



Level-Up Your Market Research Game: Strategies and Hacks You'll Want to Use 2022 Guidebook

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Dashboards by Team ACQ-SYNC, MITRE Innovation Program

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MARKET RESEARCH: TAKE THE CONTROLS!

This **Guidebook of Market Research Strategies and Hacks** is designed for **YOU**, the acquisition professional to up your game! Whether you are a Program Manager, Contracting Officer, Engineer, User, Stakeholder, Contracting Officer's Representative, Legal Advisor, or Subject Matter Expert, you can – and should – use this guidebook – because you are involved in the acquisition process, and you have a hand in your mission's success.



HOW THE WINNERS DO IT: ENGAGING INDUSTRY



Respect that market research is a powerful practice to enhance your acquisition outcomes. All of the top leaders in Government open the door to communication with industry, understanding that it is difficult to convey complex issues, challenges, and solutions through just passing the paper. Dialogue and engagement are important for both sides, laying the groundwork for new connections, new information, and new synergies. Take this opportunity to elevate your team, your program, and your personal tech stature by leveling-up your market research.

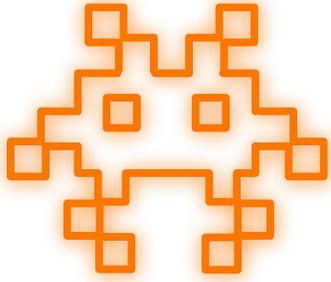
Learn from your vendors, and let your vendors learn from you – and move your mission forward. This is your market research practice; thoughtful market research powers-up your acquisition. There is a lot in it for you and your program. Market Research helps you better recognize what solutions and innovations might meet your requirements and how you can acquire them. Often, industry is working on advancements in the background that are not yet public. Market research identifies tripwires and risks that you may not be aware of – so you're prepared to dodge them. Market Research benefits you by tapping into vendors' discretionary energy. Engaged vendors provide fresh, innovative ideas that are focused on meeting your particular needs. They're thinking about solving your requirement long before you release a solicitation – you want this! Your endgame – don't play catch up and acquire yesterday's technology tomorrow. Lean forward, stay current, and do the right thing for your program and your mission!

15 WAYS TO CHANGE THE GAME

Active, engaging market research is a best practice for good reason – it works! This guidebook will help YOU do it. It includes **15 Market Research Techniques** that are simply described and visualized for your immediate usage. These techniques are successfully being used across Government, and we want to familiarize you with them, so you can use them too.

The Dashboard: For starters, each Market Research Technique is paired with a handy, quick-look Dashboard visualization. This makes it easy for you to quickly understand each technique with just a simple scan. The dashboard conveys “snackable content” with a short description of the actual technique. It includes a visual on “**Where it Falls**”, quickly showcasing the technique's level of innovation from tried and true to highly innovative; then moving to “**digestibility of information**” from ready to use to analysis required; and finally, “**knowledge gained**” from boiler plate to key differentiators.

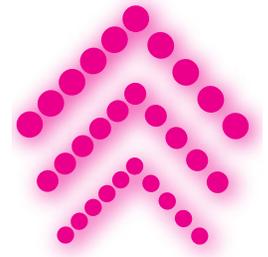




Another dashboard highlight is the **“Pulling it Off”** section that depicts the time commitment, coordination, complexity, real risk to the Government, and overall lift of each technique with a low, medium, and high indicator. The last dashboard feature is simply **“Tags: Skills and Coordination”** which exhibits the top three descriptor tags to describe the technique from this list of 15 tags: Builds your Network; Technical Acumen/SME; Light Preparation; Innovative; Facilitation; Public Speaking; Writing; Information Processing; Logistics; Face-to-Face; High Coordination; IT/AV Skills; Speedy; Paper-Based; and High Time Commitment. Find the right fit for your program and use the dashboard at the beginning of each entry to quickly see if it’s the right approach for you.

The Narrative: Accompanying the dashboard, each entry in this guidebook contains a detailed narrative describing the unique or innovative Market Research Technique. It is laid out in a way that each market research technique presents you with answers to some common questions you might ask yourself to determine if you (or your teams) want to use the technique. The guidebook provides information and scenarios to answer these common questions, so you know how to best execute the technique. These questions include:

- **THE ENDGAME** - What will I achieve with this technique?
- **MATCH THAT TECHNIQUE!** Is the technique a fit for my program?
- **GAME CHANGERS** – How does this technique work?
- **THE LIFT** – Where do you put the effort?
- **MYTHS AND LEGENDS** – What needs to be dispelled?
- **HACKS AND PRO-TIPS** – How do you execute this technique better?



Within each technique, there are also opportunities to “level-up” your approach. These are ways to go above and beyond and make your market research activities even more impactful. Consider using one or more of these “level-up” suggestions to improve your execution.

The Cheat Codes: The “Cheat Codes” section of this guidebook provides suggested combinations of market research techniques that can powerfully enhance your acquisitions. Each technique is highly effective on its own, but imagine the level-up you gain by pairing a few (it’s big!).

THE RULES – YES YOU CAN DO THIS

Before we get started, here’s a quick primer on the rules of this market research game. Engagements and dialogue with industry prior to Request for Proposal (RFP) release are in the safe zone. You just need to be fair, unbiased and protect vendors’ intellectual property. Meet with as many vendors as practical, but you do not have to meet with them all. Heads up, you may have reluctant team members that still fear engaging directly with vendors during market research. Fear not! Bring your reluctant team members along, and follow the guidance provided by the Office of Management and Budget, Office of Federal Procurement Policy: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SIGNED-Myth-Busting-4-Strengthening-Engagement-with-Industry-Partners-through-Innovative-Business-Practices.pdf>. This guidance clearly gives you the go-ahead for industry engagement!

Ultimately, market research lets you validate and challenge your assumptions. It results in real-time, actionable intelligence with the power to **enhance technical performance, improve time-to-delivery, diminish risks, improve communication with industry, and sharpen investment decisions.**

1

Virtual One-on-Ones

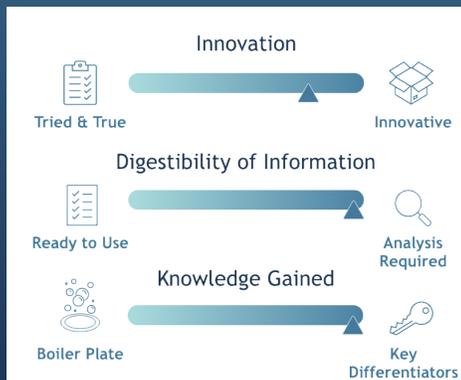


Virtual One-on-One

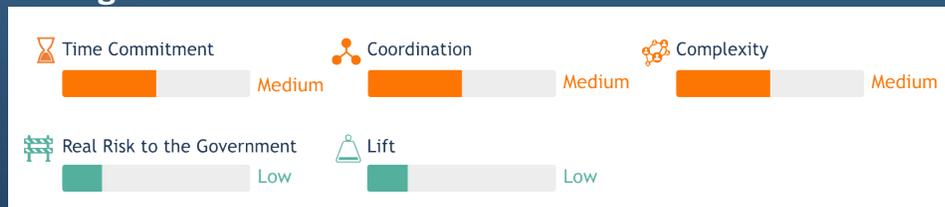
The Virtual One-on-One enables you to directly dialogue with (and ask questions of) a specific vendor. Virtual One-on-Ones put your team directly in contact with key thought leaders within a specific company to discuss risks, challenges, innovations, and potential solutions. These events can be executed rapidly, they are inexpensive, and they often yield significant and meaningful information that shapes specific acquisitions and future plans.



Where it Falls



Pulling it Off



Tags: Skills and Considerations



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THE ENDGAME – *What will I achieve with this technique?*

- Uncover a deep understanding of a specific company’s viewpoint, innovations, technologies, and suggestions for the future
- Get focused inputs and proprietary ideas that shape an acquisition and improve the requirement
- Learn what the vendor community thinks about an acquisition – what you are doing right and how you can improve

MATCH THAT TECHNIQUE! *Is the technique a fit for my program?*

The Virtual One-on-One is a good match when your team:

- Needs to have focused conversations that allow companies to reveal their unique and innovative ideas (in a forum where their competition will not have access to those ideas)
- Already has some idea of who key, innovative vendors might be **///LEVEL-UP/// Use Virtual One-On-Ones as a follow-up to a Whitepaper RFI or other initial broad engagement**
- Needs to rapidly gain information on how to improve an acquisition strategy and/or requirement
- Has a technical facilitator who can steer the conversation with vendors and ask questions
- Doesn’t want a lengthy process for analyzing and reviewing written vendor responses

GAME CHANGERS – *How does this technique work?*

Thorough planning is critical to making any Virtual One-on-One successful. Logistics are not overly complicated; however, a failure to plan can limit the effectiveness of the conversations. You must first define program-specific goals of a successful Virtual One-on-One: risks that need mitigation, innovations that should be explored, and strategies that should be verified or improved. Those objectives can be easily translated into specific questions or prompts for vendors that give them guidance on what you are most

interested in learning. Next, identify which companies might have innovative ideas, dissenting opinions, or new concepts to explore. **///LEVEL-UP///** Only invite vendors who might have unique and impactful information. It is not necessary to invite everyone! Invite those companies and include the technical prompts; include specific instructions for vendors to confirm their presentation time and instructions on the virtual platform that will be used. **///LEVEL-UP///** Limit the amount of time that vendors have to engage with you. One hour or less is generally sufficient unless you are asking for a thorough technical demonstration.

THE LIFT – *Where do you put the effort?*

- **DEFINING THE PROMPTS.** For an effective Virtual One-on-One, prompts and questions must be developed to focus the vendor's efforts. Without them, vendors may provide generalized corporate information that provides little value to your acquisition goals. Prompts should address areas of uncertainty or risk, and they should encourage vendors to provide recommendations, offer lessons learned, and describe technical capabilities. Prompts can cover both acquisition topics and technical topics. Oftentimes, prompts may encourage further explanation of topics that were discussed in a White Paper Request for Information or other previous market research engagement.
- **A THOROUGH INVITATION.** Communication is at the heart of the Virtual One-on-One, and it starts with you communicating your expectations, logistics, and desired outcomes in an invitation. **///LEVEL-UP///** Make sure vendors understand the expected level of effort to help them prioritize their resources. Invitations should include platform information, a way for vendors to book their timeslot, the prompts, a notional schedule, and expectations on who leads the discussion. **///LEVEL-UP///** Don't assign vendors timeslots unless you have to – create an online time-slot sign-up or allow vendors to email their time-slot preferences
- **THE LOGISTICS PLANS.** You need to show that you've put as much effort into the Virtual One-on-One as industry—this is accomplished through logistics and planning. **///LEVEL-UP///** Build trust with vendors by respecting the investment they are making in participating in the Virtual One-on-One. Dry run the event. Stick to a schedule. Plan roles and responsibilities for your team's participants. Identify a small question bank that further explores prompts. Send personalized calendar invitations to each company. Have a fallback plan if technology fails to cooperate. **///LEVEL-UP///** Get your team online to do communications/systems before the first vendor dials-in.

MYTHS AND LEGENDS – *What needs to be dispelled?*

- **“The Government isn't allowed to speak. Only the vendor can present.”** — Virtual One-on-Ones are designed for you to learn, but bidirectional conversation is natural to occur in these events. In order to maintain fairness amongst the entire vendor pool, you must capture any new information that is provided to vendors (information that is not already available to the vendor community at large), and you should publish that information to the vendor community. **///LEVEL-UP///** In the invitation, communicate expectations on who will present materials and lead the discussion at different parts of the schedule.
- **“It is not fair to only speak to some vendors and not all vendors”** – Every vendor needs a fair opportunity, but Virtual One-on-Ones do not limit their opportunities – they are not used to select vendors. Rather, they inform risk and strategy and reduce your uncertainty. It is not only legal, but also expected, that you will not be able to speak to every vendor. **///LEVEL-UP///** Reaffirm your commitment to protecting vendor proprietary information, and describe how you'll accomplish that (e.g., providing separate meeting invitations for each vendor).

- **“You need to ask the same questions to everybody”** – You should tailor your questions to the vendor at hand. Focus on their specific experiences, products, expertise, and ideas. This is market research – you do not need to ask the same questions of everybody. Get the information that you need and ask thoughtful questions that are tailored to each vendor!

HACKS AND PRO-TIPS – *How do you execute this technique better?*

- **PART OF A LARGER STRATEGY:** Pair Virtual One-on-Ones with the Program Manager Question and Answer technique (see Cheat Codes) to clarify your expectations and allow vendors to ask foundational questions your strategy and requirements. This allows for a more focused and impactful Virtual One-on-One.
- **ASK QUESTIONS:** Vendors will typically speak to their strengths during their presentation, and sometimes they may not completely address the prompts. You can and should ask questions about topics that the vendor does not adequately discuss. This often informs new and previously unknown risks.
- **GOOD QUESTIONS:** Virtual One-on-Ones are intended to answer the question, “What can we learn from this vendor?” but they do not answer the question, “Do we want to do business with this vendor?” As such, any questions asked by you in the Virtual One-on-One should be open-ended, for example: “What are your thoughts about ___”; “Do you have any experience with ___ or lessons learned from ___?” and “Do you have any suggestions regarding ___?” **///LEVEL-UP///** Don’t force the vendor to develop a solution for a Virtual One-on-One; don’t ask, “What is your solution for ___” – they’ll bring a solution to the table if they have one.
- **MAKE AN INTRODUCTION:** Begin Virtual One-on-Ones with an introduction that thanks vendors for their participation, provides any upfront legal disclosures, reminds vendors of time restrictions, informs vendors of how questions will be asked, and discusses what happens after the Virtual One-on-One.
- **DEFINE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** Be able to answer the following questions prior to hosting your event:
 - » Who is your facilitator, and who speaks for you?
 - » Who is allowed to ask questions and in what format (does the facilitator filter them)?
 - » Who keeps time and informs vendors of how much time remains?
 - » Who captures notes and new information? **///LEVEL-UP///** Assign someone who separately captures information that will need to be published to the entire vendor community to ensure no one has an unfair advantage.
- **STICK TO THE SCHEDULE:** It is appropriate to speak to 4 or 5 vendors in a day. **///LEVEL-UP///** Do a ‘hot wash’ after each vendor where your team can discuss their findings on key information and discoveries while they are fresh.
- **CAPTURE THE IMPORTANT STUFF:** Assign someone to consolidate notes and identify information that makes a difference. This is important to help maintain fairness amongst vendors and to help you shape your acquisition:
 - » What do we need to change in the requirement or solicitation?
 - » What are the newly identified risks we need to mitigate?
 - » How can we incentivize and reward innovative ideas?

2 Round Table with Professional Associations

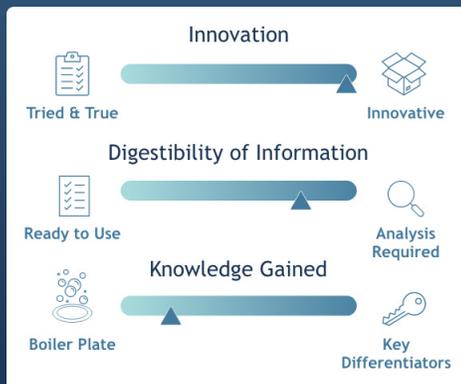


Round Table with Professional Associations



A Round Table with Professional Associations offers a unique opportunity for information exchange in a small group setting with member companies. You can explore and address mission challenges with industry, and industry can share their experience and perspectives. Use this to quickly get smart on a specific topic! The output can highlight your knowledge gaps, inform acquisition decisions and requirements, and identify risks and opportunities. Examples of associations, councils, and roundtables that you can tap into: American Council for Technology and Industry Advisory Council (ACT-IAC), The Homeland Security & Defense Business Council, National Contract Management Association (NCMA), and Washington Homeland Security Roundtable. Ask your Government Industry Liaison for groups associated with your Agency.

Where it Falls



Pulling it Off



Tags: Skills and Considerations



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THE ENDGAME – *What will I achieve with this technique?*

- Discover a variety of insights shared from different perspectives and a running dialogue to build upon or be challenged
- Realize in depth exploration, with multiple viewpoints and perceptions, and an opportunity to “dig in”, “get into the weeds”, and “pull a thread” on a topic area
- Reduce risk of failed performance and contract protest by actively engaging vendors
- Accelerate your schedule by quickly gathering a lot of information from many sources

MATCH THAT TECHNIQUE! *Is the technique a fit for my program?*

The Round Table with Professional Associations is a good match when your team:

- Has a unique challenge, needs to lean forward in a space, needs to get up to speed on the latest and greatest, or become more informed in an area.
- Values input and insights from a variety of technical experts, and a small group setting would be helpful
- Has a particular area of concern that could benefit from broader discussion.
- Appreciates insights shared and gained for creating create a better understanding of the topic/ challenge.

GAME CHANGERS – *How does this technique work?*

Building on the mission to develop better models of engagement between your team and vendors, Round

Tables facilitate unique opportunities for information exchange in a small group setting. Once the dialogue gets moving, a lot of rich information can be discovered verbally, which is often a more expedient, more fruitful, and less laborious format than writing for exploring nuances. Round Tables provide the opportunity for you to explore and address mission challenges and enable vendors to share their experience and expertise with you. They allow you to gain more information and perspectives, and they inform your processes and policies, all of which serve to strengthen your effort.

THE LIFT – *Where do you put the effort?*

- **FACILITATION PREPARATION AND CONSIDERATIONS.** Although preparing for and facilitating a Round Table with Professional Associations is a relatively light lift for you from both a time and fiscal point of view, it does require advance preparation, organization, and thought to appropriately set the stage for the dialogue. The lift is also relatively light for vendors, with some advance research and preparation. Considerations include the following:
 - » Identify the association/council/your own contacts for vendor participants
 - » Determine size of Round Table/Number of attendees (for both your team and vendors)
 - » While balancing the total number of attendees, would it make sense to invite other Government stakeholders?
 - » Will the location be in-person or virtual?
 - » How much time is needed to thoroughly discuss the topic? For a starting point, a range between 90 minutes to 3 hours may be appropriate.
 - » Are there any security concerns? If the meeting is in-person, what is needed for badging? How far in advance does this need to be done? What information needs to be collected?
 - » Is a legal, security, or contracting consultation/review needed?

MYTHS AND LEGENDS – *What needs to be dispelled?*

- **“Industry won’t provide useful information in front of competitors.”** -- That may be somewhat true for an Industry Day, but the same does not typically apply for a smaller group Round Table. If the technical representatives from vendors are invited to the session, in a matter of minutes with a strong facilitator, you’ll be tapping into rich information and a solid dialogue adding high value and insights to benefit your program. You might not get everything in the round table, but you’ll get enough to inform your next steps and strategy.

HACKS AND PRO-TIPS – *How do you execute this technique better?*

- **TARGET AUDIENCE:** As a best practice, it is important to identify your vendor target audience for the Round Table in advance: Technical? Business Development? Combination? **///LEVEL-UP///** **If you do not want a room full of business development folks, you need to specify this clearly, communicate it upfront, and capture it in writing in the read-ahead. No need to be shy about it, make what you want to see crystal clear.**
- **PREPARE A READ-AHEAD:** Be sure to tee up the topic to be discussed in a vendor read-ahead so the parties can begin thinking about the issue at hand in advance. As part of the read-ahead, an opener should be provided to frame the session, in addition to sharing anticipated questions.
- **STRONG FACILITATOR:** Make sure your key spokesperson is comfortable facilitating a dialogue. In addition, make sure your Contracting Officer is informed of and present at the session.

- **STRONG NOTETAKERS:** You'll be bombarded with great information that you can use. Make sure you've got great notetakers that can keep track of what's being said. Record sessions when possible. This also enables the facilitator to dialogue freely without the distraction and additional burden of this role.
- **PULL THE THREAD:** If your topic is complex, pick one key issue and do not be afraid to dig deep into that topic. You can have another session on another key issue, if necessary, even with a different Round Table.
- **WORK SHAPING AWARENESS:** Vendors will try to shape the work to their advantage. Although this is to be expected, you need to recognize and be aware of this and actively facilitate the Round Table conversation. Facilitation keeps these work shaping elements in check and keeps to conversation open.
- **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS HAVE POWERFUL NETWORKS:** You can tap into these organizational networks with a simple phone call, and you can use them as a springboard for dialogue with a variety of network members. This comes with minimal effort and often engages current, state-of-the-practice information.

[Appendix B: Example Round Table Preparation Exercise.](#)

3

Program Manager Question and Answer

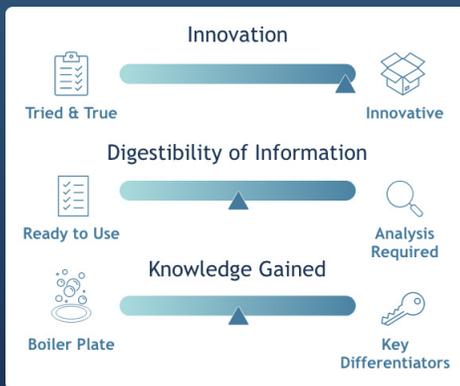


Program Manager Question and Answer



The Program Manager (PM) Question and Answer (Q&A) is a unique Market Research approach that allows you to provide information to Industry, not the other way around. It provides a forum, typically 1-3 hours, where Industry can ask questions about your acquisition requirement or objectives. This is a mixed group setting with multiple vendors in an open forum; it allows all vendors to hear from your PM directly and simultaneously. This market research activity is best suited as a follow-up to previous activities, from which vendors can form questions. The dual purposes of the PM Q&A are to help give industry as much information as possible and to build trust. PM Q&As help ensure that you receive the highest possible quality proposals.

Where it Falls



Pulling it Off



Tags: Skills and Considerations



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THE ENDGAME – *What will I achieve with this technique?*

- Give vendors the answers to **their** questions, enabling them to better respond to the requirement
- Save time in the future by clarifying uncertainties upfront to the vendor community and avoid lengthy written back-and-forth question and answers
- Obtain insight on what areas of the technical requirements are confusing or unclear
- Through their questions, vendors will indicate risks and opportunities that enable you to improve or refine your requirement
- Build vendor trust in you and your program by being open and honest

MATCH THAT TECHNIQUE! *Is the technique a fit for my program?*

The Program Manager Q&A is a good match when your team:

- Needs a follow-up to a Request for Information or other initial market research effort. This is particularly important if vendors appear to have “missed the mark” with these earlier efforts. **///LEVEL-UP///** Use the Program Manager Q&A to discover if any vendor confusion was because the requirement was poorly or confusingly written.
- Has a program manager who is an expert on the requirement.
- Wants to hear the risks and concerns that vendors have with your acquisition or requirement.
- Needs to rapidly engage industry; a Program Manager Q&A can be arranged and conducted in a very short amount of time!
///LEVEL-UP/// Notify vendors in any prior market research efforts that a Q&A will happen and conduct it as closely as possible following that notification.

GAME CHANGERS – *How does this technique work?*

A Program Manager Q&A is a great opportunity to have a direct dialog with interested vendors; they provide a significantly different perspective than other market research. The activity can be as focused (or open) as you want, you can provide topic areas, or you can let vendors freely ask the questions they have across the entire scope. You can opt to accept questions beforehand to allow you to prepare, or you can wait until the day-of for a lighter lift. Vendor questions offer a unique insight into potentially problematic areas of scope, items that are relevant but were forgotten by you, or any number of other items not previously identified. This is ideal as a follow-up to other market research efforts that give you a vendor base to invite, and those other efforts let you set the stage on your technical requirement. This is an easy market research effort to set up, and it is also short to perform. These events quickly give vendors an opportunity to ask questions, and they better inform both vendors and you. Vendors can use this information to plan their own future efforts, and it can powerfully improve their technical solutions.

THE LIFT – *Where do you put the effort?*

- **DISTRIBUTING THE INVITE TO VENDORS.** Make sure to widely distribute an invitation to the vendor community. Anyone who might be a participant in your acquisition should be invited. Reach out directly to vendors and post your event details in any other place where it might get noticed.
- **LOGISTICS PLANNING.** Make sure to set up the facility and test/plan the teleconference logistics. Ensure that notetaking roles are clearly articulated.
- **QUESTION PLANNING.** Plan how questions will be asked and fielded – will vendors be allowed to ask questions one-by-one, or will they submit them to a facilitator who feeds them to the Program Manager?
- **FACILITATION.** Prepare your PM (or yourself) to be in the spotlight during the event. Preparation can be a potentially significant effort, or it can be minor; it depends on the person.

