership training, and implications associated with competency theory due to low metacognitive skill. In 2017, Ismail et al. published an article titled “Lessons from the Major Leadership Theories in Comparison to the Competency Theory for Leadership Practice,” where they concluded that “the competency concept was a viable

option for leadership performance in 21st century leadership” (Ismail et al., 2017, p. 152). The authors also went on to state, “The implication for research can include innovative ways of conceptualizing leadership development based on the leadership competency concept due to the flexibility of the concept” (Ismail et al., 2017, p. 152). Competency applied as a leadership concept would allow for flexibility in whichever discipline, while competency applied as a standard would be moldable, not flexible. Quintana et al. published an article in 2014 titled, “Competencies Which Shape Leadership,” where they found evidence of significant “effects of a specific competency profile on three connected dimensions of leadership behavior at work: tasks, relations, and change” (Quintana et al., 2014, p. 514). Quintana et al. (2014) also identified eight competencies that promote better leadership behavior within an organization: “the ability to negotiate effectively, alertness to new opportunities, the ability to assert your authority, the ability to mobilize the capacities of others, the willingness to question your own and other’s ideas, the ability to come out with new ideas and solutions, the ability to coordinate activities, and the ability to make your meaning clear to others” (p. 525).

Another example of the application of competency theory can be seen in behavioral research. In her 2005 article titled “The Impact of Low-Level Skills on Information-Seeking Behavior: Implications of Competency Theory for Research and Practice,” Melissa Gross introduced the article by saying, “Competency theory suggests that people who function at a low level of skill lack the metacognitive ability to recognize their own incompetence and are unable to accurately assess the skill levels of others” (Gross, 2005, p. 155). While conducting her research using primarily sources from the field of psychology, Gross built a compelling case for the application of competency theory in education. She concluded her research by stating, “The incorporation of competency theory into research and practice in the area of information-literacy centers on including assessments of skill level, metacognitive skill, and question type into the existing literature on information-seeking behavior” (p. 160). In her conclusion, she also identified several potential benefits that could result from her research, most notably “an increased ability of students to find and use information” ( p. 161).

This past research provided on competency theory is important because it lays the theoretical framework on which I build this analysis, particularly its application as a



standard or metric. Now that I have gone over competence as a theory, I discuss competency modeling and how the use of competency models plays a key role in assessing a person's skill level in an organization.

## **B. COMPETENCY MODELING**

The application of competency theory can be observed when competency modeling is used to develop organizational training standards in the form of competencies. Campion et al. (2011) argued that competency modeling is “an important innovation in that it is a way to get organizations to pay attention to job-related information and employee skills in the management of employees” (p. 226). Competency modeling is similar to job analysis, but there are distinct differences. Schippmann et al. (2000) asked several experts what differences existed between the two, then summarized their responses by saying job analysis can be applied to “what” needs to be accomplished, and competency modeling can be applied to “how” you are going to accomplish it (p. 713). The practice of competency modeling has been used across an array of disciplines, including “individual differences and educational psychology, leadership research and the history of assessment centers, job analysis research, the concept of multiple intelligences, and Prahalad and Hamel’s 1990 concept of core competency,” (p. 707) which have all proved to be contributors in the evolution of competency modeling (Schippmann et al., 2000).

Campion et al. (2011) noted that competency modeling brings together best practices to form a single program (p. 260). “The result is an impact on organizations far surpassing that of traditional job analysis and may provide a platform and opportunity for industrial and organizational psychologists and colleagues to elevate talent discussions in the organizations served” (Campion et al., 2011, p. 260). The art of competency theory and the science displayed through the practice of competency modeling would not be complete without the competency model. Bartram (2005) defined the competency model as a result producing framework that consists of component competencies broken down to the finest level (p. 1187). Bartram went on to state that these components can be thought of as building blocks that can be put together to produce sets of competencies that when linked together form competency models (Bartram, 2005, p. 1187).



The utility of the competency model is easily recognizable under the umbrella of an organization. Competency models can be used as an assessment or training tool for many different skill-related functions. They can be used in the hiring, evaluation, and promotion of employees, implementing employee career development, managing employee information, compensating employees, managing the retention of critical skills, and supporting organizational change efforts (Campion et al., 2011, p. 229). Though their application is limited, competency models have also been used in leadership development. Competency models in leadership development “do not offer conclusions and implications for effective leadership development; rather, these models are attempts to learn from the experiences of actual leaders that establish a guiding framework for leadership development to individuals, organizations and society as a whole” (Quintana et al., 2014, p. 518). An example of a competency model linking competency management areas can be seen in Figure 4.

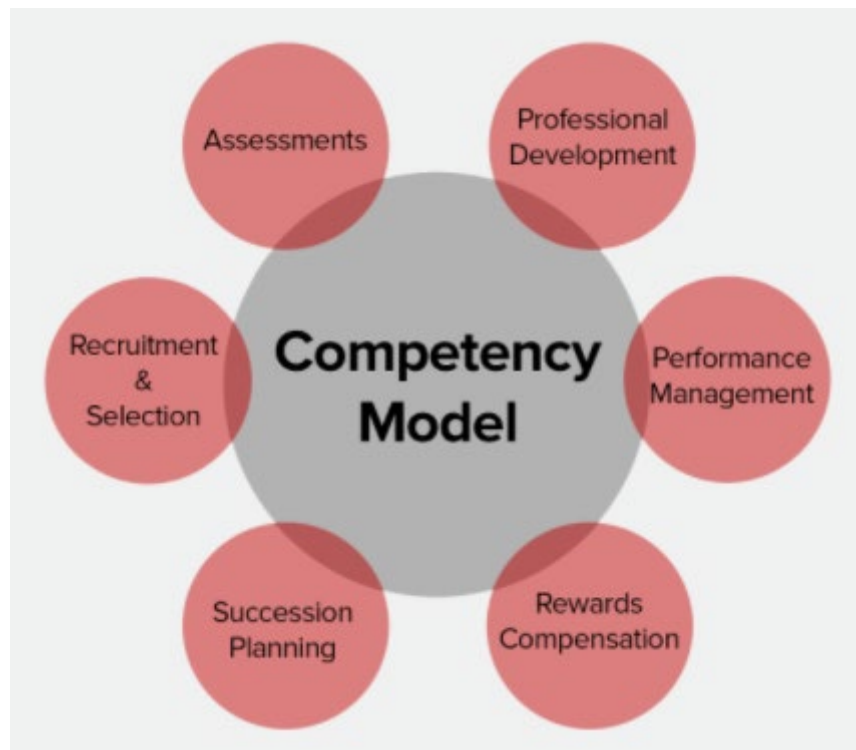


Figure 4. Basic Organizational Competency Model. Source: Ohio State University (n.d.).

Now that I have covered competency theory, competency modeling, and competency models, I discuss how competency models are utilized in federal government contracting.

### **C. CONTRACTING COMPETENCY MODELS**

Over time, competency models have been adopted by various agencies that employ a contracting workforce. In this section, I briefly discuss different contracting competency models, the model previously used by the DOD (and still in use by the Federal Acquisition Institute [FAI]), the model currently in use by the DOD, the NCMA, and the Universal Public Procurement Certification Council (UPPCC). While some of these models are similar, each of the models and competencies within are specifically prescribed to fit the respective organizations contracting goals.

#### **1. The DAWIA Era DOD Contracting Competency Model**

The DOD Contracting Competency Model that was used before the incorporation of the NCMA CMS (see Appendix A) was last updated in 2014, but for the most part has remained largely unchanged since its inception shortly after the creation of the DAU. The DOD used this model along with a three-tier certification program (see Figure 5) to train and certify both uniformed and non-uniformed contract specialists (GS-1102) in all branches of the DOD. This competency model features 11 units of competence with 38 individual competencies (Rendon & Winn, 2017). This competency model is still in use by the Federal Acquisition Institute for government executive agencies that are not part of the DOD (e.g., Department of Energy, Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Treasury, and Department of Transportation). The FAI Contract Competency Model is used in conjunction with the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) program, and until recently aligned with the DAWIA era certification requirements in experience, curriculum, and competencies (FAI, n.d.). Section 861 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2020 (2019) brought an end to these paralleled programs as discussed in the Background Section in Chapter I. Despite the DOD's fundamental change from the previous DAWIA certification program to a single-level certification program based on the competencies



listed in the ANSI/NCMA CMS, there has been no formal guidance published by the FAI on changing the standard for non-DOD contract specialist certification and training (FAI, n.d.). Failing to keep these two models on the same path will prove difficult for the future interfacing of contracting actions and interchanging of personnel between agencies under the executive branch and the DOD.

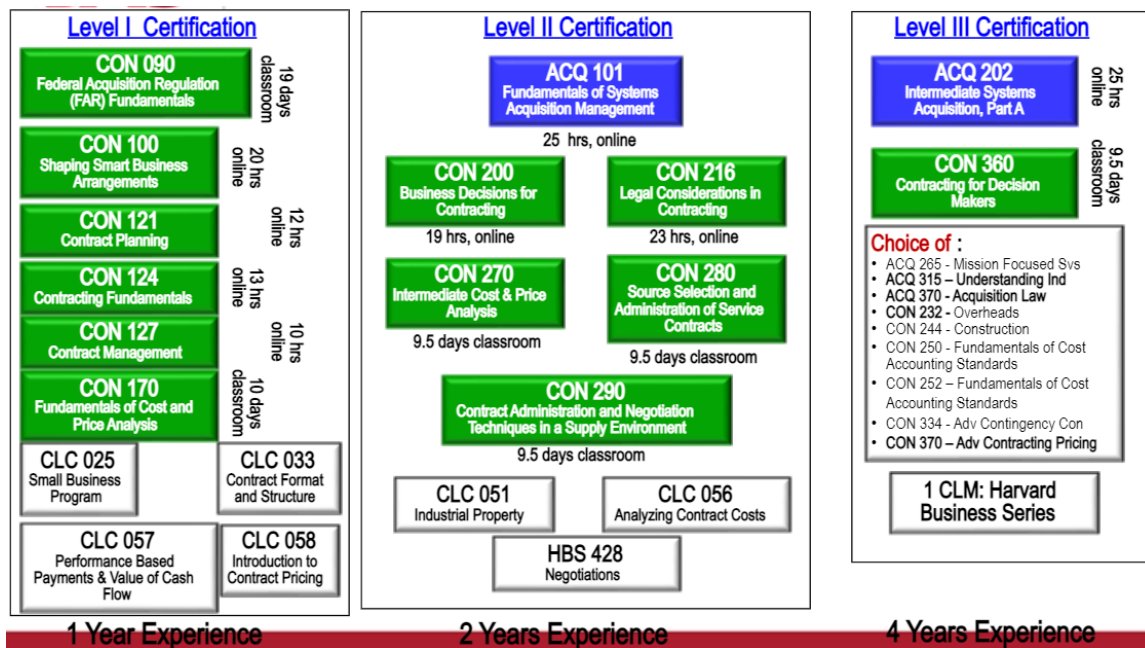


Figure 5. The DAWIA Three-Tier Certification Program. Source: Defense Acquisition University (n.d.).

## 2. The Current CMS Based DOD Contracting Competency Model

The DOD uses the DOD Contracting Competency Model to train and educate contracting specialists both in and out of military uniform in the Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Army, Defense Logistics Agency, Defense Contract Management Agency, and Missile Defense Agency (Contracting Certification Taskforce, 2020). As discussed in the Background Section of Chapter I, the current DOD Contract Competency Model is based on the ANSI/NCMA CMS (Tenaglia, 2021). This highly anticipated new model brings transparency to the defense industry on both the buyer (government) side and the seller (defense contractor) side. There are several benefits to using the competency model and competency-based planning. These benefits include defining the competencies required for the delivery of mission-critical capabilities, assessing the contracting workforce for



competencies already present, identifying gaps in contracting workforce competency, and aligning strategies to address identified competency gaps while providing opportunities for educating the workforce (Contracting Certification Taskforce, 2020).

An in-depth look at the newly adopted ANSI/NCMA CMS is discussed in a later section. The next section discusses the competency model used in state and local government procurement of goods and services.

### **3. Universal Public Purchasing Certification Council Body of Knowledge and Competency Model**

The UPPCC Body of Knowledge and Competency (BoK-C) Model is used by contracting professionals in various state and local governments to ensure “alignment with the knowledge, skills and abilities needed for successful job performance in the public procurement profession” (Universal Public Procurement Certification Council [UPPCC], 2021, p. 1). Similar to federal government procurement, state and local government procurement is subject to federal, state, and local law changes, in addition to advancements in industry that take place over time. To ensure the UPPCC BoK-C remains relevant with these changes, a competency assessment is deployed to certification holders periodically to determine procurement professional competency in areas needed for successful job performance and certification (UPPCC, 2021). The assessment contains 75 competencies spread across six domains, including legal framework, procurement planning and analysis, sourcing and solicitation, contract development and management, leadership, and business principles (UPPCC, 2021). A characteristic that is unique to the UPPCC is the Agency Certification Award and the Sterling Agency Award. Agencies that employ personnel who hold UPPCC certifications can apply for a professionally recognized certification on an annual basis called the Agency Certification Award to validate their status, and on the third consecutive year, Agency Certification Award recipients are eligible to receive the Sterling Agency Award (UPPCC, 2021).

The next section discusses the competency model that builds upon the competencies taught in the CMS.



#### **4. National Contract Management Association Body of Knowledge Model**

In 2019, the sixth edition of NCMA’s Contract Management Body of Knowledge (CMBOK) was published and, within it, NCMA’s updated Contract Management Standard. The CMBOK revised NCMA’s outline of competencies to complement the CMS (see Figure 6; National Contract Management Association [NCMA], 2019a). NCMA also recognized the CMS as the heartbeat of the CMBOK, saying, “The CMBOK adds the competencies of ‘Leadership,’ ‘Management,’ and ‘Learn’ to provide a complete overview of the contract management profession” (NCMA, 2019a, p. 23). While the CMS lays the foundational framework for the CMBOK, the CMBOK’s purpose is to build upon that foundation even further using the CMBOK Competency System (see Figure 7). The CMBOK Competency System demonstrates the “interactive relationships between the primary and subject matter competencies” (NCMA, 2019a, p. 18).

The next section lays out a comparative analysis of the competency models previously discussed.





