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## AN EXPLORATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL BUYING BEHAVIOR IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

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AN EXPLORATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL BUYING BEHAVIOR IN THE  
PUBLIC SECTOR

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DISSERTATION

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the  
College of Business and Economics  
at the University of Kentucky

By  
Kevin S. Chase  
Lexington, Kentucky

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## ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

### AN EXPLORATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL BUYING BEHAVIOR IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

This dissertation begins with a comprehensive examination of the current state of research regarding organizational buying behavior. Through this review we identify a significant gap in our existing knowledge regarding organizational buying behavior in the public sector. Due to the high level of impact that government purchasing has on the economy, and the nuances that differentiate public from private sector purchasing practices, I further explore organizational buying behavior in the public sector to make the following contributions.

First, I highlight the common practice in business-to-government (B2G) and business-to-business (B2B) transactions where buyers limit suppliers' access to them during the buying process. This research terms these buyers "barricaded buyers." Despite their prominence in practice, research related to barricaded buyers remains virtually non-existent. Therefore, the present research draws on insights gleaned from eight case studies over a period of approximately eighteen months to shed light on this important topic.

Second, this dissertation advances a conceptual framework highlighting competitive actions a focal supplier can take to improve its selection likelihood when selling to barricaded buyers. The framework identifies novel ways suppliers can gain advantage by reducing competitive intensity in the pre-barricade phase (e.g., by peacocking) and by enhancing their RFP response quality in the post-barricade phase (e.g., by offering consummate solutions). Importantly, the framework invokes the notion of strategic information disclosure whereby a focal supplier may gain advantage by knowing *when* to convey *what* types of information in barricaded buying environments.

Keywords: organizational buying behavior, sales, business-to-government, B2G, RFP, barricaded buyers

Kevin S. Chase

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April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018

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Date

AN EXPLORATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL BUYING BEHAVIOR IN THE  
PUBLIC SECTOR

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*To my wife and daughters, without you this would not have been possible.*

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## 1. Introduction

In 2010, B2B (business-to-business) transactions accounted for over \$10 trillion in the United States (Grewal et al. 2015). Despite the financial magnitude, less than five articles per year have been devoted to B2B in the top four marketing journals in the last decade (Lilien 2016). One area of B2B research in much need of attention is organizational buying behavior (OBB). “Many of the foundational models [of OBB], which were developed decades ago, are static in nature and centered on the North American or European institutional structure. However, there are forces from evolving technologies and globalization that are dramatically affecting the nature of B2B buying and challenging the validity of these models and their underlying assumptions” (Lilien 2016, p. 5). Due to the high level of practical and theoretical impact, it is not surprising that OBB research is presently one of the top research priorities of the Institute for the Study of Business Markets and the Marketing Science Institute (Institute for the Study of Business Markets 2018; Marketing Science Institute 2018). In particular, ISBM asks, “To what extent is extant knowledge on buying centers and buyer behaviors still valid?” To this end, it is important for marketing academics to both reexamine existing OBB models, as well as fill in knowledge gaps that still remain (Grewal et al. 2015; Lilien 2016).

The purpose of this dissertation is to review existing literature on organizational buying behavior in order to highlight research gaps that have significant implications for marketers in the present buying and selling environment. Through this review it is apparent that there is presently a significant gap in knowledge regarding organizational buying behavior in the

public sector. This gap is surprising considering the significant financial impact that public sector purchases have on the United States' and world economy (Lilien 2016). Following the review of existing OBB literature, this dissertation uses a grounded-theory approach using case study methodology to develop a conceptual framework of organizational buying behavior in the public sector. In doing so I also explore the role of competition among suppliers competing for a buyer's business in order to shed light on how suppliers can compete more effectively when selling to public sector organizations.

## 2. Organizational Buying Behavior Research: A Review and Future Directions

Much of the existing research on OBB and buying centers is based on models developed in the late 1960's and early 1970's (e.g., Robinson, Faris, and Wind 1967; Sheth 1973; Webster and Wind 1972). "Organizational buying behavior includes all activities of organizational members as they define a buying situation and identify, evaluate, and choose among alternative brands and suppliers" (Webster and Wind 1972, p. 14). The buying center "refers to all those members of an organization who become involved in the buying process for a particular product or service" (Johnston and Bonoma 1981a, p. 143). Whereas organizational buying behavior is a system of processes, the buying center is the group of individuals representing a customer firm at the center of these processes. In order to understand organizational buying behavior it is imperative to understand buying center composition, and how this composition affects the processes that result in the selection of a final supplier. In this section, I discuss and integrate the foundational models of OBB and the subsequent research that followed in order to develop a general model of the present state of knowledge regarding organizational buyers and the organizational buying process.