MYTHS AND LEGENDS – *What needs to be dispelled?*

- ***“The Contracting/Legal team will never allow such an unstructured conversation!”*** – Incorrect. The comfortability with this style of event will vary by organization but start discussions with your contracting/legal team early. Also provide methods for contracting and legal personnel to hit the stop button on questions (or answers) that they think are out of bounds during the event. These measures help ensure their comfort.
- ***“Industry will be reluctant to engage with other vendors in the room”*** – Each vendor is just as highly incentivized to ask their questions. If they want you to elaborate or clarify something, they will ask them in whatever forum they’re given. And by offering an event where they are all included, vendors can ask follow-up questions to each other’s questions. Through this method, vendors all receive the exact same information as it is presented. It’s an equal playing field with less effort for you and your team! Organizations will protect what they need to protect, but they will also ENGAGE with you!

HACKS AND PRO-TIPS – *How do you execute this technique better?*

- **ENGAGE YOUR WHOLE TEAM:** Involve the contracting and legal team early and often in this process. It will give time to assuage their concerns and obtain their approval to execute a Program Manager Q&A.

- **RAPID SUCCESSION:** Conduct this event as quickly as possible after a prior market research effort. Vendors will remember the requirement, and they will have better questions if it's fresh.
- **EARLY NOTIFICATION:** Notify vendors as early as feasible that this conversation is a possibility. Some vendors might not respond to a Request for Information or Sources Sought if they find the requirement confusing or poorly written, but if they know a chance to ask questions is on the horizon, they may choose to engage.
- **DISTRIBUTE MATERIALS:** Provide any materials beforehand to allow vendors to digest key program needs, details, and scope. This enables them to develop questions from a more knowledgeable position. **///LEVEL-UP/// Provide the entire work statement for them to digest, even if it is still in draft form.**
- **PLAN AN AGENDA:** Explore segmenting the time into several boxes. Whether they are different technical areas, or a division between acquisition and technical questions. This provides some rough division of the time, and it can help vendors engage their personnel who are more suited to the topic at hand.
- **PERSONAL OUTREACH:** If you were expecting a vendor to participate in a prior market research effort, and they did not, then pick up the phone! Let them know about the event and invite them to participate.
- **ASSIGN NOTETAKERS:** Having multiple note takers will lead to a more complete capture of the dialogue. It's important to capture any new information that should be broadly released to vendors, and it's important to capture themes that drive updates to your requirement. Thorough notes can be released to vendors after the event to help complete their picture, especially if they are unable to participate.

4

White Paper Request for Information

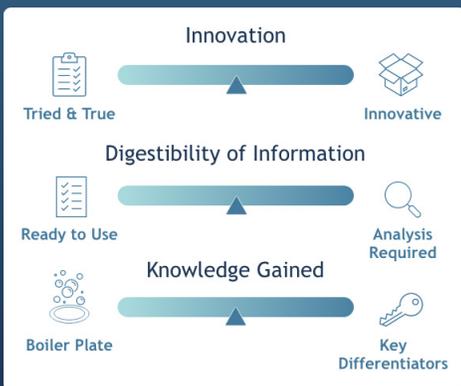


White Paper Request for Information



The White Paper Request for Information is a hybrid technique. It leverages the informative and persuasive nature of the White Paper to concisely address select complex issues or a specific topic and the vendor's philosophy on the matter. This combined technique also captures general product, service supplier and current market data typically pursued through a Request for Information. It allows for an enhanced gathering of understanding and knowledge in a formal, structured, and comparable way.

Where it Falls



Pulling it Off



Tags: Skills and Considerations



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THE ENDGAME – What will I achieve with this technique?

- Get targeted responses to your specific issues and challenges
- Mature your understanding of the marketplace and available sources, including large, small, and nontraditional businesses
- Obtain insight into acquisition strategies and plans that you can use
- Uncover knowledge of available contracting vehicles and other agencies using similar products/services
- Signal your requirements, potential issues, challenges, and future needs to vendors
- Unearth risk and opportunity information that you can use to refine your acquisition and requirements
- Inform future verbal communications with select vendors **///LEVEL-UP/// Verbal communications are highly encouraged and enable you to get critical information – see Cheat Codes section.**

MATCH THAT TECHNIQUE! Is the technique a fit for my program?

The White Paper Request for Information is a good match when your team:

- Wants to inform vendors about potential upcoming requirements and get them thinking about the effort
- Needs to explore and validate what vendors, including small businesses and non-traditional vendors, might be potential acquisition participants **///LEVEL-UP/// Stay up to date on emerging/evolving vendors by asking broad questions like “what can I change to perform my requirement better?” or “Where is technology headed in this space?”.**
- Desires industry's thoughts and insights about acquisition strategies, risks, and emerging innovations **///LEVEL-UP/// Validate your assumptions and courses of action with vendor feedback – improve your outcomes by knowing now!**

- Has a decent writer who can adequately describe the challenges and needs well enough to invoke a solid vendor response **///LEVEL-UP///** *Be sure to hone your White Paper Request for Information to the unique situation.*
- Aims to lay the groundwork for spring boarding into verbal communications and further market research

GAME CHANGERS – *How does this technique work?*

The White Paper Request for Information moves the needle on key differentiators, more than the basic knowledge gained from “passing the paper” in a generic or typical Request for Information. The White Paper Request for Information keeps vendor responses short and focused on specific questions and prompts within a structured, comparable format. Additionally, the limited page count drives down your review time.

The prompts keep vendors dialed-in on your high-interest topics and on subjects that have the greatest impact on your program’s strategy, risks, and success. The targeted questioning nudges vendors to address vital information and key aspects, with the added benefit of maximizing the return on the time and energy it takes for you to analyze responses. Additionally, it provides a solid steppingstone to next steps, options, and verbal communication with vendors, where pulling the thread on key issues greatly improves insight and understanding.

THE LIFT – *Where do you put the effort?*

- **DESCRIBING THE PROBLEM.** For an effective White Paper Request for Information, vendors need to understand what you are trying to acquire and any of your targeted issues and challenges. The needs and issues should be clearly articulated to take the guesswork out of things and in turn, you will get a better response. Spend some time and care on this – it will be noticed, and the payoff is huge. Good news, you have options too! This “setting the stage” can be done by written request to vendors or even by an event that you host. Be sure and keep your Contracting Officer/Specialist informed and invited! They add business expertise to the equation.
- **ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS.** To assist in building a White Paper Request for Information, you must have the right prompts. To get those prompts, internally ask and answer the following questions:
 - » **What don’t we know, or what could we use a refresh on?** (e.g., industry players, innovation, varied technical approaches, risks, opportunities, challenges, what other agencies/organizations have similar challenges.)
 - » **What do we want to know more about?** What are our top issues and concerns?
///LEVEL-UP/// *Industry often has knowledge of cutting-edge technology and approaches. Prompts should seek responses that identify them. This enables you to have more productive follow-on conversations with vendors, informs your requirements, helps hone a better strategy, and incentivizes the right innovations and best practices.*

Shape White Paper prompts to the questions being asked **///LEVEL-UP///** *Asking thoughtful questions with an appropriate response length encourages a quality vendor narrative, leaves less room for fluff, and ensures that your specific targeted questions are thoughtfully considered.*

- **ASSESSING THE RESPONSES:** The biggest personnel lift on this technique is hours you will spend reading and analyzing the responses. To save time and energy, brief your assessment team ahead of time on their roles and expectations, devise an assessment approach, and prep reviewers on key items to look for.

MYTHS AND LEGENDS – *What needs to be dispelled?*

- **“All you need is a Request for Information.”** – Take it up a notch for your program’s sake and build your technical stature! It is incredibly difficult to capture all of the information needed through a general Request for Information paper exercise. Although use of the White Paper Request for Information ups your game considerably, you should seriously consider coupling this technique with verbal, face-to-face communication. That is a winning combination!

HACKS AND PRO-TIPS – *How do you execute this technique better?*

- **FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS:** Limit the White Paper Request for Information prompts. Too many topics, issues, and challenges dilute the response. **///LEVEL-UP///** Focus on technical prompts that allow you to separate the wheat from the chaff of problem solvers or industry leaders.
- **THE REVIEW TEAM:** Shape your review team to include technical, acquisition, contracting, and programmatic experts who can answer the following questions:
 1. Could the responding vendors be potential players in this program?
 2. Do the responding companies offer any approaches or ideas that should be explored further?
 3. What technical and acquisition follow-up questions should be asked?
 4. What technical and program risks result from the vendor responses?
 5. What acquisition strategy approaches are being shaped or should be pursued?**///LEVEL-UP///** Ask your review team to read the White Paper Request for Information and Prompts before it goes out the door.
- **PICK UP THE PHONE:** You might know of vendors that may have innovative ideas or vendors that have something to potentially contribute. Look them up and give them a call! Tell them to be on the lookout for your White Paper Request for Information and that you are interested in hearing from them.
- **PREPARE FOR THE NEXT STEPS:** Anticipate future conversations from the targeted questions and page limitations of this technique. Vendors should be notified in the White Paper Request for Information that additional conversations may occur with certain vendors at your discretion. (Yes, you can do this! No, you do not have to talk with all the respondents.)
- **BROAD OUTREACH:** In addition to using SAM.gov or other traditional business opportunity mechanisms, the White Paper Request for Information should be released on as many platforms as practical to ensure the right vendors are looped in.
///LEVEL-UP/// Engage Other Transaction Consortia for a focused stakeholder base. Valuable information can come from anywhere. This is especially important where Other Transactions and nontraditional acquisition approaches may apply.
///LEVEL-UP/// Consider creating a communications or social media strategy to help determine where to reach.
- **RAPID RESPONSE:** With focused prompts and appropriate page limits, vendors can rapidly respond to requests in as little as 15 days (and you can more rapidly review them!).

[Appendix C: Sample White Paper Request for Information](#)

5

Lightning Networking Sessions

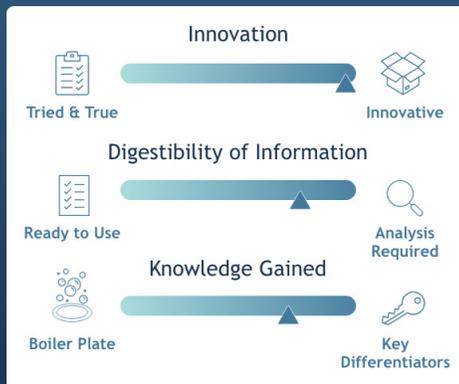


Lightning Networking Session



Lightning Networking Sessions are an opportunity for you to facilitate collaboration across the vendor community through a series of presentations and question and answer periods for potential vendor partners. The lightning networking session enables companies to see what other companies can do, and it stimulates partnerships in meeting your requirement. Additionally, by observing the interactions between vendors, you can shape your acquisition and learn more about your program risks and opportunities. Think of the lightning networking session as an innovation event to connect businesses for future partnerships with each other – it's Tinder for your program.

Where it Falls



Pulling it Off



Tags: Skills and Considerations



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THE ENDGAME – *What will I achieve with this technique?*

- Bring new ideas and technology together to better solve your requirement
- Foster a collaborative and inclusive environment with vendors
- Build an environment set up for mission success by fostering partnerships with and between vendors
- Allow vendors to see the capabilities of smaller or non-traditional potential partners for current and future partnerships – improving the capabilities that they can deliver
- Allow your team and other Government stakeholders to see the capabilities of companies for current and future acquisitions **///LEVEL-UP/// Leverage presented technologies for current and future requirements.**
- Help smaller and non-traditional companies gain market entry

MATCH THAT TECHNIQUE! *Is the technique a fit for my program?*

The Lightning Networking Sessions are a good match when your team:

- Wants to improve the technical solution that you'll receive after contract award
- Combines this with other market research techniques (such as a follow up to a White Paper Request for Information)
- Needs capability information on potential vendor players
- Seeks information on the art of the possible that supports your objectives or requirements **///LEVEL-UP/// Stay up to date on emerging and evolving capabilities and vendors.**
- Seeks to build a rapport with vendors that shows you're looking to make everyone successful **///LEVEL-UP/// Use multiple techniques along with this one to begin relationships with companies to expand the industrial base for this and future requirements.**

GAME CHANGERS – *How does this technique work?*

Facilitating Lightning Networking Sessions is a simplistic way to give vendors the chance to tell other potential vendor partners (and your team) about their capabilities and how they believe those capabilities can support your requirements. It shows that you are willing to go the extra mile to ensure the right partnerships will be available to address your requirements. Instead of the typical paper exercise, you can ask vendors to provide capability briefings and descriptions. You will then facilitate quick and precise presentations between companies, while also facilitating a question-and-answer period. Moreover, you will offer all of this information back to vendors after the completion of the sessions. It is a very powerful tool that you can use to bolster market research to refine requirements, and enable vendors to form better, stronger partnerships that meet your requirements.

THE LIFT – *Where do you put the effort?*

- **TEAM PLANNING.** Putting together the right team of stakeholders to help with the facilitation of this type of event is required. Most of the skill required is around the facilitation and logistical planning of the event. In terms of Public Speaking, it is recommended to have a representative of your program to facilitate the question-and-answer period.
- **MARKET RESEARCH STRATEGY.** The Networking Lightning Sessions need to be paired with one of the other market research techniques to be effective.
- **BESPOKE INVITATIONS.** You must first reach out to companies to provide them the opportunity to come in and take part in the Lightning Networking Sessions. This usually involves a letter going out to the vendors that participated in an RFI or something of that nature. The letter should offer them the chance to present or the chance to attend and simply ask questions of those presenting to maximize attendance and participation.
- **AGENDA PLANNING.** The Lightning Networking Sessions consist of a short presentation (10-15 minutes) followed by a question-and-answer period (5-10 minutes) that is facilitated by you. This allows for 2-4 companies to present per hour. This will require multiple roles on your side (including facilitator, timekeeper, and note taker/recorder).
- **DISCLOSURES.** All of your team's personnel and the facilitator will have to be very aware that this is an information session only and that no acquisition information will be discussed. The facilitator should spell this out in the beginning along with the legal office's concurrence.
- **FOLLOW-UP.** Once the sessions are completed, you will likely post the information to a broadly accessible place, such as SAM.gov.

MYTHS AND LEGENDS – *What needs to be dispelled?*

- ***“Companies already do this on their own and don't need additional help”*** – This may be correct for some of the larger companies that have already gained market entry; however, many smaller and non-traditional companies need help in this respect. This is a good way to incentivize new entrants and give them the ability to showcase their capabilities to potential partners and stakeholders in an open environment. It improves the technical solutions that you'll see in the end.
- ***“We got all the information we needed from the Request for Information”*** – Market research is a fluid process that never really stops. Using this technique to compliment other techniques shows more due diligence on your part, and it exposes you to things that wouldn't necessarily emerge from a typical paper exercise.

HACKS AND PRO-TIPS – *How do you execute this technique better?*

- **COMMUNICATE THE INTENT:** If you plan to conduct Lightning Networking Sessions, inform vendors as early as possible, and through any prior Market Research techniques. It may provoke a larger response knowing that this opportunity is tied to it.
- **PLAN THE AGENDA:** Make sure your team thinks through the time needed to have both presentations and a question-and-answer periods. You may find that 10-15 minutes isn't enough presentation time, given the complex requirements. You may also find that 5 minutes is enough for the question-and-answer period. Whatever you decided, just make sure you think it through. Additionally, if the question-and-answer period length seems to be too long during the event, be prepared to pivot accordingly.
- **PRE-PLAN PROMPTS AND QUESTIONS:** The facilitator should have questions prepared for each of the participants in case there is a lull. If the facilitator breaks the ice, then the other vendors and stakeholders will tend to follow suit and start asking questions. **///LEVEL-UP///** Have a Subject Matter Expert ready with specific questions for each of the vendors based on any prior RFI responses.

[Appendix D: Sample Lightning Networking Session Invitation](#)

6

University Partnership/ Engaging Academia

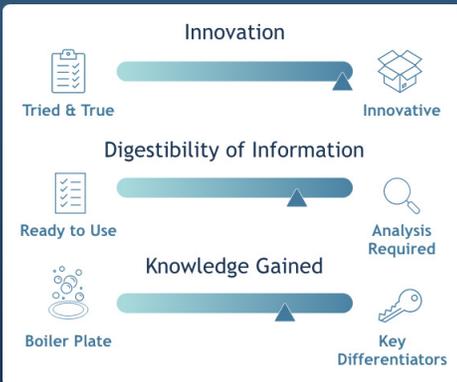


University Partnership/Engaging Academia



University Partnerships and Engaging Academia provides a new way to deliver innovative ideas and solutions to your challenges. The purpose of the partnership is to quickly and easily access the capabilities of universities to deliver innovative, data-driven technical products. You can leverage academic research and ideas to help solve important challenges in the short-term through Hackathons, Technical Interchange Meetings, or Design Challenges. You could also participate in longer-term research through sponsoring Capstones, hiring a professor part time or pursuing long term joint research.

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THE ENDGAME – *What will I achieve with this technique?*

- Expedite innovative solutions to complex challenges by combining expertise, perspectives, and research capabilities
- Build new or strengthen longstanding academic partnerships to support your mission and solve problems, now and in the future
- Provide faculty and students opportunities to collaborate with technical experts on critical national challenges and high-visibility topics
- Provide an avenue for commercializing innovations and secure some rights to own technical data
- Advance workforce development by allowing students to become familiar with you and your mission
/// LEVEL-UP /// Think future workforce leaders and next-generation challenges!

MATCH THAT TECHNIQUE! *Is the technique a fit for my program?*

University Partnership/Engaging Academia is a good match when your team:

- Wants to leverage other ongoing research and apply university research and innovations to real world problems
- Seeks to explore new ideas and ways of thinking by tapping into students' creativity and perspectives
- Desires an opportunity for academia to learn about a federal agency's mission, technology challenges, and research and development plans so academia can provide innovative solutions and collaboration
- Needs to quickly build teams that identify and advance ideas
- Needs to hire a professor or faculty part time to help with an initiative

GAME CHANGERS – *How does this technique work?*

The University Partnership/Engaging Academia technique accelerates innovation through partnerships with research universities. It links the domain knowledge and capabilities of your organization with university faculty, students, and academic research capabilities. The engagement thrives on mutually beneficial partnerships across disciplines. **///LEVEL-UP///** It can also provide for crowdsourcing technical approaches from participating universities to leverage cutting-edge academic research and ideas.

THE LIFT – *Where do you put the effort?*

- **DESCRIBING THE PROBLEM.** Government acronyms can almost be considered a second language. Terminology can be confusing, have regional nuances, and differ in academic terms, even among expert groups. Take the time to describe your project and goals in simple terms and then build them so parties are all on the same page. This is especially important when working with students who have not yet been exposed to ‘Government speak’.
- **ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS.** Finding, scoping, and shaping the effort for discovery and synergy is important. Be sure to communicate early and often to hone that focus for improved mission outcomes.

MYTHS AND LEGENDS – *What needs to be dispelled?*

- **“Does my organization even work with colleges and universities?”** – Your Agency probably does or would welcome the engagement. These types of partnerships have most likely been previously negotiated between your organization and other Agencies, so your organization would not be reinventing the wheel, just tailoring. An early start for academic year planning (especially for Capstones – prior to school year start) is critical. The paperwork aspect is actually not very difficult. For Capstones, a one to two page write up and short Statement of Work (2-3 pages) is typically sufficient.

HACKS AND PRO-TIPS – *How do you execute this technique better?*

- **CONSIDER IF THE FOLLOWING SPECIALTY EVENTS WOULD BE BENEFICIAL:**
 1. A **Hackathon** is a sprint-like design event in which computer programmers and others involved in software development collaborate intensively on software projects. The goal of a hackathon is to create functioning product by the end of the event. Hackathons tend to have a specific focus, which can include the programming language used, the operating system, an application, an Application Programming Interface, or the subject and the demographic group of the programmers. Universities are a great resource for this! Be sure to provide a great prize for the winner(s).
 2. A **Design Challenge** is a period of ideation and exploration to define a problem and its solution. As problems are often complex and broad, this activity provides a pathway to an innovative and feasible solution. A Design Challenge may take the form of a daylong competition, with student or faculty innovators designing products and services that seek to create better solutions to complicated problems. It could also be a longer-term effort such as university students conducting a semester-long Capstone Project. The outcome can include sketches, designs, mock-ups, and a better understanding of the problem.
 3. A **Technical Interchange Meeting** is an opportunity for academia to learn about a federal agency’s mission and research and development plans. They can help academia learn about technology challenges, help them to shape innovative solutions, or inspire future collaboration.

4. The **Hire-a-Professor** method allows you to gain additional perspectives and synergy within a specific technology or problem space. Although professors often have high demand on their time, it is possible (and not uncommon) to hire professors part-time to supplement your program's subject matter expertise. This method enables you to expedite innovative solutions to complex challenges by combining expertise, perspectives, and research capabilities. It enables you to build new or strengthen existing academic partnerships to support your mission and solve problems, now and in the future. The professorial expertise can be leveraged across your project's landscape to either support a specific technology development activity or to inspire new, interesting ideas and strategies.

- **NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT:** Have your Office of General Council assist in crafting an agreement that students can easily understand. Otherwise, the Non-Disclosure Agreement may not be honored.
- **PUBLISHING/RESUMES:** Meet the students or faculty where they are. Understand their need to publish and find opportunities for them to publish by leveraging your requirement. Make sure you negotiate a review before any publication with ample time (e.g., two weeks). **///LEVEL-UP/// Consider co-authoring the work and jointly presenting at conferences. Make it a win-win!**
- **COMMUNICATION:** The right amount of communication depends on how much time your team has to devote to the engagement. Understand that if you have college students in a Capstone, you could meet anywhere from twice a week to every two weeks for guidance. Some scoping, cheering, and enthusiasm goes a long way for these students to deliver a useful advancement. They are excited to be working on real-world problems. Taking the time to set up the terminology and goals with frequent direction checks can pay dividends. **///LEVEL-UP/// Get the lingo right - Universities are higher education and research institutions. "Academia" refers to the environment or community related to the pursuit of research, education, and scholarship.**
- **DATA RIGHTS:** Be prepared to negotiate data rights. Universities often have a standard agreement they use for grants that they use as a starter for other agreements. You will need to negotiate and edit this agreement to make it work for both you and the institution. It is typically not difficult to work this out for things like Capstones, but the terms need to be revealed in advance. It may impact which project a student chooses to work on for the semester or year.
- **U.S. CITIZENSHIP:** It is acceptable and appropriate to declare if only U.S. Citizens may be allowed to work on a project. This should be declared at the start of the project. It is not shocking or controversial in the university setting when working with the United States Government.

[Appendix E: Sample University Partnership Design Challenge](#)

[Appendix F: Sample Student Nondisclosure Agreement](#)

7

Highly Focused Technical Exchanges

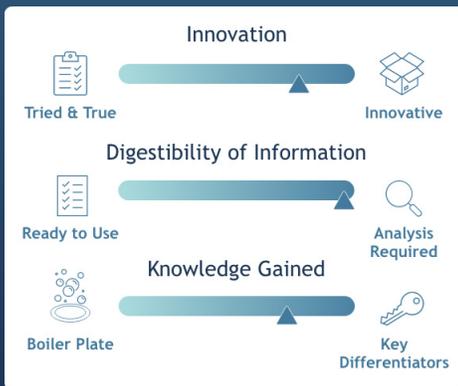


Highly Focused Technical Exchanges



Highly Focused Technical Exchanges allow for a powerful, quick-hitting, and focused session(s) between your team and a Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC) partner (e.g., The MITRE Corporation). This enables you to dive deep into your most challenging problem sets. Highly Focused Technical Exchanges are typically half-day sessions in which experts, from across the entire FFRDC, dig into prescribed problems or challenges and present topics, solutions, prototypes, best practices, and lessons-learned. These Highly Focused Technical Exchanges are structured, and the problem sets and challenges are distributed ahead of time. Presenters are always “new voices” from outside your team, and the FFRDC hand-picks those presenters to maximize value to your program by articulating solution sets, engaging in meaningful dialogue, and leading exercises with your team.

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THE ENDGAME – What will I achieve with this technique?