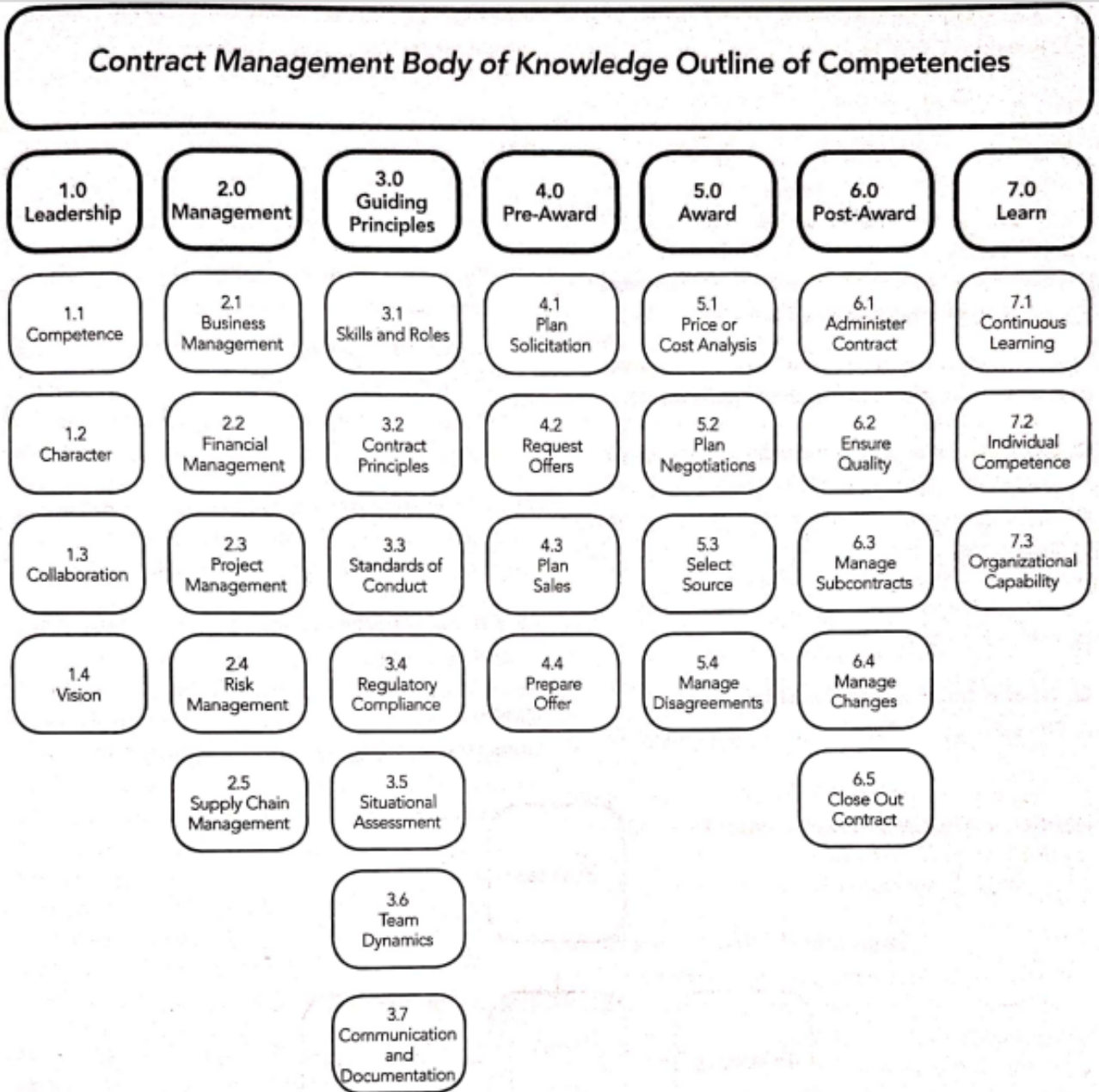


Figure 6. CMBOK Outline of Competencies. Source: NCMA (2019a).

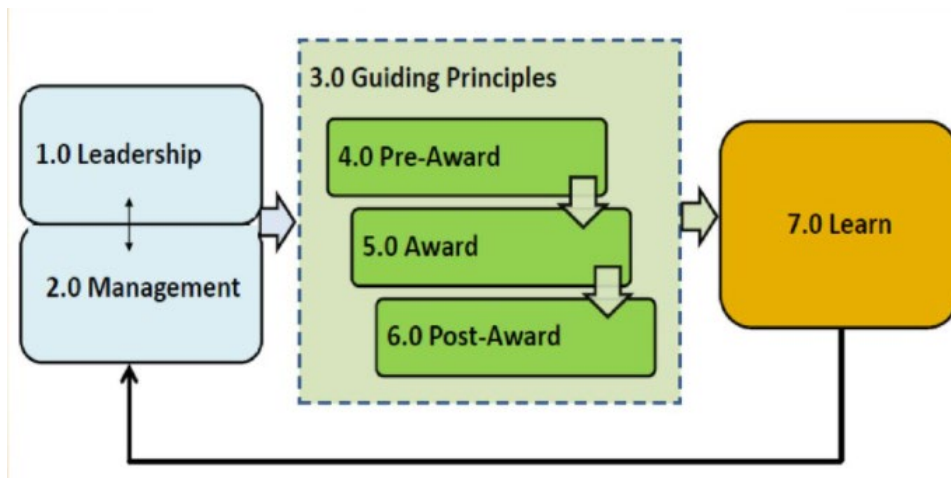


Figure 7. CMBOK Competency System. Source: Hermanto (2017).

## 5. Comparative Analysis of the Contracting Competency Models

The previous DOD Contracting Competency Model, the UPPCC Competency Model, and the CMBOK Competency Model have been in use for many years in the contract management field and have been analyzed for effectiveness against one another more than once. In 2013, Jonathan Albano wrote a comparative analysis comparing the previous DOD Contracting Competency Model, FAI Model, and a previous version of the NCMA CMBOK Model. Several changes in the NCMA CMBOK have occurred since then; however, some of his findings are still relevant. Albano (2013) determined that the fourth edition of the NCMA CMBOK provided greater detail than the DOD and FAI Contracting Competency Models, and the DOD/FAI models are confusing for users. In 2017, Rendon and Winn published an article in NCMA’s *Contract Management* magazine, where they did an in-depth study on comparing the DOD and CMBOK Competency Models. One of their findings, which policy-makers appear to have heeded a few years later, was the identification that “the CMBOK competency framework may provide a better approach for developing the DOD contract management workforce competency” (p. 80) than the previous DOD Contracting Competency Model (Rendon & Winn, 2017). They also determined that including seller competencies for the DOD contracting workforce would greatly strengthen individual competency because they would understand the buyer and seller side of the complete contract management process, which are both included in the CMBOK Competency Model (Rendon & Winn, 2017).

In 2019, Rendon wrote a technical report comparing the DOD/FAI Contracting Competency Model, the NCMA CMBOK Model, and the UPPCC BOK Model to one another. Rendon pointed out that within the DOD/FAI model and the UPPCC model, “The arrangement of competencies do not include the complete contract life cycle phases in sequence and with sufficient visibility and granularity for each life cycle phase” (Rendon, 2019, p. 93). He went on to identify how the CMBOK model excelled in this area by stating,

In terms of structure, the CMBOK uses more of a concise life cycle approach with separate competencies for each major contracting life cycle phase, thus providing much more granularity and visibility on pre-award, award, and post-award job tasks and activities. (Rendon, 2019, p. 93)

Rendon (2019) demonstrated with multiple examples how the CMBOK excelled as the supreme model. Unlike the DOD/FAI/UPPCC models, the CMBOK breaks life cycle phases into more detailed domains, “includes competencies related to both buyer and seller perspectives,” and “also includes a Learn competency that focuses on continuous learning at the individual level (competence) and at the organizational level (capability)” (Rendon, 2019, p. 93).

In the next section, I briefly recap the transformative changes leading up to the replacement of the DOD Contracting Competency Model with the NCMA CMS.

#### **D. DOD TRANSITION TO THE CONTRACT MANAGEMENT STANDARD**

In an effort to improve the contracting workforce competency, Congress issued Section 861 of the NDAA for FY 2020 (2019), which called for an alignment of contracting professional training with industry standards. The under secretary of defense for acquisition and sustainment facilitated the implementation of that policy by issuing a memorandum to commence the Back-to-Basics initiative in October 2020 (Lord, 2020). As part of that initiative, the DPC published a memorandum formally denouncing the DAWIA three-tier certification program to be replaced by a single-level certification program (Tenaglia, 2021). Additionally, the DOD Contracting Competency Model was replaced by an industry established, third-party accredited standard: the ANSI/NCMA CMS. These paradigm shifts serve as a few of the fundamental changes to the defense



AWF that came as a result of the comprehensive report delivered to Congress by the Section 809 Panel three years after the panel was appointed in the NDAA for FY2016 (2015).

The next section discusses the ANSI/NCMA CMS and characteristics that make it unique from the previous contracting competency models discussed.

#### **E. ANSI / NCMA CONTRACT MANAGEMENT STANDARD**

Previously discussed in this chapter were contracting competency models in use today and transformative changes leading up to the adoption of the ANSI/NCMA CMS as the new DOD Contracting Competency Model. Now this section discusses the CMS in detail and compares it to the previous DOD Contracting Competency Model. The NCMA CMS received its accreditation as an American National Standard from the American National Standard Institute on April 22, 2019. Within the CMBOK, NCMA provides the following preface: “The CMS provides the starting point for developing and maintaining the following: contract management work experience practices, policies, and processes; contract management training courses and programs; and contract management college courses and curricula” (NCMA, 2019a, p. 20). The CMBOK also goes on to state, “The CMS provides stability by integrating and standardizing the common job task and competencies that produce significant contract management deliverables” (NCMA, 2019a, p. 21). Seemingly foreshadowing the solution to the communication barrier problem between industry and the DOD that has been around for decades, the CMBOK goes on to state about CMS adaptability, “When contract management terminology, practices, policies, and processes are interpreted consistently, the likelihood of reaching agreement on matters relating to contract intent and interpretation is increased” (NCMA, 2019a, p. 21). The five universal components that form the structure of the CMS are Guiding Principles; Contract Life Cycle Phases; Domains; Competencies (both primary and process); and Job Tasks (see Figure 8).



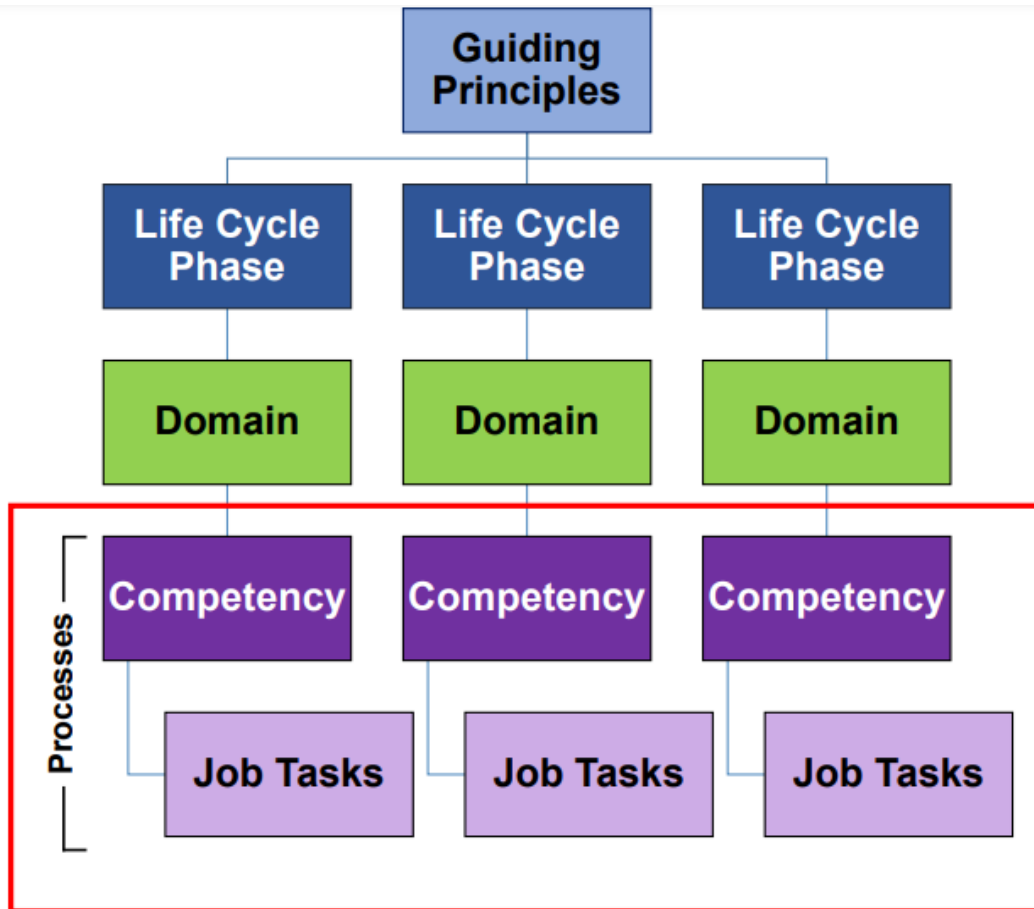


Figure 8. Component Structure of the DOD Contracting Competency Model. Source: Contracting Certification Taskforce (2020).

The CMS publication framework consists of seven guiding principles: Skills and Roles; Contract Principles; Standards of Conduct; Regulatory Compliance; Situational Assessment; Team Dynamics; and Communication and Documentation (see Figure 9). All of these guiding principles are applicable through the three phases of the contract life cycle. Although not specifically applicable to specialty competencies or job tasks, the guiding principles can be relied upon to provide transparent information that can be interpreted by both buyers and sellers.

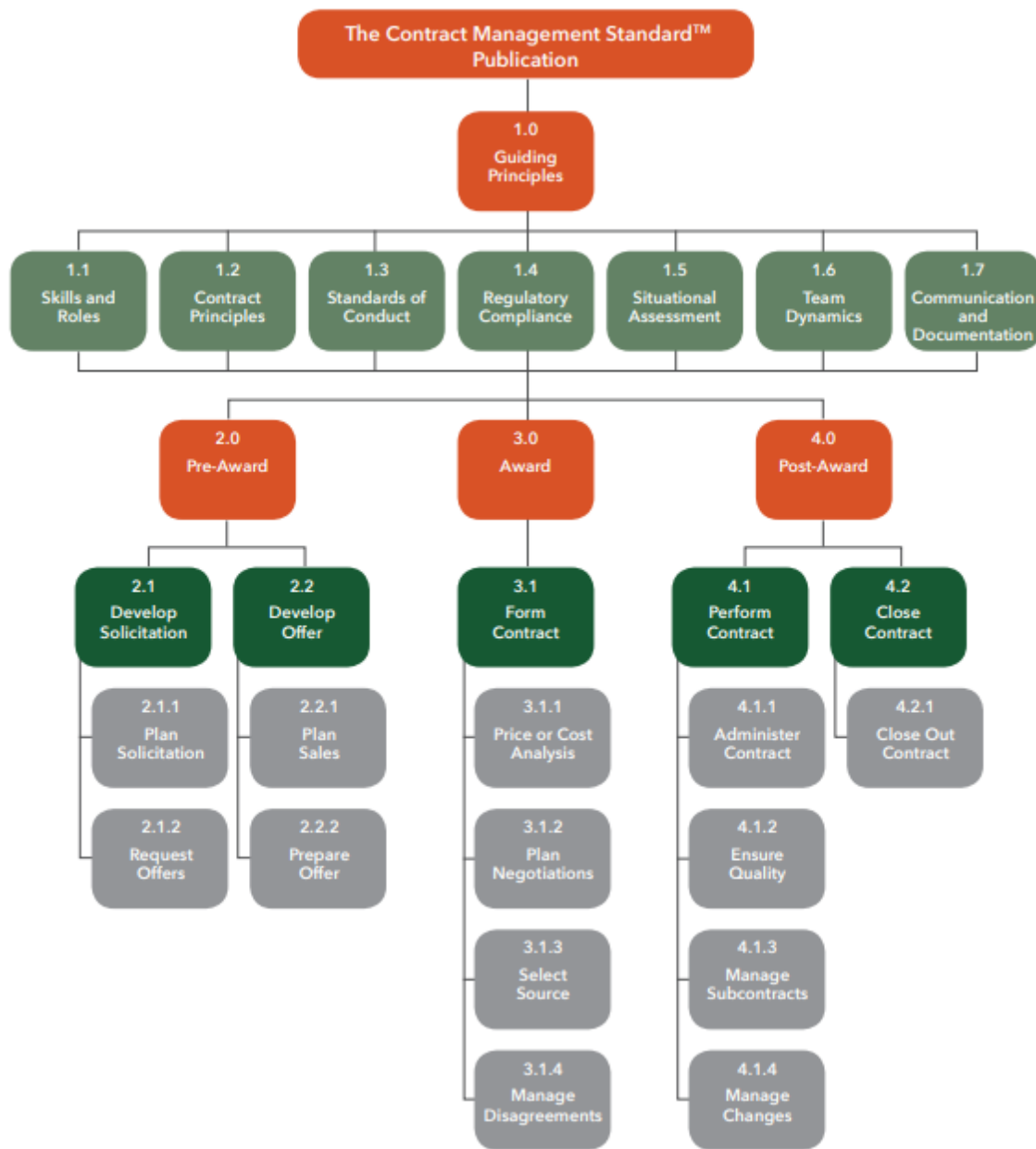


Figure 9. The CMS Publication Guiding Principles. Source: NCMA (2019b).