### 2.1 Seminal Models of Organizational Buying

The foundational models of organizational buying behavior in marketing were developed by Webster and Wind (1972) and Sheth (1973). While these models were developed separately, both contain many similar constructs, likely due to the fact that each model builds on similar literature from the late 1960's (e.g., Robinson, Faris, and Wind 1967).

For example, both models include the effects of environmental, organizational, task, group, and individual variables on organizational buying. The variables form the foundation for much of the subsequent organizational buying literature spanning 45 years. As such, it is important to understand the similarities and differences of these models that have been instrumental in shaping organizational buying literature.

The Webster and Wind model (1972) differs from the Sheth model (1973) in that the former focuses in greater detail on the context of the buying task that affects buying center composition while the latter focuses more on group processes. For example, Webster and Wind highlight how factors such as product availability and the buying firm's competitive environment affect characteristics of the purchase, and in turn individuals will be recruited for involvement in the purchase (such as managers or engineers), resulting in the buying center's final composition of members. Buying center composition refers to the final demographics of the buying center such as experience of members, education, and total size of the buying center (Webster and Wind 1972). With such a large number of variables that can potentially impact buying center composition, the Webster and Wind model implies that each buying center is likely a unique composition of members that differs both within and between buying organizations (Johnston and Lewin 1996).

The Sheth (1973) model differs from the Webster and Wind model in two key respects. First, the Sheth model focuses less on the context of the buying task, and more on how group processes account for organizational buying outcomes. For example, group decision making processes can have positive or negative impact on the final decision depending on



the type of conflict resolution tactics used (e.g., problem-solving and persuasion being positive, and bargaining and politicking being negative). Conflict resolution is noted as important to OBB due to the inevitability of diverging interests between team members. Second, the Sheth model focuses more on information search and use in the organizational buying process than do Webster and Wind (1972). The Sheth model describes key differences in what information buying center members may have in the beginning of the process, how they may choose to actively collect information going forward, and how members may choose to use this information during the buying process. Sheth notes an important factor in the joint decision-making process is “assimilation of information, deliberations on it, and the consequent which most joint-decisions entail” (p. 54).

Based on the variables of interest within extant organizational buying literature, it is useful to organize variables into three categories; inputs, processes, and outcomes (see Figure 2.1). In the general model presented here, inputs refer to situational characteristics that determine what product will be purchased and who will be involved in the purchase. Processes refer to the behaviors and actions of buying center members that lead to purchase outcomes. Finally, purchase outcomes refer to the impact of these processes on the buyer and supplier organizations. In the two foundational models of organizational buying, environmental, organizational, task, group, and individual characteristics are examples of inputs, while information search, influence, participation, and conflict management are examples of processes. Outcomes in organizational purchasing include purchase choice or buying team member satisfaction in the outcome. These foundational models have served

as a significant foundation from which organizational buying literature has been built over the last 45 years.

In order to develop my review, I focused on research conducted from these seminal papers onward. In order to identify articles, I used EBSCOhost Business Source Complete to search *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of Business Research*, *International Journal of Marketing Research*, *Industrial Marketing Management*, *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, *Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing*, *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing* for the terms “organizational buying,” “business buying,” “organizational purchasing,” and “organizational buying.” Next articles were eliminated on the basis of whether or not they focused directly on the organizational buying process. For example, a majority of articles focused on buyer-seller relationships and not the organizational buying process itself. Based on this process, 219 articles were reviewed for this paper. In the next sections, an input, process, and outcome framework is used to organize and review extant organizational buying literature that builds on these foundational models.

## 2.2 Defining the Organizational Buying Process

Organizational buying was originally defined as a “decision-making process carried out by individuals, in interaction with other people, in the context of a formal organization” (Webster and Wind 1972, p. 13). More recently organizational buying has been defined as

“four ongoing processes: implementation, evaluation, reassessment, and confirmation” (Grewal et al. 2015, p. 195). In the latter definition, implementation includes activities that are “undertaken to acquire and receive goods and services directly, within the parameters of the current buying decision” (Grewal et al. 2015, p. 195). As such, the newer definition includes traditional organizational buying in stage one, that is, the buyer engages in discussion with many suppliers about a potential purchase. While stages two through four focus on the exchange process between a *specific* supplier, or suppliers, and the buying organization. This distinction is important because in the latter stages an official relationship is established between buyer and supplier that is difficult to terminate (Heide and Weiss 1995).

