

The Procurement Communiqué

*We Asked You, and You Told Us...
The Results Are In*

*(Or, as is often the case, if you don't want to hear the answer...
...don't ask the question)*

Annual Procurement Customer Survey

We once again appreciate your responses and comments to the Annual Procurement Customer Survey, and we remain committed to continue to provide the best, most efficient acquisition process possible. We will use your suggestions and criticisms to further improve our service to you. 349 responses were received this year (up over a hundred from last year's survey). We are greatly encouraged by the overall positive results across all metrics, and the positive comments received this year. We always can and will strive to continue our renewed emphasis on customer focus, sense of urgency, and continued process improvements. We always welcome communication with you, whether it's a personal telephone call or a note.

Joe

Procurement

Points of Contact:

Joseph A. Ingraffia
Argonne Procurement Manager

William M. Walsh
Procurement Operations Manager

Vicki W. Worthington
Procurement Systems/Property

Inside this Issue:

...Candid Comments
...Timeliness
...Professionalism
...Support Quality
...Communications
...Supplier Performance
...Mission Support
...Overall Rating

As always, the comments received are up front and center. The data/charts are included at the end of the Communiqué, and take a look at the past five years results/trends. We truly appreciate your input! Please enjoy this year's sampling of

The Good, the Not-So-Bad, and the Ugly

The Good,

- The procurement system steadily improves each year. It's now become difficult to even recall what it was like 10 or even five years ago. The system now functions so smoothly (at least for me) that it's hard to think of what might be done to improve it. But of course sometimes there are problems, that's normal, which is why it's still critical to have good people. I've had only good experiences with all your buyers. Thanks for the fine work, we can't do research without equipment.
- I do not have any specific recommendations for improvement at this time. It's hard to improve on perfection!
- Things are going very well! I checked with others in NST and we have no complaints. The staff are always professional and willing to assist.
- Thank you for the great service you provide.
- I always find procurement personnel helpful and cooperative
- Keep the good work— very great experience— Great Job.— Thank you.



More of... *The Good*, the Not-So-Bad, and the Ugly

- I really like the fast turnaround that the AMOS system enables.
- _____ goes the extra mile time after time to help new contractors or new staff at contractors from other countries understand the US procurement process. _____ is meticulous assuring all requirements of process and of contract are met, but points out any issues or concerns in a positive, helpful manner that leads to mutual success. _____ provides great counsel as to the benefits or pitfalls of potential approaches before we send out RFPs so that our tech reps can pursue the best path. _____ is an absolute exemplar of professionalism and solution-seeking. Fortunately our team finds interaction with others in the procurement staff excellent as well, including support from legal and allied professionals. The only time we run into problems are when non-procurement folks in the approval chain suffer from a perspective that is overly focused on operations or activities inside the fence here at ANL without being able to see how our contracts with reactor operating organizations and suppliers outside the lab are what our sponsor charges us to focus upon.
- I'm new to a lot of this management stuff and have statements of work and all kind of procurements keeping me busy. I appreciate your patience with me as I muddle my way through all this stuff.
- As a PM often involved with PRO actions, I have found ANL/Procurement to exhibit a high degree of professionalism in all facets and phases of my project procurement process. Their expertise, responsiveness, and overall assistance is welcomed and appreciated in an often rapid procurement process.
- Procurement Staff is always very helpful. Thank you for your fine efforts! Special appreciation to _____ and recognition for helping with all of the 205 Extent of Condition work. And to others in procurement to whom I interact with less frequently.
- The service provided by Procurement has been excellent. _____ group has been wonderful again this year to deal with as they always seem to understand the importance of getting orders placed quickly for us.
- I'm very satisfied; maybe more useful canned reports, i.e. searching BPAs by cost code. When I need to pull together reports, there's always some digging involved, but that's largely due to the fact that I don't do it very often. I don't think I've ever dead-ended getting PARIS data in a usable form. The web interface is so useful, I've forgotten life without it!
- Doing a great job at this time.— Your doing a good job now.
- We appreciate the support we receive from _____ and _____ in bringing in sponsored research and continuously to plow through problems/roadblocks from the sponsors. Communication has improved immensely over the past few years, and there is no longer the "black hole" that we frequently experienced in not knowing where things were at. Also, _____ and team are always willing to help and advise us on issues/problems. Procurement has truly improved over the past several years and has become more attuned to the needs of the researchers.