I now discuss the three phases of the contract life cycle as they pertain to the CMS.

### 1. Pre-award Life Cycle Phase

The Pre-Award phase for the buyer contains job tasks under the Develop Solicitation domain (see Figure 10). While developing the solicitation, the buyer translates the customer’s needs to the seller to create or deliver the good or service. As

part of developing the solicitation, there are two competencies: Plan Solicitation and Request Offers. Value added while planning the solicitation includes the following elements: assisting the customer with requirement definition, conducting market research, conducting effective risk analysis, and developing the contracting strategy (NCMA, 2019b). While requesting offers, the buyer executes the solicitation plan with the end goal of receiving responses from sellers to fulfill the customer's need (NCMA, 2019b). The end goal to requesting offers is to “produce a clear and concise solicitation that effectively communicates all the buyer's requirements and enables the sellers to provide comprehensive, responsive proposals” (NCMA, 2019b, p. 9).



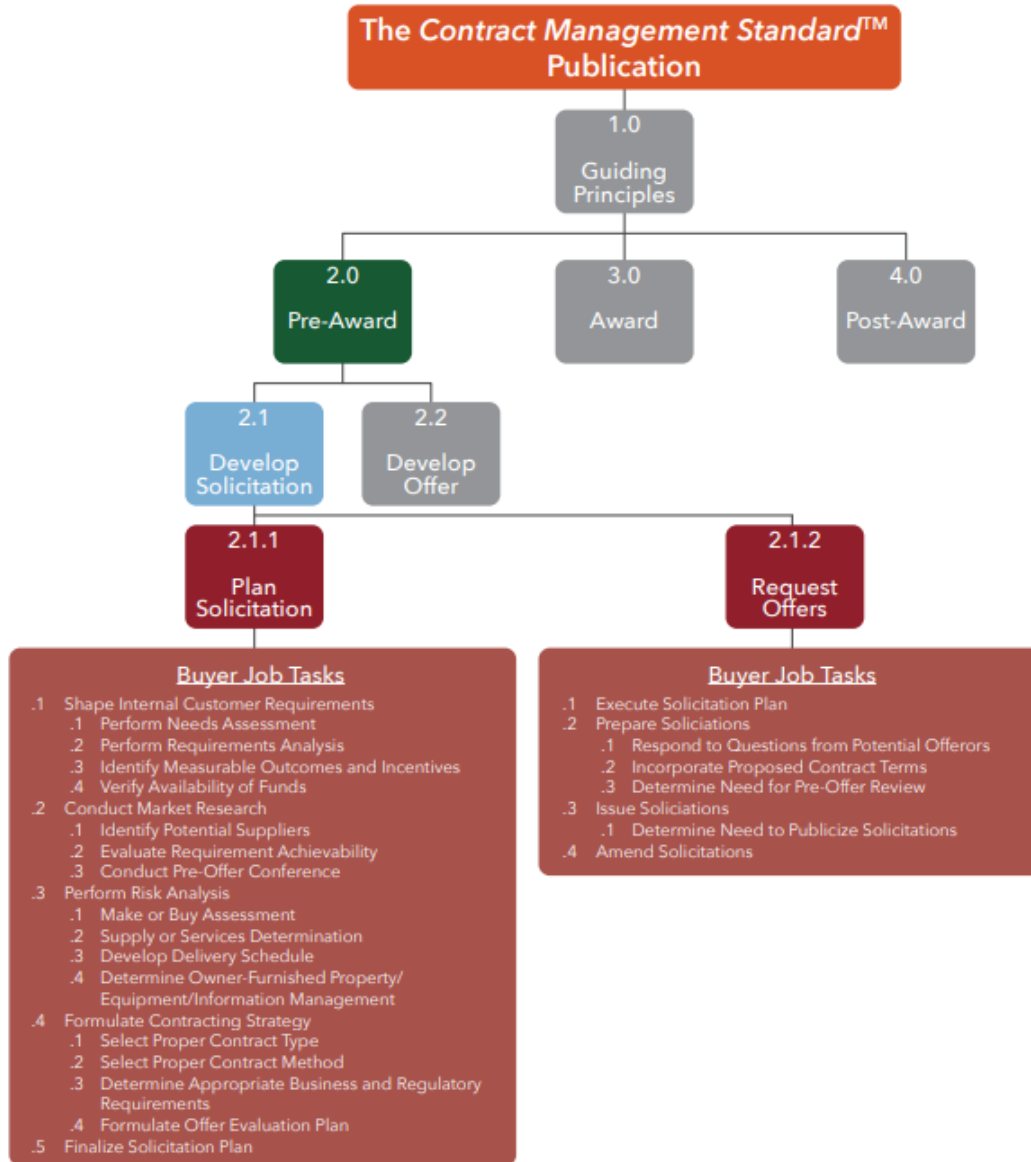


Figure 10. Competencies and Tasks for the Develop Solicitation Domain. Source: NCMA (2019b).

The Pre-Award phase for the seller contains job tasks under the Develop Offer domain (see Figure 11). Developing the offer has two competencies: plan sales and prepare offer. The planning of sales includes “organizing pre-sales activities to develop customer relations and market strategy, understanding the marketplace, and assessing the competition” (NCMA, 2019b, p. 11). When preparing the offer, it benefits the seller greatly to demonstrate not only that they can execute the plan on time and on budget but also that they possess a specific strength that other sellers in the market do not have (NCMA, 2019b).



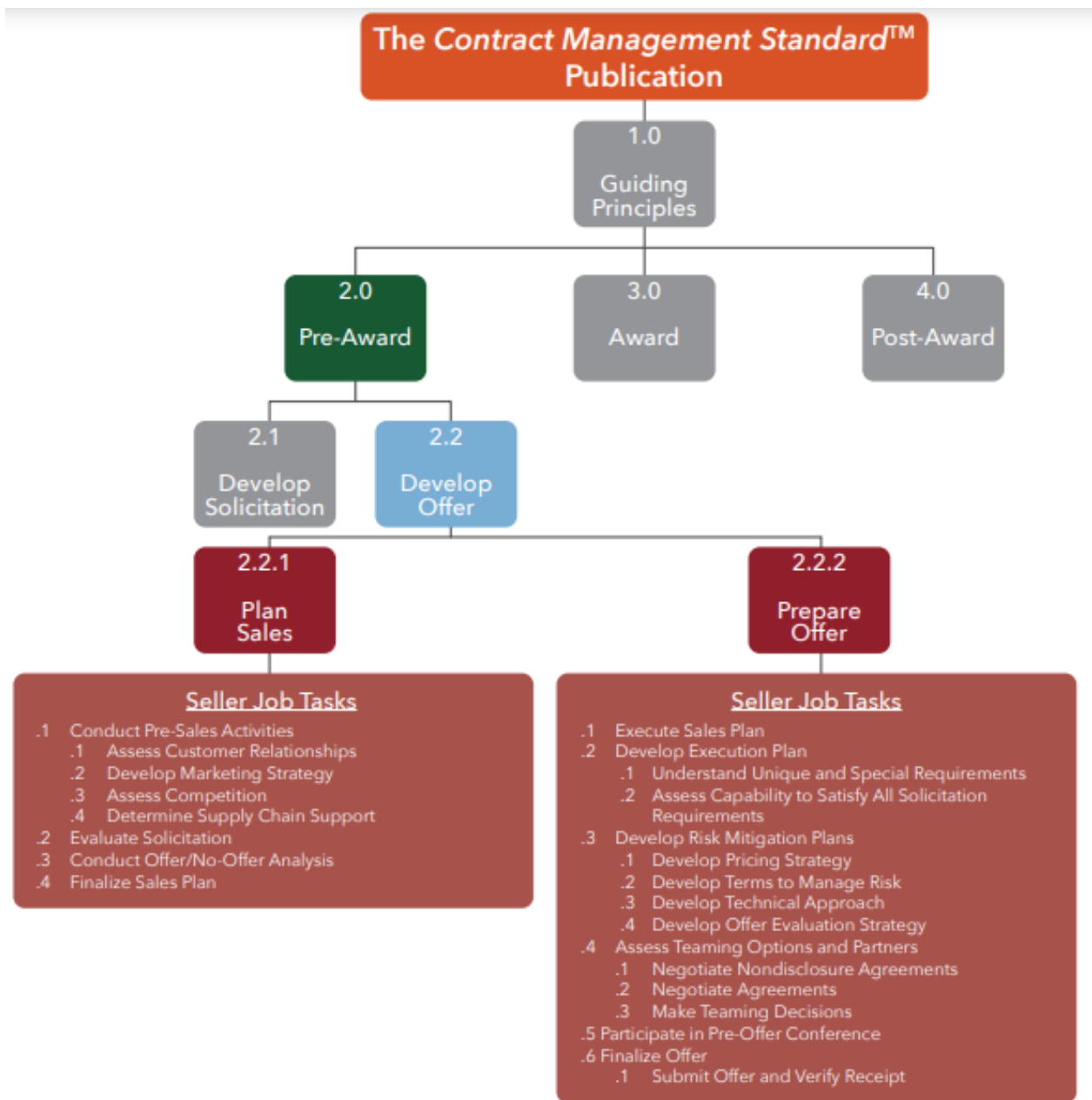


Figure 11. Competencies and Tasks for the Develop Offer Domain.  
Source: NCMA (2019b).

Now that the Pre-Award phase has been covered, the Award phase is discussed.

## 2. Award Life Cycle Phase

The Award phase contains job tasks under the Form Contract domain (see Figure 12). While forming the contract, the buyer is responsible for the competency of conducting price or cost analysis. Competencies and job tasks for both buyer and seller

include plan negotiations, select source, and manage disagreements. When conducting price or cost analysis, the buyer should take into consideration the following when determining reasonableness: historical prices, published market prices, competitive analysis, comparative analysis, and current market data (NCMA, 2019b). When planning negotiations, both the buyer and seller work to find common ground or compromise on differences (NCMA, 2019b). When selecting a source, buyer risk is mitigated by selecting the seller most likely to fulfill the identified need (NCMA, 2019b). When managing disagreements, issues involving the solicitation or source selection are resolved (NCMA, 2019b).



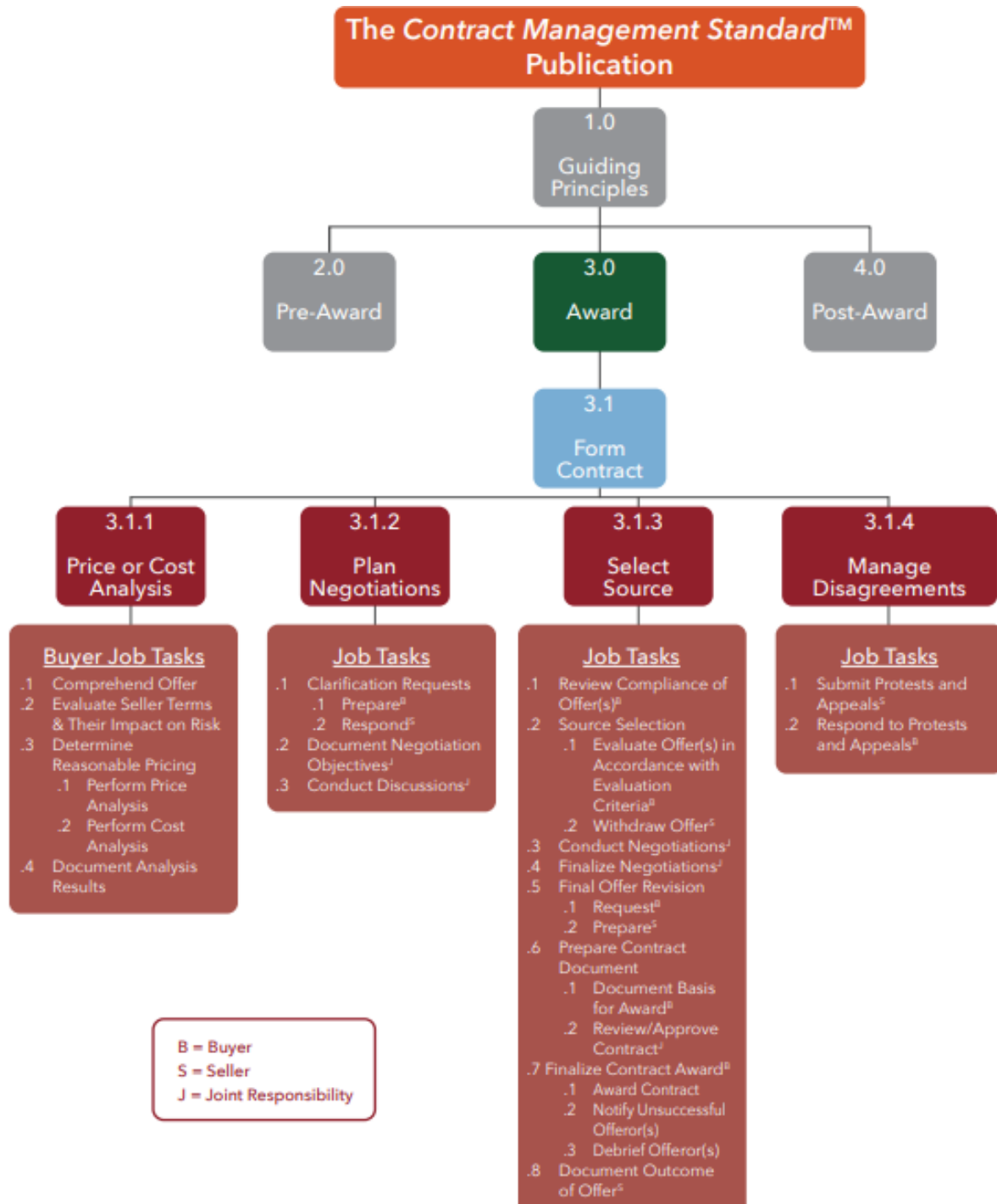


Figure 12. Competencies and Tasks for the Form Contract Domain.  
 Source: NCMA (2019b).

Now that the Pre-Award and Award phases have been covered, next is the Post-Award phase.

### 3. Post-Award Life Cycle Phase

The Post-Award phase contains competencies and job tasks for both buyer and seller in the Perform Contract and Close Contract domains (see Figures 13 and 14). Under the Perform Contract domain, all competencies contain job tasks for both buyer and seller (NCMA, 2019b). Both buyers and sellers fill active roles in the administration of the contract to ensure defined performance goals are met (NCMA, 2019b). The ensure quality competency ensures that the required good or service is delivered and meets specification requirements within the scope of the contract (NCMA, 2019b). Under the competency of manage subcontracts, effort must be made to ensure applicable personnel monitor technical and financial performance and pay the subcontractors for goods or services provided to the prime (NCMA, 2019b). The manage change competency is striking a balance of “allowing flexibility in making necessary contract changes while protecting the integrity of the contract” (NCMA, 2019b, p. 17). The Close Contract domain includes the close out contract competency and the importance of determining that all obligations have been fulfilled by both the buyer and seller (NCMA, 2019b).



