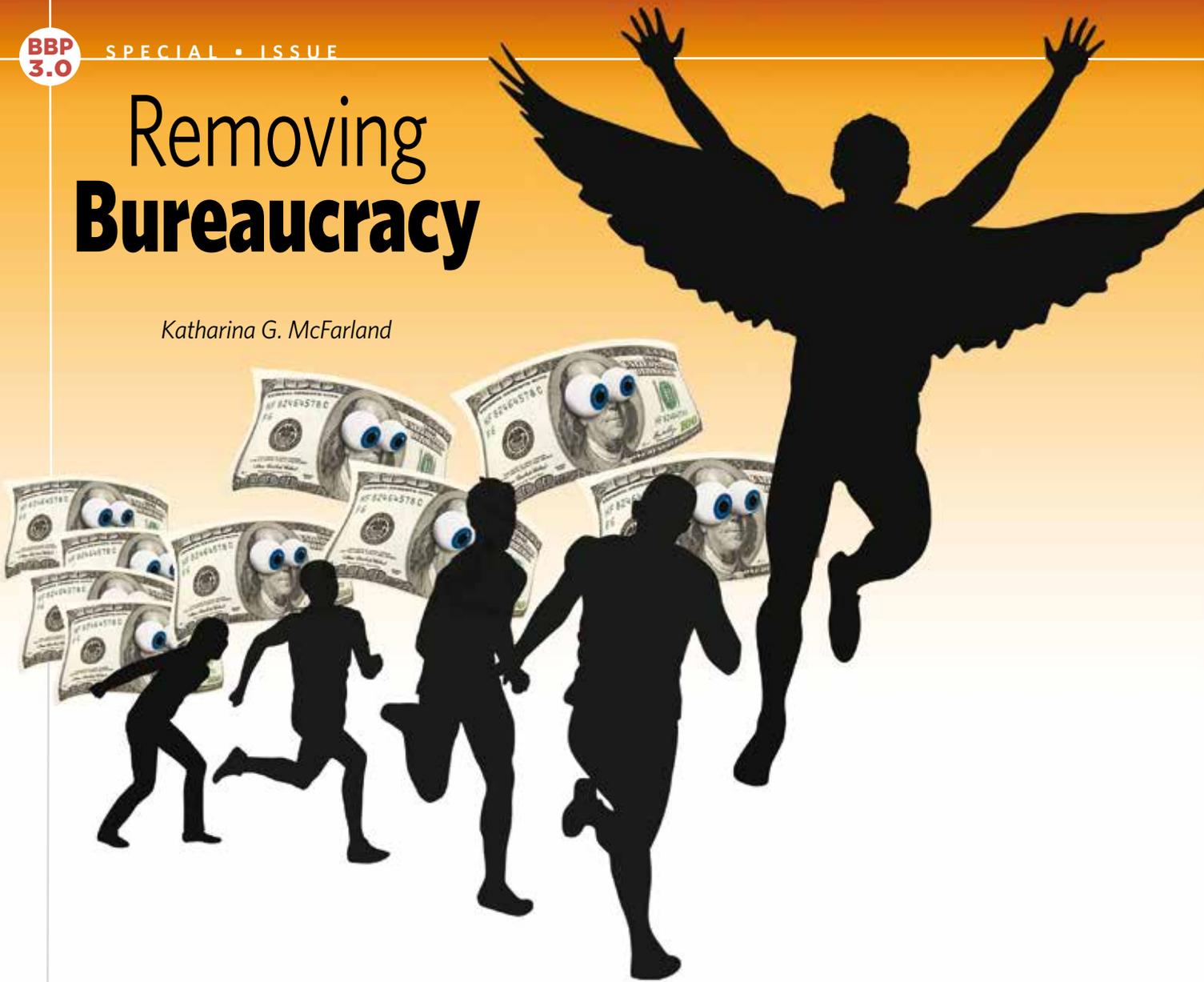


Removing Bureaucracy

Katharina G. McFarland



once managed a new start program to deliver a revolutionary warfighting capability in Battlefield Management/Command and Control. The Service sponsor was very engaged and supportive of the new program's requirements. However, when we did the cost estimate, it was clear that the cost would break the threshold of an Acquisition Category (ACAT) I program.