Based on this distinction I think it is important to define organizational buying from a more traditional perspective. I define organizational buying as the active search for a product or service supplier through a formal or informal process (Sheth 1973). This process begins when a buyer identifies a need and concludes when a supplier, or suppliers, is selected to provide a solution to meet that need. Once the selection occurs, the buying process transitions to the organizational exchange process, which is the “activity between two or more organizations that has consequences, actual or anticipated, for the realization of their respective goals or objectives” (Achrol, Reve, and Stern 1983, p. 58). Active search is a key component of the current definition of organizational buying. Firms often gather information on a passive basis with no intention of actually using that information to take action (Doney and Armstrong 1996). Buyers often acquire information on suppliers or solutions through various sources such as trade shows (Gopalakrishna and Lilien 1995) or

internet searches (Steward, Narus, and Roehm 2017). However, buyers may not initiate the buying process as a result of this new information, but instead hold onto it until much later when the buying process is initiated for some other reason.

In contrast, active search leads members within the buying organization to actively seek out new product or service solutions. Since Robinson, Faris, and Wind (1967), organizational buying models have ranged from four stages (Grewal et al. 2015; Sheth 1973) to eight stages (Johnston and Lewin 1996; Robinson, Faris, and Wind 1967). Based on my review I propose a four-stage model of organizational buying: Need Recognition, Specification Development, Proposal Request, and Proposal Evaluation. These stages were identified by reviewing existing literature proposing various stages in the buying process (e.g., Verville and Halington 2003; Vyas and Woodside 1984; Webster and Wind 1972) then combining stages based on buyers' expected outcomes at each stage in the process.

The Need Recognition stage occurs when the buying organization identifies a discrepancy between the organization's current performance and potential performance (Webster and Wind 1972). In this stage representatives of the buying organization determine whether it is feasible to achieve better performance through buying products or services from an outside supplier. Buyers may examine the resources needed to develop a solution within the organization, choose to contract with someone outside the organization, or some combination (Heide 2003). Interestingly, there is evidence that buyers may initiate the process for other reasons than a perceived discrepancy in current state. For example, buyers may go through the buying process in order to gain market information and increase

organizational learning (Dawes, Lee, and Midgely 2007). In public purchasing it is common for the federal government to go through the buying process on a regular schedule such as every three or five years (General Services Administration 2005). Regardless of the reason, the outcome of the Need Recognition stage is to determine if there may be value in going through the buying process. If so, the purchase moves into the Specification Development phase.

The outcome of the Specification Development stage is for buyers to determine the requirements necessary for a solution to the identified need. It is at this point that the buying center begins to develop. The buying center is composed of all individuals that are involved in the buying process (Johnston and Bonoma 1981a). When developing specifications, buying firms often include more individuals than at other points in the buying process (Lilien and Wong 1984; Tanner 1998). This occurs as the buying organization often solicits feedback from individuals within the buying organization who will be affected by the purchase (Leigh and Rethans 1984; Verville and Halington 2003; Vyas and Woodside 1984). In addition to sources from within the buying organization, specification development occurs by gathering information from many external sources ranging from the internet (Kennedy and Deeter-Schmelz 2001) to direct communication with salespeople (Lilien and Wong 1984). Once buyers have reached confidence in the developed specifications, the buying process moves to the Proposal Request stage.

The purpose of the Proposal Request stage is to solicit suppliers for a response to the buyer's specifications. Requesting supplier proposals consists of acquiring written or

verbal communications from suppliers about how closely they can provide a solution that addresses buyer specifications (Verville and Halington 2003; Vyas and Woodside 1984). The request from buyers can come in the form of a formal request for proposal (RFP) or request for quote (RFQ), or a request for a presentation from suppliers (Johnson, Friend, and Malshe 2016; Verville and Halington 2003). The Proposal Request stage often starts with a list of pre-identified suppliers that may have been involved in previous purchases or through information gathering in the Specification Development phase (Verville and Halington 2003; Vyas and Woodside 1984). At this point buyers may pre-screen suppliers and determine, based on current knowledge, whether new suppliers need to be added or deleted from this list (Verville and Halington 2003; Vyas and Woodside 1984). Buyers and suppliers may also communicate during this phase to clarify any questions that arise from ambiguity of supplier specifications. Once clarification is finished, suppliers submit their responses for buyer evaluation, at which point the Proposal Evaluation stage begins.

The purpose of the Proposal Evaluation stage is to determine whether or not to select a supplier, and if so, which supplier(s) to select. If a supplier or multiple suppliers are chosen, buyers also engage in the negotiation process to reach a final contract offering (Verville and Halington 2003; Vyas and Woodside 1984). The evaluation process is an intensive process where buyers compare supplier proposals against buyer specifications and to other supplier responses (Crow, Olshavsky, and Summers 1980; Verville and Halington 2003; Vyas and Woodside 1984). The evaluation occurs through both individual and group decision making processes, where buyers form individual perceptions and reach a final

selection through group discussion (Crow, Olshavsky, and Summers 1980; Wilson, Lilien, and Wilson 1991; Vyas and Woodside 1984).

