



NOMINATION FORM

Nominee Information

Public Sector Procurement Project Life Cycle and Sustainability
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Nomination submitted by

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Certification

To the best of my knowledge, I certify that the information provided is accurate and true.

Signature *Brian Barclay* Date July 3/09

Structure of the submission

The nomination form must be accompanied by an overview of the project you wish to profile. We provide you with the following outline to help you structure your submission. You are welcome to include additional information that you feel is pertinent but the submission should not exceed five (5) pages. If you have any questions, please contact us at award@summitconnects.com.

Project objectives

Brief description of the project

Summary of project experience – How did it go?

Contribution of project to key criteria:

- high degree of innovation – new ideas or approaches in either operational or policy settings;
- measurable and significant benefit – savings, efficiency and effectiveness, satisfy the stated objectives of the project;
- transferability – the central idea or approach shows some promise for being used in other areas of the public sector;
- advancing professionalism within the community.

The submission must include a letter of reference from a senior manager or procurement supervisor on the project – someone other than the team leader submitting the nomination.

Sustainability through Proper Disposal Program

Project objective

Many environmental problems stem from the effects of economic activity, daily mass production, mass consumption and mass waste disposal which gradually accumulate and impose a heavy environmental impact.

In response to contemporary environmental challenges, the Purchasing and Contract Services Department of Edmonton Public Schools has proactively considered the impact of procurement activities and the selection and disposal of products. The Department feels strongly about taking responsibility for the school district's impact on the environment as well as being mindful of the social and ethical issues surrounding procurement.

This direction of 'green' procurement has been set through board policy and regulations that support reducing the District's environmental footprint. Edmonton Public Schools' updated its procurement practices by adding a green component that guides the Purchasing and Contract Services Department. Within its general criteria for all purchases, its policy states:

The Edmonton Public School Board believes in purchasing competitively and seeking maximum educational value for every dollar expended through good purchasing practices which give consideration to the following:

- *the vendor/manufacturer of the product can demonstrate supporting sustainability of our environment through recognized certifications and standards within the industry;*
- *the vendor/manufacturer of the product can provide evidence of recognized acceptable social ethical standards through policies, practices, and procedures; and,*
- *all factors being equal, preference shall be given to local, provincial, and national suppliers in that order.*

The main goal of Edmonton Public Schools' **Sustainability through Proper Disposal Program** involves diverting products from Edmonton's landfill site. It is crucial for this to be achieved as the department is responsible for the acquisition and life cycle of products for almost 200 schools and over 80,000 students. The second priority is to efficiently manage the disposal of obsolete products from the school district without incurring any additional costs. In addition, participation in green

procurement and sustainable practices supports the goal of educating students to become environmentally responsible.

Brief description of the project

Technological commodities integrate and play a key role in education. Products that may have worked well as stand alone in the past may not meet the current demands of integration. Over ten years ago products that failed during their life expectancy were sent to a service depot for repair. The reality is that products can now be replaced quite affordably compared to when the initial purchase was made, alleviating the need for repair services.

The challenge Edmonton Public Schools faced was twofold. The first challenge included preventing the products from ending up in the city's landfill site and the second challenge was to manage the disposal of obsolete products from the school district without incurring any additional costs. Imagine for a moment the amount of products most households dispose of within a week, now try to imagine the amount of products required at nearly 200 educational sites. The Purchasing and Contract Services Department faces a monumental task.

To begin with, we determined approximately 2,852,317 Kg of waste was created from June 2008 to June 2009 based on 80, 000 students. We also determined 290,991 Kg of paper and cardboard were recycled. These numbers were further broken down to 35.6 Kg of waste per student and 3.6 Kg of recycling per student. The process of gathering and converting this data to useable information is complicated and is only compiled once a year in August. The plan was to first target technology acquisitions disposals and then the vast variety of other products used within our many educational institutions.

Edmonton Public Schools has taken the initiative to monitor what we dispose of and a major part of this initiative is to reduce waste and increase recycling.

In 2008, Edmonton Public Schools disposed of approximately 8600 computer components, chassis and cases as well as 4000 monitors which equated to 102 tons of salvage. Functioning computers that still had life were distributed to high needs schools as their technological requirements were not as complex. The District's IT Department dismantled end of life computers and the components were used to service other functioning computers. Schools found this a bonus as they were not charged for these parts. If the computer did not have value then the hard drive was removed and degaussed and the remaining metals and plastics were picked up at no charge by an approved

recycler. It is important to note that computers do not leave the District due to insurance issues and Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Previously, District computers were sent to a recycler; however, there was no legislation on recycling practices until October 2005. Prior to this time, recyclers had the option of disposing of product in any manner they deemed appropriate, which in some cases, could result in components ending up at the landfill site or sent to third world countries. The District is now guaranteed that disposed computer components are collected from certified recyclers and disposed of in a safe and efficient manner.

The Purchasing and Contract Services Department is continually looking at new opportunities to be environmentally conscientious as well as cognizant of the social and financial implications surrounding a product's acquisition and disposal. For example, the switch from Cathode Ray Tubes (CRT) to flat screens has saved the District approximately \$32, 000 in electrical costs over a one-year period.