The comptroller then added a significant cost for "oversight" to the bottom line. Suddenly, senior involvement from all of the Service warfighting areas came together to scrub the program requirements due to concern over the "bureaucracy" and external oversight the program would bear. The general opinion was that this oversight brought no value, created enormous inefficiencies and drove the program into ineffectiveness by extending the time to field. There was even a concerted attempt to find a means to reduce the program cost through content reduction in order to avoid designation as ACAT I.

We should not have such a burdensome process that people are willing to reduce capability to avoid it. The recent release of Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 5000.02 repeatedly emphasizes tailoring to reduce unnecessary reviews and documentation, and the Better Buying Power (BBP) initiatives 1.0, 2.0 and now 3.0 have a section titled "Eliminate Unproductive Processes and Bureaucracy" that focuses on reducing cycle time, staffing time and all forms of inefficiencies. This includes review of those burdens that Congress, industry and we have put in place

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over time on the acquisition process. This review must happen at all levels of the organization and involves reaching out to other areas such as requirements development, intelligence integration, comptroller processes and Service staff review and influence. Any and all inefficiencies translate to some form of cost, and we owe taxpayers, ourselves and our warfighters the most efficient use of public funds ... particularly given such uncertainties as sequestration and declining budgets.

We all know there are reasons for the processes and oversight. The Department of Defense (DoD) executes a large spending of taxpayers' dollars and must provide transparency that reflects proper management of that spending to Congress and the general public. Congress established dollar thresholds identifying the levels of oversight for programmatic spending in accord with its goals. These goals are not just for providing

(DAG) to assist in determining where streamlining opportunities exist, the team must understand that the DAG does not supersede the DoDI 5000.02 direction, but it is a guideline for understanding. DODI 5000.02 Table 2, found in Enclosure 1, shows what milestone requirements are statutory, regulatory or policy. This allows a quick assessment of where tailoring can be done. (See the Table, pp. 47-58 in the PDF at <http://www.acq.osd.mil/fo/docs/500002>.)

After using tailoring to determine which documentation is appropriate and required for a particular program, the next step is to use tailoring to streamline the content of that documentation. This requires support and judgment from staff members who participate in creating and approving it. Of course, if these people are not trained to put content before format, the PM team's tailoring will not succeed. In order for staff members to

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national security means, but also address constituency concerns. A long list of various statutes, regulations and policy has been imposed on acquisition based on these goals (small business, Buy America, etc.). There also are statutes and regulations put into effect in an effort to prevent previous program "failures" from recurring. In both cases, the implementation and value of these measures must be assessed continually on how they impact the delivery of capability to the warfighter.

Let's go back to the above example. The program manager (PM) thinks of all the documents, briefs and related time delays her program will have due to the larger community of stakeholders for which she now is held accountable, distracting from her actual management of the program. She understands why the investment and capability she is held responsible for draws this attention. But what she wants, and the taxpayer deserves, is a meaningful, simplified and efficient way to be held accountable.

Let's examine an example on how to reduce unnecessary burden in the above new-start program. DoDI 5000.02 directs the PM to tailor her products and reviews to her program. All programs do not require all the same documentation. Corrosion Protection is not required for software, nor is the Clinger-Cohen Act required for a tent. So the PM should sit down with her team and establish the right set of documentation and the reason for it. When reviewing the *Defense Acquisition Guidebook*

know what content is important, they need to spend time to really understand the program and not rely on demanding late-game explanations from the PM and her team. Senior leadership needs to provide clear guidance to all stakeholders that tailoring is not only accepted but demanded.

Tailoring also should extend to the approval process. Staff should be provided access to learn and provide comment, but the number of people with the ability to stop progress on document creation and approval should be limited by the Senior Acquisition Executive (SAE) and the Defense Acquisition Executive (DAE) to those who are held personally accountable for the program's success or failure. Tailoring is intended to result in preparation of a basic set of management plans, tools and data that are fundamental to effective program management and that facilitate program transparency. It also means that regulatory requirements that are not needed to manage the program should aggressively be "tailored out."