- Discover best practices, lessons, and innovative solutions that help address your specific challenge
- Builds enthusiasm, a network, and a broader community around your problem set
- Familiarize yourself with solutions and ideas that have worked in the past from similar problems
- Learn about risks and challenges from known experts

MATCH THAT TECHNIQUE! Is the technique a fit for my program?

Highly Focused Technical Exchanges are a good fit when your team:

- Wants to tap into experts with new and differing insights **/// LEVEL-UP ///** Use Highly Focused Technical Exchanges as an opportunity to validate your assumptions and ask questions of the FFRDC experts
- Wants to take a deeper dive into specific challenge sets to identify “what is out there”
- Desires executable solutions that are innovative, but have been successfully executed before
- Needs to explore a problem set, potential solutions, best practices, and lessons learned
- Needs to learn about the context and environment of other efforts and challenges

GAME CHANGERS – How does this technique work?

This technique identifies the challenges, questions, and/or problem sets that you and the vendor community are facing. The first step in the process is to identify what you are trying to solve or what challenge(s) are you having. Experts can then be identified and brought-in to help solve those problems or show how they have been

addressed previously in similar situations. The approach is extremely effective, as the FFRDC possesses deep, focused expertise. Moreover, the independent nature of the FFRDC protects you from biased opinions and leverages the ‘trusted advisor’ status of the FFRDC. Highly Focused Technical Exchanges present packaged solutions and lessons learned from previous efforts. They can be quick hitting (half-day to full day) in which your team is brought into a well-choreographed and jam-packed information session. The work ahead of time – identifying challenges, problem statements, and associated experts – helps to make this a powerful session.

THE LIFT – *Where do you put the effort?*

- **IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM(S).** Make sure to appropriately identify the problem(s) that your program is trying to solve. This enables FFRDC participants to target their expertise and findings directly to your program. Short, outcome-oriented problem statements are a great way to do this.
- **EVENT AGENDA.** Coordinate with an FFRDC point of contact who can choreograph presenters and identify key participants across the FFRDC. This person may be an FFRDC member either internal or external to your program team. Follow up with the Point of Contact and ensure that they develop an engaging agenda that is tailored to the needs of your team. On the day of the event, make sure your entire team is available to receive the information.
- **PROCESS THE INFORMATION.** Highly Focused Technical Exchanges produce a tremendous volume of information and ideas. Gather your team afterward to process what you learned. Figure out how to use that to shape your acquisition strategy and technical requirements. **///LEVEL-UP/// Use other techniques after the innovation day to further explore what you’ve learned**

MYTHS AND LEGENDS – *What needs to be dispelled?*

- **“This is just another meeting”** – Incorrect. Highly Focused Technical Exchanges are dynamic, engaging, deep-dive sessions. They are prepared by the FFRDC partner, tailored to the specific acquisition, and encourage collaboration and problem-solving discussions. These events stimulate thought and enable future work to proceed!

HACKS AND PRO-TIPS – *How do you execute this technique better?*

- **LIMITED SCOPE:** Although you’ll create problem statements, you should limit the scope of your event to no more than three key challenges you’re trying to resolve. This will keep the day from becoming too disparate, and it will keep your team focused on the key challenges. It will also allow you to explore your challenges in more depth, providing multiple points of view on ways to solve your difficult problems.
- **DEFINE OUTCOMES:** As part of your problem statement creation process, your team should clearly define outcomes of a successful session. What are you trying to learn? What do you hope to know more about? What knowledge will make this event a success? Communicate those expectations and desired outcomes to your FFRDC Point of Contact. After the event, follow-up and make sure to identify which outcomes were met, partially met, or not met at all. Use that knowledge to shape your next steps.
- **BRING THE ENERGY:** The sessions should be dynamic and engaging, but that requires you and your team to bring energy to the event. Ask engaging questions. Ask for stories. Don’t make this a series of briefings – make it a two-way conversation! **///LEVEL-UP/// Create a list of engaging questions ahead of time to reference during the Highly Focused Technical Exchange.**

8

Technical Demonstrations

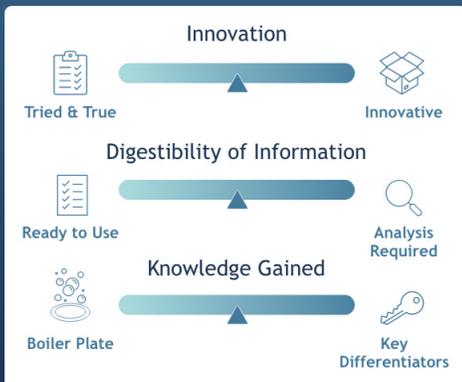


Technical Demonstration

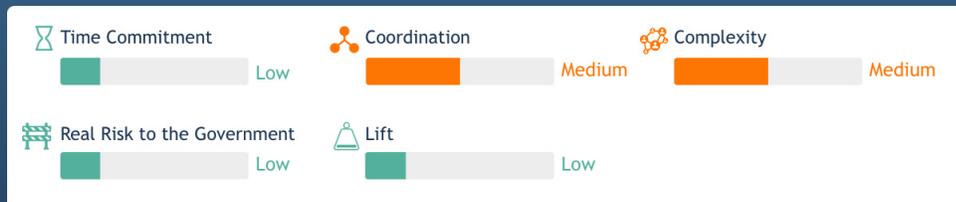
Technical Demonstrations, or “Tech Demos” enable vendors to showcase a prototype, rough example, or an otherwise incomplete version of a conceivable product or future system to you. These are put together as proofs of concept with the primary purpose of showcasing the possible applications, feasibility, or performance of a new technology.



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THE ENDGAME – *What will I achieve with this technique?*

- Builds better relationships and trust with new or existing vendors
- See the potential of new, innovative ideas (e.g., what could a capability be?) and where technology may be headed – Tomorrow’s state-of-the-art
- Discover new perspectives that can shape requirements and selection criteria in a future acquisition

MATCH THAT TECHNIQUE! *Is the technique a fit for my program?*

The Tech Demo is a good match when your team:

- Wants insights into improvements and enhancement of existing or new tools/systems
- Is looking to better understand where technology is headed in a given field – market surveillance of tomorrow’s state-of-the-art

GAME CHANGERS – *How does this technique work?*

Identify stakeholders, including users and the technical/acquisition team, who will benefit from a demonstration. Set logistics with the vendor and determine how and when the Tech Demo could occur (including virtual options, if applicable). Tell the vendor the outcomes you expect from a demo and let them shape it to meet those outcomes. Allow vendors to put together a demonstration that enables users to play, click around, and/or get a feel for the program, technology, or tool. Instruct vendors of your expectations and let them know that they can allow users to pick from a list of things a prototype can do. This helps give vendors some control in gathering productive feedback. Remember – they’re only demonstrating a prototype. **///LEVEL-UP///** Another way to strike the balance of control and getting a feel for the technology is for the vendor to prepare and show a video asking and answering a question, similar to a simulation. The scenario shows the user experience and allows for follow-up questions-and-answers.

THE LIFT – *Where do you put the effort?*

- **LOGISTICS PLANNING.** Depending on the situation, considerations include: a hosting platform for sharing virtually, technical support, advance set up and testing, travel, security/badging, parking, bringing equipment on site, use of practice stations, room/facility coordination, agenda, and list of questions/desires for Tech Demo, and identifying participants (both from your team and the vendor).
///LEVEL-UP/// Some Tech Demos can be done at the vendor location, which also allows a bonus insider look into their operations and facilities and enables other focused one-on-one discussions.

MYTHS AND LEGENDS – *What needs to be dispelled?*

- **“If we do one Tech Demo, we need to see Tech Demos from everyone”** – You only need to consider Tech Demos from companies that have suspected capabilities, technologies, or ideas that will enhance an understanding of the future. Remember, this is market research!
- **“This is the most amazing technology we’ve ever seen. We have to have it.”** -- Be aware, when a vendor is running the Tech Demo, what you see may be a bit of theater. Even Steve Jobs created and relied on a “golden path” which was basically a step by step, scripted procedure of features that he could show in a specific order so that the iPhone would not malfunction. This is commonplace when showcasing how technology could work and what is envisioned.

HACKS AND PRO-TIPS – *How do you execute this technique better?*

- **SEEK OUT TECH DEMOS:** It is appropriate for you to reach out to vendors and request a Tech Demo.
///LEVEL-UP/// Tell the vendor what you want to see and why you want to see it. Make sure they can shape the Tech Demo to meet the specific desired outcomes.
- **IDENTIFY THE TARGET AUDIENCE:** The program, application, or tool cannot be everything to everyone. For example, different types of users at different points in their careers may have different needs. In some cases, multiple Tech Demos may be needed to encourage open dialogue within the selected groups.
- **BE CONSISTENT:** Make sure that you’re consistent in your approach with how you talk to different vendors. Make sure you’re giving them the information that they need in order to answer your questions. When doing many Tech Demos in a short period of time, you may neglect to offer key information. Use a script – with introductions and a reiteration of your expectations – to maintain consistency.
- **FOCUS ON THE FUTURE:** Ask demonstrators to showcase potential capabilities, demonstrate performance of capabilities, test capabilities on ordinary users, encourage trial and use, or convince interested parties of the viability of some capabilities.
///LEVEL-UP/// Provide feedback to the developers. Tell the vendor what you like, what you do not like, and talk about your pain points. As long as an unfair advantage is not created, and good judgement is used, this is a best practice.

9

Virtual Site Visit

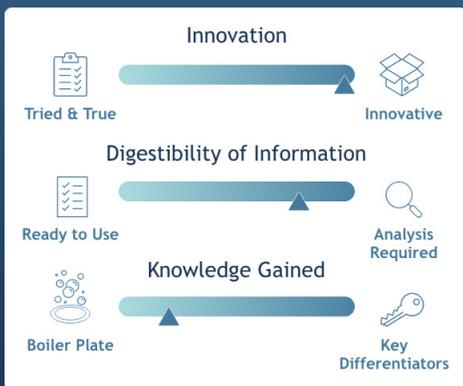


Virtual Site Visit



A *Virtual Site Visit*, also known as a *Virtual Tour*, is a fast, easy alternative to in-person visits to government sites or industry sites. Virtual tour software and 3D cameras can now scan and digitize your building or space, automatically create 3D tours, provide schematic floor plans, capture existing conditions, and replace manual measurements. You can tag and label your tour. It is an inexpensive alternative to traveling. (For example, Fannie Mae piloted Matterhorn software for property appraisals during COVID-19.)

Where it Falls



Pulling it Off



Tags: Skills and Considerations



THE ENDGAME – *What will I achieve with this technique?*

- Enable potential vendors to get firsthand insight on operations, conditions, or even just the space/area for understanding of your effort
- If a vendor is leading the site visit, you get an opportunity to view vendor business operations, conditions, or the space/area for increased insight into how things work at the vendor site
- Easily share pictures and measurements
- Collaborate between geographically distant teams
- Reduce incumbent advantages (and achieve better competition) by giving more parties an opportunity to view your site directly through a visual
- **/// LEVEL-UP ///** If security is a concern, you can target/narrow down a small group of vendors for access to the information or host through secure/classified virtual means.

MATCH THAT TECHNIQUE! *Is the technique a fit for my program?*

The Virtual Site Visit is a good match when your team:

- Has applications or is working in areas such as: facilities management, architecture, engineering, construction, emergency preparedness, office environments, training, and visualization in difficult to access or dangerous areas, and anywhere that essential building details must be included
- Has performance and schedule concerns and, thus, needs to reduce risk in these areas by increasing access to critical building or site intelligence
- Needs to quickly provide measurements of a structure and dimensions of the equipment within. The technology allows users to find all relevant information to where specific items (from a retail-type space to machinery) are located
- Wants to visually verify or provide supplemental visual insight into information, whether adding clarity to the market research (seeing is believing) or to your requirements

GAME CHANGERS – *How does this technique work?*

Taking a page from renowned lender Fannie Mae gives you a new take on Site Visits—one that you can smartly leverage. This technique may be particularly powerful if the place of performance for your effort is in a location that cannot be accessed easily by the broad vendor community prior to award (secure location, challenging to travel to, etc.).

Enter the world of 3D capture/360-degree views and Virtual Site Visits (also known as Virtual Tours). These are a fast and easy alternative to in-person visits. The newer technology works by creating immersive 3D digital twins. In short, a 360 camera captures two images or video files from dual lenses with a 180-degree field of view and either automatically stitches them together in-camera or offers companion software with which files are stitched together. Virtual tour software and 3D cameras can now scan and digitize your building or space, automatically create 3D tours, provide schematic floor plans, capture existing conditions, and replace manual measurements. You can tag and label your tour and build new applications with 3D object insertion and real-time space modification capabilities. Relative to facilities, a virtual tour will provide vendors with information that may not be found on drawings and specifications; it can show current “problem areas” with the space or challenges when transporting to a space (road conditions, building entry hazards, storage spaces, etc.).

THE LIFT – *Where do you put the effort?*

- **TIMING.** This technology is very fast, relatively inexpensive, and easy, especially when compared to travel to a site. As an example, from real estate, it can take anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour to capture one or two single panoramas. An interactive tour will generally take between 1 and 2 hours for 4 - 10 rooms.
- **LOGISTICS.** Coordinating with your Audio/Visual (A/V) team for professional set up and site access should be done a few weeks in advance. If necessary, for the first time, purchasing the camera/software can be done under a purchase order or P-Card quickly. Consider engaging your security team (if you have one) and make sure that you have the right approvals to use this equipment and process in your location.
- **GUIDING QUESTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS.** You should ask and answer the following questions to know if this technique is appropriate:
 - » Would a Virtual Site Visit/Virtual Tour increase insight into the effort or enhance understanding of the space?
 - » Can a Virtual Site Visit/Virtual Tour take the place of an in-person visit?
 - » What is the quality of the existing requirements?
 - » For market research purposes, would you like to view the vendor’s office or facilities?

MYTHS AND LEGENDS – *What needs to be dispelled?*

- **“Vendors will be able to understand what it looks like through our written documents”** – As the saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words. In this case, there is truth to it. Give yourself the advantage of letting vendors see for themselves – it will enhance their proposed solutions and ultimately let you acquire a better service or product.

HACKS AND PRO-TIPS – *How do you execute this technique better?*

- **DO-IT-YOURSELF OR GO PRO:** Although you can do it yourself (even from an iPhone), a 3D camera and professional photographer may be desired. **///LEVEL-UP///** Professional capture technicians can be hired depending on what technology/vendor and scanning software is selected.
- **GOOD TO KNOW:** Measurements in leading software/3D technology offerings are generally accurate to within 1% of reality under normal operating conditions. De-calibration, abnormal temperatures, and other factors may result in reduced accuracy. For example, in a 10 ft (3 m) long room, measurements can vary within 1.2 in (3 cm) from actual. (Source: Matterport). For security, a private network and access control for viewing the virtual tours should be addressed.

[Appendix H: Sample Virtual Site Visit Pictures from Matterport](#)

10

Program
Announcement

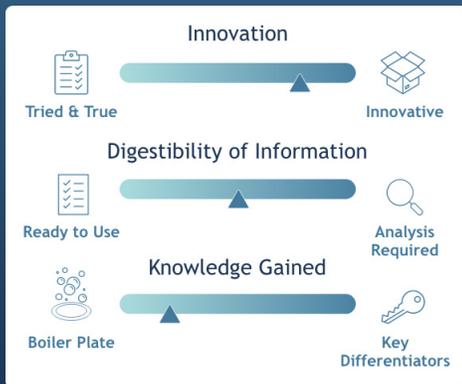


Program Announcement

Program Announcements are a quick written request to understand vendor highlights in a specific marketplace or problem area. By releasing a Statement of Need to industry and requesting a short response, you can quickly understand who the thought leaders, established players, and innovators are for a given topic. Program Announcements enable you to rapidly transition into other market research techniques.



Where it Falls



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Tags: Skills and Considerations

Speedy Build your Network Paper-Based

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THE ENDGAME – *What will I achieve with this technique?*

- Discern key information about the marketplace for a given topic: current innovations, where technology is headed, who are the current market leaders, who might be future market leaders, etc.
- Orient vendors to your requirement at extremely low cost with minimal effort
- Create a platform from which to conduct other, deeper market research once the marketplace is understood

MATCH THAT TECHNIQUE! *Is the technique a fit for my program?*

A Program Announcement is a good match when your team:

- Needs a platform from which to launch into other verbal communications with companies
- Needs a way to figure out who the market leaders and innovators are in a marketplace
- **///LEVEL-UP///** Conduct Program Announcements even if you think the marketplace is already well understood. Validate your assumptions and keep current with the latest market trends!

GAME CHANGERS – *How does this technique work?*

A Program Announcement is a very brief request for information, with the clear expectation that it will expand into further conversations (e.g., Virtual One-on-Ones, Tech Demos, Industry Roundtables) later. You release a Statement of Need and ask vendors to submit one or two paragraph responses on where they think their key differentiators are, and any thoughts on innovation or ideas for your program to consider. You then pick a handful (or more) of those responses for further engagement.

///LEVEL-UP/// In the Program Announcement, make sure to articulate the anticipated future forums – this helps vendors plan resources against your market research strategy.

THE LIFT – *Where do you put the effort?*

- **DEVELOP THE RIGHT STATEMENT OF NEED.** Vendors must understand the problem (or capability gap) that you are trying to overcome and the requirements that you are trying to fulfill. The Statement of Need should be broad enough to enable innovation and ‘new ideas’ to come to the surface.
///LEVEL-UP/// Articulate the risks and opportunities that you see. Ask for responses that address those known variables, validate the assumptions, and/or identify new risks/opportunities.
- **ASSESSING THE RESPONSES.** The biggest lift on this technique is the assessment of vendor responses. Although one or two paragraph responses can be quick reads, the team must come to consensus about which vendors to invite to further conversation and which questions to ask of those vendors. ///LEVEL-UP/// When inviting vendors back, provide specific prompts or demonstration requests – focus vendors on the exact problems and innovations you want to learn more about; don’t get caught receiving broad corporate information that doesn’t affect the specific requirement at-hand.

MYTHS AND LEGENDS – *What needs to be dispelled?*

- **“We already know the key players in our requirement. We don’t need to validate them.”** or **“This is just a recompete”** – This is a dangerous attitude that perpetuates the status-quo and leaves little room for increased competition or fresh ideas. Getting additional opinions challenges your assumptions, and it enables innovation that may yield radically different acquisition approaches.
- **“There is no value in a two-paragraph response”** – The Program Announcement is all about beginning to build a vendor community around your problem. You want to know who is out there and what they can bring to the table. Short responses create a very low-cost approach for vendors to get involved ///LEVEL-UP/// Consider Program Announcements when small businesses could be a player – they often have fewer business development resources and will benefit from the streamlined approach.

HACKS AND PRO-TIPS – *How do you execute this technique better?*

- **PICK UP THE PHONE:** You might know of vendors with innovative ideas or vendors that have something to potentially contribute. Look them up and give them a call! Tell them to be on the lookout for your Program Announcement and that you are interested in hearing from them.
- **SOCIAL MEDIA:** Program Announcements are perfect for social media. Use agency official posting platforms and link to your announcement. Expand your horizons beyond the ‘common’ players.
- **THE REVIEW TEAM:** Shape the review team to include technical, acquisition, contracting and programmatic experts who can help isolate companies with unique information or offerings. ///LEVEL-UP/// Include your review team in shaping the Statement of Need. Make sure that the key stakeholders agree on what is being communicated and asked.
- **THE REVIEW PROCESS:** Use Likert-based reviews and pre-defined review templates to quickly sift through responses and identify the most important ones. Lead a quick ‘coordination’ event to determine who will be invited for further discussion.
///LEVEL-UP/// Ask an experienced facilitator to lead the coordination. Make sure to draw out everyone’s opinion and find the innovative nuggets hiding in vendor responses.
- **LEVEL-UP WITH FUTURE ROADMAPS:** Communicate your findings and share vendor responses across your organization. Although some innovations may not be relevant to you, they might be important to another team solving another problem.
- **RAPID RESPONSE – DESIGN AND ASK FOR IT:** Industry can rapidly respond to requests in as little as 5-7 days.

11

Innovation Day

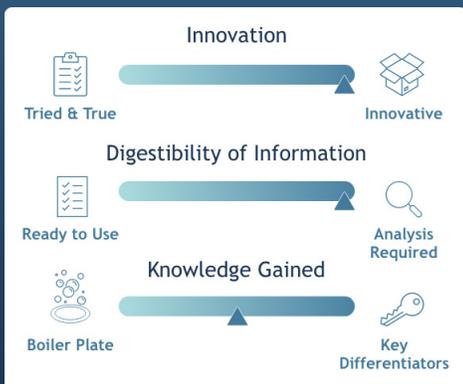


Innovation Day



An Innovation Day is a powerful market research technique used to focus on gaining a better understanding of the Government's problem, problem set, and challenges. Furthermore, it enables you to gain a better understanding of the solution space (to include the "as is" and the "to be"); analogous efforts and solutions; and industry's capabilities, questions, concerns, recommended incentives, and approach. It taps into the power of Industry and Academia, fosters partnerships, and gives you a better understanding of how to best acquire innovative solutions.

Where it Falls



Pulling it Off



Tags: Skills and Considerations



THE ENDGAME – *What will I achieve with this technique?*

- Determine a better understanding of your problem set and capability gaps
- Realize a better understanding of the solution space and potential innovations that you might want to inspire
- Develop partnerships and relationships with new innovators and sources
- Unearth focused knowledge on the solution space that meets problems and capability gaps

MATCH THAT TECHNIQUE! *Is the technique a fit for my program?*

The Innovation Day is a good match when your team:

- Does not fully understand the problem set or challenges ahead
- Is looking for innovative solutions **/// LEVEL-UP ///** Consider breaking your problem space into constituent parts, and addressing them separately, through separate innovation days.
- Suspects vendors have good insights, innovations, and/or futuristic technology that could enhance your program outcomes
- Wants to build strong relationships with vendors and academic partners

GAME CHANGERS – *How does this technique work?*

The Innovation Day combines the most powerful outcomes of the Virtual One-on-One, Virtual Industry Day, Reverse Industry Day, Tech Demo, and Program Manager Q&A into a single, focused event.

The first step is to develop a succinct Problem Statement. It should be page limited (no more than 2 pages, 1-page front and back), and it should get to the heart of your challenge. It can provide background and references regarding the problem set, as well as questions, concerns, and direct feedback that is

needed. Bottomline, it should be enough information for vendors to review, digest, and understand your challenge – enough for them to bring potential solutions and ideas to the table. The Problem Statement is an important part of the outcomes for this technique. It is a forcing function for your stakeholders to get together, collaborate, and articulate the problem or capability gap – this step alone is extremely valuable! Next, you invite participants by releasing your Problem Statement and logistics plan to key stakeholders, vendors, academic institutions, professional associations, consortiums, Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs), Government labs, non-traditional contractors, and anyone else that might have unique ideas. This will cast a wide net and tap into the full innovation of potential solution spaces and analogous efforts. An Innovation Day is not an Industry Day – it is not a monolithic meeting where only you are speaking, and there is limited interaction and innovation. Instead, the Innovation Day is exactly the opposite — It is engaging, dynamic, and fully immersive and interactive. Participants are invited to provide briefings and White Papers that are focused on your topic areas and problem statement.

/// LEVEL-UP /// Hold a series of Innovation Days, or an “Innovation Week,” to cover different parts of your problem statement.

The Innovation Day should include partnering sessions and focused brainstorming sessions, breakouts, and group discussions focused on your Problem Statement. Additionally, it can include a “show and tell” poster board session for participants and your team to network and display solutions and recommendations. Include an agenda item for Government Panel Q&A sessions.

/// LEVEL-UP /// Provide time and space for vendors to have one-on-ones sessions with your team.

THE LIFT – *Where do you put the effort?*

- **LOGISTICS.** Innovation Days consolidate a tremendous volume of engagement techniques and activities into a single event (or series of events). Thus, the invitations, technical infrastructure, and event support activities take time, energy, and planning. Take care to think through how the Innovation Day will work, and Dry-Run the execution.
- **AGENDA.** Take the time to develop an intriguing agenda that allows participants to share their innovations and enables collaboration.
- **PARTICIPATION.** Use your subject matter expert and stakeholder network, alongside other techniques, to identify the right external and internal participants. Market your event. Use social media and other outlets to get the appropriate visibility, and make sure participants understand what you’re trying to do – they need to justify the investment of their time and energy.
- **PROCESS THE INFORMATION. INNOVATION** Days produce a tremendous volume of information and ideas. Gather your team afterward to process what you learned. Figure out how to use that to shape your acquisition strategy and technical requirements. **/// LEVEL-UP ///** Use other techniques after the Innovation Day to further explore what you’ve learned.