The Not-So-Bad...

- The process for determining the priority placement of orders is opaque and unclear. I have had large dollar no rush orders placed faster than small dollar rush orders. Often, this seems to be a matter of who in the procurement office is placing the order, but there may be other issues that are not communicated to me. A system with a better defined gradient - urgent, high, medium, low - such as is used by APS IT when dealing with service requests might work better and provide both procurement and users more flexibility to work on orders in the time they are needed.
- Have an online class on how to use the Paris system .
- We now receive PARIS tips in email format. I would prefer some kind of training as email is hard to archive, search etc. Also -- I wish the general procurement process was more transparent so I would know what to expect with each procurement, instead of having it vary depending on the specialist that I am working with.
- Online information regarding subcontract process and requirements would be helpful.
- When completing more complex procurements, certain documents and forms are required. (ex., contractors, subcontracts, extensions) It would be helpful to have a basic cross reference of necessary docs and forms before I submit the PR, which may eliminate the wasted time resulting from the "disapproval" process if the correct forms/docs are not presented upon routing.
- We now receive PARIS tips in email format. I would prefer some kind of training as email is hard to archive, search etc. Also -- I wish the general procurement process was more transparent so I would know what to expect with each procurement, instead of having it vary depending on the specialist that I am working with.
- Have something that lists what the different QA levels are so I know which one to choose when filling out a purchase order. I seldom do one, so it would help me remember.

continues on the next page

More of... *The Good*, the Not-So-Bad, and the Ugly

- Training for new buyers/buyers who have changed responsible divisions needs improvement. The buyers who have been responsible for a particular division have become a valuable commodity for that division-ideally they should be training buyer as to the idiosyncrasies for that particular division's needs. Our previous buyer (____) has been incredible. If everyone we worked with had ____ intuitiveness, follow through, practicality - the Laboratory would greatly benefit. Some of the questions that we have been asked recently were redundant - the information was in the req; needless delays that have detrimentally impacted timespan needed to award, etc.
- It was hard to fill this out because I've had mixed results. I've been very satisfied with most of the Procurements I've been involved with, but have been very dis-satisfied with the ____ Procurements. The ratings I've included here reflect any Procurements that were not ____ Procurements.
- The person who initiated the requisition needs to be notified ASAP, in detail, when any changes are made by anyone in the requisition process. Small changes can make a big impact. For example: any substitutions, quantity change, or back ordered items needs to be brought to the attention of the requisitioner. Thanks.
- Recent trends have shown that vendors are declining to bid contracts as a result of the cumbersome terms and conditions clauses. Need to figure out a way to bridge this issue so vendors stay interested in our business.
- The purchasing process took much longer than anticipated for a purchase that was very time-sensitive due to long lead times. It was initially stalled between procurement and the supplier at the beginning of the process. I had to get directly involved to get the process going again and make sure it stayed on track. I'm not confident that the purchasing process would have been completed in a timely manner without my direct involvement. Once I got involved, though, the ANL purchasing team was very helpful.
- It is noteworthy that this survey only asks about timeliness, professionalism, quality, etc. regarding procurement services, but nothing about the cost of those services. G&A and ALD taxes should be applied on the cost of Procurement Services only, not on the value of the contract. These taxes more than double the cost of a procurement (i.e., 7.07% for procurement services, and 9.49% for G&A plus EGS taxes). We are losing opportunities for handling pass-thru work because of the exorbitant taxes.
- Please look at improving communications between procurement and AP.
- Like to get a email with a est. date the vendor will ship items
- I understand the need to improve services and establish a smoother process. Increased communication is key. My greatest frustrations involve this single topic.