It is important to note that recent research has identified that the buying process is much more dynamic than is often depicted in existing marketing literature (Bunn 1993). There is some recent evidence that buyers move forward and backwards through the buying stages (Makkonen, Olkkonen, and Halinen 2012; Verville and Halington 2003). For example, information gathered when evaluating supplier proposals may cause buyers to rethink specifications (Verville and Halington 2003). In addition, many of the organizational buying variables that have been examined in previous research are significantly affected by the stage of the buying process. As such, it is important to examine organizational buying variables in relation to the stage of the buying process. In the next section, I integrate these buying stages with variables organized around an input, process, and outcome framework (Ilgen et al. 2005, see figure 2.1) in order to develop research propositions and highlight areas for future research.

### 2.3 Inputs to the Organizational Buying Process

I define inputs to the organizational buying process as the contextual factors that affect the buying process. Inputs can be separated into several high level categories including the environmental, organizational, individual, and buying task that affect how the organization defines its needs (Anderson, Chu, and Weitz 1987; Johnston and Bonoma 1981a). In turn, the inputs affect the processes through which a decision is made (Crow, Olshavsky and

Summer 1980; Hunter, Bunn, and Perrault 2006; Wilson, Lilien, and Wilson 1991). The processes are actions that buyers take in order to reach the decision, which include information gathering, interpersonal influence, conflict resolution, and decision making. The outcomes of the buying process have been predominately focused on supplier selection, but also include, supplier preferences, length of decision making process, and choice satisfaction. In the next sections, I discuss existing inputs, processes, and outputs in the existing organizational buying behavior literature.

### 2.3.1 Environmental Inputs

Environment is defined as the geographic, ecological, technological, economic, political, legal, and cultural factors that affect the information, opportunities, and constraints of the buying task (Webster and Wind 1972). Empirical research has shown several links between environmental inputs and buying center composition to support Webster and Wind's (1972) original propositions. Environmental inputs commonly examined in existing OBB literature include number of suppliers (Choffray and Lilien 1978; Homburg and Kuester 2001; Kauffman and Leszczyc 2005; Vyas and Woodside 1984), environmental uncertainty (Alejandro et al. 2010; McCabe 1987; Spekman and Stern 1979), relational norms (Heide and John 1992; Palmatier, Dant, and Grewal 2007), and technology (Stremersch et al. 2003; Weiss and Heide 1993).

Research has shown that the organizational buying process is materially affected by the number of suppliers in the marketplace and the resulting number of suppliers who vie for



the buyers business (Hunter, Bunn, and Perrault 2006; Vyas and Woodside 1984). It appears that buyers often prefer to evaluate three to four suppliers during the decision making process (Vyas and Woodside 1984). As the number of suppliers involved in the purchasing process grows larger, the result is greater time and effort required by buyers to evaluate suppliers (Vyas and Woodside 1984). As a result, they often use a process of conjunctive elimination whereby suppliers with the lowest scores on the most important attributes are eliminated one by one until a manageable set of suppliers (e.g., four) is left for more detailed evaluation (Crow, Olshavsky, and Summers 1980). However, recent research has shown that buyers may benefit in some purchasing situations by increasing the number of suppliers in the consideration set as high as ten (Kauffman and Leszczyc 2005). In situations where price is a significant portion of the consideration, having a higher number of suppliers increases price competition among suppliers.

Environmental uncertainty is generally measured as the amount of information available in the marketplace to make a good decision (McCabe 1987; Spekman and Stern 1979). Environmental uncertainty has been linked to an increase in number of individuals involved in the purchase decision, as well as decentralization of decision making authority (McCabe 1987; Spekman and Stern 1979; Wilson, Lilien, and Wilson 1991). As environmental uncertainty increases, organizations often include a greater number of individuals in the purchase decision (McCabe 1987; Lewin and Donthu 2005), the amount of information that buyers access during buying process (Alejandro et al. 2010), and the number of suppliers considered for purchase (Kauffman and Leszczyc 2005; Kull, Oke, and Dooley 2014).

