



Transcripts from Acquisition Internship Video Testimonials

Rewarding Experiences in Contracting:

Sandy Wright: Most recently I received an award for a contract I had done with the SEC (Security Exchange Commission) and it involved the filings of statements that all industry does with the SEC. Just being a part of the team that worked on that, it was for the Chairman's Office, and the impact that is going to have across the board with all companies and the SEC Regulations. That was very rewarding.

Melany Pollock: The most exciting part (of contracting) is not knowing what is going to happen that day. Every day is different and one of the things I tell people that I love about my job is coming in, and at the end of the day I can see how the work that I have done that day is going to benefit and help the public. So, that is an awesome opportunity and you don't get that from other places where you work. I know that when I worked for law firms that is not one of the things that I got, and this is one of the things I was seeking. So it is a wonderful experience.

Contracting Internships Formulate Your Career:

Benjamin Van Wormer: Through the internship I was rotated a few times, received different experiences with different types of contracts and different managers, and I've definitely formulated a career path because of those experiences. So, it was definitely a helpful program.

Melany Pollock: When I came to the Transportation Administration I worked for the Infrastructure division. There I was new to contracting. I was new to the whole Federal Government, so I started out with small procurements but I began to grow through this internship program, began to gain more responsibilities. Within the internship program we did a rotation, so I was rotated from one division to another, I am now in the Human Capital and Finance Division. Once I rotated, with that rotation came more responsibility, so my job ended up growing from something where I was new and I was a babe in the field to where now I am working independently and just getting minimal guidance from my CO (Contracting Officer).

Lesley Field: I think it is a tremendous opportunity. I think having gone into it (contracting) sort of (thinking) “gosh this looks interesting let me try this.” To, “boy this has been my career and I haven’t looked back.” I’ve barely even noticed the last 18 years, it has gone by so quickly and I’ve had every opportunity. I think the workforce right now is very well positioned to bring in new people and to make the maximum amount of effort to keep the folks that are in it now and to make their jobs meaningful and different and varied. I can’t say enough good things about how acquisition has helped shape my career.

Favorite Part of Working in Contracting:

Melany Pollock: There are so many things; my favorite thing about working for Federal contracting is knowing that at the end of the day I can make a difference. Negotiating a contract, saving the American people, saving the government millions of dollars. Or, either just working with my CO (Contracting Officer) and developing new plans on how we are going to handle a contract or what direction we are going to take. Working with the program office, giving them guidance on the best value, helping them make good business decisions. So, it’s an awesome experience.

Benjamin Van Wormer: I would like to go back to I guess to the amount of responsibility you are given in a short amount of time because as I mentioned before I was a private contractor for the government and I wasn’t given as much responsibility as I thought I could handle and I was sort of just flailing and not really going anywhere. Even as a Contract Specialist you are given a lot of responsibility and that’s a really satisfying thing to have, especially when you know you can handle that amount of responsibility. So basically, you are given as much as you can handle and that is what I like the most about it (Contracting).

Making an Impact as a Contracting Professional:

Lesley Field: I think as a Contract Specialist where you really learn how everything is done, you learn how you move from the pre-award environment to an administrative sort of capacity in a contract. I think any meaningful contract that you get to see from cradle to grave has a tremendous impact. I know at DOT (Department of Transportation) we worked on the drug testing contract for some of the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) components, you really got to see your work in action. I worked on some of the building contracts there and you got to see what you were doing. So I think contracting gives you a unique perspective that you get to see the project that you’ve worked on, you get to see it from beginning to end, and you can really learn everything from cradle to grave of what’s involved in that contract and to see it actually come to fruition is a tremendous experience.

Melany Pollock: I would say actually the contract that I am handling now and the reason this contract has such significance is because it is a hybrid contract which means that it’s a contract where there is different types of CLINs (Contract Line Item Numbers) on it; it

has fixed-price, it has cost, it has cost-reimbursement. So there is a lot that is going on in this contract and this is the contract where I had the opportunity to sit by myself in a room full of contractors where they had people from their CEO (Chief Executive Officer) on down, where I negotiated by myself and my CO (Contracting Officer) sat off to the side. That for me was amazing, not only was it amazing but it provided me the opportunity, from research, to save the government over 9 million dollars. That was a monumental moment for me that day so I will never forget that experience. It was an awesome experience and it was where I was the focus and I was able to lead the discussion and I was able to guide the discussion and it was just awesome.

Advice for Contracting Career Seekers:

Sandy Wright: I would say be ready for something that's probably the most challenging thing in your career that you will ever do if you stay in contracting. I don't think that I have ever been bored in the job, and I think there is room right now in the Federal Government for upward mobility in the contracting field because there has been a real drain over the last probably 5 to 10 years.

Lesley Field: Absolutely do it. Absolutely look at all the different opportunities. I think the Federal Government is very well poised to look for new entrants into the workforce. So, I think the opportunities for people looking to come in, either at the entry-level or at the mid-level or even at the senior-level are going to be wide open. So now is a fantastic time to take a look at what it means; what kind of career this is. Look for a program that seems to match your skill sets and make every inroad to try and get there. I think contracting has a tremendous opportunity, we spend almost 500 billion dollars a year, that's a lot of money, we need a lot of talent to help us and so this is a tremendous opportunity for anybody seeking a career with the Federal Government. Anybody seeking a career that's interesting, that's varied, that will give you lots of responsibility at a very early stage in your career, contracting is it.

Contracting Job Responsibilities:

Benjamin Van Wormer: I would say that I am mostly independent. I do not yet have a warrant, that means I can't sign the actual contracts but I act completely independently otherwise. I interact directly with private contractors in terms of funding them or in terms of asking them what's going on with the contract. I write memos myself and have the Contracting Officer sign them. I write modifications, I write the entire contract and have my Contracting Officer review it for signature. I do solicitations, you know, pretty much the whole gamut on my own with minimal supervision.

Exciting Aspects of the Contracting Profession:

Benjamin Van Wormer: Just knowing that stuff that I work on, things that I do, directly impacts the public as opposed to indirectly. For example, I worked on a contract where we were doing risk analysis on the highways. You know people don't realize that TSA (Transportation Security Administration) is not only for aviation security, it's for

transportation security. So, what I work on is a lot of the other parts that TSA is going to play a much larger role in, in the future. Coming up there is going to be a lot of talk about highway vulnerability, and I got to be at the ground when it started.