and the Ugly

- Some way the system can nag the purchasing person to process the order instead of sitting for over 3 weeks, or so I don't need to hunt down who the purchasing person and phone them and to beg them to process the order. this is worse this year since the re-org of the purchasing, there was no communication as to who would be handling the half processed orders.
- Timely answering and/or returning of phone calls made to the procurement staff.
- Rush orders are hit or miss sometimes, and in rare cases can take longer when the supplier cannot fulfill a rush order and then they wait for confirmation.
- We need more communication on the status of the order. It is not acceptable when we make an order and do not hear from procurement and when we check on the status after a month, we find out that the order was not submitted by procurement for some reasons!
- Too often, your people are more concerned with passing audits than they are with achieving the procurement objective. It is the procurement equivalent of No Child Left Behind: pass the test rather than learning, pass the audit rather than partnering with the requester to meet he goal. In fact, some of your people clearly take great delight in "catching" instances where being audit-correct is preferable to servicing the client.
- How about an investigation into why Procurement employees are so miserable?
- I would like to be able to search my AMOS history, keywords, date, vendor, requester Why can't we do this??? I think it's stupid to print out the orders. Searching my Outlook is really pretty awful.
- Procurement really does need fixing. Take down the walls, lose the attitude, be open to change and to the needs of the internal customers- and respect the internal customers whose project success are dependent on Procurement. Good luck- and thank you.
- While I understand they are following a directive, the small business/woman owned business comes across as a joke. For the most part we end up using the same vendors but with more hassle because we're going through their partners. It's not efficient and it's often created more problems than anything else. Packages coming later than they ever did before, wrong things being sent, delivered to the wrong location, broken packages, etc. Yes those things may have occurred in the past but not nearly as frequently as they have since Argonne started using the small business/woman owned partners.
- Outside fabrications take too long to clear. They sit in the e-mail inbox too long with no action.

Annual Procurement Customer Climate Survey—Fiscal Year 2015

Survey Responses — Timeliness

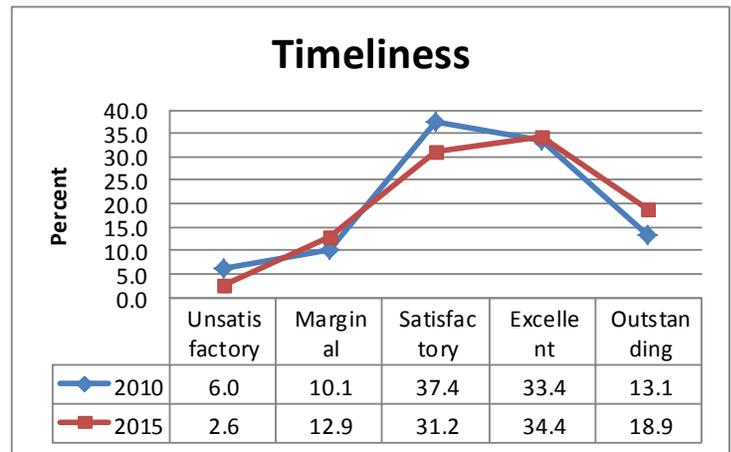
Question No. 1 “TIMELINESS OF SUPPORT”

How would you rate the overall timeliness of support in awarding requisitions sent to Procurement?

Over Fifty-Three percent of respondents have now indicated that Procurement performance under this measure is “Excellent/Outstanding” as compared to Forty-Six percent in FY2010.

In addition, the percent of “Unsatisfactory” responses has dropped by over 56%.

There is, however, still room for even more improvement!

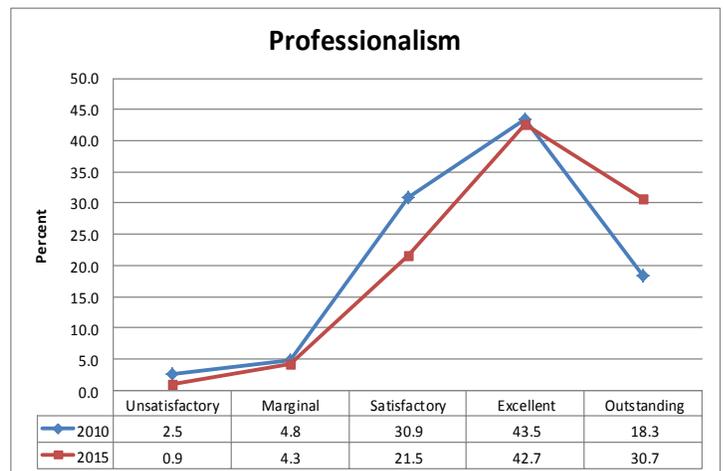


Survey Responses — Professionalism

Question No. 2 “PROFESSIONALISM OF PROCUREMENT PERSONNEL”

How would you rate the professionalism of the Procurement personnel handling your requirements?

