

E&I Cooperative Services Streamlines Contract Sourcing Processes for 5,000 Members

Customer Profile

E&I Cooperative Services is the only member-owned, non-profit procurement cooperative focused exclusively on serving the needs of education. With over 5,000 member institutions in higher ed and K-12, E&I offers a portfolio of competitively solicited contracts. E&I acts as an extension of their members' procurement departments by providing them strategic sourcing solutions that maximize Members' education dollars.

"It's the efficiency created by leveraging 21st century digital technology, versus all the old methods that we were doing that were very labor intensive."

Ian Robbins,
Vice President, Strategic
Sourcing & Contract
Management,
E&I Cooperative Services

Challenges

Prior to 2018, E&I lacked integrated digital solutions, most notably in contract management and sourcing. Solicitation for RFPs was extremely labor intensive, with suppliers submitting bids manually, time stamping and shipping three-ring binders. The consideration process relied heavily on email and Excel spreadsheets, which were used for response comparisons and scoring matrixes. The process of digesting these massive printed bids was arduous; the average RFP cycle at the time was roughly nine months.

On the contract management side, the organization's signature and storage system was self-contained and had limited functionality. The result was a disjointed contracts business process that oftentimes resulted in managers spending an inordinate amount of time processing documents and organizing files.

E&I is highly selective when taking on contracts, looking for quality over quantity to provide the best to their members. In any



given year, the organization sources six to ten RFPs. Still, with over 100 contracts to manage, the team was stretched thin. The organization has limited resources managing a large volume of contracts, and as a non-profit, budget is always top of mind.

When Ian Robbins joined the team as Vice President, Strategic Sourcing & Contract Manager in 2017, he was excited about the opportunity to help improve the process and create valuable efficiencies within E&I.

The Solution

Robbins had fully implemented JAGGAER previously as an E&I member, first at University of Montana and later at Florida State. Additionally, E&I had already done some solution analysis prior to his arrival, which included JAGGAER as a potential partner.

Ultimately, the decision to implement JAGGAER came down to integration. One of

the key criteria was a sourcing solution and contract management platform that worked collaboratively. “I didn’t want to have to go to multiple platforms,” said Robbins, reiterating that the organization needed true integration. The team evaluated over a dozen solution providers before settling on JAGGAER Sourcing and Contracts+. “I wanted to provide more value internally,” said Robbins.

Sourcing was fully implemented by November of 2019. Now, all RFPs go through the JAGGAER Sourcing platform. All supplier onboarding and registration also happens in the system using self-service registration.

E&I opted to adopt Sourcing first because they saw it as a faster path to getting contract managers on board with the new system and their processes digitized. It required fewer integrations than their Contracts+ implementation, which was highly dependent on a new Salesforce instance.

The benefits were immediately evident to the sourcing team. One major advantage was the ability to standardize bid responses, eliminating unnecessary detail. According to Robbins, this provided a considerable time savings when reviewing responses. The platform also provides suppliers with both time and cost efficiencies when submitting their response, since they can do so digitally.

Evaluation is also significantly easier. With all the information already digitized, there's no need to manually input or copy data. The evaluation team can view and compare responses and score various bid factors right in JAGGAER. This fully replaces the need to distill data, build reports, and digitize and upload full responses to a Sharepoint site, saving dozens of hours.

The Future

E&I is currently implementing Contracts+ for complete contract lifecycle management. The configuration, templates, and libraries have been built, and the solution will be fully operational by the end of 2020.

The E&I team is looking forward to Contracts+ taking hold so that they can continue to more effectively manage day to day contract tasks. Contract managers will be freed up to focus on more strategic tasks within the organization and drive increased value for members.

The organization intends to reach a point where they're considering contracts before they happen. "JAGGAER allows us to be more

proactive in managing the portfolio," says Robbins. "You're letting the tool do a lot of the heavy lifting for you."

On the sourcing side, the goal is to continue optimizing workflows with each RFP. 2020 has brought more projects than usual, and the use of JAGGAER Sourcing has helped significantly in keeping pace with the demand for new contracts while also resoliciting existing contracts. The goal is to shorten the full RFP lifecycle, which averaged nine months before JAGGAER, to just three and a half months.

Bottom Line Results

- Moved 100% of bid submissions to a digital portal
- Onboarded evaluation team members to the Sourcing solution for all evaluations
- Eliminated Excel-based comparison matrixes
- Shifted 100% of supplier registration to the online self-service portal

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