

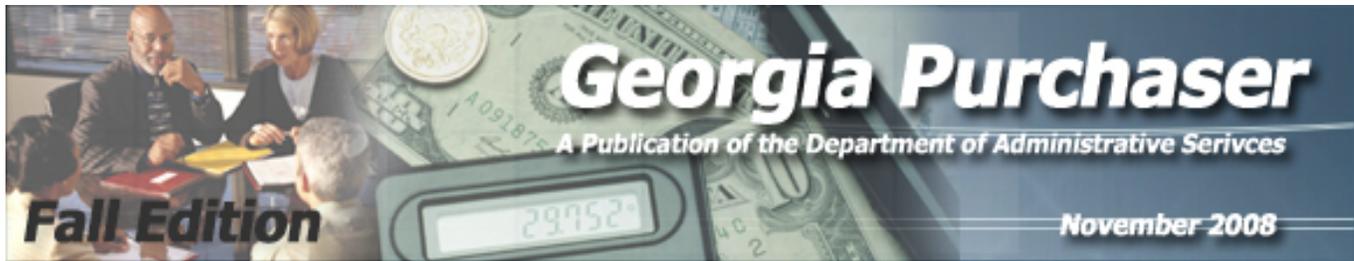
Supplier Outreach: Concerted Efforts, Focused Strategy

With the arrival of fall, the countdown begins to our January 2009 launch of Team Georgia Marketplace. The Department of Administrative Services (DOAS) has less than four months to alert our more than 37,000 active and inactive suppliers of the launch and maximize registration in the new system. To answer this tall order, we conducted preliminary research and are enacting a communications strategy to “over-communicate” the coming changes and improve relations between suppliers and the State of Georgia.

The inaugural issue of *The Supplier Source* was launched in September as part of a communications strategy designed to “over-communicate” the implementation of Team Georgia Marketplace in January 2009.

Our new communications strategy began with a [supplier survey](#) that was administered to sampling of 85 suppliers in July. 43 (51%) suppliers responded, giving us meaningful baseline data regarding their internet and computer usage, methods for collecting business communications, and preferences when being trained on an online program. Ultimately, many of the findings of this study were used as a springboard from which other communications tactics were developed to reach to our many suppliers.

Topping our list of new communications tools is *The Supplier Source*, which is an e-newsletter, introduced in mid-September. Unlike *The Georgia Purchaser*, which has typically been distributed to various publics including our agency partners, government stakeholders and suppliers, [The Supplier Source](#) is intended solely for suppliers, catering to their needs, interests and wants. While a short, monthly publication of little more than three articles per issue, we expect to generate great attention through coverage of supplier specific information such as spotlights of DOAS staff and veteran suppliers, and guidance on how suppliers can best position themselves for business with Georgia. It is our intent that with focused messages catering to our target audience, we can better serve supplier needs and drive them to specific action (in this case, to register in Team Georgia Marketplace by January 20, which is the underlying message



of our inaugural issue). So far, supplier response has been positive and in agreement with survey results that suppliers appreciate the use of internet technology to receive business opportunity updates.

Our supplier research also led to the development of our regional Supplier Seminars which are coming up this fall. According to the survey, suppliers learn in a variety of ways and respond to multiple methods of teaching including classroom training, online tutorials, self-study with a written manual, or individual trial and error. To cater to those suppliers preferring classroom training, DOAS is offering supplier seminars featuring training and registration support on the new system. As a result, suppliers will have the opportunity to be oriented to the Supplier Portal into Team Georgia Marketplace and have the opportunity to ask questions and register before the January deployment. The Supplier Seminars will be offered throughout Georgia at locations including Albany, Atlanta, Dublin, Valdosta, and Dahlonega. To supplement in-person training, DOAS will provide online training in the form of a video, with job aids available for downloading.

In addition to offering a variety of learning methods for Team Georgia Marketplace, our research supports a variety of communications tactics for reaching vendors. Beyond the e-newsletter and regional seminars, our communications strategy involves presentations and announcements at supplier orientations, flyer distribution and e-blasts to business and trade organizations, among others. Through these concerted efforts and the cooperation of our agency partners who maintain consistent relations with our suppliers, we expect to not only alert suppliers of the coming changes, but convey the importance of this technology in advancing the State of Georgia to new levels of procurement. It is our goal to support their relationship with the State of Georgia, and to provide faster, friendlier, and easier service to all our trusted partners in government procurement.

For more information about Team Georgia Marketplace, its deployment, purpose or methods of promotion, contact Gina Tiedemann at gina.tiedemann@doas.ga.gov or call 404-463-5558.

Read [our inaugural issue](#) of *The Supplier Source* or review details of the [Supplier Change Management Survey](#). ■