



# Creating Effective Engagements with CBP

Jay Payne, Vice President  
USG Account Manager



CARGO SCANNING & SOLUTIONS

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# CBP Communication with Vendors is essential – through all stages of design, development, and deployment

- Development of new products needs input on the concept of operations
  - Latest example - New drive through X Ray systems need traffic controls, communication systems, and peripheral placement to fit each specific site
  - Design must consider officer field limitations – battery life, ease of carry, poor network, environmental concerns, officer availability, traffic flow and pressures, cargo or vehicle configurations, seasonal variations, etc.
- Matching new technology to a technological need requires communication with all stakeholders
  - Developing an RFI or RFP prematurely leaves unanswered questions, missing or incorrect specifications, or does not adequately consider CONOPS or field limitations
    - Vendors are reluctant to ask questions directly related to their proprietary technology
    - Formal RFI/RFP questions are funneled through multiple processes and not necessarily sent to correct stakeholder, resulting in little change
- CBP is not adequately staffed for establishing requirements – fraction of DoD training or staffing
  - Field expertise does not necessarily translate into an adequately defined RFP or SOW
  - Majority of CBP acquisitions are “Modified COTS” not typical Research and Development projects
  - S&T programs for CBP have developmental focus, difficult to engage appropriate CBP representation

- While the FAR encourages discussions and communications with vendors –
  - “**1.102-2a 4** The Government must not hesitate to communicate with the commercial sector as early as possible in the acquisition cycle to help the Government determine the capabilities available in the commercial marketplace. The Government will maximize its use of commercial products and services in meeting Government requirements.”
- Varying application by agencies, offices, and directorates throughout DHS – DHS Policy lays out some guidelines but leaves room for interpretation
  - When does an acquisition start? When are needs considered identified? How are needs communicated with industry?
  - Agencies must manage contact - Maintain vendor competition, protect proprietary info, ensure level playing field
- Integrated Product Teams between S&T and CBP identify high level gaps – leave details open

- Industry needs a published annual plan for high level strategy and acquisition plans
- CBP should have frequent industry days, with high level technology needs
  - Followed by one on one meetings with vendors to go into further detail
  - Ends in detailed CONOPS and specifications
- Separate meetings for new concepts - Educational – background for new product development
  - Determine if new or advanced technology will benefit CBP
    - Describe specific functions or capabilities
    - Define operational parameters
    - Understand general CONOPS and limitations
- CBP/S&T further define developmental concepts and timeline to operational readiness