Additionally, the District has made an agreement with photocopier companies to be part of their disposal process once a product has reached the end of its lifecycle. The vendor is responsible for properly disposing of the used equipment in accordance with disposal legislation. Last year the District disposed of approximately 70 photocopiers which were returned to the manufacturers' for dismantling. This equated to 18 tons of recycled product. The disposal process in place has allowed the District to manage current technologies and prepare strategies to address the future disposal requirements of newer products such as Smart Boards. We are committed to always being one step ahead.

Presently, we are reviewing our recycling program for toner and ink cartridges. The District successfully recycled 1100 toner cartridges in 2008. Although we have an effective program we are looking at ways of eliminating the recycling process altogether. As a result, we are testing solid wax ink which would eliminate the need for toner cartridges and the corresponding need for recycling. This is an area where we will see many benefits as we have approximately 500 photocopiers and 3000 printers spread across our District.

In addition to researching the use of solid wax ink, we are looking at other alternatives that would reduce the recycling process. The bottom line is, recycling does cost money. One option includes having vendors ship items in reusable containers as opposed to cardboard packaging. We are considering this practice in anticipation of six new school sites opening in the fall of 2010. Reducing the amount of packaging sent to these sites would reduce the amount of cardboard

requiring disposal. The savings would be recovered in both time and recycled cardboard. We must also acknowledge the fact that with such large acquisitions all of the cardboard may not be actively recycled and instead may end up on the waste side of the equation.

The challenge to recycle within any school district is a massive undertaking due to the vast variety of products used. These products may have a lower dollar value and their use is spread throughout the City of Edmonton. Reducing the time spent housing, handling and maintaining obsolete products was a priority for the Purchasing and Contract Services Department. We did not feel it made sense to add cost to a product that initially had very little value. If a vehicle is not available to manage these obsolete assets then schools will begin to store them in various locations within their building. One concern was that keeping these products *out of sight and out of mind* would cause further depreciation where the products would end up having no value – to anyone.

At one time, district trucks would pick up these various products from different locations around the city and then take them to an auction house for sale. We found that the costs associated with handling and moving the product far exceeded the product's value, however, it was not an ideal method. We strongly felt the need to assist schools in better managing these assets.

With this in mind, an on-line internal program called *For Sale Trade* was established. The program was tied to the Purchasing and Contract Services Department website and allowed schools and departments online access to post ads for products they required or no longer needed. The school would enter the information in the preformatted fields and use fly out windows to help categorize the commodity. Every Friday, an email would be sent out to each school with a list of available products. Schools would then barter and exchange or sell products between themselves. The next challenge was to manage those products that were stagnant, but still had value. As it currently stands, if goods are no longer required, their disposal needs to be completed in the most efficient manner possible.

Keeping the goal of efficiency in mind, a new program was created for the Purchasing and Contract Services Department's website called *C-Port*, which stands for community portal. This site was made available to external non-profit organizations as well as the general public. Schools would list the products they had for sale online through the website. This information was then consolidated and sent out to all registered participants. When an individual saw an item they liked they would contact the school directly to make the purchase. The advantage to the School District

was that the end of life products were better managed, allowing a higher return on obsolete products and eliminating the additional costs needed to manage these products. The largest benefit to Edmonton Public Schools was that this method of disposal aligned with our sustainability regulation. Schools would receive the monetary benefits of the sale while the buyer would get a great deal on a product. In 2008, the District passed on over 5000 items to external sources, which stopped these items from entering the city's landfill site or recycling depots. Through these efforts, the school district reduced its carbon footprint and saved on labour costs.

Summary of project experience – How did it go?

The **Sustainability through Proper Disposal Program** continues to be a successful initiative because the complete life cycle of a product is taken into consideration. Edmonton Public Schools pays particular attention to both vendors and manufacturers, ensuring they have accredited and environmental certifications recognizing standards that positively impact product acquisition. They are required to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability by providing a letter of assurance signed by the president or assigned designate in compliance with recognized acceptable standards.

In addition to the Purchasing and Contract Services Department's central efforts in reducing the district's carbon footprint, we are working directly with schools to develop programs and strategies that create student awareness about environmentally conscious. To show commitment to this practice, the District has hired a full time consultant, a former Principal, to address and monitor energy consumption and recycling.

We are proud to have taken the initiative to monitor what we dispose of and as part of this ongoing program we are dedicated to reducing waste while increasing our recycling efforts.

Managing our assets to their maximum potential plays an important role in sustainability; Edmonton Public Schools is more than committed to this standard. By including environmental considerations in purchasing decisions, we are confident we can reduce our environmental footprint and promote practices that improve health and wellness, conserve natural resources and reward environmentally conscientious manufacturers.



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July 3, 2009

The Summit Magazine
263 Holmwood Avenue, Suite 100
Ottawa, ON
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Dear sir/madam:

On behalf of Edmonton Public Schools we are pleased to support Purchasing and Contract Services submission for the 2009 Summit Award - Leadership in Public Procurement.

Edmonton Public Schools Purchasing & Contract Services is to be commended for its dedication to focus on initiatives that lessen the school districts impact on the environment. Efficient use of technology has helped to maintain product sustainability and reduced time spent by staff managing products no longer needed. Keeping the process simple is imperative to lessen the temptation of merely discarding products to landfill.

We thank you for this opportunity to demonstrate our innovation and leadership in public sector procurement.

Sincerely,

D. R. Power, CA
Assistant Superintendent - Treasurer

DRP/ej

Bright futures 
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