We are pleased that for FY2015 73.4% of the survey respondents indicated that the professionalism of Procurement personnel was “Excellent” or “Outstanding” with a 94.8% overall positive satisfaction ratio.



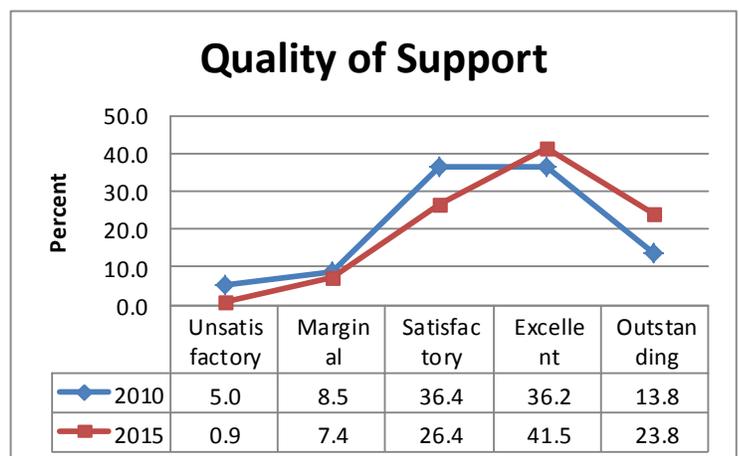
Survey Responses — Quality of Acquisition Support

Question No. 3 “QUALITY OF ACQUISITION SUPPORT”

From your point of view, how would you classify the quality of acquisition support received at ANL?

With a 5% jump in the “Excellent” and a 10% jump in “Outstanding” responses, the chart shows a significant shift in the positive direction!

In addition, the less than 1% percent of “Unsatisfactory” responses shows a drop of 82%.



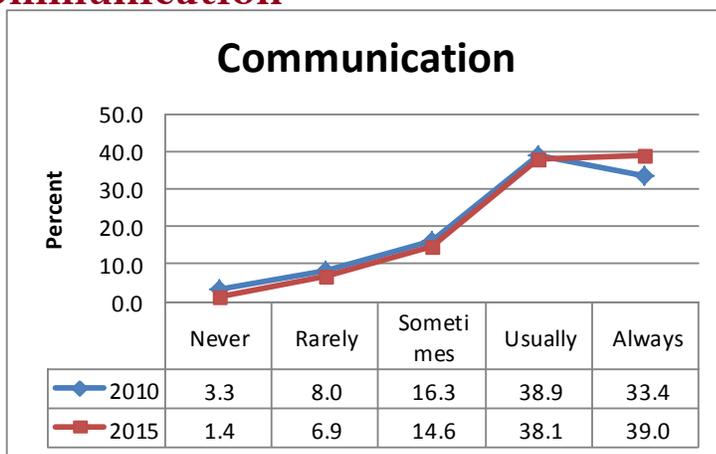
Survey Responses — Effective Communication

Question No. 4 “EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION”

Did Procurement systems and personnel effectively communicate the status of your requirements to you?

Over 77% of the respondents indicated that we usually or always communicate effectively.

This is one of the hardest performance measures to meet, but there has been a nice reduction in the negatives and an nice increase in the positives since FY2010



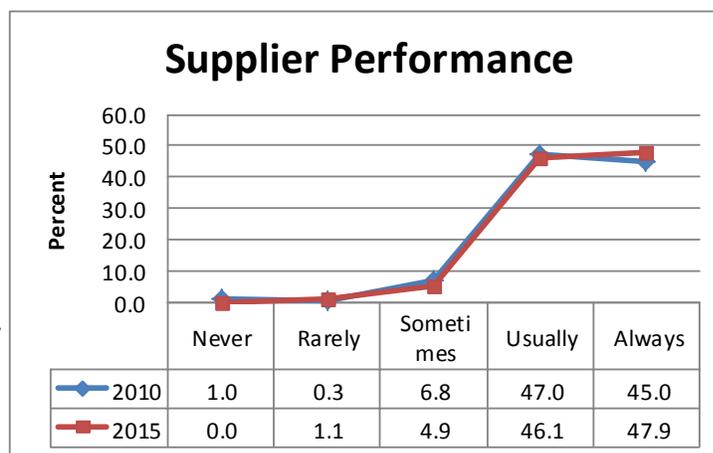
Survey Responses — Supplier Performance

Question No. 5 “SUPPLIER PERFORMANCE”

In your opinion, did the supplier provide your requirement as they agreed to in the official purchase documents?