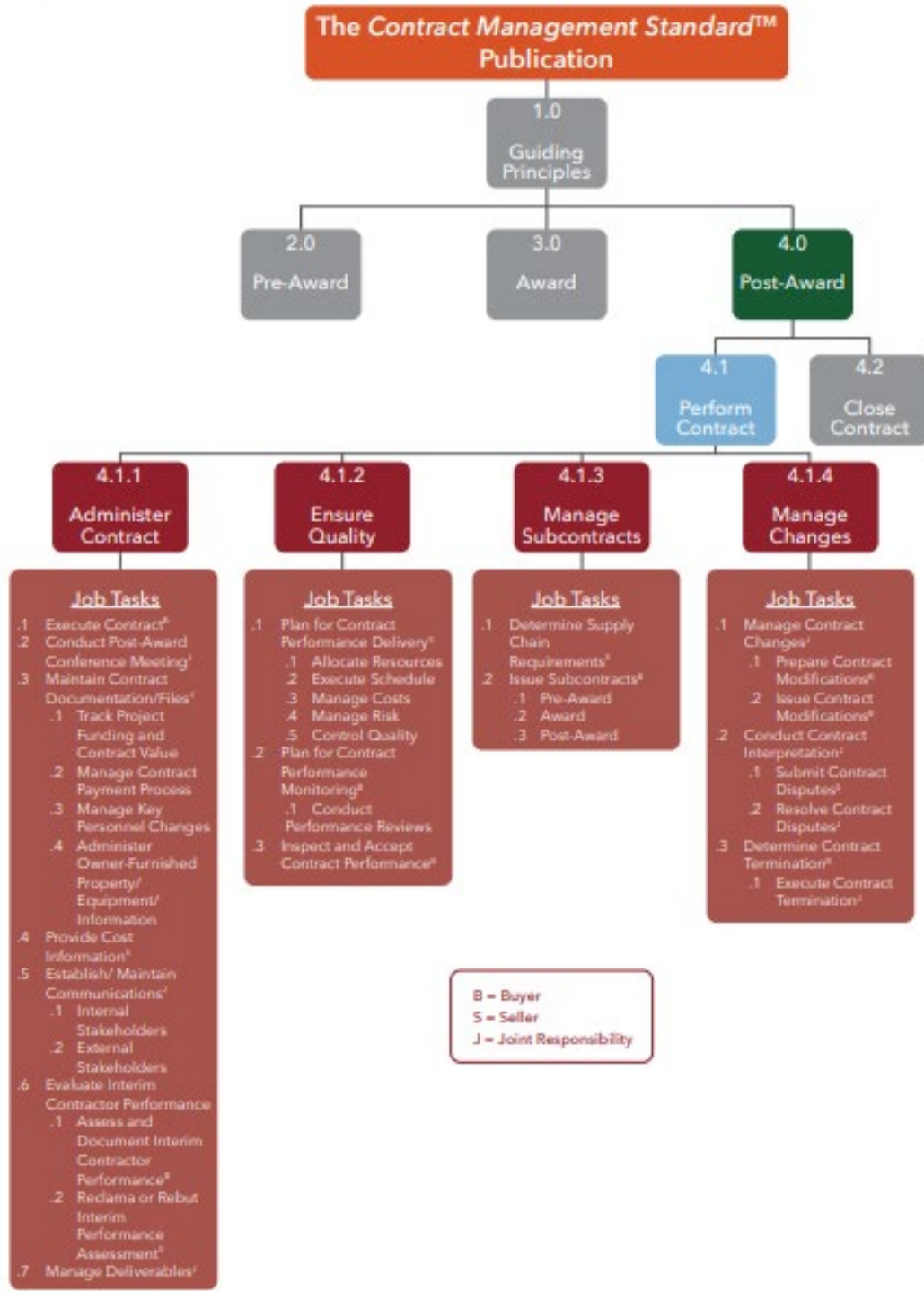


Figure 13. Competencies and Tasks for the Perform Contract Domain. Source: NCMA (2019b).

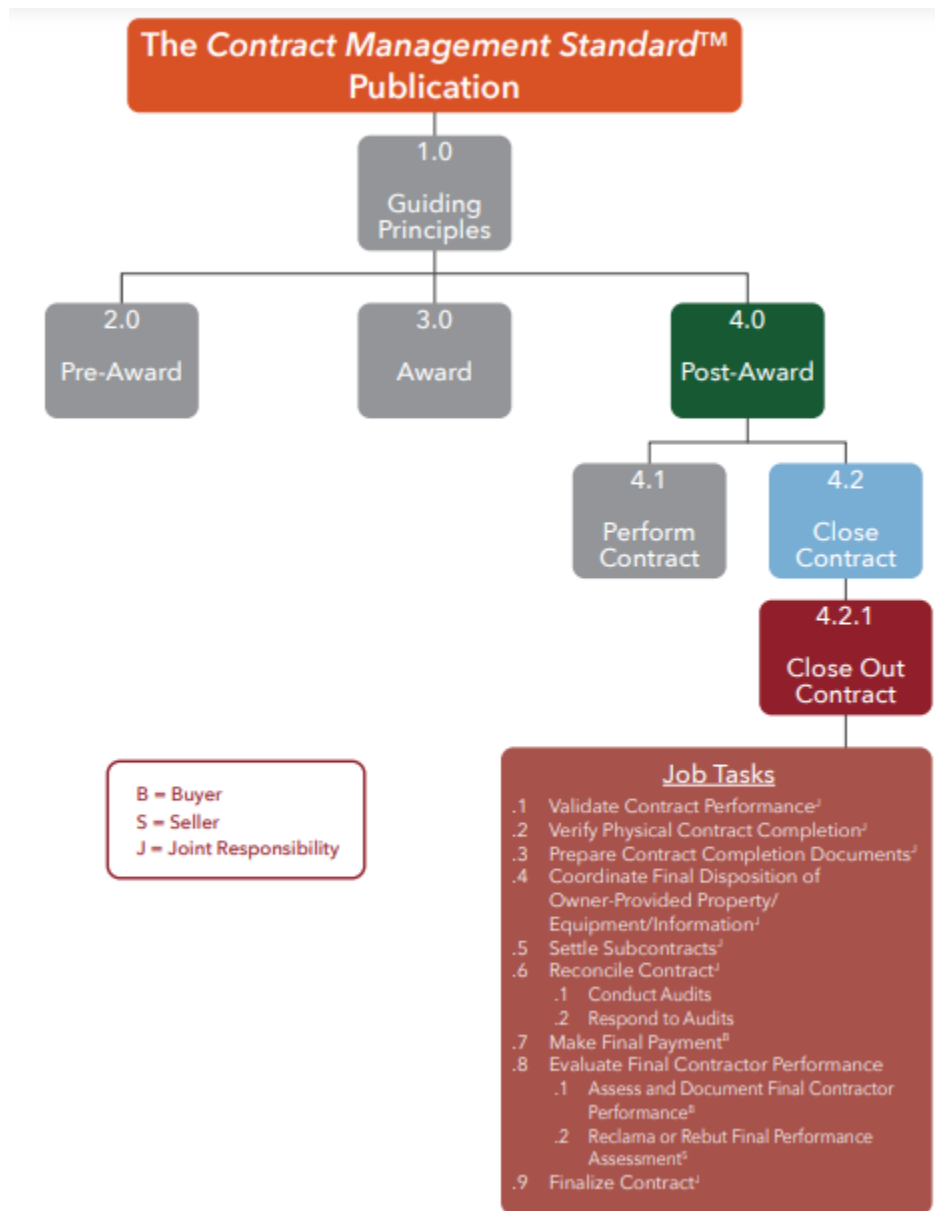


Figure 14. Competencies and Tasks for the Close Contract Domain.  
 Source: NCMA (2019b).

Since the CMS has been discussed in depth and was selected as the new DOD Contracting Competency Model, I now discuss differences between the new model and the previous model, which received its last published update in 2014.

**F. A BRIEF COMPARISON OF THE 2021 MODEL AND 2014 MODEL**

As discussed, the prior DOD Contracting Competency Model contained no seller competencies, which created a dilemma for the buyer when it came to interpreting seller



actions and mitigating inflation to the fullest extent. The CMS contains competencies from both buyer and seller perspectives in its framework, with the shared understanding that successful contract management occurs if both the buyer and seller have a fundamental understanding of associated competencies and job tasks (NCMA, 2019b). In his 2019 technical report titled *Enhancing Professional and Technical Excellence: Analysis of Contract Management Competency Models*, Rendon mentions that the DOD/FAI Contracting Competency Models “do not include the complete contract life cycle phases in sequence and with sufficient visibility and granularity for each life cycle phase” (p. 93). In this research, Rendon (2019) also points out that “the DOD/FAI model combines both pre-award and award contract life cycle phases into one competency and divides the post-award life cycle phase into two separate competency units of contract administration and contract termination” (p. 93). The CMS contains all three life cycle phases broken down individually and includes competencies that engage both the buyer and seller.

#### **G. CMS COMPARED TO REGULATION AND CODE**

The CMS and CMBOK focus on concepts and processes of contract management. They do not incorporate any regulations such as the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) or Uniformed Commercial Code (UCC). On the contrary, the FAR and the UCC are only the application of contract management principles, concepts, and processes. This does not mean that the CMS and CMBOK do not apply to federal government contracting personnel who use the FAR, and state and local government contracting personnel who use the UCC to procure goods and services. The concepts and processes established in the CMBOK and CMS are aligned with the FAR and the UCC. Appendix B is a cross reference matrix of the CMS competencies and job tasks with the FAR part they can be applied under. Appendix C is a cross reference matrix of the CMS competencies and job tasks with the UCC article under which they can be applied.

#### **H. PAST RESEARCH ON THE CMS**

Research on the use of the CMS as a performance measurement tool has been explored at different levels of contracting within the DOD. Moyer et al. (2020) conducted



an analysis on Air Force contract management personnel competency as part of their master's thesis project titled *An Analysis of Air Force Contract Management Personnel Competency and Internal Processes Using the National Contract Management Association's Third-Party Accredited Competency Standard*. In their research, they were able to align “DOD IG-reported contract management deficiencies” (p. i) from inspections done on the Air Force in the past with the CMS competency framework (Moyer et al., 2020). They were also able to provide “a comparative analysis between the CMS and the Air Force Contracting Self-Inspection Checklist” (p. i), and recommendations for improving the checklist for better alignment with auditability theory (Moyer et al., 2020).

Alex Pfannenstiel and Spencer Hayashi (2020) conducted a competency assessment on the Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) contracting workforce (which primarily procures weapons systems) as part of their master's thesis project titled *Analysis of Marine Corps Systems Command Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment*. Through their research, they were able to provide MCSC contracting workforce leadership with “proficiency ratings for buyer competencies, knowledge ratings for seller competencies” (p. i), recommendations for improving MCSC competency levels, and a comparative analysis between the results they obtained and assessment results obtained from federal non-DOD contracting workforce members (Pfannenstiel & Hayashi, 2020).

Davies et al. (2021) conducted a competency assessment on Army contracting personnel located in Mission and Installation Contracting Command Field Directorate Office–Fort Sam Houston (MICC FDO-FSH) which provide base level contracting support, and the Army Contracting Command–Orlando (ACC-ORL) which provide systems-level contracting support, as part of their master's thesis titled *Analysis of Army Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment*. Through their research, they were able to establish a baseline for both organizations analyzed and “provide insight for decision makers on where to focus the redesign of training and education” (p. i) initiatives so that they align with NCMA CMS contract management competencies pertaining to both buyer and seller tasks (Davies et al., 2021). They were also able to provide training recommendations to “improve the organizations' ability to manage disagreements”





(Davies et al., p. i), as well as recommendations on incorporating the recognition of Certified Professional Contract Manager (CPCM) certification “as an equivalent training for those with industry experience” (Davies et al., 2021, p. i).

Richard Powell (2021) conducted a competency assessment on the Army National Guard’s contracting personnel located in 54 states and territories as part of his master’s thesis titled *Analysis of NGB Enterprise Contract Management Competencies*. In his research, he analyzed “which life cycle phases were more proficient from both the buyer’s and seller’s perspective” (Powell, 2021, p. i). He was also able to provide Army National Guard Bureau (NGB) contracting leadership with the Army National Guard’s contracting personnel ratings as they pertain to “proficiency of CMS buyer competencies” (p. i), and “knowledge of CMS seller competencies” (p. i), as well as recommendations to improve these ratings (Powell, 2021).

Contracting competency assessments have been performed on contracting workforce members at the base support level, and weapons procurement level, but not the contingency contracting level. This research aims to fill that gap by conducting a competency assessment on the Marine Corps contracting workforce members that are part of the Marine Corps Field Contracting System (MCFCS). The three ECP’s and the three RCO’s to be analyzed contain uniformed workforce members who train and are equipped to perform contingency contracting in remote locations, forward deployed. The three RCO’s also contain GS-1102 contracting workforce members who provide contracting support to the three deployable Marine Expeditionary Forces, and who also serve as initial trainers to Marines new to the contracting workforce. The organizational framework of these two commands will be discussed further in Chapter III.

## **I. SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed the theoretical framework, modeling, and models which serves as the basis of the research questions discussed in Chapter I. Competency theory, when applied properly, can help prevent individual ignorance from taking hold in organizational settings. Competency modeling and competency models serve as the most effective tools when assessing contract management workforce competencies. Actions and events within the last few years leading up to adoption of the CMS as the new DOD



Contracting Competency Model were discussed. The five components that form the structure of the ANSI/NCMA Contract Management Standard were discussed, along with life cycle phases and general competencies for both buyers and sellers. A comparison of some of the differences between the previous and new DOD Contracting Competency Models provided examples of why the 2021 model is superior. A comparison between the CMS and regulation and code contained in the FAR and UCC was discussed, as well as past research on the CMS.



### **III. MARINE CORPS EXPEDITIONARY CONTRACTING**

This chapter provides an overview of Marine Corps contracting, lines of authority in contracting, and the operational chain of command as it pertains to Marine Corps contracting. The three Marine Corps Expeditionary Contracting Platoons (ECPs), along with their organizational overview and command organization are discussed. The three Regional Contracting Offices (RCO)s that provide support to Marines assigned to the three Marine Expeditionary Force's across the globe are discussed, along with their organizational structure. Controls in place to regulate spending by Marine Corps ECPs and RCOs are discussed, along with associated spending thresholds, and an estimate of FY22 RCO spending. Finally, reasoning for choosing the Marine Corps expeditionary contracting workforce closes out this chapter.

#### **A. OVERVIEW OF MARINE CORPS CONTRACTING**

Contracting is present within the ranks of the Marine Corps to enable contingency operations on foreign soil as well as domestic contract support for units not deployed. The Secretary of the Navy possesses operational control of the Marine Corps and contracting authority over Marine Corps contract spending. Figure 15 shows both the operational and contracting flow of authority. Contracting authority flows from the secretary of the Navy to the assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development, and acquisition, who reports to Congress as an advocate for all matters pertaining to acquisition policy and program within the Navy and Marine Corps (Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, & Acquisition [ASN(RDA)], n.d.). Contracting authority then moves through the deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for acquisition and procurement (DASN-P) to the deputy commandant, I&L, and then to I&L Contracts Division, which serves as the HCA. Contracting authority then passes to Marine Corps Installations Command (MCICOM), then on to the four RCOs that support Marine Corps deployable forces in Camp Pendleton, Camp Lejeune, Camp Butler, and Marine Corps Base Quantico. Command authority has a slightly different route. It flows from the secretary of the Navy to the commandant of the Marine Corps, who serves on the joint chiefs of staff as the senior Marine representative on all matters pertaining to national



security, then command authority flows to the deputy commandant, I&L. Within HQMC I&L, command authority then moves through the assistant deputy commandant I&L Facilities Division, then directly to the directors of the four RCOs that support the forces in garrison.