Another environmental input that has been shown to affect the buying process is relational norms (Heide and John 1992). “Relational norms are expectations about behavior that are at least partially shared by a group of decision makers” (Heide and John 1992, p. 34). Research has shown that relational norms are related to the way in which buyers approach relationships with salespeople (Palmatier et al. 2008), and determine the buying center members’ mindset when beginning the buying process (Leigh and Rethans 1984). Leigh and Rethans (1984) provide evidence that organizational buyers have knowledge and expectations about how the purchasing process will play out based on their previous experiences during the buying process. These expectations affect how the buyer prepares for the buying task through information search and approach to decision making (Qualls and Puto 1989).

Technology has long played a significant impact on organizational buying as it often determines the information available to buyers (Grewal et al. 2015; Lilien and Wong 1984), facilitates communication between buyers and suppliers (Agnihotri, Rapp, and Trainor 2009; Presutti 2003), and can affect the urgency of which solutions are evaluated (Stremersch et al. 2003; Weiss and Heide 1993). As a result of technological advancement, buyer access to information is increasing while costs for acquiring the information is decreasing (Grewal et al. 2015). However, technological complexity of customer solutions is increasing (Stremersch et al. 2003), leading to more complex interactions between buyers and suppliers during the buying process (Grewal et al. 2015; Schmitz and Ganesan 2014).

Overall, environmental variables play an important role on OBB as they can directly affect the suppliers in the marketplace and the solutions available to buyers. They also appear to impact the way in which buyers and suppliers interact during the buying process. Interestingly, little research has examined how organizational buying and selling changes across industries. While research has looked at the buying process in different contexts such as industrial manufacturers purchasing raw materials (Vyas and Woodside 1984), lithographic printing (Silk and Kalwani 1982), and software (Verville and Halington 2003), there are still several significant areas that remain unexamined. For example, Lilien (2016) highlights that public sector purchases account for billions of dollars annually, yet there is virtually no research regarding public sector purchases. Public organizations have a high level of oversight and regulations compared to their private sector counterparts (e.g., General Services Administration 2005), future research could benefit by examining the differences between public and private purchases. As such, I offer the following research question:

RQ1: How does organizational buying behavior differ in public sector organizations from private organizations?

### 2.3.2 Organizational Inputs

The next inputs that materially affect the organizational buying process are those related to the organization. Organizational inputs include organization size, the structure of the organization, organizational goals, and technological constraints (Webster and Wind

1972). Early organizational buying research focused more heavily on organizational characteristics than environmental characteristics (Johnston and Lewin 1996).

Originally, organizational buying literature hypothesized that formalization and centralization in the buying process was related to characteristics of the purchase (e.g., novelty and complexity). Formalization refers to the degree to which the buying task is governed by rules, procedures, and buyer roles are defined within the group (Dawes, Lee, and Dowling 1998; McCabe 1987), while centralization refers to how concentrated and at what organizational level final decision making within the buying process occurs (Barclay 1991). In contrast to previous organizational buying theories, recent research has provided evidence that formalization is more closely related to organizational structure than purchase characteristics (Lewin and Donthu 2005). Research has shown that as organizations increase in size, so does the level of formalization and centralization of the buying center (Barclay 1991; Grønhaug 1976), the number of individuals involved in the buying center (Johnston and Bonoma 1981a), and buying center conflict (Barclay 1991). However, it appears that as purchase uncertainty, novelty, and complexity increase, the relationship between organization formalization and buying center formalization weakens (Lewin and Donthu 2005).

In addition to formalization and centralization, employee reward structures have been shown to materially affect the organizational buying process. Reward structures have the ability to incentivize employees to participate more or less in the organizational buying process (Anderson and Chambers 1985). For example, employees that receive direct

benefits from the outcome of the buying process (e.g., buying a new computer system makes their job easier) are more likely to participate than those who receive no benefits (Anderson and Chambers 1985; Dawes, Lee, and Dowling 1998). Rewards may also create conflict in the buying process when rewards are different between buying center members (Barclay 1991). This occurs as members with different incentives often disagree on the importance of different specifications in the buying process (Barclay 1991). For example, procurement may wish to keep costs down while engineering wants to purchase the highest quality product. In addition to conflict in the buying center, research has also examined the impact of rewards on supplier selection. Buyers are often risk averse when it comes to buyer selection, however, reward structures can induce buyers to consider riskier suppliers when incentivized to do so (Anderson and Wynstra 2010).

Overall, organizational factors highly influence the processes through which organizational purchasing is carried out. The degree of formalization and centralization of decision making are important influences on group level outcomes, while reward structures influence both the level of individual participation and individual conflict within the group. Presently, there is still lack of clarity as to how these variables operate within the different stages of the buying process. For example, it appears that riskier decisions involve more individuals in the buying process, but the final decision in the process is made by fewer individuals (McCabe 1987). This may provide an explanation for previous findings that show managers are more involved in making final decisions than product users (Lilien and Wong 1984; Silk and Kalwani 1982).