MYTHS AND LEGENDS – *What needs to be dispelled?*

- **“Hosting an Innovation Day looks hard, and there isn’t a lot of bang for the buck”** -- Absolutely wrong! The Innovation Day builds momentum around the acquisition with internal stakeholders and industry alike. It builds a community around your tough, often misunderstood, problem set. **/// LEVEL-UP ///** Focus on the problems that you’re addressing for the first time and focus on trying to do business differently, with a different approach or solution.

- ***“The problem statement seems like a simple exercise”*** – Building a good problem statement is extremely important and extremely valuable EVEN IF the program does not use the Innovation Day technique. It can help any type of acquisition you are working on as it brings stakeholders together and allows them to jointly understand the goals...which can be difficult to do!

HACKS AND PRO-TIPS – *How do you execute this technique better?*

- **BRING ENERGY AND POSITIVITY:** Build momentum and energy around your acquisition and the problem you are trying to solve! Remember to be relatable to the vendors, and you should approach the event with an attitude that you don't know all of the answers. By partnering with industry, you're looking to learn more, identify more impactful solutions, and learn the art of the possible.

[Appendix I: Sample Innovation Day Agenda](#)

[Appendix J: Sample Innovation Day Challenge Ideas](#)

12

Multi- Stakeholder Expertise

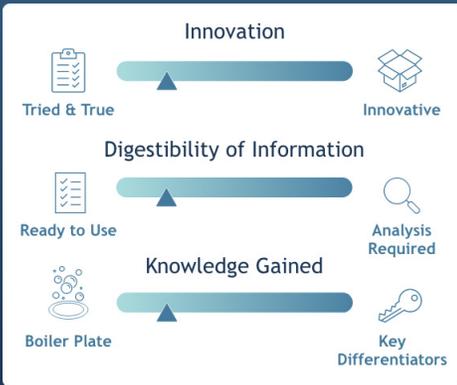


Multi-Stakeholder Expertise



Using multi-stakeholder teams are the norm for most acquisitions that are planned and executed today. Identifying the various subject matter experts (individuals or represented groups) on your team and leveraging their inputs enables you to capture valuable information. Additionally, by leveraging design thinking tools, you can focus your team's expertise into capturing key lessons learned, gaining technical insights, and capturing unique perspectives and ideas.

Where it Falls



Pulling it Off



Tags: Skills and Considerations



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THE ENDGAME – *What will I achieve with this technique?*

- Learn valuable perspectives and insights on your requirements, issues, and challenges
- Gather targeted inputs and expertise from various internal sources **///LEVEL-UP/// Target and exploit the strengths of the stakeholders in support of programmatic success. Use experts in an impactful way – they are not a “must-have” on everything**
- Obtain consolidated inputs across stakeholder groups
- Foster meaningful debate between experts to help you re-think your requirement and assumptions **///LEVEL-UP/// Encourage healthy debates/exchanges between stakeholders to flush out details (iron sharpens iron!)**

MATCH THAT TECHNIQUE! *Is the technique a fit for my program?*

Facilitating Multi-Stakeholder Expertise is a good match when your team:

- Needs to draft key acquisition artifacts and documentation that relies upon technical and functional knowledge **///LEVEL-UP/// Allow the experts to focus on isolated areas, specific to their expertise, while they remain informed of the other areas**
- Has experts, users, and requirement holders either inside or outside of your organization
- Has a complex technical need
- Expects highly technical discussions with vendors **///LEVEL-UP/// Allow experts to primarily focus their time on their specific areas of expertise rather than the entire requirement, then consolidate responses**

GAME CHANGERS – *How does this technique work?*

Identifying and strategically utilizing the various experts within your stakeholder team positions the acquisition team to efficiently collect data and inputs. Ask questions of these experts, bring the experts into the market research process, and enable them to contribute to developing and refining the approach.

The targeted use of experts during market research can also streamline the review of responses from industry regardless of the market research methodology utilized. Experts can focus their time and attention on those areas that fall directly within, or are a dependency to, their area of expertise and offer valuable perspectives, ask specific questions, identify risks and gaps.

THE LIFT – *Where do you put the effort?*

- **FACILITATED SESSIONS.** Facilitate sessions with your in-house technical experts to help gather past experiences, lessons learned, known industry players, and future objectives. Conduct these sessions early in the market research process to ensure the outcomes can shape other market research.
/// LEVEL-UP /// Use design thinking techniques to effectively capture and facilitate these conversations – www.itk.mitre.org
- **ESTABLISHING A BASELINE UNDERSTANDING OF THE REQUIREMENTS.** Ensure all stakeholders are on the same page regarding the requirements and your intent. Hold internal sessions to make sure everyone understands the objectives and needed information.
- **UNDERSTAND EVERY EXPERT'S POSITION.** Understand every expert's role, interest, and goals. Look for the interconnection between stakeholders and areas of commonality and contradiction. Use those interconnections to facilitate mediated, healthy discussions. Leverage the expertise in a facilitated discussion to refine the requirements while resolving any lingering disagreements.
- **COORDINATION, COMMUNICATION AND CAPTURE.** When using the targeted approach, it's imperative to place a greater emphasis on the coordination of support from the stakeholders to ensure the experts are being leveraged in the right areas at the right time. Experts are usually in high-demand and may have limited time to dedicate to your acquisition. Actively communicate to ensure your entire team is aware of the status of your acquisition and your expectations of each expert.
/// LEVEL-UP /// Capture inputs and feedback that lead to executing effective market research and vendor responses.
- **IDENTIFY A LEAD FOR EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP.** To save time and energy, identify primary Points of Contact (POC) within each stakeholder group. The POC will be responsible for gathering the inputs from their respective group, consolidating them, and reviewing them for completeness. This is particularly important when gathering inputs from different external stakeholder groups.

HACKS AND PRO-TIPS – *How do you execute this technique better?*

- **START HERE:** Engage and build the core of your Subject Matter Expert team early in the acquisition lifecycle. Use guided questions to identify what you already know, what you think you know, and where you think uncertainty and risks may be. Use this knowledge to launch into other market research activities.
- **STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT:** Identify each of your Subject Matter Experts and Stakeholders and understand their interest, goals, and motivations. Use this knowledge to shape roles and expectations. Derive a way to combine talents for success.
- **DOCUMENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** For large stakeholder groups that cross organizational boundaries, use documentation such as charters, user agreements, and memorandums of understanding to secure stakeholder support. Leverage organizational chains of command as needed to ensure the right stakeholder participation is available.
- **PREDICTABLE PARTICIPATION:** Make sure to communicate roles and expectations to each Subject Matter Expert and Stakeholder, and establish a predictable schedule (e.g., weekly meetings) for their participation.

13

Targeted Cold Outreach

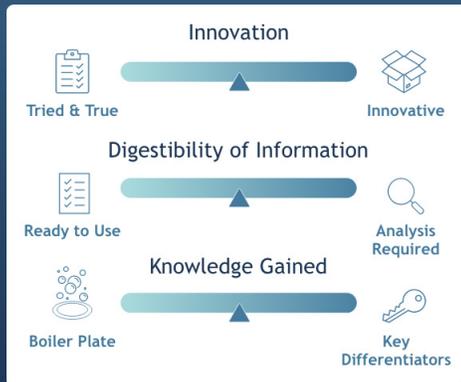


Targeted Cold Outreach



Targeted Cold Outreach reaches those companies that do not traditionally engage in business with your organization via the typical procurement process and through the typical opportunity platforms (e.g., SAM.gov). Your team identifies requirements and constructs a survey template that yields easily digestible information from a variety of vendors. This activity gives you quick insight into industry capabilities and ideas in an easy-to-compare and understand format. You're reaching new people with new ideas!

Where it Falls



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Tags: Skills and Considerations



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THE ENDGAME – *What will I achieve with this technique?*

- Uncover targeted information from vendors that would otherwise be unknown to you
/// LEVEL-UP /// Using an easy-to-complete format allows you to compare offerings quickly and efficiently
- Build solid relationships that enable further reach back for follow-on discussions
/// LEVEL-UP /// Verbal communications are highly encouraged after contact has been made through email correspondence – this enables your team to gather more information and build trust
- Discern an understanding of the marketplace and available sources, including knowledge of available contracting vehicles and other agencies using similar products/services **/// LEVEL-UP ///** Performing upfront “open source” research of the marketplace helps identify a targeted vendor list. If the industry experts have vendor contact information, it significantly increases the chances of obtaining a response
- Signal to vendors your potential issues, challenges, and future needs
- Discover additional capabilities, insight, or innovative solutions to refine your acquisition

MATCH THAT TECHNIQUE! *Is the technique a fit for my program?*

Targeted Cold Outreach is a good match when your team:

- Has a requirement that is more commercial in nature and may not have a robust Government vendor base
- Needs to explore and validate which vendors, including small businesses or non-traditional vendors, are possibly able to meet requirements **/// LEVEL-UP ///** Stay up to date on emerging and evolving vendors, as they apply to future efforts
- Has an expert or experts in-house with knowledge of the commercial marketplace.
/// LEVEL-UP /// Use services like Gartner and Forrester to identify key vendor players in a given field
- Wants to inform vendor partners about potential upcoming requirements

- Desires industry's thoughts and insights about strategies, risks, and emerging innovations that affect your acquisition **///LEVEL-UP///** *Validate your assumptions and courses of action with vendor feedback.*
- Has the technical understanding and communication skills to adequately describe your challenges and needs **///LEVEL-UP///** *Be sure to hone your Targeted Cold Outreach to the unique situation and provide them context of the need*

GAME CHANGERS – *How does this technique work?*

The Targeted Cold Outreach technique opens the playing field to allow selected experts to respond to market research inquiries and participate in your acquisition. It builds bridges to new companies. Effective Targeted Cold Outreach front-loads the bulk of the effort; your team should create an organized templated database to gather matching data points from a range of potential partners. Reaching out to the potential vendor partners, whether through known contacts or newly identified vendors, through a template format helps to ensure that all the responses can be quickly assessed and compared. Additionally, it provides an opportunity to easily compare and contrast vendors **///LEVEL-UP///** *Use this technique to identify which vendors are most appropriate for further follow-up discussions.*

THE LIFT – *Where do you put the effort?*

- **DESCRIBING THE NEED/PROBLEM.** For an effective Targeted Cold Outreach, vendors need to understand what you are trying to acquire and any targeted issues and challenges. The need and issues should be clearly articulated to eliminate confusion and generate better responses. Make sure that your team has enough information to empower vendors to make critical decisions and answer logistical questions without having to come back to you. It is also important to provide vendors with the background to the problem and a prioritization of the requirements to provide more relevant responses. Spend some time and care on this – it will be noticed, and the payoff is hugely beneficial.
 - » **Establishing the format of the market research findings:** Be able to answer the question, “How do I want to see the findings reported?” It is critical to agree on a format in the very beginning to set expectations and avoid format changes mid-stream. Being prepared and organized when entering into preliminary discussions with new vendors will set the relationship up for success.
 - » **Setting a reasonable due date for responses:** Providing vendors with a minimum of 1-2 weeks gives vendors a reasonable amount of time to craft a response.
- **DETERMINING THE REQUIREMENTS.** To execute a Targeted Cold Outreach, the outreach template must have the right prompts. To get those prompts, internally ask and answer the following questions:
 - » **Who are the right Stakeholders?** Spend time finding out who the stakeholders/requirements owners are and determining the right people to get the right requirements (e.g., if the need is technical in nature, then consulting the appropriate technical SME is key, etc.). Talking to the right people will help your acquisition team understand the need and have enough background and context to answer basic vendor questions.
 - » **What are the requirements?** Stakeholders who have industry expertise/knowledge should share what they know about the particular industry, commercial best practices, and anything specific about the potential vendors in that market. The stakeholders should convey the need and prioritization of the requirements (“need to have”, “nice to have”, etc.).
///LEVEL-UP/// *Present the option to hold a meeting so that the acquisition team can understand the background, clarify terminology and context, and ask questions*

- **FORMATTING THE OUTREACH.** Establish an outreach plan and process, create standard outreach email templates (initial and follow-up), and create a standard outreach template (containing the list of requirements based on importance). */// LEVEL-UP /// The standard outreach template should incorporate a way for vendors to include their company name and contact information for tracking purposes and a space for additional comments or suggestions*
- **ASSESSING THE RESPONSES.** At this point, the responses can be efficiently assessed and reviewed for missing information, lack of responses, inconsistencies, or a need for further clarification. */// LEVEL-UP /// Similar comments from multiple vendors indicates a need to evaluate the team's understanding of industry standards*
- **FOLLOWING UP ON RESPONSES.** Due to the nature of the cold outreach, sending a reminder email a few days before the deadline will help ensure the highest rate of responses. Make sure to document the date responses are received, late responses, and lack of responses.

MYTHS AND LEGENDS – *What needs to be dispelled?*

- ***“The Government is not allowed to do Targeted Cold Outreach with commercial vendors.”*** – Commercial vendors are typically open to responding to inquiries for more information about their capabilities and how they can help you. Getting industry specific information resulting from Targeted Cold Outreach helps to develop stronger technical requirements and also alerts non-traditional commercial vendors to an opportunity to solve your needs.
- ***“Innovative companies are aware of how to do business with the Government”*** – Many companies, including small and nontraditional vendors, do not even know that you (or anyone else in the Government) has these needs/problems, and they are often not aware of Government acquisition practices (e.g., SAM.gov). Some innovative companies may also believe that it is too difficult or not worth their time and effort to do business with the Government. Give these vendors a seat at the table and address their concerns!

HACKS AND PRO-TIPS – *How do you execute this technique better?*

- **COMMUNICATION:** Timely responses to all email communications ensures an open line to vendors. In order to maintain a warm relationship, providing vendors with status updates goes a long way in showing transparency, not only on the present request but for any future requests, too.
- **AMPLE RESPONSE TIME:** Providing at least 1-2 weeks for vendors to prepare their response with a set due date and following up accordingly reminds them that their feedback is important and that their time is valued.
- **SHARE THE FUN:** The more team members that can help delegate the workload, the better. Leverage the entire acquisition team to contact vendors and coordinate responses. Keep in mind that vendors may have additional questions or send back incomplete responses that require further coordination. Make sure the entire team is ready for such eventualities and empower your team to contribute. */// LEVEL-UP /// Use a shared platform like Microsoft Teams to show the status across all requests and to enable quick status checking. This eliminates the need for most status meetings*
- **BE WILLING TO BE A LITTLE VULNERABLE:** You will get more useful responses if you give more information on the context of the problem and what you are asking the vendors to do.

[Appendix L: Targeted Cold Outreach Script Sample](#)

14

Modular Market Research Reporting

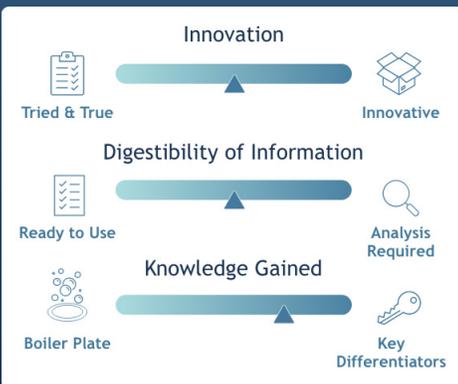


Modular Market Research Report



Modular Market Research Reporting is an alternative to your traditional market research report. FAR 10.002 empowers agency heads to document market research results in a manner appropriate to the size and complexity of an acquisition. Modular Market Research Reporting is a perfect way for you to tailor such reporting. It allows you to answer key questions, document market research activities and findings, and ensure that the Market Research Report becomes a usable document for you. It leverages a modular approach – each module is severable from the report and describes what you did and what you learned. Ultimately, the modular market research report allows you to quickly learn and shape your acquisition. It also allows you to continuously update your market research long into the future. The streamlined approach makes the market research report work for you!

Where it Falls



Pulling it Off



Tags: Skills and Considerations



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THE ENDGAME – What will I achieve with this technique?

- Fulfill the market research requirement set forth by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR)
- Enable you to rapidly update your acquisition and documents using what you learned from market research
- Streamline the processes for conducting and documenting both formal and informal research
- Create a report that can remain relevant and updated in rapidly changing environments
/// LEVEL-UP /// Perform independent research to stay current with major developments across industry

MATCH THAT TECHNIQUE! Is the technique a fit for my program?

Modular Market Research Reporting is a good match when your team:

- Is procuring things that leverage emerging technologies or other state-of-the art products, where markets have been known to experience significant change in relatively short periods of time
- Wants to branch out from only using the traditional market research techniques and go with a coupled approach that includes non-traditional methods. **/// LEVEL-UP /// All techniques may not be appropriate for each effort, so be sure to hone your approach based on what is the best fit**
- Has strong writers that are able to describe the market research activities **/// LEVEL-UP /// Have the report reviewed by someone outside your team to offer an unbiased opinion on readability**
- Is ready to document what you've done in Market Research

GAME CHANGERS – *How does this technique work?*

- Modular Market Research Reporting is a process to help you create the best possible version of your market research report. Effective implementation means creating an executive summary that describes what techniques have been accomplished and creating an appendix for each technique. The appendices describe in more detail exactly what was learned from market research techniques, what conclusions were drawn, and how they've influenced decision making. **///LEVEL-UP/// Create checklists of findings geared at key future activities – future actions needed, changes to the work statement, information needed for a bidder's library, ideas for forming selection criteria, requirements discussions with the users, etc.** This activity presents large volumes of data in a format that effectively communicates findings. Two very important parts of market research include both performing it and reporting on what is found. This activity helps you achieve the goal of not only “checking the box” on completing market research but doing so in a way that gives you a more accurate picture to better inform acquisition decisions.
- Modular Market Research Reports support a continuous market research philosophy. This is possible due to the segmented nature of a Modular Market Research Reporting method. Information gleaned from attending a conference, for example, can be easily added as an appendix to the market research report even if it has already been written. This can be especially beneficial in acquisitions dealing with things like emerging technologies, where markets have been known to experience significant change in relatively short periods of time.

THE LIFT – *Where do you put the effort?*

- **KEEP THE INFORMATION CURRENT, EVEN AFTER REPORT SUBMISSION.** Traditional market research tends to have a definitive beginning and end. For example, once a request for information has been issued, the responses from industry are collected/analyzed, and the market research report is written. An approach using non-traditional market research, however, can support the continuation of that market research to keep a continuous pulse on industry's state-of-practice. Market research is never done! This is possible due to the segmented nature of the Modular Market Research Reporting method. Information gleaned from attending a conference, for example, can be easily added as another section to the market research report even if it has already been written.
///LEVEL-UP/// Establish vendor contacts who you can reach out to in the future and document their names, titles, contact information, and your history of interactions with them. Leverage those contacts in-between acquisitions to keep the relationship fresh. Continuous networking is key to success!
- **DELEGATE ACTIVITIES AS APPROPRIATE AND MAKE IT A TEAM EFFORT.** The market research process can be streamlined using this method by allowing multiple authors to complete different sections of the market research report. This allows for a much more collaborative approach to market research, rather than depending on just one individual to capture what is going on. Furthermore, it also lends itself to the potential for conducting continuing market research as discussed above.
///LEVEL-UP/// Having multiple authors can increase the need for additional oversight and cohesiveness, so keep that in mind should it add extra time to your schedule.

MYTHS AND LEGENDS – *What needs to be dispelled?*

- **“Once we write this report, the information will be outdated in a couple months.”** – Yes, market research of an effort, no matter what field it is in, runs into the challenge of remaining current in an ever-changing environment. But that does not mean the information you have instantly becomes

irrelevant. Instead of throwing out the entire report and starting over, update the report as new information is gathered. Ultimately you want the acquisition decisions to be based on the best information possible, so it makes sense for market research to be an ongoing effort.

- ***“This report is just something we have to write to say we wrote it; no one is actually going to read the whole thing.”*** – Not true! The market research report is highly impactful to informing the acquisition decisions, which makes it even more crucial that the report show thorough research that captures a true picture of the current climate. To encourage people to read the report, do your best to keep it as succinct as possible, and focus on the most crucial details while minimizing the extraneous items.
- ***“This is too long. I don’t have time to write this.”*** -- The market research process can be streamlined by allowing multiple authors to complete different sections of the market research report. This allows for a much more collaborative approach, rather than depending on just one individual to capture what is going on. As opportunities for additional market research appear, your team can conduct that market research and apply it to any ongoing acquisition that has taken this modular approach.

HACKS AND PRO-TIPS – *How do you execute this technique better?*

- **BRING INCREMENTAL MARKET RESEARCH INNOVATION:** In some cases, your organization may not be ready to adopt significant innovation and change in its approach to market research. Using the modular method allows your team to continue using its tried-and-true methods, such as Requests for Information and Sources Sought Notices, while providing an opportunity to supplement those techniques with some new approaches, like Virtual One-on-Ones.
- **KEEP IT SIMPLE:** When performing market research and capturing your findings, there can be a fine line between information overload and a report that is too general and lacks usable content. If a report has too much data, it can become too hard for the reader to find the key bits of information. You may be tempted to include narrative as to the processes you performed but try to keep it to just the critical pieces; what you did, why, and what you learned from it.
- **KEEP PUSHING INNOVATING MARKET RESEARCH PRACTICES:** Naturally, when you are trying new techniques, you might encounter resistance since the method is unproven. But the only way to get acquisition professionals familiar with these new techniques is to keep using them and promoting their benefits until they become accepted. **///LEVEL-UP/// Document your past successes to show as examples of where these techniques have worked and the impact they had on the acquisition – share success stories.**
- **DOCUMENT AND KEEP HISTORICAL RECORDS:** As in any market research effort, documentation is key. Keep track of who you contact, where information is gathered from, documents sent to vendors, sample agendas, and any other essential details such as justifications of the methods you used and any approvals you obtain. These records will be helpful should you be asked to replicate the process in the future.

[Appendix M: Modular Market Research Report Template](#)

15

Reverse
Industry Day

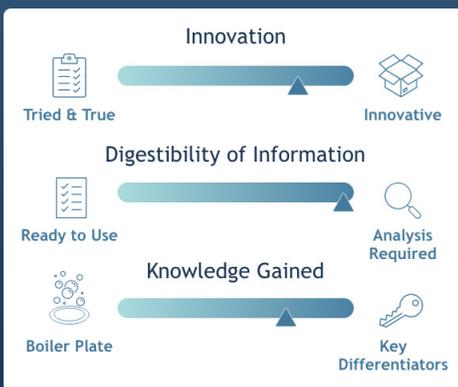


Reverse Industry Day



If you are staring blankly at an Acquisition Strategy or requirements document, asking yourself “how am I supposed to know what contract structures or contract types work best for my requirement, is there enough time for industry to complete this work, how can I incentivize great performance, will there be competition and how can I increase it?”, a Reverse Industry Day may provide you with foundational knowledge to kickstart your acquisition. Reverse Industry Days are strategic in nature and can function as training sessions for the Government to gain vendor perspectives on multiple aspects of doing business with you. Reverse Industry Days are typically a larger forum that include multiple 3-5 person panels of industry leaders. These leaders speak to acquisition topics, often tailored to your program, and enable you to understand vendor decision making and motivations, ways to improve your requirement, and ways to improve your plan.