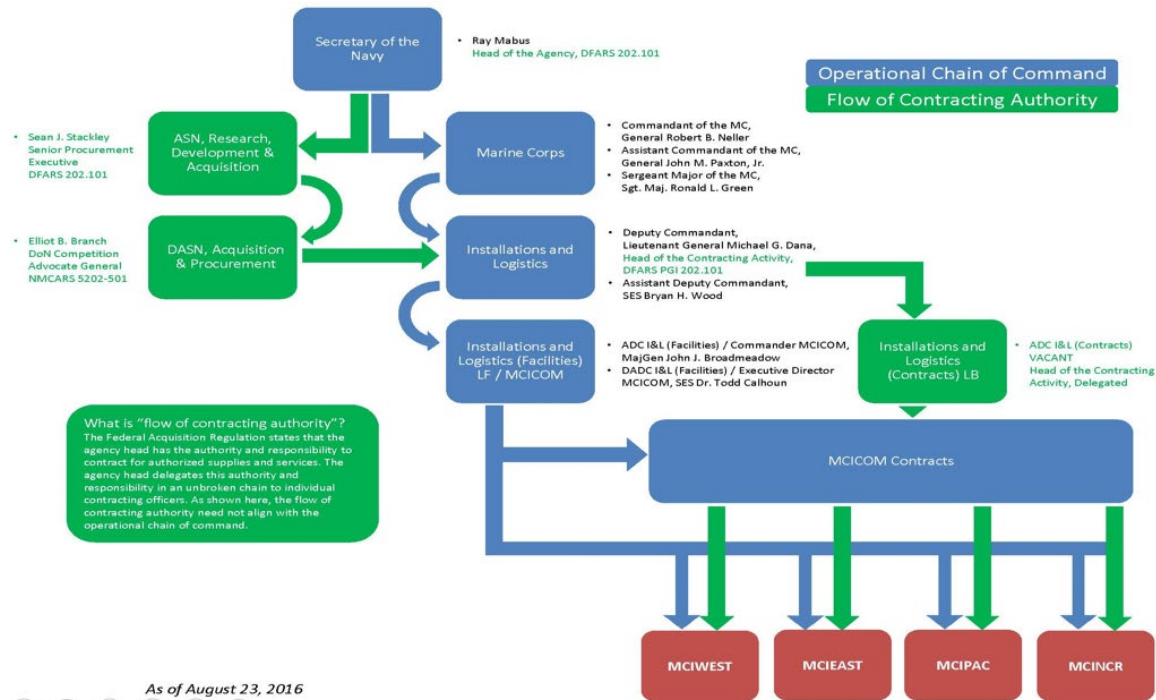


Figure 15. Command Versus Contracting Authority. Source: Marine Corps Installations Command (MCICOM; 2018).

Not pictured in Figure 15 is the contracting authority for system procurement and deployed Operational Contract Support (OCS). Contracting authority for system procurement flows to MCSC, which serves as the HCA for procuring Class VII major end items. Contracting authority for OCS flows from the Assistant Deputy Commandant, I&L directly to the three separate Marine Logistics Group (MLG) ECPs in Camp Pendleton, Camp Lejeune, and Camp Butler. Contracting authority is then forward deployed in the form of a warranted contracting officer (KO) supporting contingency operations wherever the Marine Corps may find itself on the forward edge of America’s defense. OCS provides a unique capability to the combatant commander on the ground to use fiscal means to shape the battlespace where unit level fund managers fall short. In Marine Corps Reference Publication 3-40B.3, titled *Contingency Contracting*, Lieutenant General Flynn writes, “Contingency contracting support is an integral part of the overall

process used to provide supplies, services, and construction in support of Marine air-ground task force operations” (USMC, 2018, p. 5).

Now the command structure of the Marine Corps expeditionary contracting capability is discussed.

## **B. EXPEDITIONARY CONTRACTING COMMAND STRUCTURE**

Marine Corps ECPs are unique in the Marine Corps, because although they are deployable, they do not deploy as an entire unit like the name suggests. Marines possessing the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) 3006 (contracting officer) and 3044 (contract specialist) attach to a deploying unit to complement the commander with the option of not using organic assets solely for logistical support and solutions to limited space available for transportation and storage of equipment (USMC, 2018). These Marines complement operational-level commanders with contracting support in such areas as reception of personnel, materiel management, supply support, maintenance, movement, and distribution of supply and equipment (USMC, 2018). These Marines complement tactical-level commanders with contracting support of Class I water, field sanitation, and office equipment (USMC, 2018). The KOs and contract specialists assigned to an ECP can expect to deploy to support contingency operations at least twice in a four-year period (G. Carnazza, personal communication, April 8, 2021).

Now that the basic ECP organization has been discussed, the command organization is next.

## **C. EXPEDITIONARY CONTRACTING COMMAND ORGANIZATION**

The deployable forces within the Marine Corps consist of I MEF (headquartered in Camp Pendleton, CA), II MEF (headquartered in Camp Lejeune, NC), and III MEF (headquartered in Camp Butler, Okinawa, Japan). Within each of the three MEFs, there is an MLG with a nearly identical mission. First MLG’s primary mission is to “provide direct support to the MEF Ground Combat Element (GCE), and general support and sustained tactical-level logistical support above organic capabilities of supported elements of the MEF” (Marines, n.d.-a). Within each MLG lies an ECP. Each ECP has a very similar mission but in three different geographic locations. Third MLG ECP’s



mission statement is “to provide efficient and effective contracting support for supplies and services to the operating forces in the INDOPACIFIC area of operation while simultaneously training and developing a professional acquisition workforce and a worldwide deployable contingency contracting force” (Marines, n.d.-b). Command authority for each ECP is delegated down from the respective MEF commander, through the MLG commander, to the senior KO of the respective ECP. Each ECP is organized and equipped with 28 Marine contracting personnel, with approximately 14 on average conducting on-the-job training at the co-located RCO (G. Carnazza, personal communication, April 8, 2021).

#### **D. REGIONAL CONTRACTING COMMAND STRUCTURE**

The RCOs in Camp Pendleton, Camp Lejeune, and Camp Butler provide deployable forces with contract support in non-deployed environments. The RCO in Quantico, VA, provides contract support to garrison forces stationed in the national capital region. There are satellite offices in New Orleans, LA; Albany, GA; Barstow, CA; Twentynine Palms, CA; Bridgeport, CA; and Parris Island, SC. All RCOs are responsible for providing support when tasked to Marine Corps contingency contracting operations; lending assistance to end users during the requirements generation phase; and facilitating each phase of the contract life cycle in a secure timely manner (Marine Corps Installation Command [MCICOM], 2018). The RCO headquartered in New Orleans is unique because it provides contract support to Marine reserve units across the United States, not just in New Orleans. The RCOs in Albany, GA, and Barstow, CA, provide contract support to the two Marine Depot Maintenance Centers where depot-level repairs are made on ground equipment, then sent back to the operating forces. The RCOs in Parris Island, SC, and Twentynine Palms, CA, are unique because they only provide support to training commands.

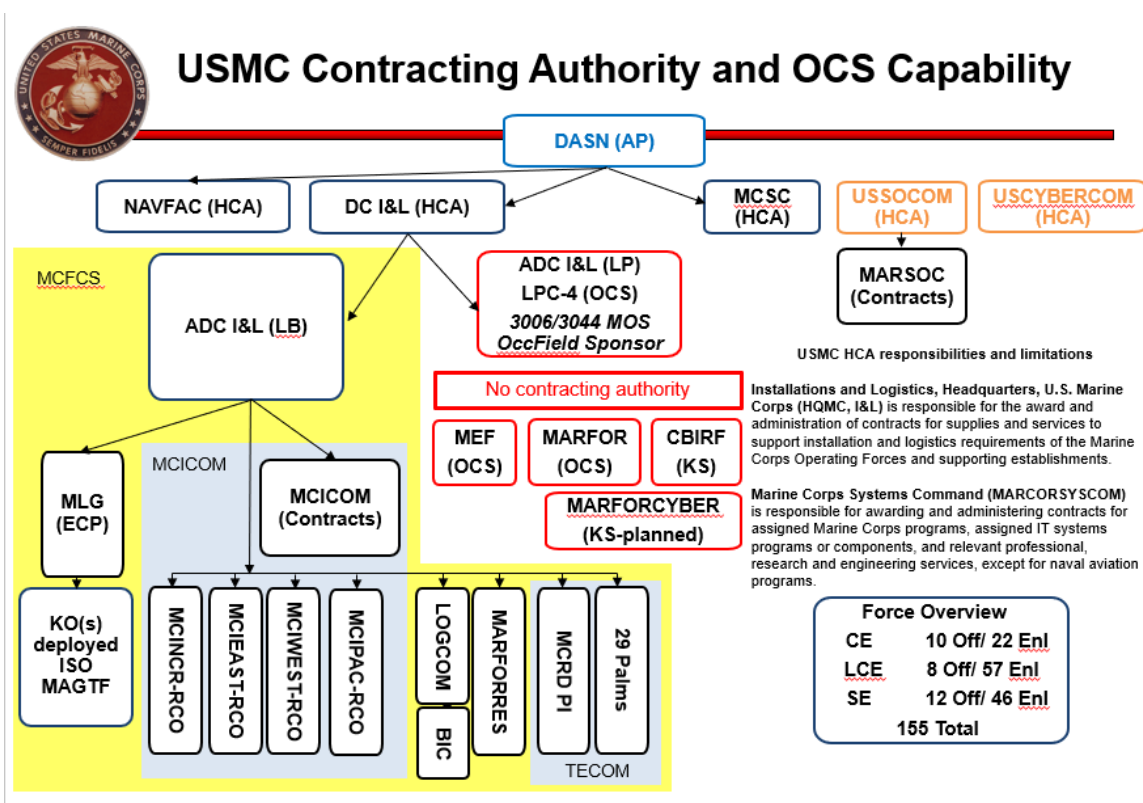
#### **E. REGIONAL CONTRACTING COMMAND ORGANIZATION**

Command authority for all RCOs passes through USMC I&L, as previously mentioned. The RCOs located in Albany, New Orleans, Parris Island, Blount Island and Twentynine Palms do not fall under MCICOM and therefore, directly report to USMC



I&L (see Figure 16). MCICOM’s mission is to provide leadership, manage the contracting workforce under the umbrella of MCICOM, and develop policy, performance standards, and best practices (MCICOM, 2018). The RCOs in Camp Pendleton, Camp Lejeune, and Camp Butler all have a similar mission statement. The mission of Marine Corps Installations (MCI) East is “to contribute to Marine Corps war fighting excellence by: (1) providing timely, innovative and effective procurement support for all customers; and (2) training and mentoring military procurement specialist to create accomplished, independent thinking professionals for expeditionary environments” (Marine Corps Installations East, n.d.). Each of these three RCOs takes on the additional task of training contract management personnel early in their contracting career before they are assigned to an ECP to be forward-deployed. The Quantico RCO has the mission of supporting HQMC offices located at the Pentagon, the Marine Barracks 8th and I in Washington, DC, and all major commands headquartered in Quantico (Felton, 2014). The RCO office in Quantico is the largest of the four offices, as it has approximately four active-duty Marines and 55 GS-1102 federal employees, and processes around 2,000 contracts annually (Felton, 2014).





Source: A. Pfannenstiel, personal communication, October 3, 2021.

Figure 16. USMC Contracting Authority and OCS Capability

**F. CONTROLS**

Contracting Marines and GS-1102 workforce members working at the ECPs and RCOs currently have a robust control environment based on regulations that require strict adherence. The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS), the Navy Marine Corps Acquisition Regulation Supplement (NMCARS), and various departmental memorandums from the under secretary of defense for acquisition, technology, and logistics (OUSD[AT&L]) must all be referenced prior to the initiation of a contract (MCICOM, 2018). There are several statutes that must be taken into consideration as well before entering into a contract on behalf of the federal government. The Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act, Competition in Contracting Act, Service Contract Act, Small Business Act, Javits Wagner O’Day Act, Davis Bacon Act, Federal Acquisition Reform Act, and Procurement Integrity Act all play a part in all contract management life cycle phases (MCICOM, 2018). Special thresholds applicable to the ECP contracting Marines forward deployed include a micro-





purchase threshold of \$30,000 and a \$1,500,000 simplified acquisition threshold (SAT) for declared contingency operations (C. Yoder, PowerPoint slides, May 30, 2018). Under Simplified Acquisition Procedures (SAP), RCOs are capped at entering into contracts of \$10 million or less, and USMC I&L is capped at entering into contracts of \$25 million or less.

The Fiscal Year 2022 budget request for the Marine Corps Operation and Maintenance (O&M) funding was estimated to be \$7.4619 billion (Department of the Navy [DON], 2021). Approximately \$234.1 million of this O&M funding was requested for base operations support, of which, contracting support obligations fall under (DON, 2021). The \$234.1 million will not be evenly distributed amongst the eight separate RCOs, but for the sake of this example, let's say they are. Each RCO would have \$29.2 million to obligate during fiscal year 2022 (DON, 2021). These numbers do not reflect funds that will be obligated by Marines forward deployed for contingency operations. These Marines receive funding from the geographic command they are deployed in support of.

#### **G. WHY SELECT THE MARINE CORPS EXPEDITIONARY CONTRACTING WORKFORCE FOR THIS RESEARCH?**

The three Marine Corps ECPs and co-located RCOs were chosen because of their primary mission and the makeup of their workforce. Support of Marines forward-deployed or preparing for deployment in garrison is where the cutting edge of contracting should lie within the Marine Corps. If this research identifies information that effects even the smallest positive change in the way the Marine Corps expeditionary contracting workforce supports the warfighters of tomorrow, it is worth it. USMC I&L stands to benefit from this research because it provides an unbiased assessment of where the expeditionary contracting workforce is in terms of competency as it pertains to the new DOD Contracting Competency Model. USMC I&L also stands to benefit from this research as it provides a baseline for future competency assessments to gauge training comprehension and retention.



## **H. SUMMARY**

This chapter provided an overview of Marine Corps contracting, lines of authority in contracting, and the operational chain of command as it pertains to Marine Corps contracting. The Marine Corps ECP organizational overview and command organization were discussed. All RCOs that provide support to Marines across the globe were discussed, along with their organizational structure. Controls in place that regulate spending by Marine Corps ECPs and RCOs were discussed, along with associated spending thresholds, and an estimate of RCO spending during FY22. Finally, the reasoning for choosing the Marine Corps expeditionary contracting workforce concludes this chapter.



## IV. METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains how the contracting competency assessment instrument was developed, the domains and competencies contained within the competency assessment instrument, and three sections that make up the competency assessment instrument. The competency levels used to assess individual participants will be discussed. Steps taken to deploy the survey to the organizations who participated in this research will be discussed, followed by a brief description of how survey results were obtained. Lastly, a summary is provided before moving on to Chapter V.

### A. SURVEY DEVELOPMENT

The contracting competency assessment instrument based on the National Contract Management Association (NCMA) Contract Management Standard (CMS) was developed by Rene Rendon of the Naval Postgraduate School and published in a technical report coauthored by Brett Schwartz (2021). The competency assessment instrument includes questions from each phase of the contract life cycle and covers both buyer and seller contracting perspectives. The competency assessment instrument developed by Rendon was done so to help answer two overarching research questions: (1) “How can the Contract Management Body of Knowledge (CMBOK) / Contract Management Standard (CMS) competency structure be used as the basis for developing a survey-based instrument for assessing the competencies of the DOD contracting workforce?”, and (2) “Based on competency assessment results, in which contract management competencies is the workforce less proficient and less knowledgeable?” (Rendon & Schwartz, 2021, p. 1). This competency assessment instrument was used to obtain the data needed for this research. This competency assessment instrument has also been used to perform competency assessments on several contracting agencies in the Air Force, Marine Corps, Army, and Army National Guard as mentioned in Chapter III.

The demographics section of the survey asks participants basic questions such as current Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) certification level, if they are a warranted contracting officer, total years of contracting experience, years at current organization, which organization they represent, and professional certifications



obtained other than DAWIA. The proficiency section aims to collect self-assessment data on survey respondents as buyers performing contract management tasks in all three phases of the contract life cycle. Questions within the proficiency section are based on process competencies from the pre-award phase including Plan Solicitation and Request Offer, process competencies from the award phase including Price or Cost Analysis, Plan Negotiations, Select Source, and Manage Disagreements, and process competencies from the post-award phase including Administer Contract, Ensure Quality, Manage Changes, and Close Out Contract (NCMA, 2019b). The knowledge section aims to collect self-assessment data on survey respondents pertaining to contract management tasks performed by sellers in all three phases of the contract life cycle. Questions within the knowledge section are based on process competencies from the pre-award phase including Plan Sales and Prepare Offer, process competencies from the award phase including Plan Negotiations, Select Source, and Manage Disagreements, and process competencies from the post-award phase including Administer Contract, Ensure Quality, Manage Subcontracts, Manage Changes, and Close Out Contract (NCMA, 2019b). Now that the survey development has been discussed, we will now discuss how the competency levels are evaluated.