Present research on the impacts of organizational inputs on OBB is limited in two respects. First, it is limited in that generally only a single member of the buying center is often used to investigate the entire buying process. Not only that, many of the informants for existing research come from the National Association of Purchasing Managers (e.g., Barclay 1991; Leigh and Rethans 1984; Michaels, Day, and Joachimsthaler 1987). Future research would benefit by including a greater number of individuals involved in the buying process in order to create a more complete picture of individual motivations (Dawes, Lee, and Dowling 1998).

Second, centralization and formalization in the buying process is mainly examined at the process, rather than stage level. Research has shown that specification development, an earlier buying stage, is a less formalized process (Johnston and Bonoma 1981b) while the later supplier evaluation stage is often a more formalized process (Vyas and Woodside 1984; Wilson, Lilien, and Wilson 1991). Since centralization and formalization affect several significant organizational buying variables, such as buyer information search (Dawes, Lee, and Dowling 1998), an important contribution of future OBB research could be to examine how variation of formalization and centralization affect the buying process differently. For example, does having a set of procedures for developing buyer specifications lead to better or worse proposals submitted by suppliers?. As a result, I offer the following research questions:

RQ<sub>2</sub>: a) How do changes in centralization and formalization across different stages in the buying process affect buyer behavior? b) How do changes in centralization and formalization across different stages in the buying process affect suppliers?

### 2.3.3 Buying Task Inputs

The next significant input variables in the general model of organizational buying are those related to the buying task. These include buyclass (new purchase, modified rebuy, straight rebuy), product type, purchase importance, purchase complexity, and purchase risk. Early organizational buying research appears to have focused more heavily on these characteristics than either organizational or environmental characteristics (Johnston and Lewin 1996). Buyclass was one of the original variables proposed to affect buying center composition and decision making (Robinson, Faris, and Wind 1967), which resulted in being one of the first variables to be repeatedly tested (e.g., Anderson, Chu, and Weitz 1987; Grønhaug 1976; Jackson, Keith, and Burdick 1984; Johnston and Bonoma 1981a). New purchases are those that the buying organization has no previous history of making (Robinson, Faris, and Wind 1967). As a result, new purchases are often more complex and riskier than purchases the organization has made previously. A straight rebuy is a purchase of a product or service that the organization has made previously (Robinson, Faris, and Wind 1967). For straight rebuys the buying organization does not make any changes from what it has purchased previously, and generally has a high level of knowledge and experience about the purchase. Straight rebuys involve relatively low effort for the organization as there is little information needed to make the purchase decision. Often, straight rebuys are routinized to the point where organizational buyers fill out a purchase order on a repeated basis with no adjustment or consideration of alternative suppliers (Anderson, Chu, and Weitz 1987). Modified rebuys fall between new purchase and straight rebuys, and constitute the most typical organizational purchases (Anderson, Chu, and

Weitz 1987). Modified rebuys are purchases that an organization has made before, but requires some level of adjustment from the previous purchase (Jackson, Keith, and Burdick 1984). For example, an organization may have previously purchased computers, but chooses to upgrade the functionality in the subsequent purchase. While the organization has familiarity with computers, it is likely buyers will need to acquire some new information as a result of changes in technology since the previous purchase.

While some research has supported the proposed relationship between buyclass and buying center composition, and between buyclass and decision making processes (e.g., Anderson, Chu, and Weitz 1987), other research has not supported these relationships (e.g., Johnston and Bonoma 1981a). The explanation for mixed findings appears to be the combination of importance, complexity, and risk of the purchase, rather than the buyclass itself. Robinson, Faris, and Wind (1967) noted that generally new purchases are more novel, more complex, and more important than straight rebuys. Research has generally supported the proposition that buyclass groups these variables together fairly well (Anderson, Chu, and Weitz 1987; Bunn and Clopton 1993; McQuisten 1989), but not in all cases (Bunn 1993). In new purchases, for example, the novelty and complexity is likely to be higher than that of a straight rebuy. Research has shown that novelty, complexity, and importance can affect the buying process independently of one another (McQuisten 1989). In fact, Bunn (1993) noted two potential additional buyclasses from the original model: judgmental new task, and complex modified rebuy. Judgmental new tasks are purchases where complexity and importance are low, resulting in decreased perception of risk than for more traditional new purchases. Complex modified rebuys include modified rebuys where complexity and



importance are higher than expected than the average modified rebuy, resulting in greater perceptions of risk (Bunn 1993).