Where it Falls



Pulling it Off



Tags: Skills and Considerations



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THE ENDGAME – *What will I achieve with this technique?*

- Improve vendor relationships through communications to establish a mutual understanding of your needs and to enable problem solving
- Absorb industry best practices and perspectives that can be used to improve your requirements
- Gain insight into how your acquisition strategies and plans affect vendor bid decisions and contract performance
- Facilitate increased competition by bringing new companies into the fold
- Detect key risk information that changes “unknown-unknowns” into “known-unknowns” and enables future risk mitigation

MATCH THAT TECHNIQUE! *Is the technique a fit for my program?*

The Reverse Industry Day is a good match when your team:

- Needs industry thoughts and insights about acquisition strategies, risks, and emerging innovations
///LEVEL-UP/// Validate your assumptions and courses of action with vendor feedback – improve your outcomes by knowing now!
- Wants generalized perspectives on doing business with the Government. Sessions can focus on one or multiple broad subject areas such as contract types, acquisition timelines, incentives, evaluation criteria, bid/no bid decisions, debriefs and protests, pricing approaches, and other topics for industry. Topics can also be tailored to a specific industry subset (e.g., Health, Cybersecurity Care, Information Technology, or Information Technology for Health Care)

- Wants to understand how vendors work through Government acquisitions
- Does not need to focus on one specific contract action or acquisition

GAME CHANGERS – *How does this technique work?*

Walking a mile in industries' shoes could save time, prevent frustration, and enable more productive and effective acquisition outcomes. Reverse Industry Days are strategic in nature, not geared towards a single acquisition effort, and can function as training sessions for the acquisition workforce. High level steps for a Reverse Industry Day include:

1. Setting goals and objectives for the event
2. Brainstorming panel topics and a high-level agenda that will support the goals and objectives
3. Getting senior leader buy-in and support
4. Securing a sufficiently sized location, to include needed technology
5. Working with vendors to validate and adjust the topics and prompts for conversations
6. Securing panel members (and backups), keynote speakers, and senior acquisition leadership participation
7. Advertising and inviting Government participants
8. Developing scripts and slide decks for speakers, as needed, and assigning topics to industry panelists
9. Soliciting questions ahead of time and preparing other questions to ask the panelists
10. Assigning note takers to record questions and answers during the forum
11. Conducting a dry run
12. Hosting a follow-up meeting for panelists and acquisition leadership to personally thank them
13. Sending thank you letters to panelists
14. Sending out key takeaways from the event to all participants

THE LIFT – *Where do you put the effort?*

- **PLANNING AND LOGISTICS.** The biggest lift for this effort is working the logistics. This involves securing an appropriately sized venue, information technology (IT) needs, advertising and recruiting the right industry participants, garnering senior leader support and participation, and advertising to Government participants.
- **ESTABLISH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.** Another big lift is establishing the right goals and objectives for your Reverse Industry Day. Once these are established, discussion topics can be decided, and panel members can be solicited and chosen. *///LEVEL-UP/// Collaborate with Industry via councils, associations, or communities of practice to establish goals and objectives and solicit panel members. Using these forums to solicit information and panel members helps obtain buy-in and collaboration from industry and can preclude conflicts of interest or the perception of preferential treatment towards a specific company.*
- **FOLLOW UP.** Industry has taken time out of their day to help make your Reverse Industry Day successful. Be sure to follow up with a thank you note and recap the lessons learned. Additionally, send the lessons learned out to the Government participants and post them on your internal website so they can be shared by others. *///LEVEL-UP/// Send out a follow-on survey to both industry and Government to see what went well from their perspectives and what can be improved upon for next time.*

MYTHS AND LEGENDS – *What needs to be dispelled?*

- **“Reverse Industry Days are of little worth because vendors will not provide information of value in front of potential competitors”** – A Reverse Industry Day is not meant to garner insight, feedback, or proprietary information on a specific acquisition. Instead, it is designed to foster open communication, synergies, and transparency with vendors so they may develop a relationship where each side understands the other’s needs. Many market research activities focus on your needs and not contractor needs. A Reverse Industry Day provides industry with a platform to voice concerns and potential solutions improving the acquisition process.

HACKS AND PRO-TIPS – *How do you execute this technique better?*

- **SIZE MATTERS:** Target separate Reverse Industry Days for large businesses and small businesses. **///LEVEL-UP///** Consider having smaller breakout sessions focused on special topics
- **MARKETING:** Advertise on your agency’s point of entry such as SAM.gov **///LEVEL-UP///** Reach out to industry liaisons and industry councils, associations, or communities of interest to advertise and solicit participation from a variety of businesses. Also consider using social media to advertise.
- **BE PREPARED:** Allow for audience Q&A but have pre-written questions ready to go to get the Q&A started. Allow for anonymous questions, as well. **///LEVEL-UP///** Use technology to your advantage and allow questions to be sent electronically and anonymously throughout the discussions.
- **RULES OF ENGAGEMENT:** Send out participant ground rules for both Industry and Government contributors ahead of time so that everyone understands what is and is not allowed.
- **SENIOR LEADER PARTICIPANT:** Have senior leader buy-in and participation to show industry participants that senior leaders appreciate their time and effort to making the Reverse Industry Day successful. **///LEVEL-UP///** Have the senior acquisition or contracting executive provide opening remarks.
- **TECHNOLOGY:** Consider incorporating mobile and virtual technologies such as live streaming for increased Government participation and interaction and video conferencing to reach industry panel members who may not be able to travel to the venue.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

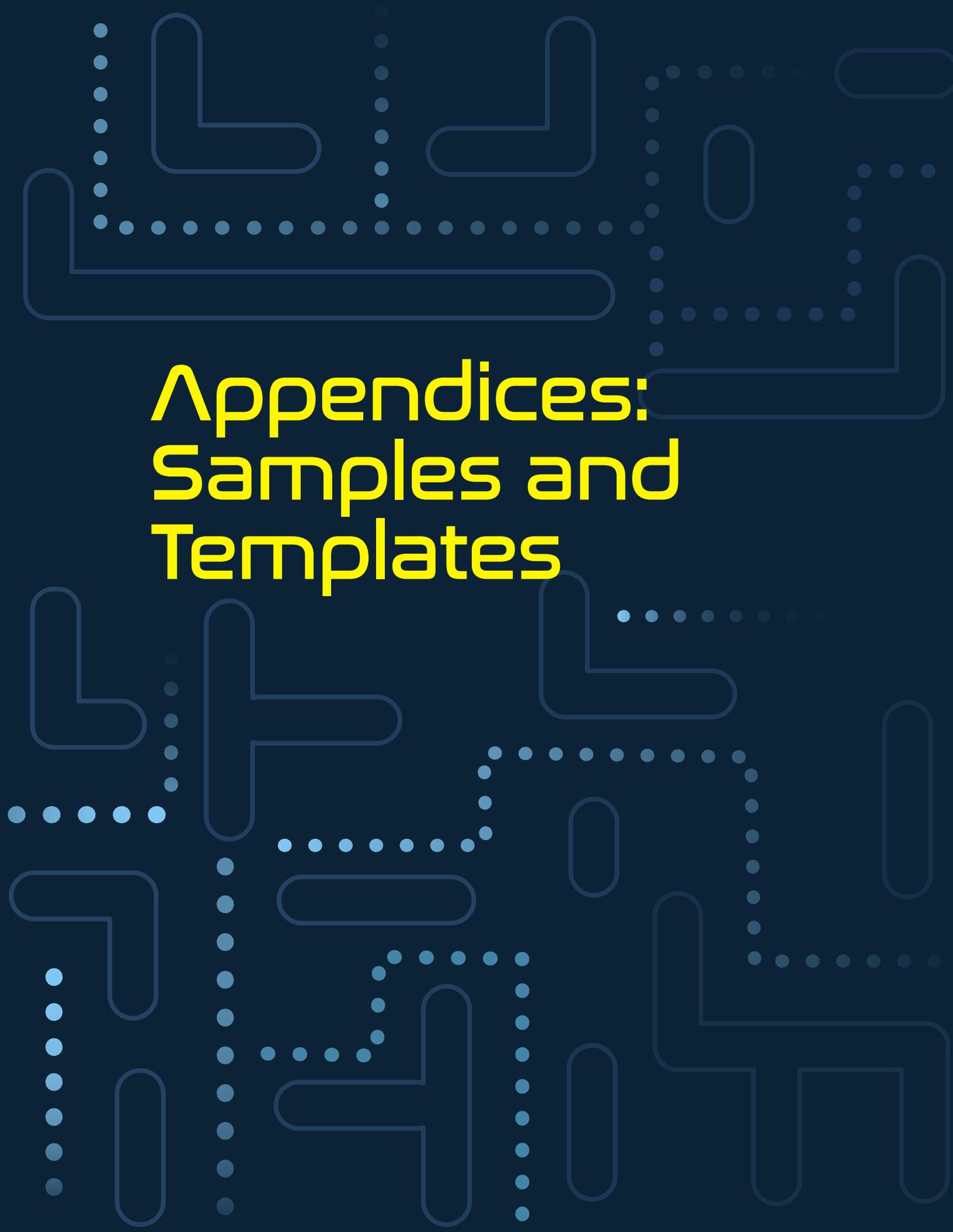
Many federal agencies and other organizations have information, guidance, samples, templates, and checklists on their websites, to assist with planning a Reverse Industry Day. A few of those sites are listed below for reference.

Content Type	Organization	Location
Information, Samples, Templates, Checklists, Agendas	IRS	https://www.fai.gov/sites/default/files/periodic table/IRS Reverse Industry Day Materials.pdf
Information	GSA	https://interact.gsa.gov/blog/what-are-reverse-industry-trainings-rit
Information	DAU	https://www.dau.edu/aap/pages/ArticleContent.aspx?itemid=17741
RID Recorded Live Stream	CMS	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3FbRe_uYAc
Information	ACT-IAC	https://www.govevents.com/details/26443/lifting-the-curtain-with-reverse-industry-day/
Information	DHS	https://www.dhs.gov/publication/reverse-industry-day

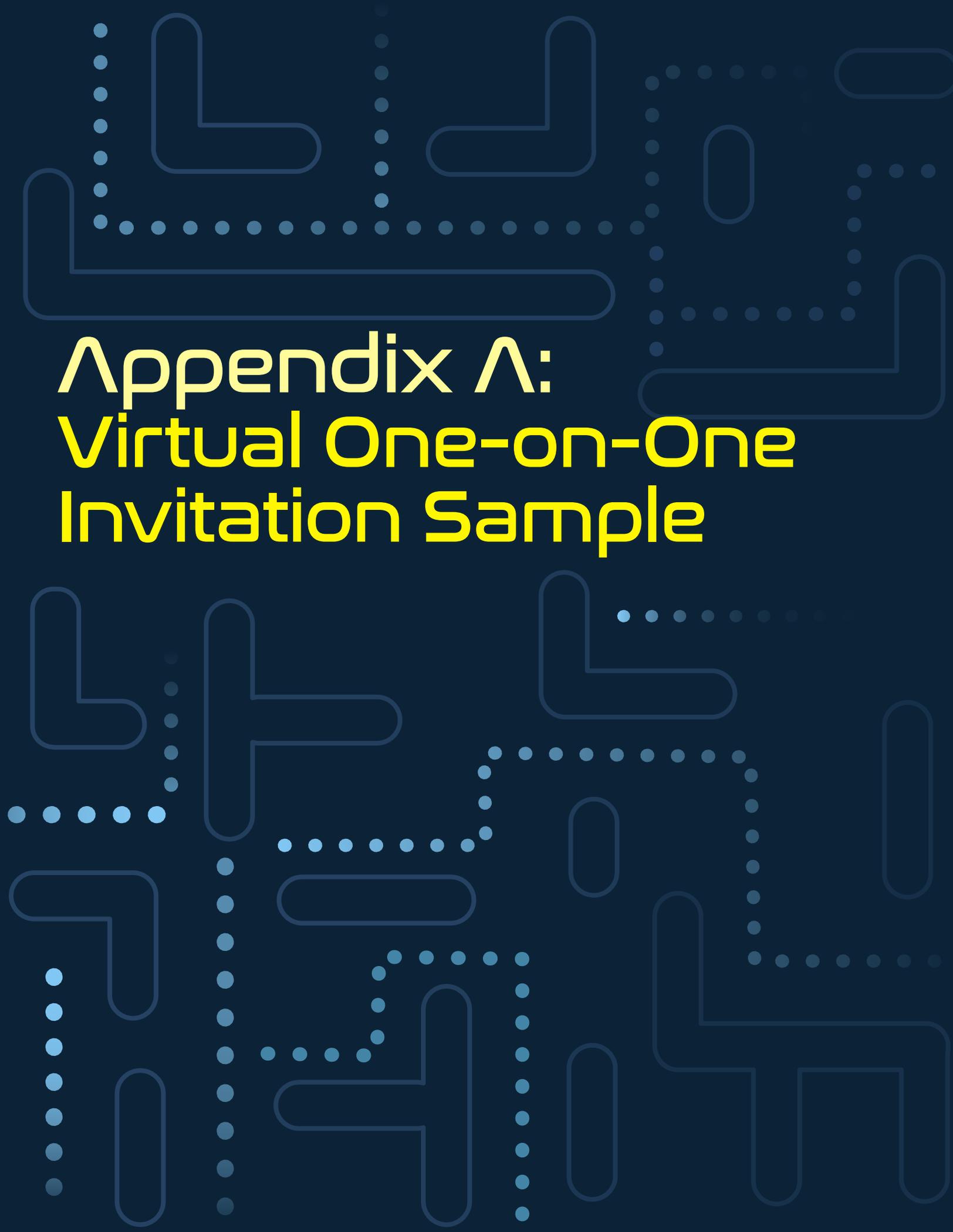
CHEAT CODES: POWERFUL COMBINATIONS OF TECHNIQUES”

You can, and should, take each of the preceding market research techniques as a single element of your market research approach. Really great market research leverages several of the techniques; oftentimes, one technique is made more powerful as a follow-on to another technique. Take a look at these cheat codes – combinations of market research that can powerfully change your market research game.





Appendices: Samples and Templates

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Appendix A: Virtual One-on-One Invitation Sample

APPENDIX A: VIRTUAL ONE-ON-ONE INVITATION SAMPLE

Virtual One-on-One (VOO) Invitation

[Program Name]

The *[agency]* invites your company to participate in a VOO for the *[program/effort name]*. As a key part of the Government's market research strategy, this VOO will provide a venue for your company to showcase your capabilities and help inform the Government's acquisition approach.

VOO Dates: VOOs will be held virtually on 4th, 5th, and 6th of August 2020

Location: All VOO participation will be conducted via Microsoft Teams

Agency Points of Contact (POCs): *[Identify any agency contacts (e.g., Contracting Officer)]*

Vendor Point(s) of Contact and Preferred Time: Vendors are asked to provide a lead POC (including name, title, and email address) that will participate in this VOO by 4 PM EST on July 22, 2020. This POC will receive a Microsoft Teams invitation from the Government. In their response, vendors are also asked to rank order their preferred time blocks for their VOO timeslot from 1 to 6: () 4 August Morning; () 4 August Afternoon; () 5 August Morning; () 5 August Afternoon; () 6 August Morning; () 6 August Afternoon. The Government will attempt to accommodate vendor timeslot preferences.

Logistics: The MS Teams invite will be sent no later than 4 PM EST on July 31, 2020. To protect proprietary information and encourage collaboration, each company will have a separate invitation and unique meeting access code. The Government may record these meetings; however, these recordings will be used for market research purposes only and will not be shared outside of the Government's acquisition team.

Vendor participants are asked to dial-in and be present at least five minutes prior to their designated start time. The Government meeting leader will admit participants through Microsoft Teams. During the demonstration and presentation period, vendors will share their screens and present materials via the Microsoft Teams platform.

Requirements Clarifications and Questions: The Government will also host an "Ask Me Anything" event for all VOO participants on July 23, 2020, from 10:00-11:30 AM EST. At this event, the Government will restate the statement of need and entertain vendor questions on the program's technical requirements.

Schedule of Events: The schedule for each VOO engagement will adhere to the following format and time limits. VOOs will be limited to one hour, including a bi-directional question and answer period.

- Introductions and greetings: 5 minutes – Government-led
- Demonstration and discussion of capabilities*: up to 30 minutes – Vendor-led
- Question and answer period: 20 minutes – Government-led
- Conclusions: 5 minutes – Government-led
- *The Government will not interrupt vendors during the demonstration period, and the Government team will reserve questions until the designated Q&A period. If the vendor-led discussion lasts less than 30 minutes, that time can be used for additional Q&A.

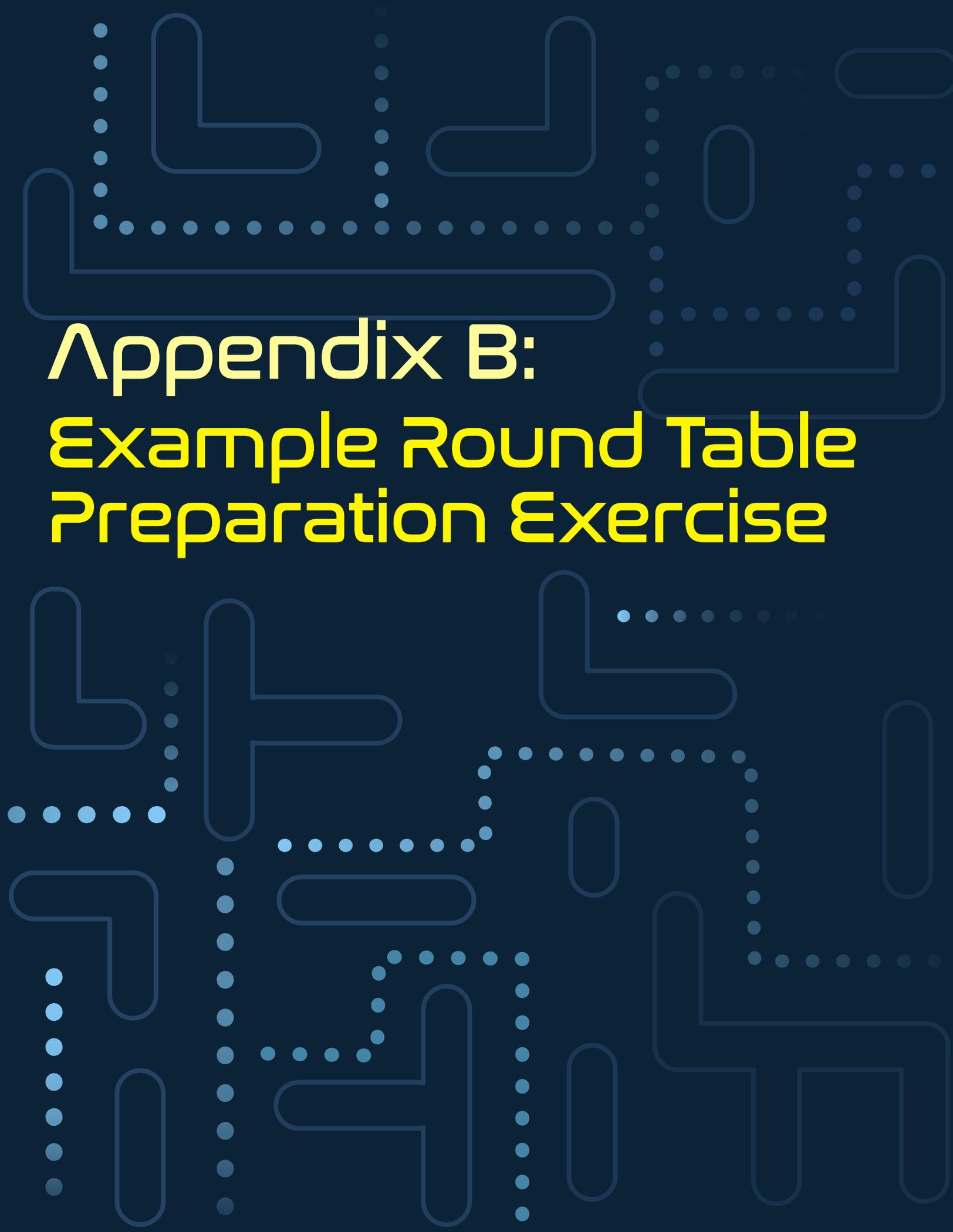
Presentation Topics: The Government seeks more information on the specific implementation of the technical approach. The Government is specifically interested in learning more about your company's:

- *[Insert Prompts here, some sample prompts follow]*
- Teaming and potential to support an agreement under Other Transaction Authority. Please include any descriptions of shared investment and/or specifically what work nontraditional defense contractors would be responsible for.
- Capabilities that could be demonstrated in a Challenge Based Acquisition scenario. For more information, please see:
<https://www.mitre.org/publications/technical-papers/challenge-based-acquisition-5th-edition>
- Thoughts on implementing Cross Domain Solutions (CDS)
- Approach to receiving and maintaining an Authority to Operate (ATO)
- A Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) of hours, labor categories, tools, software, hardware, etc. to achieve mission success
- Performance metrics that can be used to evaluate performance and ensure alignment between commercial incentives and Government requirements
- Thoughts on data rights

Information Restrictions: This forum will be limited to UNCLASSIFIED and CONTROLLED UNCLASSIFIED INFORMATION (CUI) only. Proprietary information and trade secrets, if any, must be clearly marked on all materials submitted as part of this VOO. All information received that is marked or verbally stated as being "Proprietary" will be handled accordingly. Please be advised that all submitted materials become Government property and will not be returned nor will receipt be confirmed. Submitted materials and discussions that are part of this VOO are not offers and cannot be accepted by the Government to form a binding contract.

Additional Instructions: Please send any briefing or demonstration materials to the Government POCs NLT 8 AM EST on July 31, 2020.

VOO Questions: Any questions on the VOO should be provided to the Agency POCs identified in this document no later than 4 PM EST on July 27, 2020.