## **B. COMPETENCY LEVELS**

Each competency statement is rated by the survey respondents using a Likert scale illustrating different levels of proficiency in buyer job tasks, and different levels of knowledge in seller job tasks (Rendon & Schwartz, 2021). The competency levels within the survey are designed to specifically assess contracting workforce members within the DOD. This is evident through the assessment of buyer-job task proficiency, and through the assessment of seller job task knowledge. “The proficiency rating scale pertaining to buyer job tasks, are identified and defined below:

1. **Aware:** Applies the competency in the simplest of situations and requires close and extensive guidance.
2. **Basic:** Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations and requires frequent guidance.
3. **Intermediate:** Applies the competency in difficult situations and requires little or no guidance.



4. Advanced: Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations and generally requires no guidance.
5. Expert: Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations and serves as a key resource and advises others.
6. N/A: Not applicable/not needed in my job” (Rendon & Schwartz, 2021).

“The knowledge rating scales, for understanding seller job tasks, are identified and defined below:

1. None: I am not aware of this Contractor competency.
2. Aware: I am aware, but have no knowledge of this Contractor competency.
3. Basic: I have some basic level knowledge of this Contractor competency.
4. Intermediate: I have intermediate level knowledge of this Contractor competency.
5. Advanced: I have advanced level knowledge of this Contractor competency” (Rendon & Schwartz, 2021).

Now that the survey development and structure have been discussed, I will discuss how the survey was deployed.

### **C. SURVEY DEPLOYMENT**

After gaining approval from the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) Institution Review Board (IRB), and the Marine Corps IRB, the survey was deployed on an open-source surveying tool called LimeSurvey (Naval Postgraduate School [NPS], n.d.) Using LimeSurvey ensures volunteers anonymity outside the scope of the specific demographic questions discussed in Section A of this Chapter. As mentioned in Chapter III, the three Marine Corps Expeditionary Contracting Platoons and co-located Regional Contracting Offices were chosen because of their primary mission, and the unique makeup of their contracting workforce. The survey link and approved recruitment script were emailed to a designated point of contact within each of the six offices analyzed. Each of these points of contact were not in leadership positions at the time of deployment to prevent undue influence in participation or responses. Once received, each point of contact deployed the survey to all contracting workforce members employed within their respective organizations. The LimeSurvey link remained open for approximately two weeks from



the time the point of contact deployed the survey. Responses were collected and consolidated by the lead investigator. The lead investigator provided the student investigator with deidentified data in order to satisfy the purpose of this research by conducting an analysis on said data.

#### **D. SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed how the contracting competency assessment instrument was developed, the domains and competencies contained within the competency assessment instrument, and three sections that make up the contracting competency assessment instrument. The competency levels used to assess individual participants were also discussed in this chapter. This chapter also explained the scale used by survey respondents to self-assess proficiency in buyer job tasks and knowledge in seller job tasks performed during the contract life cycle. Lastly, steps taken to deploy the survey and obtain data to analyze were laid out for the reader to gain awareness of the process. The next chapter will discuss results obtained from the competency assessment and the interpretation of those results.



## **V. ASSESSMENT RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

In this chapter, data obtained from survey respondents on the three sections of the Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment are discussed, including demographics, buyer, and seller competencies. The analysis of the data from the buyer and seller competency sections are broken down by the three phases of the contract life cycle. A comparison of buyer and seller competency results will be discussed. A comparison with other organizations that have taken the same Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment will take place. Lastly, recommendations for improving training and competency development will be provided.

### **A. ANALYZING THE ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

Demographic data and response data from both buyer and seller job tasks obtained from the Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment are provided in this section. Results and analysis of each phase of the contract life cycle will be covered in this section. Due to a response rate between 33% and 41% of all contracting workforce members who received the survey, results from the six organizations analyzed were combined to provide an overall analysis of the contracting workforce that supports Marines both deployed or training to deploy.

#### **1. Demographics Section**

Some members of the contracting workforce who chose to participate in the survey did not answer every question, leaving a variance in the response rates and total number of responses. The results obtained from the demographic questions in Section 1 of the survey are provided in Table 1.



Table 1. Expeditionary Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment Demographic Results

CM Years of Experience		Years in Organization	
3 or Less	15	1 or Less	15
4 to 8	19	1 to 2	6
9 to 13	5	2 to 3	6
14 to 18	2	3 or More	12
19 or More	0		
		<b>PCO</b>	22
DAWIA Level Certification		Other Professional Certifications	
None	8	CFCM	0
Level I	11	CCCM	0
Level II	16	CPCM	0
Level III	6	Other	0

Forty-one survey respondents reported their level of Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) certification status. Eight survey respondents reported that they did not hold a DAWIA certification, 11 reported that they held a Level I certification, 16 reported that they held a Level II certification, and six reported that they held a Level III certification. These numbers show that 46% of the surveyed contracting workforce population hold entry level or below certifications, 39% hold Intermediate level certifications, and 14% hold advanced level certifications (DAU, n.d.). The fact that 85% of the surveyed workforce holds an Intermediate level or below DAWIA certification indicates a low to medium level of training and experience throughout the contracting workforce that make up the three Marine Corps Expeditionary Contracting Platoons (ECPs) and co-located Regional Contracting Offices (RCOs).

Twenty-two survey respondents reported that they are Procuring Contracting Officers (PCOs). This means that they are appointed in writing to obligate funds through contract awards as an agent of the United States Government. No survey respondents held any professional contract management certifications outside of their occupational DAWIA level certification. Professional contract management certifications commonly found in the occupational field include but are not limited to: Certified Federal Contract Manager (CFCM), Certified Professional Contract Manager (CPCM), and Certified Commercial Contract Manager (CCCM). The lack of additional certifications is





surprising considering the number of sites that were analyzed. A lack of professional contract management certifications outside of DAWIA level certification is not necessarily bad, but it does show the workforce either has a low awareness of these professional certifications or does not recognize the benefit of additional contract management training outside of the prescribed occupational DAWIA level curriculum.

Forty-one survey respondents reported that they have experience in the contract management field. Fifteen reported that they had three years or less experience; 19 reported they had between four and eight years of experience; five reported that they had between nine and 13 years of experience, and two reported that they had between 14 and 18 years of experience. No survey respondents reported having 19 or more years of experience. The fact that almost 83% of the surveyed workforce has eight years or less experience in contract management indicates that the majority of the respondents providing contracting services is relatively new to the contract management field. Thirty percent of the contracting workforce reported that they had been with their respective organization for three or more years, while 38% reported having been with their respective organization for one year or less. All data points provided in the remainder of this chapter will be presented as averages taken by combining survey responses from all respondents.

## **2. Buyer Competency Section**

The consolidated assessment findings for buyer competencies can be seen in Figure 17. Next, we will discuss these findings as they relate to the pre-award, award, and post-award phases of the contract life cycle.



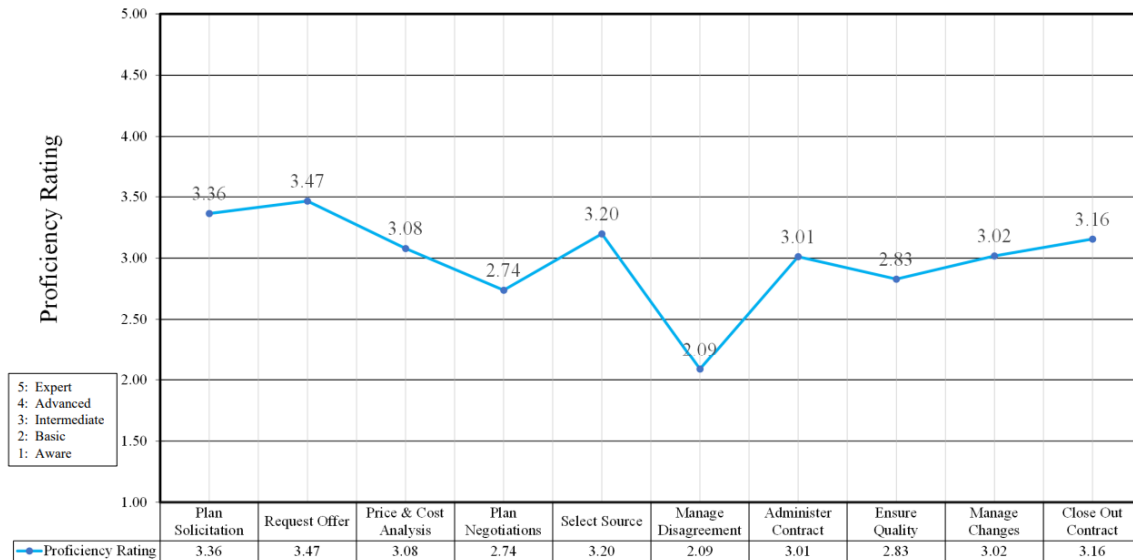


Figure 17. Expeditionary Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment Results (Buyer Competencies)

**a. Pre-Award Phase**

The buyer perspective of the pre-award phase within the contract life cycle includes two process competencies: “Plan Solicitation and Request Offer” (NCMA, 2019b, p. 9). The ECP/RCO workforce received a proficiency rating of Intermediate (3.36) for Plan Solicitation, and a proficiency rating of Intermediate (3.47) for Request Offer. The Intermediate rating in both of these competencies indicates that the contracting workforce generally requires no guidance and can perform job tasks in “considerably difficult situations” (Rendon & Schwartz, 2021, p. 11).

**b. Award Phase**

The buyer perspective of the award phase within the contract life cycle includes four process competencies: “Price or Cost Analysis, Plan Negotiations, Select Source, and Manage Disagreement” (NCMA, 2019b, p. 15). The ECP/RCO workforce received a proficiency rating of Intermediate (3.08) for Price or Cost Analysis, a proficiency rating of Basic (2.74) for Plan Negotiations, a proficiency rating of Intermediate (3.20) for Select Source, and a proficiency rating of Basic (2.09) for Manage Disagreements. The Basic rating in both the Plan Negotiations and Manage Disagreement competencies indicate that the contracting workforce requires “frequent guidance” in “somewhat difficult situations” that occur in these competencies (Rendon & Schwartz, 2021, p. 11).



The Intermediate rating in both the Price or Cost Analysis and Select Source competencies indicates that the contracting workforce generally requires no guidance and can perform job tasks in “considerably difficult situations” (Rendon & Schwartz, 2021, p. 11).

**c. *Post-Award Phase***

The buyer perspective of the post-award phase within the contract life cycle includes four process competencies: “Administer Contract, Ensure Quality, Manage Changes, and Close Out Contract” (NCMA, 2019b, p. 18). The ECP/RCO workforce received a proficiency rating of Intermediate (3.01) for Administer Contract, a proficiency rating of Basic (2.83) for Ensure Quality, a proficiency rating of Intermediate (3.02) for Manage Changes, and a proficiency rating of Intermediate (3.16) for Close Out Contract. The Basic rating in the Ensure Quality competency indicates that the contracting workforce requires “frequent guidance” in “somewhat difficult situations” that occur in this competency (Rendon & Schwartz, 2021, p. 11). The Intermediate ratings in the Administer Contract, Manage Changes and Close Out Contract competencies indicates that the contracting workforce generally requires no guidance and can perform job tasks in “considerably difficult situations” (Rendon & Schwartz, 2021, p. 11).

**3. Seller Competency Section**

The consolidated assessment findings for seller competencies can be seen in Figure 18. Next, we will discuss these findings as they relate to the pre-award, award, and post-award phases of the contract life cycle.



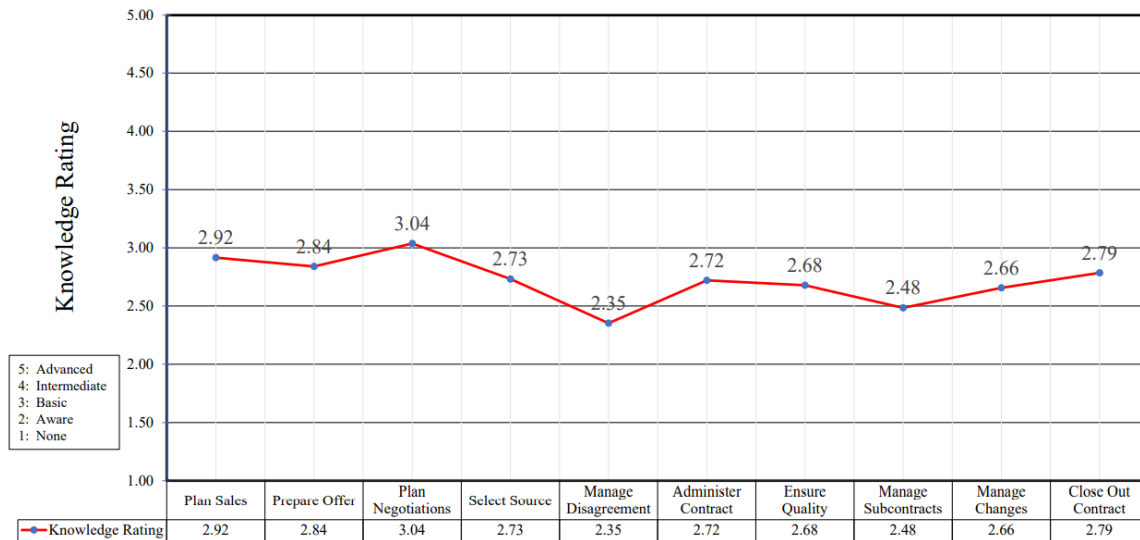


Figure 18. Expeditionary Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment Results (Seller Competencies)

**a. Pre-Award Phase**

The seller perspective of the pre-award phase within the contract life cycle includes two process competencies: “Plan Sales and Prepare Offer” (NCMA, 2019b, p. 12). The ECP/RCO workforce received a knowledge rating of Aware (2.92) for Plan Sales and a knowledge rating of Aware (2.84) for Prepare Offer. The Aware rating in both of these competencies indicates that the contracting workforce knows that these competencies exist “but have no knowledge” of tasks within them (Rendon & Schwartz, 2021, p. 11).

**b. Award Phase**

The seller perspective of the award phase within the contract life cycle includes three process competencies: “Plan Negotiations, Select Source, and Manage Disagreement” (NCMA, 2019b, p. 15). The ECP/RCO workforce received a knowledge rating of Basic (3.04) for Plan Negotiations, a knowledge rating of Aware (2.73) for Select Source, and a knowledge rating of Aware (2.35) for Manage Disagreement. The Basic rating in the Plan Negotiations competency indicates that the contracting workforce has “basic level knowledge” within this competency (Rendon & Schwartz, 2021, p. 11). The Aware rating in the Select Source and Manage Disagreement competencies indicate



that the contracting workforce knows that these competencies exist “but have no knowledge” of tasks within them (Rendon & Schwartz, 2021, p. 11).

**c. *Post-Award Phase***

The seller perspective of the post-award phase within the contract life cycle includes five process competencies: “Administer Contract, Ensure Quality, Manage Subcontracts, Manage Changes, and Close Out Contract” (NCMA, 2019b, p. 18). The ECP/RCO workforce received a knowledge rating of Aware (2.72) for Administer Contract, a knowledge rating of Aware (2.68) for Ensure Quality, a knowledge rating of Aware (2.48) for Manage Subcontracts, a knowledge rating of Aware (2.66) for Manage Changes, and a knowledge rating of Aware (2.79) for Close Out Contract. The Aware rating in these five competencies indicate that the contracting workforce knows that these competencies exist “but have no knowledge” of tasks within them (Rendon & Schwartz, 2021, p. 11).

Now that I have discussed the assessment results, I will discuss what these results mean in terms of competency as it pertains to the three Marine Corps ECPs and co-located RCOs that make up the expeditionary arm of the Marine Corps Field Contracting System (MCFCS).