There are several independent relationships associated with higher levels of complexity. For example, increasing complexity results in a need for more information to make the purchase (Anderson, Chu, and Weitz 1987). As information needs increase, buyers consult a greater number of sources in order to make sure they make the best decision (Bunn and Clopton 1993). With newer purchases typically high in purchase complexity, the result is a greater number of individuals involved in the buying process (McQuisten 1989). Interestingly, the number of individuals involved at different stages in the buying process appears to change. For example, more individuals are often included at earlier stages in the buying process than later ones (Anderson, Chu, and Weitz 1987; Lilien and Wong 1984; Verville and Halington 2003). What's more, the individuals involved at each stage in the buying process also changes (Lilien and Wong 1984; Verville and Halington 2003).

While a large number of individuals has been shown to benefit the organization through increased knowledge, it has also be shown to serve a second purpose. Organizational buyers often try to mitigate the risk associated with complex and important purchases by increasing the level of lateral and vertical participation in the buying center (Johnston and Bonoma 1981a). Vertical participation refers to the number of hierarchical levels involved in the purchase decision within the buying organization (Johnston and Bonoma 1981a). Lateral involvement refers to the number of departments involved in the purchase decision within the organization (Johnston and Bonoma 1981a). Varying levels of lateral and vertical involvement occur because buyers are motivated by potential professional gains

and losses as a result of the buying task (Anderson and Chambers 1985). When purchasing risk is high, buying center members may include a greater number of individuals in the buying process in order to spread the blame of a bad decision (Wilson, Lilien, and Wilson 1991).

In summary, characteristics related to the purchase such as complexity and importance have a strong influence on buying center composition and the organizational buying process. Overall, increases in complexity and importance are significantly related to who is involved in the buying process as well as their level of participation during the different stages in the buying process. While some research on buying tasks has been conducted, several areas remain unexplored. One major area presently unexamined is how the buying task variables affect member participation at different points in the buying process. While research has provided evidence that buying center members' participation and influence changes throughout the buying process (e.g., McQuisten 1989; Verville and Halington 2003), it is less clear as to why participation changes and what happens as a result.

Based on this review I propose a new variable to organizational buying literature termed "buying center fluidity." I define buying center fluidity as the degree to which buying center decision-makers change throughout the buying process. Further research regarding buying center fluidity should provide significant insight into group processes such as information search, participation, and influence. In addition, examining the fluid nature of buying centers may also provide significant insight for sales practices. Since salespeople are valuable sources of information (Bunn and Clopton 1993; Moriarty and Spekman

1984), salespeople might provide value for the buying firm by serving as a resource to educate new members as they are brought into the buying process. As a result of this discussion, I offer the following research question:

RQ<sub>3</sub>: How does buying center fluidity affect the organizational buying process?

#### 2.3.4 Group and Individual Inputs

Individual inputs to the buying process include group and individual characteristics of the buying center. It is important to note that the buying center group variables are the aggregation of individual variables within the buying center (Webster and Wind 1972). Individual variables include education, motivation to participate, risk preferences, and position within the organization (Johnston and Lewin 1996; Sheth 1973; Webster and Wind 1972). Research in this area highlights how the background of individuals contributes to the way the buying center ultimately functions. For example, research has shown that individuals with a higher rank (e.g., manager vs. CEO) and greater centrality within the organization are perceived to have a higher level of influence within the group (Ronchetto, Hutt, and Reingen 1989). Centrality refers to the degree to which buyers are connected to other employees within the buying organization (Ronchetto, Hutt, and Reingen 1989). Hierarchies within the buying center often determine the types of influence strategies that are used, as well as the level of influence participants are likely to have at different stages in the decision making process (Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman 1995). For example, users of a product, such as engineers in a manufacturing plant, are often likely to initiate the

buying task due to their specific knowledge of product specifications. However, managers often make the final decision due to their authority over finances (Silk and Kalwani 1982).

Buying center member role perceptions within the buying center have also been shown to have a significant relationship with buying center behavior. For example, role ambiguity and role stress within organizational buying teams can lead to lower performance outcomes (Michaels, Day, and Joachimsthaler 1987). Often in these situations employees are unsure of what they need to contribute to the group, and let those they perceive to be more involved make the decision. The causes of role ambiguity and role stress stem from uncertainty within the buying task as buying centers that lack formalization have higher levels of role ambiguity and stress (Barclay 1991).

Individual risk preferences have also been shown to affect decision making. For example, individuals with low risk preference often choose suppliers with which they have higher familiarity, regardless of if the supplier offers the best choice (Brown et al. 2012; Puto, Patton, and King 1985). Risk preferences are significant to buying center decision making as Webster and Wind (1972) note that it is one of two causes of individual behavior, the second being individual goals. Buying center members are driven to participate in the buying process by the goals they perceive they will achieve. However, goal achievement is often compared against the perceived risk to achieve it. For example, a purchasing manager who is compensated on cost savings and product performance, will likely weigh the two against each other in determining to choose a supplier based on quality or price. Overall, individual inputs affect group decision making through the impact on information,

participation, influence, and conflict, making these variables some of the most impactful on organizational buying behavior.