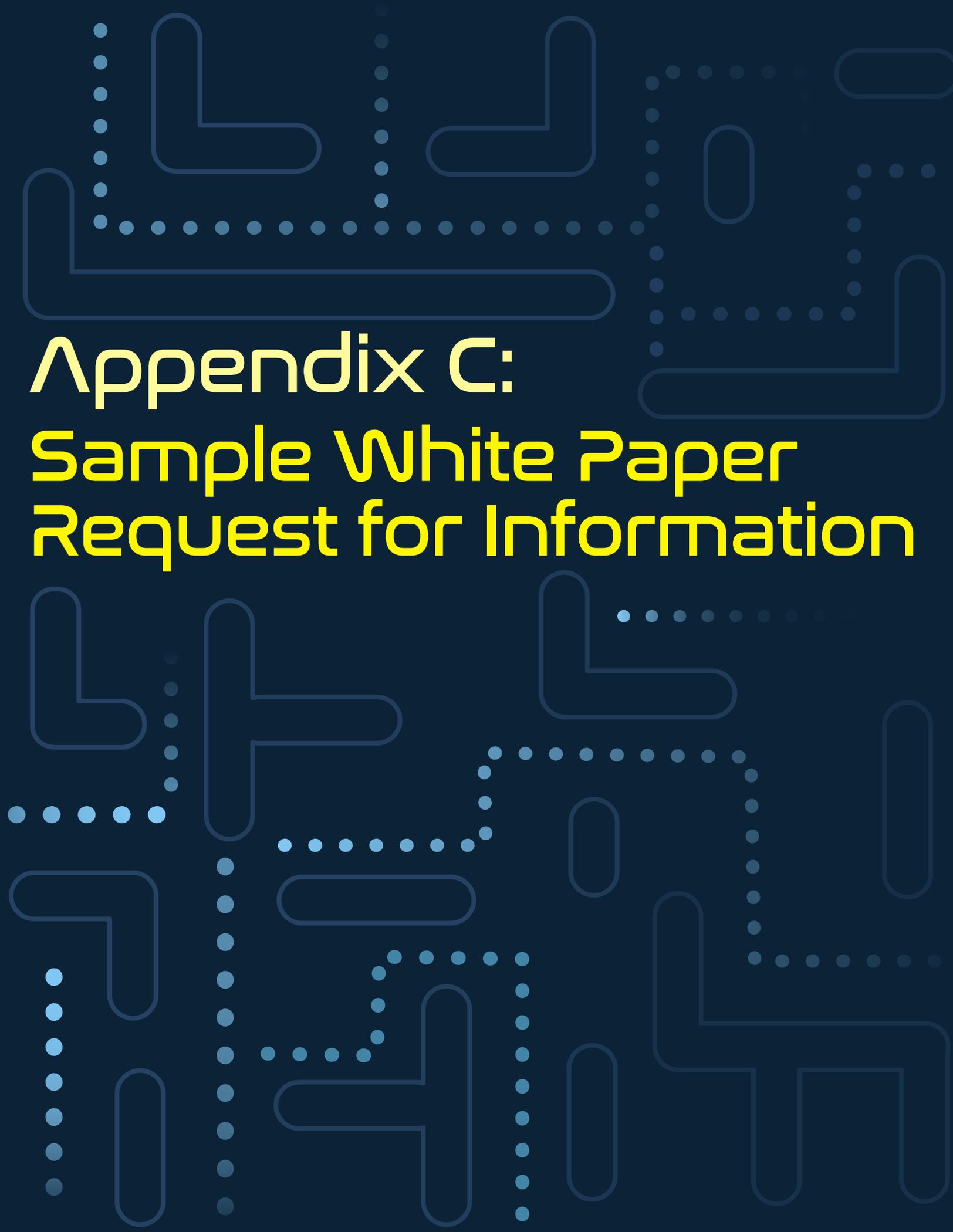


Appendix B: Example Round Table Preparation Exercise

APPENDIX B: EXAMPLE ROUND TABLE PREPARATION EXERCISE

Round Table Preparation Exercise:

- 1. Brainstorm and Pick One Issue/Challenge for a Round Table Discussion. Challenge: Major Technology Transitions**
- 2. Identify Association/Council/Your Own Contacts for Industry Participants**
 - » Council: ACT-IAC Market Research Roundtable with [Agency]
 - » Target Audience: Innovative technology providers. Technical expertise (not business/contracting expertise) needed from companies.
- 3. Determine Size of Attendees & Why (For Both Government & Industry)**
 - » Government: Team of 10 program and technical
 - » Industry: Limit to two attendees per company
- 4. Write a Sample Opener to Send for Industry Read-Ahead.** Sample Opener: *[Agency]* is conducting market research on the topic of major technology transitions. The scope of the systems for technology transitions includes mission and support applications and data. The scope also includes transitioning portions of the infrastructure to use the services, including user desktops, networks, and security services. Major technology transitions may include transitioning existing infrastructure and applications to new technologies that are often rapidly adopted by industry because they may provide an opportunity to:
 - » Reduce time-to-market or time-to-deliver solutions to mission users
 - » Reduce or avoid costs to develop or maintain infrastructure or applications
 - » Migrate away from older technologies that may become more difficult to maintain, and where the marketplace of skilled personnel may shrink or become more expensive
 - » Enhance user experiences in performing their jobs
 - » Reduce risk and complexity in developing and maintaining solutions
- 5. Brainstorm and Capture Questions for the Round Table.** Some topics and questions for today's discussion of major technology transitions include migration of applications and databases to cloud services:
 - » What new skills are needed to migrate applications and databases to the cloud?
 - » What applications are best suited to migrate to the cloud?
 - » What are the risks and challenges in assembling multiple independent or legacy databases into a single "big data" environment for discovery, access, and analysis?
 - » What kinds of "refactoring" or reimplementations of portions of applications may be needed to migrate applications effectively and efficiently to the cloud?
 - » How can information security be "built-in" or integrated into applications as they are migrated to the cloud?
 - » What risks are there in migrating applications to the cloud, and what mitigations have been employed successfully to limit those risks?
- 6. Discuss Inviting Other Government Stakeholders (e.g., other divisions in agency, other agencies) & Why**
- 7. Identify Government Team Lead Spokesperson and roles/responsibilities of Government team (e.g., Note taker, logistics coordinator, etc.)**
- 8. Prepare time, location, and logistics for team debriefings following the event**

The background features a dark blue field with various light blue geometric patterns. These include solid lines forming L-shapes, rectangles, and rounded corners, as well as dotted lines forming similar shapes. The patterns are scattered across the page, creating a modern, technical aesthetic.

Appendix C: Sample White Paper Request for Information

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE WHITE PAPER REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

WHITE PAPER REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

1. **PROGRAM BACKGROUND:** *[Insert a brief description of the program, the origin of the requirement, and what strategic challenges it aims to resolve.]*
2. **OVERVIEW/PURPOSE/DESCRIPTION OF ACQUISITION:** *[Insert a description of the planned Acquisition Strategy, technical approach and an explanation of other pertinent details that are known. This section should provide background information for any areas that the RFI prompt below will require industry to respond to.]*
3. **TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS:** *[Insert a description of the major technical characteristics for this effort. This can be security requirements, technical specifications, development approaches, or key technical disciplines/expertise necessary to successfully meet the requirement.]*
4. **REQUESTED INFORMATION:** All requested information is intended to facilitate the Government's market research efforts and inform the Government's acquisition approach.

RESPONSE GUIDELINES: *[Below is a standardized set of guidelines for vendor responses. Depending on the program specifics, the section should be changed to reflect that. It is key to strike a balance between giving industry sufficient space to properly address the questions asked while ensuring there is no room for marketing materials or 'fluff.' In general, shorter responses are easier to pick out important content and minimize unnecessary language.]*

Interested parties are requested to respond to this RFI with a White Paper in accordance **with the White Paper Format provided below**. Submissions *[will not exceed one (1) page table with the requested vendor demographic information, two (2) pages for the Acquisition questions, and four (4) pages for the Technical Capability questions]*, single spaced, 11-point type with at least one-inch margins on 8 1/2" X 11" page size. Cover pages are not included in the page limit. The response should not exceed a 5 MB e-mail limit for all items associated with the RFI response. Responses must specifically describe the contractor's ability to meet the requirements of this effort. Oral communications are not permissible. Companies who wish to respond to this RFI should send responses via email no later than *[DUE DATE HERE]* to *[contracting officer names and E-mail addresses]*.

INDUSTRY DISCUSSIONS: *[If there are potential further planned market research activities, outline them here and if necessary, provide instructions for vendors to indicate interest or apply. Directly indicate that not all vendors may be asked for additional discussions.]*

QUESTIONS:

[If the COR or PM are willing to accept and respond to questions, the language below provides standard language regarding delivery and deadline for them.]

Questions regarding this announcement shall be submitted in writing by email to *[Insert contracting officer E-mail]*. Verbal questions will NOT be accepted. Answers to questions will be posted to SAM.gov. The Government does not guarantee that questions received after *[Insert deadline date]* will be answered. The Government will not reimburse companies for any costs associated with the submissions of their responses.

DISCLAIMER: [Standard contract disclaimer, change if necessary.]

This RFI is not an RFP and is not to be construed as a commitment by the Government to issue a solicitation or ultimately award a contract. Responses will not be considered as proposals, nor will any award be made as a result of this synopsis. All information contained in the RFI is preliminary as well as subject to modification and is in no way binding on the Government. Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) clause 52.215-3, "Request for Information or Solicitation for Planning Purposes", is incorporated by reference in this RFI. The Government

does not intend to pay for information received in response to this RFI. Responders to this invitation are solely responsible for all expenses associated with responding to this RFI. This RFI will be the basis for collecting information on capabilities available. This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes. Proprietary information and trade secrets, if any, must be clearly marked on all materials. All information received in this RFI that is marked "Proprietary" will be handled accordingly. Please be advised that all submissions become Government property and will not be returned nor will receipt be confirmed. In accordance with FAR 15.201(e), responses to this RFI are not offers and cannot be accepted by the Government to form a binding contract.

WHITE PAPER FORMAT

[This section outlines the Table of Contents that vendors will respond to. The goal with providing a strict outline such as this is to ensure that vendors stay focused and to simplify the evaluation process for the Government. Below is a table of contents from a previous effort as an example.]

1.0 Vendor Information

Provide Company Name, Address, Company Representative, and relevant business categories (e.g., large business, small business, SDB, HUBZone, 8(a), SDVOSB, WOSB, etc.), and any Government-Wide or agency contract you are on as a Prime or a Subcontractor, and if you are interested in a potential acquisition as a prime, subcontractor, teaming arrangement or joint venture.

2.0 Acquisition Strategy Questions

2.1 Interest in a Virtual Innovation Event

The Government is interested in hosting an Innovation Event to further inform a potential acquisition. This would involve a short presentation from a vendor, and a short Question and Answer session. Please indicate if interested in this event.

2.2 Other Transaction and Challenge-Based Acquisition

Please provide feedback on the Government's acquisition strategy, including the use of Other Transactions and Challenge Based Acquisition. Please address any OT consortia that may apply to this acquisition.

3.0 Technical Capability Questions

3.1 CI/CD Strategy/Approach

Provide a description of your approach to managing the CI/CD process for this system.

3.2 Agile Framework and Methodology

Specifically, how this Agile Framework can utilize short sprints, and how you would build to a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) and then continue that development to a Minimum Viable Capability Release (MVCR)

3.3 Management of Cloud Infrastructure Costs

Cloud Infrastructure costs will fluctuate throughout the life of this development, describe your approach to ensure that there is access to both growth and reduction in Cloud facilities as necessary.

3.4 Processes, Tools, Documentation to Enable Continuous Development

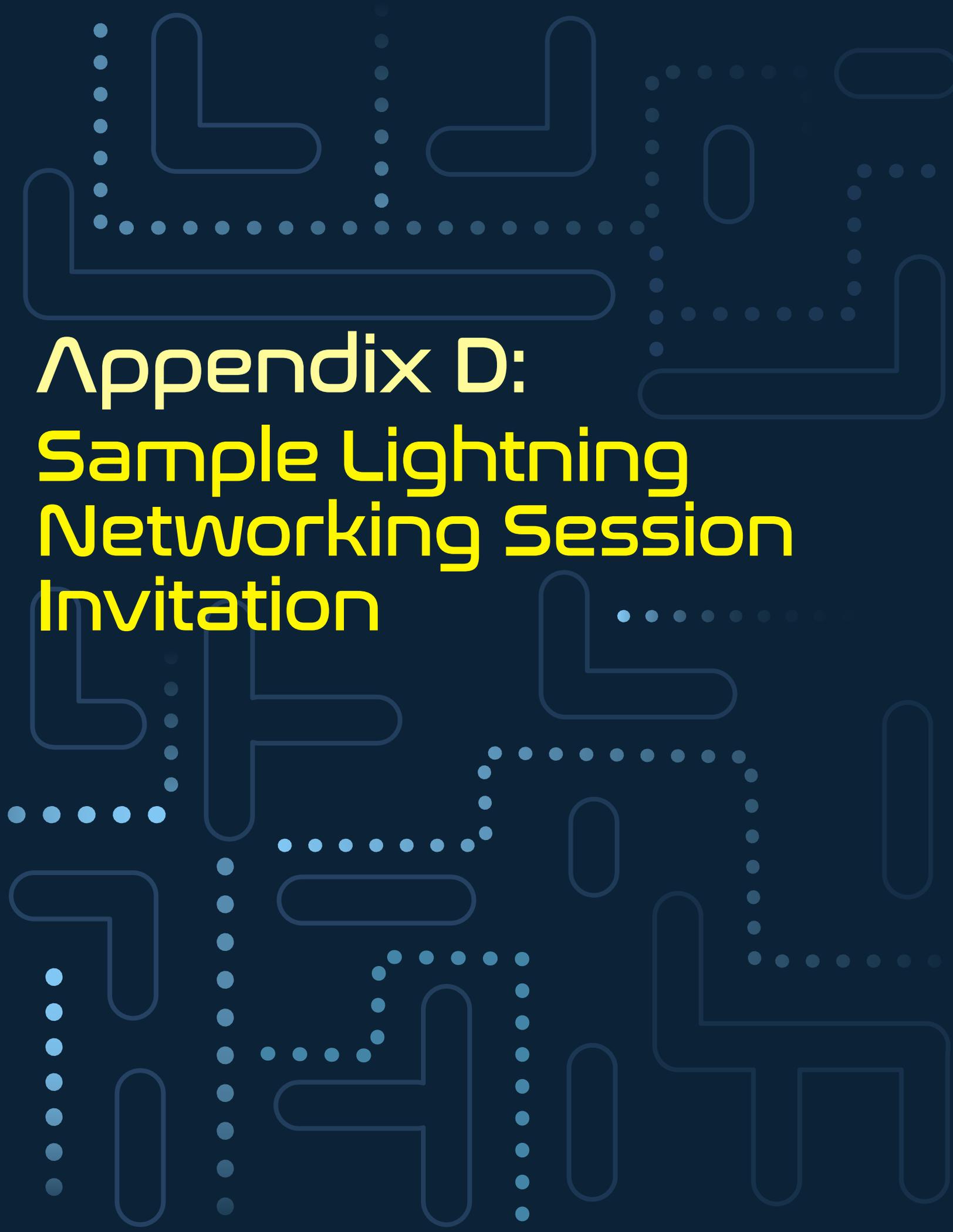
Describe your approach to ensuring that Continuous Development is both possible and efficiently performed.

3.5 Suggested Program Office Integration

Provide a description of your approach to ensuring there is clear communication with the Government PO and ensuring the Government has sufficient access to development tools for monitoring.

4.0 Other Recommendations

Provide any recommended acquisition or technical approaches that the Government should consider for this effort.



Appendix D: Sample Lightning Networking Session Invitation

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE LIGHTNING NETWORKING SESSION INVITATION

Lightning Networking Sessions Invitation and Vendor Instructions

The *[Agency/Organization]* invites your company to participate in lightning networking sessions for the *[Program]*. As a key part of the Government's market intelligence strategy, these lightning network sessions will provide a venue for companies to showcase capabilities and help inform other potential partners on how your company can contribute to future *[program]* efforts and express what your company is looking for in a potential partner.

Lightning Networking Sessions Date: Lightning networking sessions will be held virtually on *[14 May 2021]*.

Location: All lightning networking sessions will be conducted via Microsoft Teams.

***[Agency]* Points of Contact (POCs):**

- Agreements Officer:
- Agreements Specialist:
- Program Manager:

Presenting Company Point(s) of Contact: Companies are asked to provide one Lead POC (including name, title, and email address) who will participate in these lightning networking sessions to the above listed *[Agency]* POCs by *[4 PM EST on 10 May 2021]* (Companies are limited to one presenter). Each companies' Lead POC will then receive a Microsoft Teams invitation from the Government with their designated time slot for the lightning networking session by *[10 PM EST on 12 May 2021]*. Additionally, the Lead POC will need to provide three (3) slides of content and one additional slide with up to 3 POCs to be distributed to all participating companies. Slides shall be emailed to the above listed Agreements Officer and Agreements Specialist by *[4 PM EST on 10 May 2021]*. By submitting these slides, the company gives permission to *[The Agency]* to post the slides along with the *[Agency's]* Request for Information (RFI) on SAM.gov. The Government encourages companies to take advantage of the lightning session presentations but in the event, there aren't enough interested companies in presenting the Government will cancel the live session and post the list of provided POCs to SAM.gov.

Non-presenting Company Point of Contact(s): The Government understands that companies will want to have some additional participants for the Q&A sessions. Please limit company teams to one (1) presenter and two (2) additional team members. If a company would not like to present but still participate in the Q&A sessions, please limit to two (2) team members attending. Again, the Government encourages participation in the presentations to provide the most information for impactful partnerships for this and future requirements.

Logistics: The Government may record these meetings; however, these recordings will be used for market intelligence purposes only and will not be shared outside of the Government's acquisition team.

Presenters are asked to dial-in at least five minutes prior to their designated slot start time. The Government meeting leader will admit confirmed participants through Microsoft Teams.

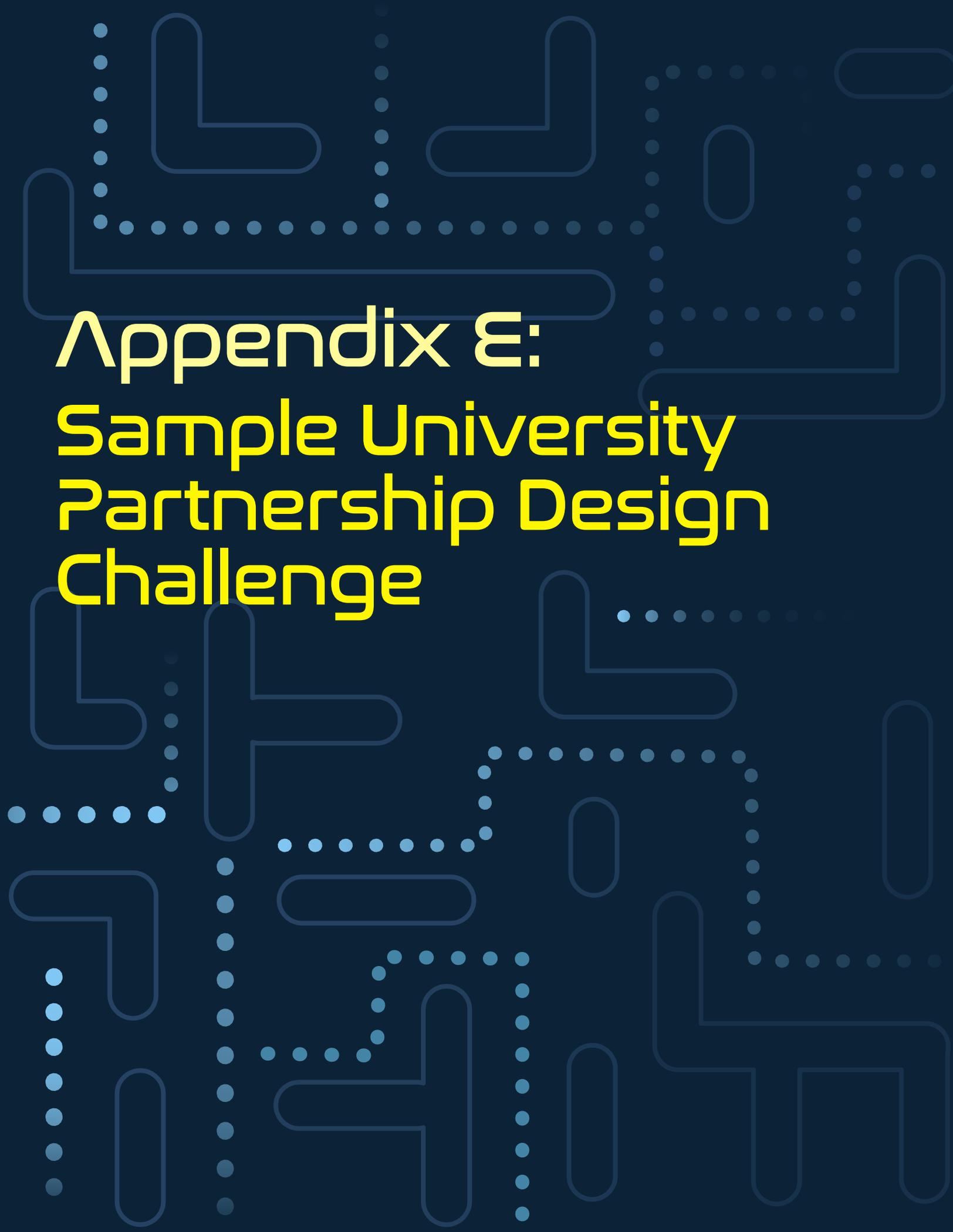
During the lightning session, companies will share their screens and present materials via the Microsoft Teams platform. This schedule may change depending on number of interested companies, however the 10-minute presentation and 10-minute Q&A session format will remain.

Schedule of Events: The schedule for each lightning session will adhere to the following format and time limits. Lightning networking sessions will be limited to 20 minutes, including a bi-directional question and answer period.

- Introductions and greetings: 5 minutes – Government-led
- Program Clarifications and Road Map: 25 minutes – Government-led
- **LIGHTNING NETWORKING SESSIONS (Number of sessions TBD)**
 - » **Sessions: 10 minutes to talk through company capabilities and partner needs** – Company-led (maximum of **THREE (3) SLIDES and an additional POC slide**)
 - » Question and answer period for potential partners: 10 minutes – Government-facilitated
- Conclusions: 5 minutes – Government-led

Lightning Networking Sessions Questions: Any questions on the lightning networking sessions should be provided to the POCs identified in this document no later than *[4 PM EST on 7 May 2021]*.

NOTE: None of the information provided in these lightning networking sessions will be used for source selection purposes. These sessions are for the benefit of the companies that would like to partner for future requirements.

The background features a complex, abstract pattern of light blue lines and dots on a dark blue background. The lines form various geometric shapes, including L-shapes, rectangles, and rounded corners, some of which are filled with a series of small dots. The overall effect is a dense, interconnected network of shapes and points.

Appendix E: Sample University Partnership Design Challenge

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP DESIGN CHALLENGE

ACQ-SYNC: Synchronizing Acquisition Strategy and Scheduling...Simply

Overall Topic

Harnessing Automation and Joyful Design to Help Acquisition Personnel Succeed

Government contracting moves \$500 billion dollars a year, but much of its enabling technology is stuck in the 1980s. Acquisition personnel make deals to find the right contractor to fit the mission need, whether they are buying an information technology system that tracks terrorists or an artificial intelligence application that detects early signs of cancer. The deals are complex, technical, and there is pressure to spend the allocated funds before Congress takes it away. Acquisition personnel need to push information about project needs to industry and they need to pull information from industry to ensure they select the right solution. There are a myriad of diverse strategies that acquisition personnel can exploit to plan the deal. Each deal is different and requires a unique approach and strategy.

The Current Problem

Obsolete technological systems are slowing down the acquisition process, adding stress to an already complicated process. Acquisition is an art, requiring highly specialized skills that take time to develop. Acquisition personnel often have book-learning but lack hands-on experience. New personnel, therefore, require a mentor to walk them through the process and guide them in choosing a unique strategy (and associated tasks) that sets the project up for success. Currently, no tools deliver such support.

The ACQ-SYNC app is a decision-support tool being built to address this gap. It will employ graphical user interfaces and artificial intelligence. It seeks to help acquisition personnel in creating a plan, managing the plan, and dealing with setbacks. ACQ-SYNC accelerates decision-making by presenting options in an intuitive way. It redefines the acquisition experience by breaking the linear process of traditional scheduling and illuminating the connections between activities and people. It jumpstarts the acquisition process, builds confidence, and provides shared knowledge for the acquisition team.

ACQ-SYNC needs to be simple, joyful, engaging, and fun! In order to accomplish that, it needs to be easy to use, yet bring a modern look to contracting tools; and incorporate a novel approach to gamification. MITRE has defined the users, the necessary features, and has outlined the solution of decision support and human machine teaming. But we are still in need of creative approaches for deepening the level of user engagement and generating immersive visualizations beyond the typical calendar or schedule. We are looking for help disrupting the technology landscape.

Where We Would Like to Be

At present, we have a set of personas, a spreadsheet of features, and wireframes for the app. By the end of the capstone project, we would like to have mocked up wireframe designs that have been evaluated with users. These wireframe concepts will depict how users view and interact with the schedule designed for a mobile application. It should incorporate creative visualizations and aspects of gamification to keep users interested and coming back for more.

Multiple sets of wireframes should be developed. Contacts at MITRE will work with the capstone team to narrow options to the most feasible sets of wireframes. The wireframe sets could differ on how the information is displayed (e.g., the theme used) or how the user interacts with the system (e.g., how they prioritize and focus on what is important to them). User testing should be conducted to evaluate the usability of prototyped user interfaces and how well each version supports human-machine teaming

principles. The evaluation should help MITRE determine which features or visualizations are most impactful to eventual users. The ultimate goal is to create an experience so that every acquisition personnel wants this app on their phone. It generates a cult like following and users can breathe a sigh of relief from current technology and obstacles.

Background Information

The high-level technical approach is to help acquisition personnel populate an acquisition schedule, beginning with initial planning and ending with 'the Deal.' The key members of acquisition teams are Contracting Officers (aka acquisition personnel), the Contracting Officer's Representatives (COR) who have the technical expertise, and the Program Managers.