Automation can help. Another example, started this past year, is automating the documentation review by Service and Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) staff through use of an electronic coordination tool (ECT). The new ECT pilot has OSD and staff review of a document occur electronically at the same time and on a specified schedule, rather than have the Service staff review and the SAE sign documents prior to OSD staff review. The SAE then obtains

the redlined document with comments from the PM. The SAE can accept or revisit the PM's document and resolution of comments on their merits and then sign. The redlined document, with the final comment reconciliation matrix, is then placed back on ECT for a short final review before going to the DAE. Staff review has been reduced to less than two months on average, where we previously had examples of documents taking two years to get to DAE signature. The automated process emphasizes the SAE and DAE, saving the PM from frustrating redundant staff review and allowing her to focus on answering the final decision maker's concerns. One lesson learned, however, is that this process should not replace telephoning or exchanging emails if there is confusion over the comments provided.

These thoughts are focused on the PM, but what about reducing the bureaucratic burden on industry? I recently conducted a pilot review with a set of small, medium and large defense industry partners to assess what could be done to reduce the burden on industry. Our efforts resulted in investigating a set of business systems processes and contracting methods. After approximately one year's effort by two dedicated government/Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC) people, we were able to recommend changes in Federal Acquisition Regulations that will reduce cycle time, Earned Value Management changes that will reduce manning and save millions, and guidance that will ensure consistency of business practices across the enterprise. That consistency will reduce rework and simplify business systems. We are realigning 50 people to other high-priority tasks in the Defense Contract Management Agency, and industry forecasts indicate this will provide millions of dollars of cost avoidance.

My final example is our legislative proposal efforts. A Service/OSD team reviewed documentation and processes and noted possible improvements. The Acquisition Strategy, a living document, was proposed to replace many of our current required milestone documents and certifications in order to eliminate redundancy. The initiatives submitted were designed to streamline, revise or eliminate submissions in the following areas: Milestone Decision authority, contract type selection, Manpower Estimates, Life-Cycle Management, Product Support, Risk Management, and Defense Business Systems. Our working relationship with Congress on these proposals has led to the recent draft "Acquisition Reform" proposal from Texas Rep. Mac Thornberry that includes many of our recommended ideas.

But these efforts are just a few examples of what has been done. BBP 3.0 has more planned in documentation review, DAG updating, streamlining of documents and removing burdens from Industry. Everyone can help. Let us know your ideas at the Defense Acquisition University. Please send your comments through the email address below. 

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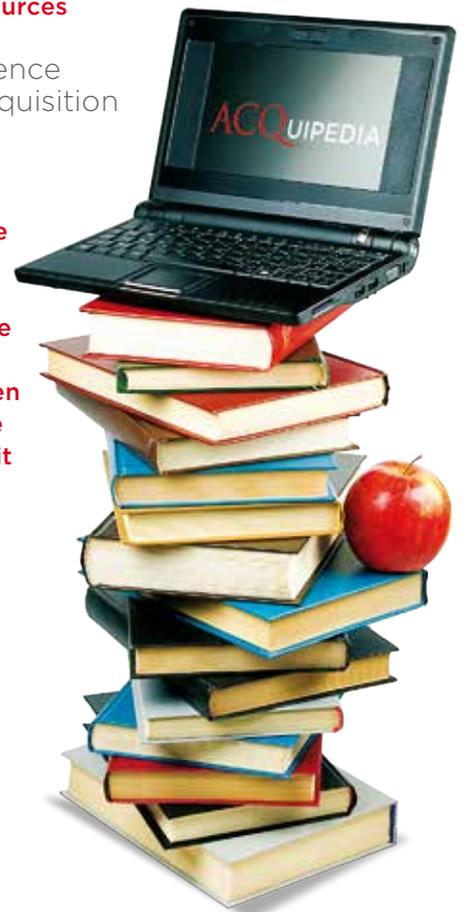
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