**4. Discussion of Assessment Findings**

As expected, the surveyed population scored higher overall in buyer proficiency than they did in seller knowledge. This may be explained by the DOD contracting workforce being primarily trained on buyer competencies and not seller competencies under the previous DOD Contracting Competency Model. The assessment revealed that the survey respondents demonstrated a proficiency rating of Intermediate (3.30) in pre-award buyer competencies, a proficiency rating of Basic (2.67) in award buyer competencies, and a proficiency rating of Intermediate (3.00) in post-award buyer competencies. Buyer proficiency ratings in the pre-award phase are the highest, and buyer proficiency ratings in the award phase are the lowest of the three life cycle phases. The highest buyer proficiency rating was the Request Offer competency with a rating of



Intermediate (3.47), and the lowest buyer proficiency rating was the Manage Disagreement competency with a rating of Basic (2.09).

The assessment also revealed that the survey respondents demonstrated a knowledge rating of Aware (2.88) in pre-award seller competencies, a knowledge rating of Aware (2.70) in award seller competencies, and a knowledge rating of Aware (2.66) in post-award seller competencies. Seller knowledge ratings in the pre-award phase are the highest, and seller knowledge ratings in the post-award phase are the lowest of the three life cycle phases. This indicates that as the contract life cycle progresses, the survey respondents become less knowledgeable of seller tasks. The highest seller knowledge rating was the Plan Negotiations competency with a rating of Basic (3.04), and the lowest seller knowledge rating was the Manage Disagreement competency with a rating of Aware (2.35).

There were consistencies in both buyer and seller competency ratings. These consistencies include higher ratings in the pre-award phase compared to the award and post-award phases. I also observed that the Manage Disagreement competency was the lowest competency rating in both buyer proficiency and seller knowledge. Now that we have discussed the buyer and seller results of the analysis, and consistencies within the two, we will discuss how they compare to other organizations assessed using the same contracting competency assessment.

## **B. COMPARISON WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ASSESSED**

In this section, results from the CMS based Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment performed on the three Marine Corps ECPs and co-located RCOs are compared to results obtained from other organizations who have taken the CMS based Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment.

### **1. Marine Corps Systems Command**

Results obtained from Pfannenstiel & Hayashi's (2020) *Analysis of Marine Corps Systems Command Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment* indicate that the MCSC contracting workforce is more experienced in both buyer proficiency and seller knowledge than the contracting workforce that makes up the three Marine Corps ECPs



and co-located RCOs. There are some consistencies between the MCSC workforce assessment results and the ECP/RCO workforce assessment results. Buyer proficiency ratings in the pre-award phase were the highest of the three phases analyzed within both sets of assessment data. The Request Offer competency was the highest rated in terms of buyer proficiency within both sets of assessment data. The Plan Negotiations competency was the highest rated in terms of seller knowledge within both sets of assessment data. The Manage Disagreement competency was the lowest rated in terms of buyer proficiency and seller knowledge within both sets of assessment data. The higher ratings demonstrated by the MCSC workforce in all three phases of the contract life cycle may be explained by 80% of MCSC survey respondents having nine or more years of contracting experience, of which 30% had 19 or more years (Pfannenstiel & Hayashi, 2020). As mentioned in the demographics section of this chapter, 83% of the ECP/RCO survey respondents had eight years or less experience in contract management, and no members reported having 19 or more years of experience.

## **2. Army-Mission and Installation Contracting Command Field Directorate Office–Fort Sam Houston/Army Contracting Command–Orlando**

Results obtained from Davies et al. (2021) *Analysis of Army Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment* indicate that the Army Mission and Installation Contracting Command Field Directorate Office–Fort Sam Houston (MICC FDO-FSH) and Army Contracting Command–Orlando (ACC-ORL) contracting workforce is more experienced in both buyer proficiency and seller knowledge than the contracting workforce that makes up the three Marine Corps ECPs and co-located RCOs. There are some consistencies between the MICC FDO-FSH, ACC-ORL, and the ECP/RCO workforce assessment results. Buyer proficiency ratings in the pre-award phase were the highest of the three phases analyzed within all three sets of assessment data. The Manage Disagreement competency was the lowest rated in terms of buyer proficiency within all three sets of assessment data.

The Request Offer competency was the highest rated in terms of buyer proficiency between MICC FDO-FSH and the ECP/RCO workforce. Another consistency between MICC FDO-FSH and the ECP/RCO workforce assessment data observed



pertained to seller knowledge ratings. Seller knowledge ratings in the pre-award phase are the highest, and seller knowledge ratings in the post-award phase are the lowest of the three life cycle phases. This indicates that as the contract life cycle progresses, the survey respondents become less knowledgeable of seller tasks. The only similarity shown exclusively between the ACC-ORL, and the ECP/RCO workforce assessment data was the Plan Negotiations competency, which was the highest rated in terms of seller knowledge. The higher ratings demonstrated by the MICC FDO-FSH and ACC-ORL workforce in all three phases of the contract life cycle may be explained by 89% of the MICC FDO-FSH/ACC-ORL survey respondents having nine or more years of contracting experience, of which 28% had 19 or more years (Davies et al., 2021). As mentioned in the previous section, 83% of the surveyed ECP/RCO workforce had eight years or less experience in contract management, and no members reported having 19 or more years of experience.

### **3. Army National Guard Bureau**

Results obtained from Powell (2021) *Analysis of NGB Enterprise Contract Management Competencies* indicate that the Army National Guard Bureau (NGB) contracting workforce is more experienced in both buyer proficiency and seller knowledge than the contracting workforce that makes up the three Marine Corps ECPs and co-located RCOs. The only consistency observed between the NGB workforce assessment result data and the ECP/RCO workforce assessment result data were that the Manage Disagreement competency was the lowest rated in terms of buyer proficiency and seller knowledge. The higher ratings demonstrated by the NGB workforce in all three phases of the contract life cycle may be explained by 75% of the NGB survey respondents having nine or more years of contracting experience, of which 35% had 19 or more years of experience (Powell, 2021). As mentioned in the previous two sections, 83% of the surveyed ECP/RCO workforce had eight years or less experience in contract management, and no members reported having 19 or more years of experience.





#### **4. Patterns Observed Between Organizations**

Survey respondents from four of the five organizations that performed the CMS based Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment demonstrated the highest buyer proficiency ratings in the pre-award phase. Survey respondents from three of the five organizations assessed demonstrated the highest seller knowledge ratings in the pre-award phase. Survey respondents from all five organizations rated the Manage Disagreement competency as the lowest in terms of buyer proficiency. Survey respondents from three of the five organizations assessed rated the Manage Disagreement competency as the lowest in terms of seller knowledge.

Results from this comparison analysis give the impression that the members filling the ranks at the three Marine Corps ECPs and co-located RCOs are generally junior in their careers compared to other organizations assessed, and with the proper training and experience, will increase not only proficiency, but competency. Now that I have discussed results obtained through this analysis compared to previous organizations analyzed using the same CMS based Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment, I will discuss recommendations for training and development, as they pertain to the newly adopted CMS-based DOD Contracting Competency Model.

#### **C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

The CMS-based DOD Contracting Competency Model is new to the Marines and GS-1102 contracting workforce members who volunteered to take part in this analysis by completing the Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment. Keeping this in mind, the following recommendations are meant to provide senior contract management leaders with information on where to start training reform, as well as tools to help improve contracting competency, thus improving the way the Marine Corps procures goods and services to support its warfighters.

##### **1. Buyer Competency Improvement**

As discussed in Section A of this chapter, the buyer proficiency ratings reflected that the award phase had the lowest ratings in buyer proficiency, followed by the post-award phase, then the pre-award phase. Given these findings, my first recommendation



would be that the Marine Corps ECP/RCO workforce receive additional training on award competencies to improve buyer proficiency. Buyer specific training in the award phase should include the Plan Negotiations, Select Source, and Manage Disagreement competencies.

My second recommendation would be that the Manage Disagreement competency should receive the most attention in training development since it was the lowest performing buyer competency. The top four reasons the GAO sustained protests during Fiscal Year 2020 were: “1. Unreasonable technical evaluation, 2. Flawed solicitation, 3. Unreasonable cost or price evaluation, and 4. Unreasonable past performance evaluation” (Armstrong, 2020, p. 1). An increased proficiency in managing disagreements would undoubtedly mitigate all four of these reasons cited, thus mitigating protests against the government overall.

My third recommendation would be that the Marine Corps ECP/RCO workforce receive additional training on post-award competencies to improve buyer proficiency. Buyer specific training in the post-award phase should include the Administer Contract, Ensure Quality, Manage Changes, and Close Out Contract competencies.

My fourth recommendation would be that the Marine Corps ECP/RCO workforce receive additional training on pre-award competencies to improve buyer proficiency. Pre-award buyer specific training should include the Plan Solicitation, Request Offer, and Price and Cost Analysis competencies. Any competency training developed could be aligned with the associated FAR sections, as reflected in the CMS-FAR Matrix (Appendix B).

## **2. Seller Competency Improvement**

As discussed in Section A of this chapter, the seller knowledge ratings reflected that the post-award phase had the lowest ratings in seller knowledge, followed by the award phase, then the pre-award phase. Given these findings, my first recommendation would be that the Marine Corps ECP/RCO workforce receive additional training on post-award competencies to improve seller knowledge. Seller specific training in the post-



award phase should include the Administer Contract, Ensure Quality, Manage Subcontracts, Manage Changes, and Close Out Contract competencies.

My second recommendation would be that the Manage Disagreement competency should receive the most attention in training development since it was the lowest performing seller competency. As described in the previous paragraph, an increased knowledge in managing disagreements would help to mitigate sustained protests against the government.

My third recommendation would be that the Marine Corps ECP/RCO workforce receive additional training on award competencies to improve seller knowledge. Seller specific training in the award phase should include the Plan Negotiations, Select Source, and Manage Disagreement competencies.

My fourth recommendation would be that the Marine Corps ECP/RCO workforce receive additional training on pre-award competencies to improve seller knowledge. Pre-award seller specific training would include the Plan Sales and Prepare Offer competencies. Any competency training developed could be aligned with the associated FAR sections, as reflected in the CMS-FAR Matrix (Appendix B). The next section provides additional training tools that will complement the competency specific training previously mentioned.

### **3. Supplemental Training**

Locating and distributing supplemental training on competencies found within the new CMS-based DOD Contracting Competency Model framework to all contracting workforce members of the Marine Corps Field Contracting System (MCFCS) is recommended. This can be as simple as a pocket reference guide to get them familiar with the new DOD contracting competency model. The presentation put together by the Contracting Certification Taskforce (2020) titled *Department of Defense Contracting Competency Model* provides all relevant information pertaining to the transition of DOD Contracting Competency Models. The largest deviation for both buyer and seller competencies was Manage Disagreement with the rating of Basic for buyer proficiency, and Aware for seller knowledge. The lack of competency in this area likely stems from



survey respondents being more familiar with functioning in a contingency contracting environment where protests are rare, however a lack of buyer proficiency and seller knowledge in this competency can present problems that turn into protests against the government, slowing the acquisition process. The CMS-FAR matrix (Appendix B) can also be used to help bridge the gap between the DOD Contracting Competency Model framework, and the execution regulation provided within the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR).

#### **4. MCTIMS as a Tactical Level Training Distribution Tool**

NCMA CMS based competency training material can be uploaded into the Marine Corps Training Information Management System (MCTIMS) website which can be accessed for training purposes and updated globally by any Marine Corps contracting workforce member. A thorough search of the training resource module within MCTIMS revealed no relevant contract management training material has been uploaded to this website for contracting workforce members to use.

#### **5. Incentivize Competency Training**

I recommend contracting workforce leadership encourage/incentivize the pursuit of professional certifications in contract management. Professional certifications will undoubtedly increase contracting competency, resulting in better procurement of goods and services for the government. Results obtained from the demographics section of the competency assessment indicated no survey respondents had professional certifications outside of their occupational DAWIA certification. A potential tactical level tool that could be used to encourage this pursuit of competency within the contracting workforce is increased personal performance markings within Section G of the NAVMC 10835C Fitness Report (FITREP) performed on individual workforce members, or General Schedule (GS) equivalent civilian performance evaluations.

#### **6. Update Training and Readiness Standard References**

I recommend updating the Training and Readiness (T&R) standards in NAVMC 3500.64C to include the updated DOD Contracting Competency Model as reference material for each 3006 or 3044 Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) T&R standard.



## **7. Baseline for Future Use**

Using the results provided from this Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment as a baseline to reassess the contracting workforce at a future date in terms of competency as it pertains to the newly adopted CMS-based DOD Contracting Competency Model is recommended. Continuous pursuit of increased buyer proficiency and seller knowledge will help reduce barriers for the contracting workforce in procuring goods and services to support the Marine Corps warfighters both in garrison and deployed.

### **D. SUMMARY**

Results obtained from survey respondents on the three sections of the Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment were discussed in this Chapter, including demographics, buyer, and seller competencies. Results from the buyer and seller competency sections were broken down by the three phases of the contract life cycle. A comparison of buyer and seller competency results were also discussed. Next, a comparison with other organizations that have taken the same Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment took place. Lastly, recommendations for improving training and competency development were provided.



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## VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In this chapter, a summary of the transformative changes leading to the replacement of the DOD Contracting Competency Model, the purpose of the research, theories used, and reason for choosing the organizations analyzed will be discussed. Conclusions made from the research will be discussed. Lastly, areas for further research provides potential research topics that could be beneficial to senior leaders in the future.

### A. SUMMARY

Transformative changes have led to the restructure of the DOD Contracting Competency Model and certification program almost three decades after its first implementation. Congress has always been concerned with the way the defense acquisition workforce is trained and educated. There have been many committees established with the intent of bettering defense acquisition and its workforce. With a focus on bettering the way the defense department procures goods and services, Congress enacted “the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act on November 5, 1990” (General Accounting Office, 1993, p. 1). The Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) required the establishment of an Acquisition Corps, the professionalization of the acquisition workforce through the establishment of centralized training, descriptions of the education and certification requirements, and the establishment of the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) structure (Rendon & Snider, 2019). In 1992, the General Accounting Office (GAO) released a report that cited DOD Contract Management as one of 17 high risk federal government program areas, and DOD Contract Management has remained on this list for nearly 30 years.

After several legislative investigations and initiatives, on February 17, 2021, the principal director for defense pricing and contracting (DPC) published a memorandum titled *Restructuring of the Certification Program for the Contracting Functional Area*, which outlined the restructuring of the DOD Contracting Professional Certification Program and Contracting Competency Model, based on the American National Standard Institute (ANSI) / National Contract Management Association (NCMA) Accredited



Standards Developer (ASD) 1-2019 accredited Contract Management Standard (CMS; Tenaglia, 2021).

The two theories used to conduct this research were auditability theory, and competency theory. A discussion of several different contracting competency models in use today took place, including the previous DOD Contracting Competency Model, and current Contract Management Standard (CMS)–based DOD Contracting Competency Model, and a discussion on the transition to the CMS. Contracting competency assessments have been performed on contracting workforce members at the base support level, and weapons procurement level, but not the contingency contracting level. This research filled that gap by conducting a competency assessment on the Marine Corps contracting workforce members that are part of the Marine Corps Field Contracting System (MCFCS). The three Expeditionary Contracting Platoons (ECPs) and the three Regional Contracting Offices (RCOs) to be analyzed contain uniformed workforce members who train and are equipped to perform contingency contracting in remote locations, forward deployed. The three RCOs also contain GS-1102 contracting workforce members who provide contracting support to the three deployable Marine Expeditionary Forces, and who also serve as initial trainers to Marines new to the contracting workforce. The primary purpose of this research was to establish a contract management competency baseline on the workforce that makes up the three Marine Corps ECPs and co-located RCOs, since these forces directly support Marines deployed or training to deploy.

## **B. CONCLUSIONS**

In order to provide organizational policymakers with the expeditionary contract management workforce’s current strengths and possible areas of improvement, a Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment based on the new DOD Contracting Competency Model was performed on the three Marine Corps ECPs and co-located RCOs. Results obtained from this Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment were used to answer the questions that gave purpose to this research.