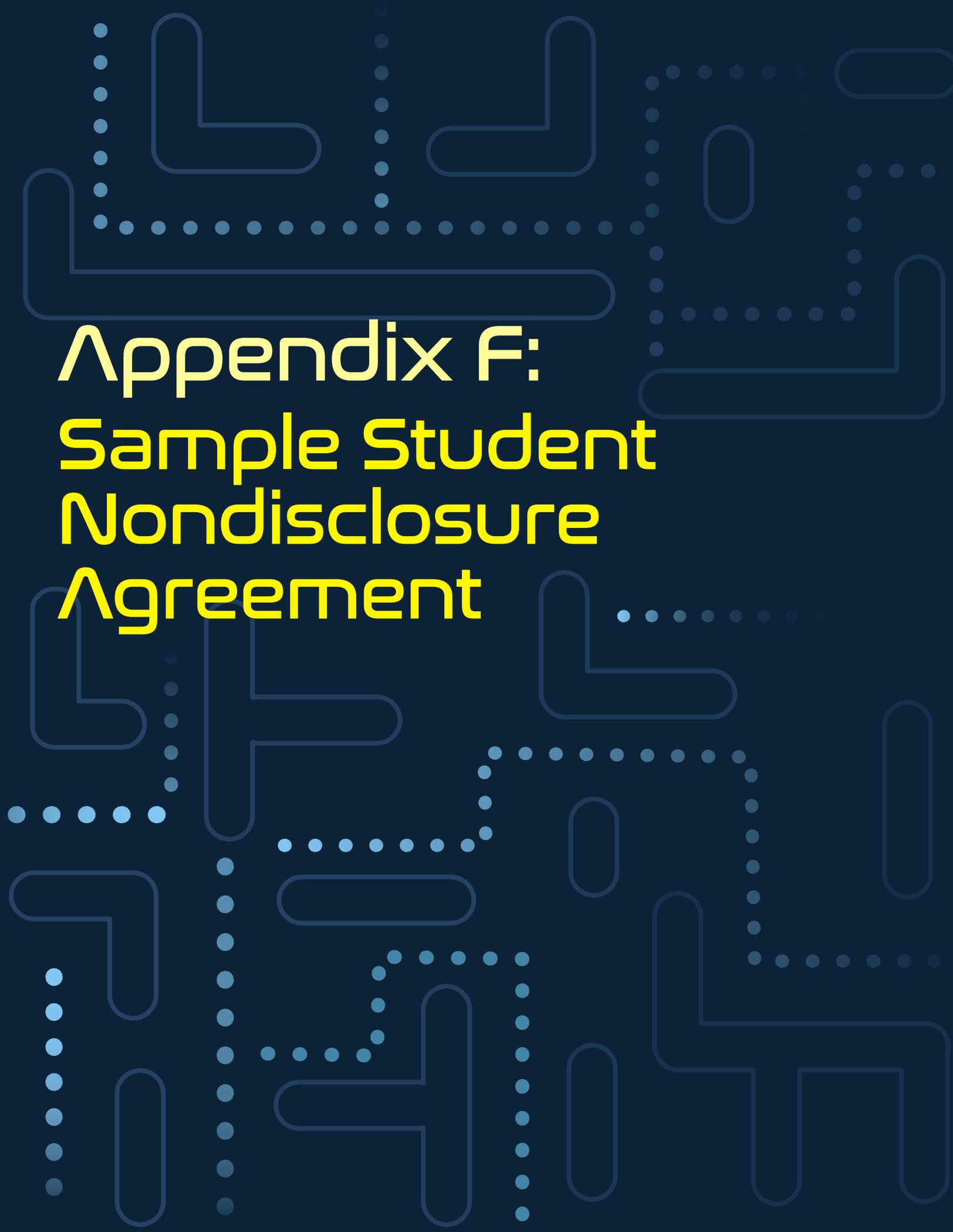
Client Information

The MITRE Corporation is a federally funded think tank. As a not -for-profit organization, MITRE works across the government to tackle problems that challenge our nation's safety, stability, and well-being. Our unique vantage point allows us to provide innovative, practical solutions in the defense, aviation, judiciary, healthcare, and cybersecurity domains.

Kelly Horinek is government acquisition expert. ACQ-SYNC is her brainchild. She has been storing up ideas for how to make things better for acquisition personnel for years and ACQ-SYNC finally gives her a way to make that happen and pay it forward.

Patty McDermott is a cognitive engineer and jack of all trades. She helps ensure that ACQ-SYNC is designed using human-machine teaming principles so that the tool partners with acquisition personnel as opposed to being yet another obstacle.

Kelly and Patty both believe in making things better and paying it forward.

The background features a complex, abstract pattern of light blue lines and dots on a dark blue background. The lines form various geometric shapes, including L-shapes, rectangles, and rounded corners, some of which are filled with a grid of small dots. The overall effect is a modern, technical, and digital aesthetic.

Appendix F: Sample Student Nondisclosure Agreement

APPENDIX F: SAMPLE STUDENT NONDISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

UNILATERAL NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

between

[The Agency]

and

Student's Individual Name Here: _____

THIS Unilateral Non-Disclosure Agreement (the “Agreement”) made by and between [The Agency], having a principal location at [Address], and student individual name _____ (“Recipient”), having a principal address of _____, and shall be effective as of February 2020 (“Effective Date”). [The Agency] and Recipient may each be individually referred to as a “Party” and collectively as the “Parties”.

[The Agency] intends Recipient to receive certain proprietary/confidential information (“Information”) as further described below for the purpose described below. Recipient wishes to so receive and use such Information. In consideration of the foregoing premises and of the mutual promises and covenants herein, it is agreed as follows:

1. The Information to be disclosed, and the purpose for its disclosure, is described as follows: exploration of ideas, methods, or tools to innovate [Technical Objective of the Activity] through the use of [expert advice, automation, visualization, gamification, and other interactive technologies, including the technology or technical data associated with [project]], in conjunction with Recipient’s participation in the design challenge sponsored by [The Agency] and the [University] during the 2019/2020 academic year, known as the *University of [X] 2019/2020 Capstone Design Challenge*.
2. Recipient shall hold the Information in strict confidence and shall use such Information only for the purpose described above. Recipient shall protect the Information with at least the same degree of care that it protects its own information in order to accomplish the purpose defined above. Use of confidential information by the Recipient for academic purposes must be coordinated with [The Agency] in advance, as outlined in Section 6 below, and approval by [The Agency] for such use will not be unreasonably withheld.
3. Recipient’s obligations under Section 2, above shall not apply to any portion of the Information that:
 - a. is or becomes publicly available, other than through the Recipient’s fault or negligence;
 - b. is already known to Recipient, without restriction, at the time of receipt, as evidenced by competent proof thereof;
 - c. is rightfully and lawfully obtained by the Recipient from a third party rightfully and lawfully possessing the same without restriction;
 - d. is independently developed by the Recipient without having had access to the Information disclosed hereunder; or
 - e. is obligated to be produced under an order of a court of competent jurisdiction or other compulsory process, but only to the extent and for the purposes of such, and provided that, [The Agency] is immediately notified by Recipient of the order and assists [The Agency] in seeking an appropriate protective order to protect the confidentiality of the Information.

4. Information shall be subject to the foregoing restrictions if (a) it is in writing or in other tangible form and is clearly marked with an appropriate, conspicuous legend (e.g., “Proprietary” or “Confidential” or “For the purpose of the University of [X] 2019/2020 Capstone Design Challenge only”), or (b) it is stated to be proprietary or confidential at the time it is verbally disclosed, or (c) given the nature of the Information and the circumstances surrounding its disclosure, a reasonable party would recognize such Information to be proprietary and confidential.
5. All Information obtained by Recipient from *[The Agency]* hereunder shall remain the property of *[The Agency]* and shall be returned to *[The Agency]*, or destroyed, promptly at *[The Agency’s]* request, together with all copies made thereof by Recipient. Upon request, Recipient shall promptly submit to *[The Agency]* a certificate of destruction.
6. Except as specifically provided for herein, Recipient shall not make use of Information for its own benefit or the benefit of any third party. Recipient may use Recipient’s own work products produced in conjunction with the University of [X] 2019/2020 Capstone Design Challenge in Recipient’s personal resume and portfolio of experience. *[The Agency]* may use any work products produced by Recipient as a participant in the University of [X] 2019/2020 Capstone Design Challenge and submitted to *[The Agency]*, for any future research and development, sponsor support or any business purpose of *[The Agency’s]*.

Recipient may publish papers related to or incorporating the results of the University of [X] 2019/2020 Capstone Design Challenge, except that such publications will not disclose any of *[The Agency’s]* Information without the written consent of *[The Agency]*. Recipient shall submit for *[The Agency’s]* review and approval any proposed publication resulting from research conducted under the University of [X] 2019/2020 Capstone Design Challenge Fifteen (15) days prior to submission for publication. Recipient is not authorized to publish any proposed publication resulting from research conducted under this Agreement prior to *[The Agency’s]* approval. *[The Agency]*, may delete any Information in the proposed publication.

Recipient agrees to notify *[The Agency]* as soon as possible if Recipient becomes aware of any misappropriation, misuse, or disclosure of Information.

7. Neither the Information nor the act of disclosure thereof shall constitute a grant of any license of any kind either under any trademark, patent or copyright, or application for same, or otherwise, nor shall they constitute any representation, warranty, assurance, guarantee, or inducement by *[The Agency]* with respect to the infringement of any trademark, patent, copyright, any right of privacy, or any right of third persons.
8. *[The Agency]* is providing the Information “AS IS” and makes no warranty, express or implied, as to the accuracy, capability, efficiency, merchantability, or functioning of the Information. In no event will *[The Agency]* be liable for any general, consequential, indirect, incidental, exemplary, or special damages, even if *[The Agency]* has been advised of the possibility of such damages.
9. Recipient accepts the Information on the condition that it indemnifies and holds harmless *[The Agency]*, its Board of Trustees, officers, agents, and employees, from any and all liability or damages to itself, its officers, employees, or agents, including attorneys’ fees, court costs, and other related costs and expenses, arising out of Recipient’s use of the Information irrespective of the cause of said liability.
10. In the case of a lawsuit or other proceeding, Recipient may disclose a *[The Agency]* trade secret if the filing is protected from public disclosure under seal. Recipient is not legally liable for disclosing trade secrets to government officials or an attorney in confidence for the purpose for reporting or investigating a suspected violation of the law.

11. In compliance with U.S. Department of Commerce Export Administration Regulations and the U.S. Department of State International Traffic in Arms Regulations, and notwithstanding any other provision of this Agreement, Recipient shall not attempt to, nor export or re-export to any country prohibited from obtaining such data, either directly, or indirectly through affiliates, licensees, or subsidiaries, any U.S. source technical data acquired from *[The Agency]*, any products utilizing such data, or any Information provided under this Agreement or any ancillary agreements, to any countries outside the U.S. which export may be in violation of U.S. Export Laws or Regulations. Nothing in this provision shall relieve Recipient from any other obligation stated elsewhere in this Agreement not to disclose such Information.

12. This Agreement shall be effective as of the Effective Date and shall terminate three (3) years thereafter, provided, however, that this Agreement may be terminated by either Party at any time by providing thirty (30) days prior written notice of termination to the other Party. The rights and obligations respecting the disclosures made hereunder shall survive the termination or expiration of this Agreement until such time as any of the exceptions in Section 3 (a) through (e) apply to the relevant piece of Information.

The primary points of contact for the exchange of any Information pertaining to this Agreement, and subject to change upon written notice, shall be as follows:

For *[The Agency]*: _____

For Recipient: _____

The points of contact for official notices pertaining to this Agreement, at the official addresses noted in the Recitals above, and subject to change upon written notice, shall be as follows:

For *[The Agency]*: Office of General Council

For Recipient: _____

This Agreement shall not be assigned, transferred, or conveyed without the prior written consent of *[The Agency]*, which may be granted or withheld at the sole and absolute discretion of *[The Agency]*.

This Agreement, which shall be governed by the laws of the [State] without regard to [State] conflict of laws rules, represents the complete and exclusive understanding of the Parties pertaining to the subject matter hereof. Any modification to this Agreement must be signed by a fully authorized representative of both Parties.

The Parties agree to the above as signified by executing below:

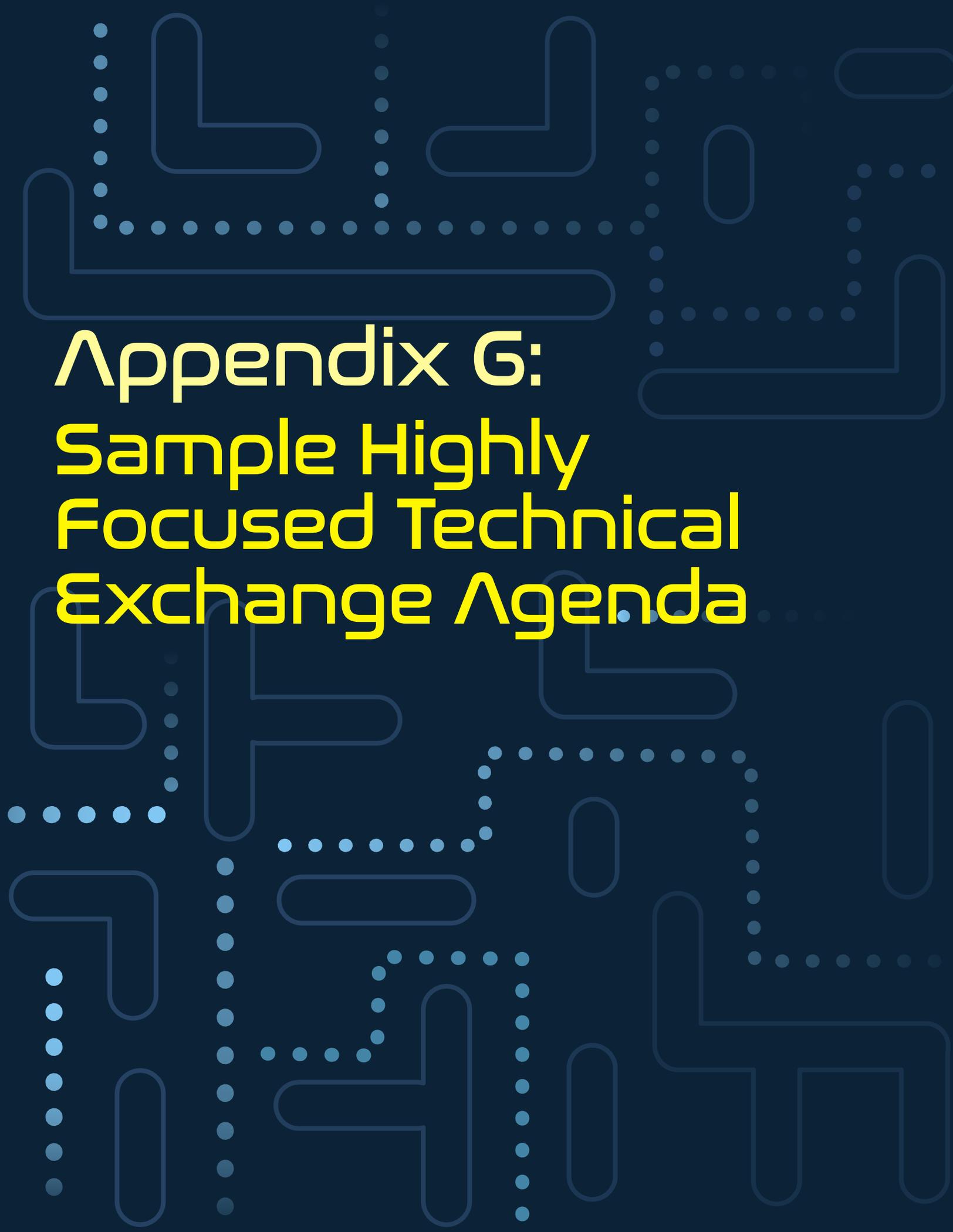
The Agency

By: _____
(Signature)

Name: _____

Title: _____

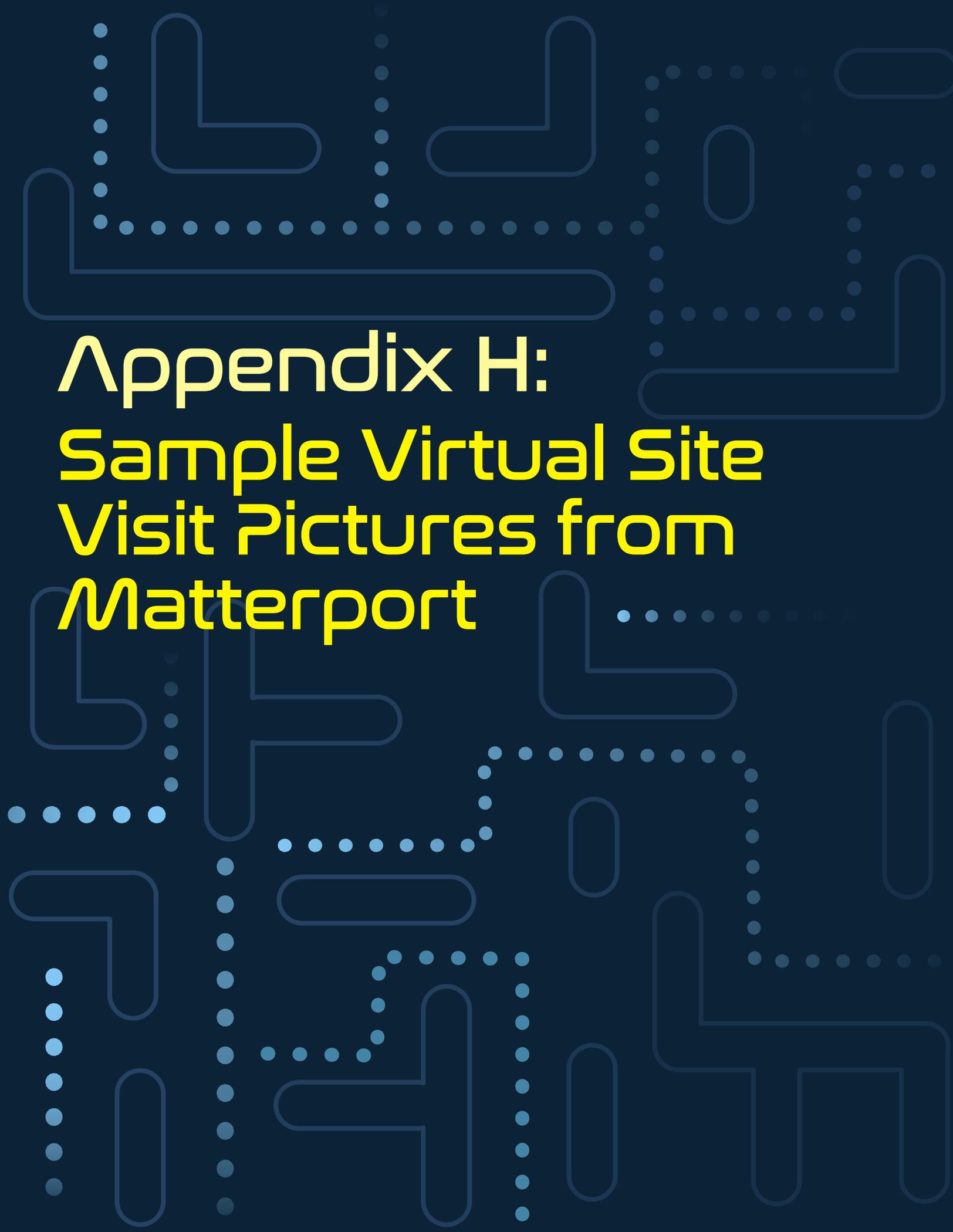
Date: _____



Appendix G: Sample Highly Focused Technical Exchange Agenda

APPENDIX G: SAMPLE HIGHLY FOCUSED TECHNICAL EXCHANGE AGENDA

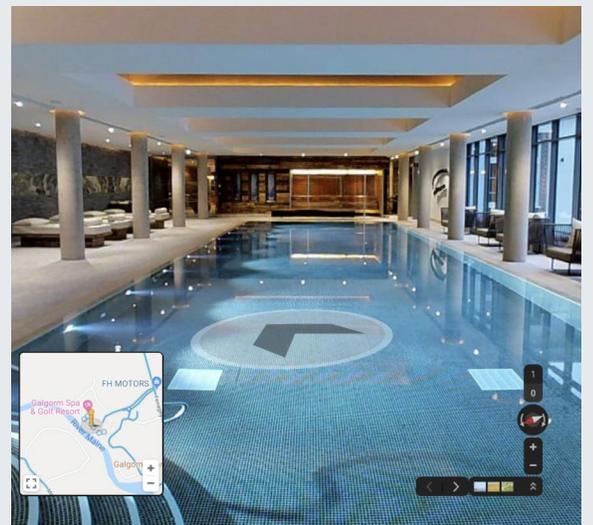
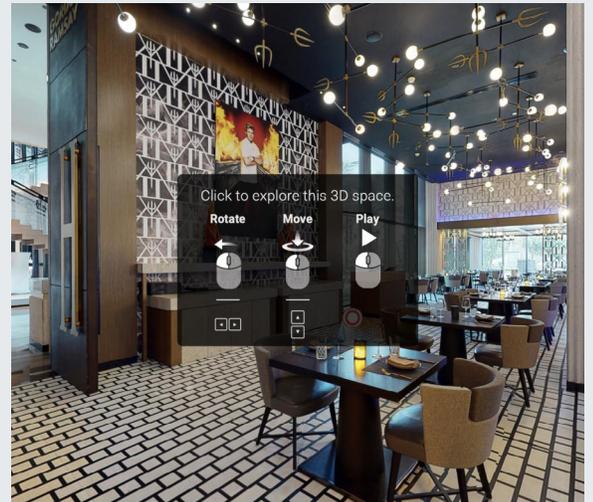
Program Acquisition Strategy Workshop		16 August 2021 0800-1700
0800 – 0830	Opening Remarks / Objectives Points of Contact	
0830 – 0930	Premortem Exercise Defining Failure to Shape Success – Facilitator	
0930 – 0945	Break	
0945 – 1130	Portfolio Management Implementation Discussion 1 – Presenter A Discussion 2 – Presenter B Discussion 3 – Presenter C and Presenter D	
1130 – 1230	Lunch	
1230 – 1345	Strategy Considerations Innovative Process Model – Presenter E Accelerated Acquisition Strategy Approach – Presenter F	
1345 – 1515	Technical Integration Roundtable – Participants G, H, and I	
1515 – 1530	Break	
1545 – 1645	Future Technologies Discussion 4 – Presenter J Technical Demonstration 1 – Presenter K and Presenter	
1645 – 1700	Closing Comments/Adjourn	



