

Clever, Creative Procurement Innovation



Soraya Correa
Chief Procurement Officer
Department of Homeland Security

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Soraya Correa thrives on coming up with clever, creative ways to evaluate proposals in real time to make sure DHS gets mission critical products and services needed quickly.

That's why she is particularly proud of what the DHS Procurement Innovation Lab (PIL) has accomplished.

"The PIL focuses on we improve business processes; how we come up with more clever, creative, innovative ways, working within the confines of the regulations for DHS, industry and government partners to speed up the process", Ms. Correa explained. "The PIL has been very successful. We've run probably run over 19 projects."

One example is a VA project where DHS collaborated with them.

"VA used one of our processes where we use technical demonstrations from industry instead of having them write proposals," Ms. Correa explained. "We bring them in and they demonstrate their capabilities."

This creative risk taking, working in partnership with our customers is important thing I want to do in procurement, Ms. Correa stressed.

That is translating into increased collaboration and strategic conversations with industry. "We're talking with industry before solicitations are out there, before we're planning a procurement to really let them know: 'Here are the challenges we face, here are the problems we are trying to solve', making sure industry understands our needs and how we can better work with industry," Ms. Correa said.

"When industry does see a problem, they bring it to my attention or to the head of contracting so the problem can actually be solved."

Ms. Correa stressed she wants to properly plan with customers to deliver what they need, when they need it, how they need it in furtherance of the mission.

"Because at the end of the day, that's what this is all about."

Transforming the Conversation – and IT



Stephen Rice
Deputy Chief Information Officer
Department of Homeland Security HQ

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When **Stephen Rice** came to DHS, he helped change the management conversation about the role of IT at DHS.

Many outside IT thought was just a delivery system; to Mr. Rice IT could be a transformational agent at DHS. Thus, he set out to make sure that everyone understood their business, the challenges and financial issues DHS was facing.

"It sounds kind of simple, but if you have never seen a data center, you really don't know the size, scale and complexity," Mr. Rice explained. "The first thing I did was create a roadshow. I took the finance community, I took the procurement community; I put them in a car and drove them down to the data center."

There they saw rows and rows and racks of equipment. The conversation turned to the challenges of recapitalization; the complexity based on the size, scale and number of patches necessary; and just that the pace of a data center.

Mr. Rice also showed them a cloud center. "Now instead of cloud being a nebulous term, they started seeing that there are data centers behind it and it's actually a change in business models," he added.

Now leadership has a better understanding of the compute requirements necessary. This change in conversation allowed Mr. Rice to sit down with CFOs and procurement staff at multiple levels to discuss ways to transform the delivery, governance and acquisition of services.

"We can actually transform the type of Federal IT professional we are looking at," Mr. Rice said. "We are not looking for infrastructure professionals; we are looking for data analysts; we're looking for persons that understand how to operate in the cloud; we're looking at the ability to move into a cloud or DevOps approach. So it is the change in conversation that I am most proud of."