**1. What are the buyer competency proficiency ratings for the Marine Expeditionary Contracting Workforce based on the CMS assessment?**

The assessment revealed that the survey respondents demonstrated a proficiency rating of Intermediate (3.30) in pre-award buyer competencies, a proficiency rating of Basic (2.67) in award buyer competencies, and a proficiency rating of Intermediate (3.00) in post-award buyer competencies. Buyer proficiency ratings in the pre-award phase are the highest, and buyer proficiency ratings in the award phase are the lowest of the three life cycle phases. The highest buyer proficiency rating was the Request Offer competency with a rating of Intermediate (3.47), and the lowest buyer proficiency rating was the Manage Disagreement competency with a rating of Basic (2.09).

**2. What are the seller competency knowledge ratings for the Marine Expeditionary Contracting Workforce based on the CMS assessment?**

The assessment revealed that the survey respondents demonstrated a knowledge rating of Aware (2.88) in pre-award seller competencies, a knowledge rating of Aware (2.70) in award seller competencies, and a knowledge rating of Aware (2.66) in post-award seller competencies. Seller knowledge ratings in the pre-award phase are the highest, and seller knowledge ratings in the post-award phase are the lowest of the three life cycle phases. This indicates that as the contract life cycle progresses, the survey respondents become less knowledgeable of seller tasks. The highest seller knowledge rating was the Plan Negotiations competency with a rating of Basic (3.04), and the lowest seller knowledge rating was the Manage Disagreement competency with a rating of Aware (2.35).

**3. What recommendations can be made for improving the contract management competencies for the Marine Expeditionary Contracting Workforce based on the CMS assessment?**

My first recommendation would be to provide additional training on buyer competencies starting with award, post-award, then pre-award life cycle phases. My second recommendation would be that the Manage Disagreement competency should receive the most attention in training development since it was the lowest performing buyer and seller perspective competency and can be directly tied to mitigating sustained



protests against the government. My third recommendation would be to provide additional training on seller competencies starting with post-award, award, then pre-award life cycle phases. My fourth recommendation would be to locate and distribute supplemental training material pertaining to the new CMS-based DOD Contracting Competency Model framework to improve contracting workforce competency. The increased understanding of the fundamental framework and linking it with the execution language found in the FAR will help the workforce perform better as contract managers procuring goods and services for Marines. My Fifth recommendation would be to use MCTIMS as a vessel to distribute training material to contracting workforce members globally, and sixth would be to incentivize the pursuit of professional certifications in contract management. My seventh recommendation would be to update T&R standard references to reflect the DOD Contracting Competency Model, and my eighth recommendation would be to use the results obtained from this assessment as a baseline for future reassessments of contracting workforce competency.

### **C. AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

My first area for further research would be to conduct the same type of assessment on an Air Force, Army, or Navy organization that specializes in contingency contracting operations and see how the results compare. As mentioned in Chapter III, the three Marine Corps ECPs and uniformed contracting workforce members at the co-located RCOs specialize in contingency contracting operations, where vendor competition and protests are often limited, reducing the workforce's exposure to "routine" contract management procedures.

My second area for further research would take place at least one year from the date of any additional training implementation. Another competency assessment can be performed on the ECP/RCO workforce which can be compared to the results obtained while performing this research. This will provide feedback as to whether the additional training increased workforce competency or had no effect.

My third area for further research would be on recruitment and retention of the Marine Corps contracting workforce. The demographic results obtained from the Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment performed on the three Marine Corps



ECPs and co-located RCOs revealed a contracting workforce that consisted primarily of members who are junior in their contracting careers; 83% had eight years or less contract management experience. When comparing these demographic results to other government agencies who performed the Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment, these survey respondents were the most junior in terms of contracting experience. Research on Marine Corps contracting workforce retention rates could be beneficial and reveal recommendations to keep these uniquely qualified professionals in the workforce longer, or it could reveal beneficial changes to the current force structure model.



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## APPENDIX A. 2014 DOD CONTRACTING COMPETENCY MODEL

<b>The DOD Contracting Competency Model</b>	
UNITS OF COMPETENCE	COMPETENCIES
<b>Pre-Award and Award</b>	Determination of How Best to Satisfy Requirements
	Consider Socioeconomic Requirements
	Promote Competition
	Source Selection Planning
	Solicitation of Offers
	Responsibility Determination
	Bid Evaluation (Sealed Bidding)
	Proposal Evaluation (Contracting by Negotiation)
	Source Selection
	Contract Award
<b>Develop and/or Negotiate Positions</b>	Process Protests
	Justification of Other than Full and Open Competition
	Terms and Conditions
<b>Advanced Cost and/or Price Analysis</b>	Preparation and Negotiation
	Advanced Cost and/or Price Analysis
<b>Contract Administration</b>	Initiation of Work
	Contract Performance Management
	Issue Changes and Modifications
	Approve Payment Requests
<b>Small Business-Socioeconomic Programs</b>	Close Out Contracts
	Addressing Small Business Concerns
<b>Negotiate Forward Pricing Rate Agreements and Administer Cost Accounting Standards</b>	Negotiate Forward Pricing Rate Agreements and Administer Cost Accounting Standards
<b>Contract Termination</b>	Contract Termination
<b>Procurement Policy</b>	Procurement Analysis
<b>Other Competencies</b>	E-Business and Automated Tools
	Activity Program Coordinator for Purchase Card
	Construction/Architect and Engineering
<b>Contracting in a Contingent and/or Combat Environment</b>	Contracting in a Contingent and/or Combat Environment
<b>Professional Competency</b>	Problem Solving
	Customer Service
	Oral Communication
	Written Communication
	Interpersonal Skills
	Decisiveness
	Technical Credibility
	Flexibility
	Resilience
Accountability	

Figure 19. 2014 DOD Contracting Competency Model. Source: Rendon and Winn, (2017).



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## APPENDIX B. CMS2-FAR MATRIX

The following matrix cross-references the competencies of the *Contract Management Standard, Second Edition (CMS2)* with the *Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR)*.

CMS Competency	Job Task	FAR Part
<b>1.0 Guiding Principles</b>		
<b>1.1 Skills and Roles</b>	Career Development, Contracting Authority, and Responsibility	1
<b>1.2 Contract Principles</b>	Statement of Guiding Principles for the FAR	1
<b>1.3 Standards of Conduct</b>	Improper Business Practices and Personal Conflicts of Interest	3
	Contractor Responsibility Standards	9
<b>1.4 Regulatory Compliance</b>	Application of Labor Laws to Government Acquisitions	22
	Environment, Energy and Water Efficiency, Renewable Energy Technology, Occupational Safety, and Drug-Free Workplace	23
	Protection of Privacy and Freedom of Information	24
	Manage Patents, Data, Copyrights, Bonds, Insurance, and Taxes	27, 28, 29
<b>1.5 Situational Assessment</b>	Special Contracting Methods	17
	Emergency Contracting	18
	Foreign Acquisition	25
	Major Systems Acquisition	34
	R&D Contracting	35
	Construction and A-E	36
	Service Contracting	37
	Federal Supply Schedule Contracting	38
	Acquisition of Information Technology	39
	Acquisition of Utility Services	41
	Extraordinary Contractual Actions and the Safety Act	50
<b>1.6 Team Dynamics</b>	Acquisition Team	1
	Definitions of Words and Terms	2
	Document Lessons Learned/Best Practices	4
<b>1.7 Communication and Documentation</b>	FAR Compliance	1 – 52
<b>2.0 Pre-Award</b>		
<b>2.1 Develop Solicitation</b>		
<b>2.1.1 Plan Solicitation</b>	Shape Internal Customer Requirements	11
	Conduct Market Research	5, 7, 10
	Perform Risk Analysis	6, 8, 10, 15, 19, 26
	Formulate Contracting Strategy	12, 13, 14, 15, 16
	Finalize Solicitation Plan	12, 13, 14, 15
<b>2.1.2 Request Offers</b>	Execute Solicitation Plan	12, 13, 14, 15
	Prepare Solicitations	12, 13, 14, 15
	Issue Solicitations	5, 12, 13, 14, 15
	Amend Solicitations	12, 13, 14, 15
<b>2.2 Develop Offer</b>		
<b>2.2.1 Plan Sales</b>	Conduct Pre-Sales Activities	3, 5
	Evaluate Solicitation	2
	Conduct Offer/No-Offer Analysis	6, 9
	Finalize Sales Plan	7, 12, 13, 14, 15
<b>2.2.2 Prepare Offer</b>	Execute Sales Plan	12, 13, 14, 15
	Develop Execution Plan	45, 46
	Develop Risk Mitigation Plans	32, 42, 49
	Assess Teaming Options and Partners	9, 19, 44, 51
	Participate in Pre-Offer Conference	5
	Finalize Offer	4, 53

Figure 20. CMS2-FAR MATRIX. Source: R. Rendon (personal communication), October 21, 2021.



### 3.0 Award

3.1 Form Contract		
3.1.1 Price or Cost Analysis	Comprehend Offer	12, 13, 14, 15
	Evaluate Seller Terms & Their Impact on Risk	12, 13, 14, 15
	Determine Reasonable Pricing	30, 31
	Document Analysis Results	30, 31
3.1.2 Plan Negotiations	Clarification Requests	12, 13, 14, 15
	Document Negotiation Objectives	12, 13, 14, 15
	Conduct Discussions	12, 13, 14, 15
3.1.3 Select Source	Review Compliance of Offer(s)	12, 13, 14, 15
	Source Selection	12, 13, 14, 15
	Conduct Negotiations	12, 13, 14, 15
	Finalize Negotiations	12, 13, 14, 15
	Final Offer Revision	12, 13, 14, 15
	Prepare Contract Document	12, 13, 14, 15
	Finalize Contract Award	12, 13, 14, 15
3.1.4 Manage Disagreements	Submit Protests and Appeals	33
	Respond to Protests and Appeals	33

### 4.0 Post-Award

4.1 Perform Contract		
4.1.1 Administer Contract	Execute Contract	12, 13, 14, 15
	Conduct Post-Award Conference Meeting	42
	Maintain Contract Documentation/Files	4, 45
	Provide Cost Information	30, 31
	Establish/Maintain Communications	1
	Evaluate Interim Contractor Performance	42, 47, 48
4.1.2 Ensure Quality	Manage Deliverables	12, 13, 14, 15
	Plan for Contract Performance Delivery	46
	Plan for Contract Performance Monitoring	46
4.1.3 Manage Subcontracts	Inspect and Accept Contract Performance	46
	Determine Supply Chain Requirements	9, 19, 44
	Issue Subcontracts	9, 44
4.1.4 Manage Changes	Manage Contract Changes	43
	Conduct Contract Interpretation	2, 33
	Determine Contract Termination	49
4.2 Close Contract		
4.2.1 Close Out Contract	Validate Contract Performance	42
	Verify Physical Contract Completion	42
	Prepare Contract Completion Documents	4
	Coordinate Final Disposition of Owner-Provided Property/Equipment/Information	45
	Settle Subcontracts	44
	Reconcile Contract	4
	Make Final Payment	4, 31, 32
	Evaluate Final Contractor Performance	42, 47, 48
	Finalize Contract	4, 12, 13, 14, 15, 42, 52

Figure 21. CMS2-FAR MATRIX. Source: R. Rendon (personal communication), October 21, 2021.





## APPENDIX C. CMS-UCC MATRIX

The following matrix cross-references the competencies of the Contract Management Standard (CMS) with the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC).

CMS Competency	Job Task	UCC Article (Part)
<b>1.0 Guiding Principles</b>		
1.1 Skills and Roles		1, 2 – 9 (1)
1.2 Contract Principles		
1.3 Standards of Conduct		
1.4 Regulatory Compliance		
1.5 Situational Assessment		
1.6 Team Dynamics		NA
<b>2.0 Pre-Award</b>		
<b>2.1 Develop Solicitation</b>		
2.1.1 Acquisition Planning	Perform Acquisition Planning	NA
	Shape Internal Customer Requirements	NA
	Conduct Market Research	NA
	Identify Potential Suppliers	NA
	Evaluate Requirement Achievability	NA
	Conduct Pre-Offer Conferences	NA
	Select Proper Contract Type	NA
	Select Proper Contract Method	NA
	Determine Appropriate Business and Regulatory Requirements	NA
2.1.2 Requesting Offers	Formulate Offer Evaluation Plan	NA
	Prepare Solicitations	2 (2)
	Determine Need to Publicize Solicitations	NA
	Issue Solicitations	2 (2)
<b>2.2 Develop Offer</b>		
2.2.1 Business Development	Amend Solicitations	2 (2)
	Evaluate Solicitation	2 (2), 2A (2), 6
	Conduct Pre-Sales Activities	NA
	Conduct Bid/No Bid Analysis	2 (2), 2A (2)
2.2.2 Develop Win Strategy	Finalize Business Development Plan	2 (2), 2A (2), 6
	Execute Business Development Plan	2 (2), 2A (2)
	Develop Acquisition Execution Plan	2 (2), 2A (2)
	Develop Risk Mitigation Plans	2 (3) 2A (2)
	Assess Teaming Options and Partners	2 (2), 2A (2)
	Participate in Pre-Offer Conference	2 (2), 2A (2)
	Finalize Offer	2 (2), 2A (2), 6
<b>3.0 Award</b>		
<b>3.1 Form Contract</b>		
3.1.1 Price or Cost Analysis	Review Compliance of Offer(s)	
	Comprehend Offer	NA
	Evaluate Seller Terms & Their Impact on Risk	3 (2)
3.1.2 Conduct Negotiations	Determine Reasonable Pricing	3 (2)
	Clarification Requests	NA
	Conduct Negotiations	NA
	Final Offer Revision	NA
3.1.3 Select Source	Finalize Negotiations	NA

Figure 22. CMS-UCC MATRIX. Source: R. Rendon (personal communication), October 21, 2021.



	Evaluate Offer(s) in Accordance with Evaluation Criteria	2 (2 – 3), 2A (2)
	Prepare Contract Document	
	Finalize Contract Award	
3.1.4 Manage Legal Conformity	Submit Protests and Appeals	NA
	Respond to Protests and Appeals	NA

#### 4.0 Post-Award

<b>4.1 Perform Contract</b>		
4.1.1 Administer Contract	Conduct Post-Award Conference Meeting	NA
	Maintain Contract Documentation/Files	1 – 9
	Manage Contract Payment Process	3 (2), 4, 4A, 5
	Administer Owner-Furnished Property, Equipment, Information	NA
	Establish/Maintain Communications	NA
	Evaluate Contractor Performance	2 (2, 5, 6, 7), 2A (2, 4)
4.1.2 Ensure Quality	Plan for Contract Performance Delivery	2 (5, 6, 7), 2A (2, 4), 3 (2)
	Plan for Contract Performance Monitoring	2 (5, 6, 7), 2A (2, 4), 3 (2)
	Inspect and Accept Contract Performance	2 (5, 6, 7), 2A (2, 3, 4), 3 (2)
4.1.3 Subcontract Management	Determine Supply Chain Requirements	2(2)
	Issue Subcontracts	NA
4.1.4 Manage Changes	Manage Contract Changes	2 (2, 6, 7), 2A (2), 3 (2)
	Conduct Contract Interpretation	2 (1), 3(2)
	Determine Contract Termination	2 (6, 7), 2A (2, 4, 5), 3 (3)
<b>4.2 Close Contract</b>		
4.2.1 Contract Closeout	Validate Contract Performance	NA
	Verify Physical Contract Completion	NA
	Prepare Contract Completion Documents	NA
	Coordinate Final Disposition of Owner-Provided Property/Equipment	NA
	Reconcile Contract	NA
	Make Final Payment	4, 4A, 5
	Finalize Contract	NA

Figure 23. CMS-UCC MATRIX. Source: R. Rendon (personal communication), October 21, 2021.



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