**Appendix H:
Sample Virtual Site
Visit Pictures from
Matterport**

APPENDIX H: SAMPLE VIRTUAL SITE VISIT PICTURES FROM MATTERPORT

The below images are from Matterport simply as an example to demonstrate the technology:



images sourced from <https://matterport.com/>

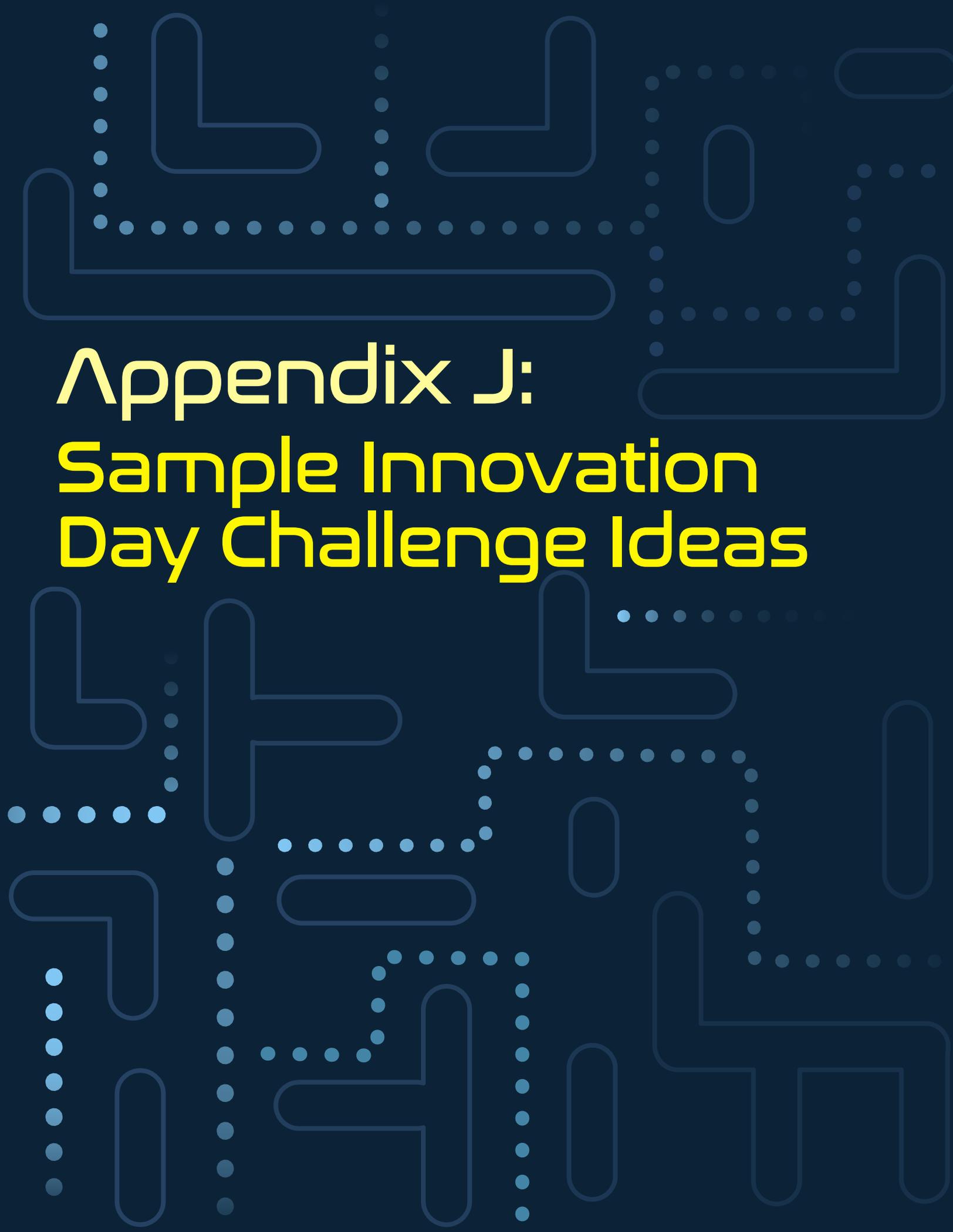


Appendix I:
Sample Innovation
Day Agenda

APPENDIX I: SAMPLE INNOVATION DAY AGENDA

Suicide Prevention Innovation Day Agenda

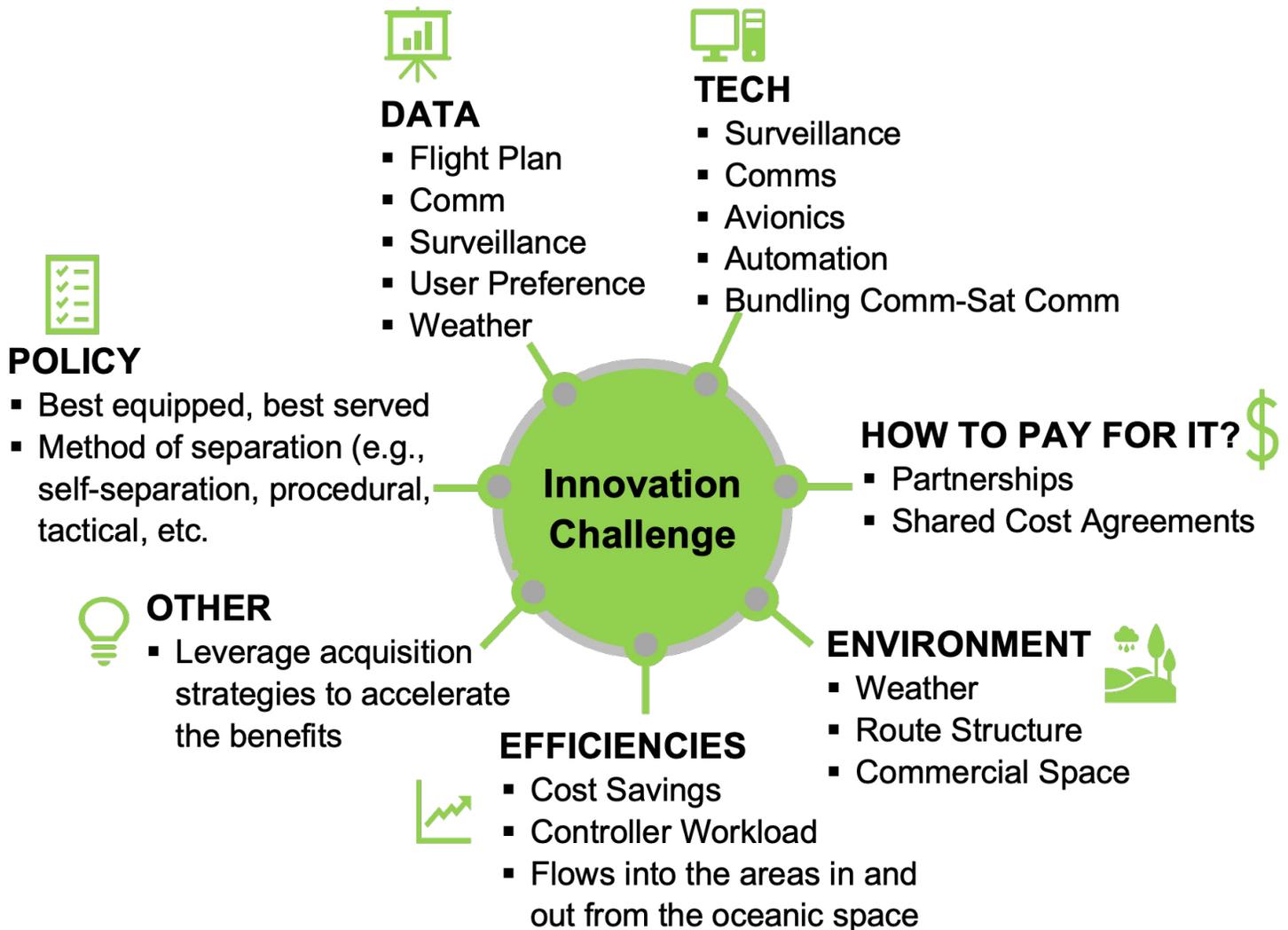
Start Time	Stop Time	Topic
1100	1110	Opening Remarks and Introductions
1110	1120	Ongoing/Upcoming Objectives
1120	1130	Health Innovation Research Project – Current Status and Future Objectives (Vendor A)
1130	1140	Synthetic Health Records Technical Integration (Vendor A)
1140	1150	Observations and Feedback from Suicide Prevention Patient Group
1150	1200	Future Planned Research and Innovation Projects (Vendor B)
1200	1210	Design Innovation Metrics (Vendor B)
1210	1220	Observations and Feedback from Suicide Prevention Patient Group
1220	1225	Suicide Prevention Research (FFRDC)
1225	1230	Introduction and Journey Map
1230	1240	Healthcare Simulation Modeling (FFRDC)
1240	1250	Observations and Feedback from Suicide Prevention Patient Group
1250	1300	Closing Remarks and Way Ahead

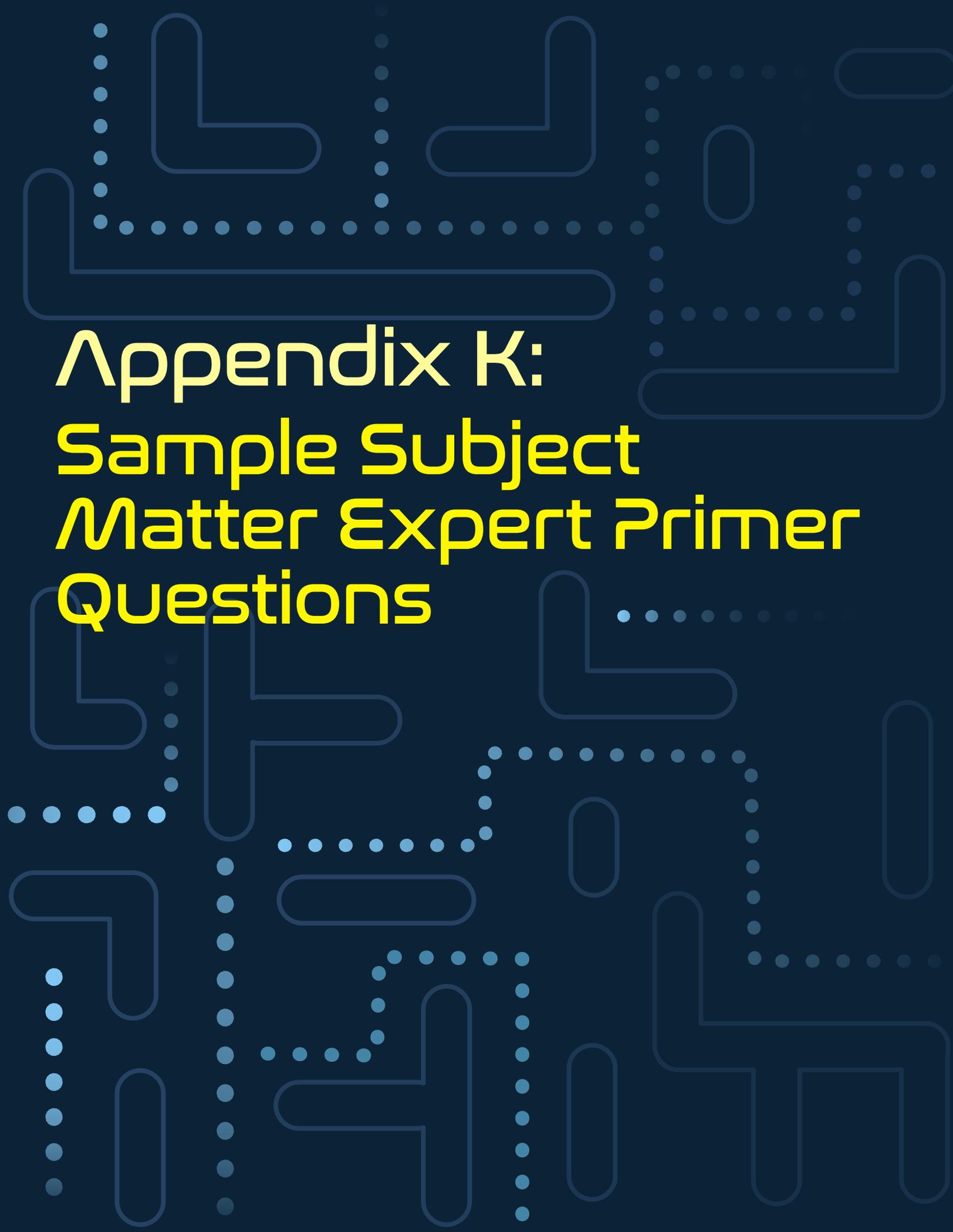


Appendix J:
Sample Innovation
Day Challenge Ideas

APPENDIX J: SAMPLE INNOVATION DAY CHALLENGE IDEAS

The following idea board represents a sample of a primer that can be presented to Innovation Day participants, along with a challenge statement, to articulate the breadth of solutions that you're after:



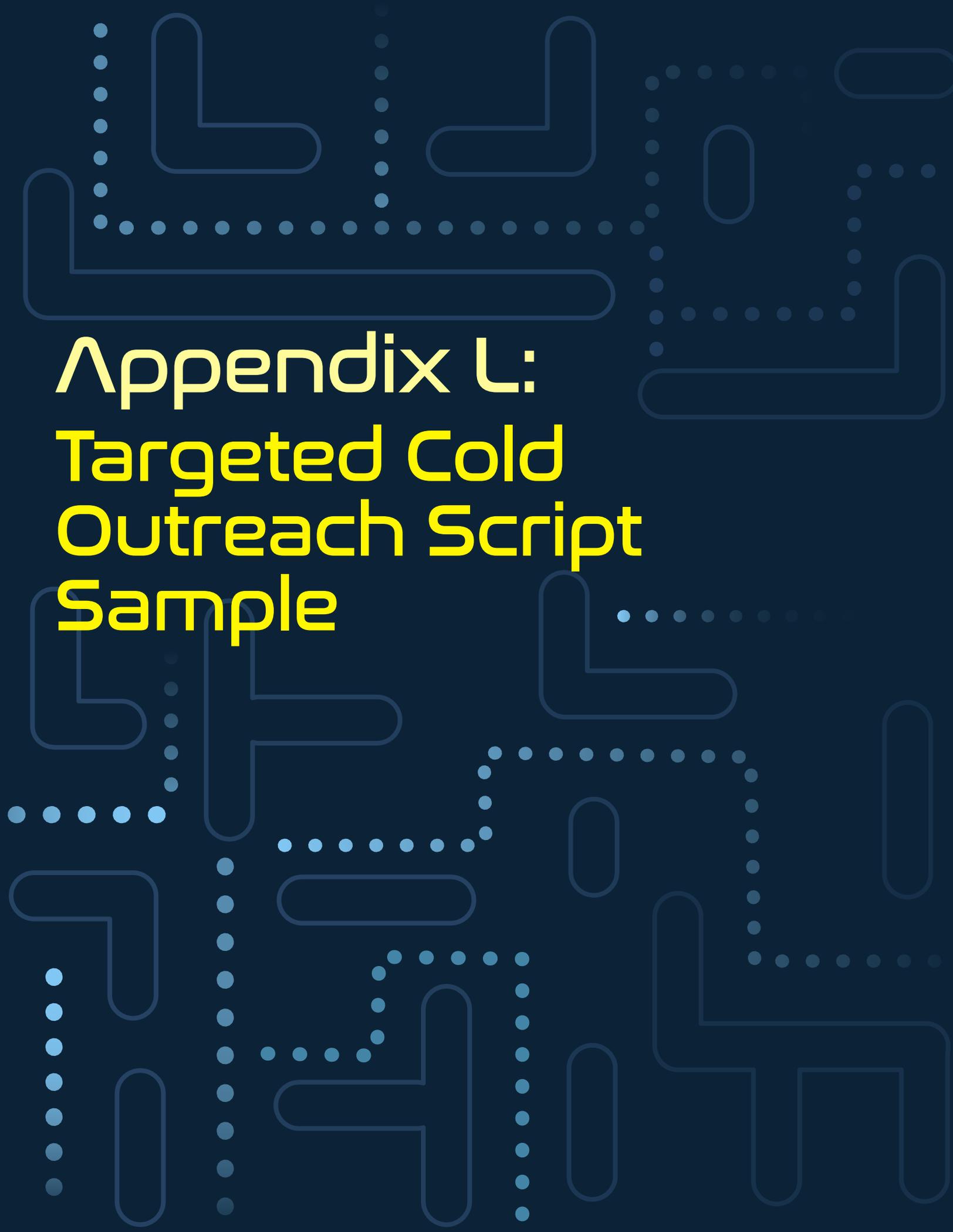


Appendix K:
Sample Subject
Matter Expert Primer
Questions

APPENDIX K: SAMPLE SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT PRIMER QUESTIONS

The following questions were used with a team of 12 Subject Matter Experts to prepare for the recomplete of a contract. These questions were asked and answered through a pair of two-hour facilitated working groups.

1. What are the goals for our new effort?
2. What has worked well with the three incumbent efforts?
3. What performance improvements from the three predecessor efforts should we pursue?
4. What qualities do the current contractors have that make them successful?
5. What do you see are the incumbent contractor's biggest hurdles to success?
 - » External challenges?
 - » Dependencies that were originally unplanned?
6. What are the biggest risks to transitioning to a new vendor? (What might we lose?)
7. What are the biggest risks to successful performance in the future?
8. What changes when we have to consolidate the three incumbent contracts into a single future contract?
9. What behaviors do we want to incentivize on the new contract?
10. What dependencies will help determine success?



Appendix L:
Targeted Cold
Outreach Script
Sample

APPENDIX L: TARGETED COLD OUTREACH SCRIPT SAMPLE

Online Training Acquisition

Company/Organization Contact Information:

- Company/Organization Name:
- Phone Number:
- Date/Time of Call:
- Message Left: Yes or No
- Name and Title of Individual Interviewed:
- Scheduled Call Back Time:

Telephone Script:

Hello,

My name is _____ and I'm with the [Agency – Office of _____]. I'm interested in learning more about your training capabilities, for example, Computer Based Training/E-Learning. What do I need to know about training in general? And how does the process work? Basically...the whole enchilada.

Who within your company/organization would be the best person to speak with?

Hi so and so. Thanks in advance for taking the time to speak with me today. (Insert humor here --) Now I'll go over the standard Government market research disclaimer...this call is **“purely for market research purposes”** to shed some light on the whole business of training. No future business or contract is implied in any way.

(Description of our need)

Now that we have that established, here's a little bit more detail on what we are looking for.

The goal of today's phone call is to collect information about training --- curriculum content and design, delivery, measures of success, etc. My specific division is focused primarily on cyber security. We're specifically interested in Virtual/Computer Based Training/E-Learning. Our audience is made up of Information Technology (IT) Security Professionals, IT Managers, Chief Information Officers, Chief Information Security Officers, etc.

Note: The company may ask you for more specifics on this. Be prepared to give additional details to help scope.

(Summary of Acquisition Background)

We're developing a cyber-program. In order to implement the program, we need to train the cyber workforce. We've got a really good in-house brain, with quite a bit of training content already developed and more in his head.

- How do we get that information into a final product that can be delivered and accessed virtually?

One of the major goals is consistency in training a huge and varied group of IT professionals from across the government—we're talking 100s of organizations all over the map. This is going to have a big impact on helping us (the government) protect our critical data. Our desired delivery date is 12 months from now - for the initial training deliverable (i.e., 10 modules)

- Is this feasible?
- What's the general / normal / typical timeframe for developing a computer-based training program?
- What's the fastest you've done it...and the longest?

Specifically, here's how you could really help us out.

(General Questions)

- How do you handle / what's your process for designing curriculum and developing content for a **technical course**?
- To expand on that, what's your process for developing a course for a **highly technical audience**?
- What's your experience developing a computer-based training program? What's your experience developing computer-based training for the Government?
- Do you follow / use / rely on any instructional design standards? If so, which ones?
- We expect that we'll have updates to the course material. What are some of the ways you typically handle this? What's the norm for course updates from a timeframe perspective (quarterly, semi-annually)? What do you find that actually works and is realistic?

(Measures)

- What are some of the ways you measure the effectiveness and quality of an e-learning course?
- What techniques/methodology do you use to measure or evaluate student comprehension?
- What do you normally do to evaluate the overall success of your training?
- In your experience, what's the best way to measure mastery of concepts?
- To wrap up on this topic, what should we be measuring? You tell us. We're not educators. What have we missed?

(Hosting Questions)

- Do you have experience hosting government e-learning?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of contractor versus government hosting of an e-learning program? What are the complicating factors if contractor hosted? What are the complicating factors if government hosted?
- What factors should the government consider when outsourcing an e-learning platform?

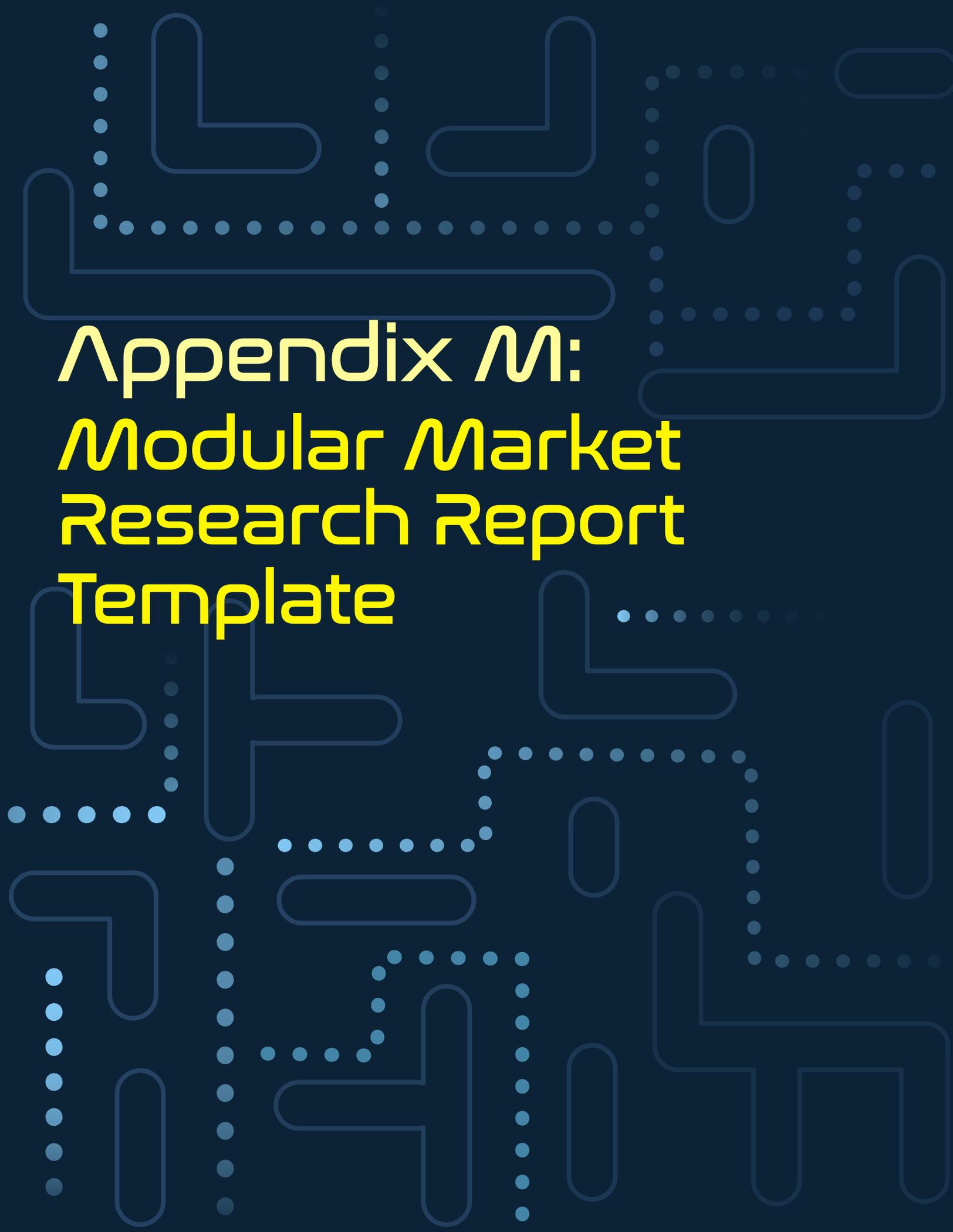
(Learning Management Systems Questions)

- If you can provide hosting support, including student registration and tracking, what Learning Management System is used? What are some of the features and usage?
- What types and intervals of status updates can be provided?

(Wrap Up Questions – Try Not to Skip)

11. What type of information do your customers provide that makes life easier for you? What helps the process?
12. Is there anything that we have not covered, that you think we should know?

THANKS AGAIN FOR YOUR TIME. IT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!!!!!!



Appendix M:
Modular Market
Research Report
Template

APPENDIX M: MODULAR MARKET RESEARCH REPORT TEMPLATE

Acquisition Title:

Current as of:

- **Acquisition Objective and Background** *Provide a background and introduction to your program and purpose, the current need, and the reason an acquisition may be required.*
 - A. **Statement of Need** *Clearly state the “what” that is needed.*
 - B. **History/Applicable Conditions**
- **Requirements/Features.** *Identify essential characteristics of the product, solution, or service clearly, concisely, and in language easy to understand to accurately guide market research efforts.*
- **Market Research Team Members** *Identify market research team members. Include Name; Title and Contact information for each team member along with the appendix they authored.*

Team Member	Appendix
< Name/Tile>	
<Email Address>	
<Phone Number>	

- **Plan of Action** *List which Market Surveillance and Market Investigation techniques were used and why. Each of the techniques will be listed as separate appendix in the report in Section 5. This enables different members of the sponsor team to research and prepare the content of each appendix which is documented in the table in Section 3. The approach will expedite the process, enable on-going research, and directly inform the resulting acquisition.*
- **Market Research Report Appendices** *Provide an appendix for each method that was used. Within each appendix describe what you did, what you learned, and what the next steps are. Continue to add new appendices as you conduct more investigations*
 - A. White Paper Request for Information (RFI) – August - September 2020
 - B. Industry Conference (Virtual) – September 2020
 - C. Technical Demonstrations – September – October 2020
 - D. Vendor Virtual One-on-One Meetings – November 2020
 - E. Subject Matter Expertise: Prior Acquisition Reviews – August 2020
 - F. Internet Research – July – November 2020
- **Key Findings (Current as of _____):** *At a high level describe your key findings from current Market Research Techniques. Update this section as necessary as you continuously perform market research.*



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