By dealing with responsible/reliable suppliers we have been able to identify those suppliers that are responsive to our user’s requirements and do not place the Laboratory at risk.

Identifying quality suppliers while still striving to meet the LABORATORY prime contract goals of supporting small business, small disadvantaged business, woman-owned small business, HUBZone small business, veteran-owned small business and service disabled veteran-owned small business continues to be one of our greatest challenges.



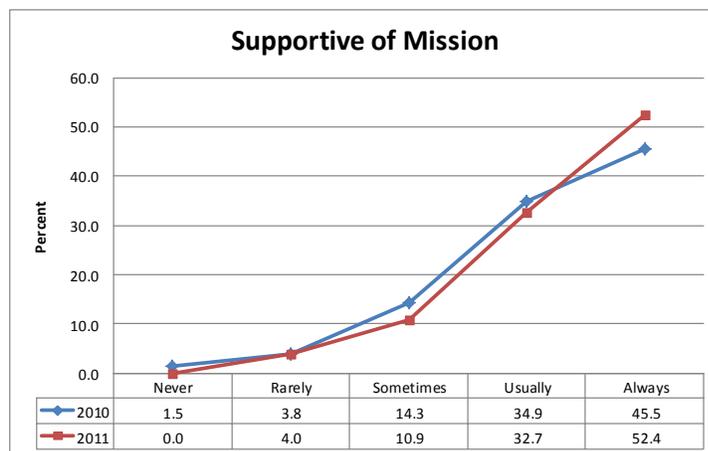
Survey Responses — Mission Support

Question No. 6

“PROCUREMENT SUPPORTIVE OF THE MISSION”

Were Procurement personnel supportive of your organization’s goals, missions, and initiatives?

Procurement at Argonne has not always been viewed as the service organization that it really is. We continue to work diligently to overcome this perception by providing the best procurement support possible with our resources. We are pleased that 96% of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied that Procurement was at least somewhat supportive of their organization’s goals, missions, and initiatives.



Survey Responses — Procurement’s Overall Rating

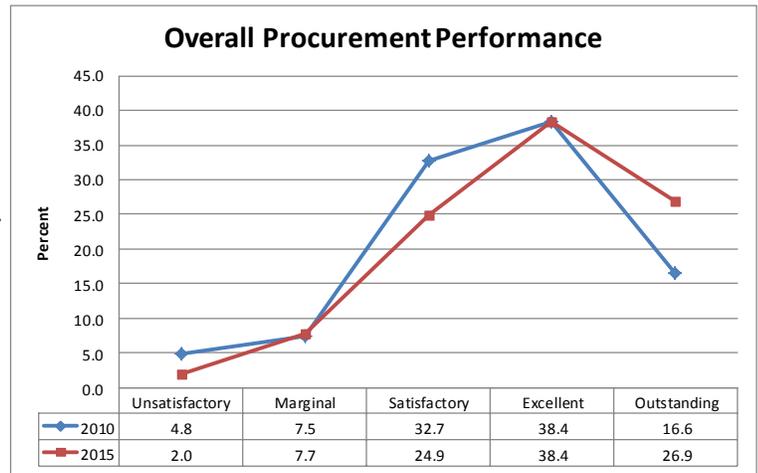
Question No. 7

“PROCUREMENT’S OVERALL RATING”

Overall, how would you rate the performance of ANL Procurement?

On the whole, over 90% of the respondents indicated that they are satisfied with the performance of the Procurement Department.

“Excellent” and “Outstanding” make up a combined approval rating of 65.3%, as compared to 55% in FY2010.



Procurement thanks you for your participation

As we close out yet another extremely busy fiscal year-end period, we thank you for taking time out of your busy day to complete the survey for us. Many of your suggestions for process improvements are under discussion and, in addition, some new PARIS tips will be directed at answering some of the questions regarding existing PARIS capabilities.

Current Procurement Organization Chart