While much research has examined the individual goals and risk preferences on buying center interactions and individual buyer behaviors, the assumption is that buyers are at least somewhat interested in being part of the decision making process. However, some buying center research has highlighted that buying center members are often uninterested in being involved in the decision making process (Tanner 1998). Buyers cite the reason for involvement occurs as they are volunteered by superiors to be involved and see involvement as more of a nuisance than anything. What's more, most models often ignore the role of buying center members that are located outside the buying firm. For example, research has shown that consultants often play a role in the buying process (Brossard 1998; Dawes, Lee, and Midgley 2007; Johnston and Bonoma 1981a). Despite the prominence of these buying center members, little is known as to how these individuals are chosen to be included in the buying process. As a result, I propose the following research questions:

RQ4: a) How are employees chosen to be part of the buying process and how does this selection affect OBB? b) How do organizations decide whether to include buying center members outside the organization and how does it affect OBB?

## 2.4 Organizational Buying Processes

OBB literature typically looks at several key processes that determine organizational buying outcomes: Information search and utilization (Grønhaug 1976; Anderson Chu and

Weitz 1987; Bunn 1993; Heide and Weiss 1993; Spekman and Stern 1979), individual participation (Anderson and Chambers 1985; Dawes, Lee, and Dowling 1998; McQuisten 1989), interpersonal influence (Kohli 1989; Ronchetto, Hutt, and Reingen 1989; Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman 1995), and conflict management (Barclay 1991; Ryan and Holbrook 1982). Together, these processes significantly affect decision-making within the buying team (Johnston and Lewin 1996). In this section, I summarize each of these processes and their relationships with decision-making outcomes.

#### 2.4.1 Information Search

Gathering, analyzing, and utilizing information have been the common focus of existing OBB literature since their proposed importance in original OBB models (Johnston and Lewin 1996). These models hypothesized that information search was significantly related to many of the input factors discussed in the previous section. Information is a key construct within OBB models as information used by both individuals and the group determine buying specifications (Moriarty and Spekman 1984), which individuals to involve in the buying center (Krapfel 1985), which suppliers to consider (Choffray and Lilien 1978; Vyas and Woodside 1984), and final selection (Choffray and Lilien 1978; Hada, Grewal, and Lilien 2013; Webster and Wind 1972).

As mentioned in the previous section, information search is often dependent on organization and buying task inputs (Bunn and Clopton 1993). Early research focused on buyclass as a significant antecedent of information search behavior, providing evidence

that information search increases as purchases move from straight rebuy to new purchases (Grønhaug 1976; Anderson Chu and Weitz 1987; Bunn 1993; Heide and Weiss 1993; Spekman and Stern 1979). Information search is also significantly related to product complexity, purchase importance, perceived vendor switching costs, decision time, and perceived product compatibility within the buying team (Heide and Weiss 1995; Hunter, Bunn, and Perrault 2006; Moriarty and Spekman 1984; Weiss and Heide 1993). Early in the buying process, buyers search for information to help them develop specifications and identify suppliers that may be able to provide solutions to the identified specifications (Vyas and Woodside 1984; Verville and Halington 2003). As the buying process progresses, it appears that information search turns from exploratory in nature, to confirmatory in nature. For example, in early stages buyers look for what suppliers are in the market (Vyas and Woodside 1984) while in later stages they collect information to confirm which supplier to select (Hada, Grewal, and Lilien 2014).

Along with search for information, the type of information source itself has been shown to be an important variable in determining OBB (Aarikka-Stenroos and Makkonen 2014; Hada, Grewal, and Lilien 2014). Early research in OBB broke information sources into two main categories: personal and impersonal sources (Moriarty and Spekman 1984). Personal sources of information are those that come from individuals such as a product expert or salesperson, while impersonal sources of information are materials such as brochures or product websites (Moriarty and Spekman 1984). Type of information source is important to the organizational buying process as previous research has shown impersonal sources are sought earlier in the buying process, with their importance to decision making varying

by product type (Moriarty and Spekman 1984; Jackson, Keith, and Burdick 1987). In addition, buying center members are more likely to use personal sources of information throughout the entire buying process, and even more so when the purchase is perceived as important (Anderson, Chu and Weitz 1987; Bunn and Clopton 1993; Grønhaug 1976; Moriarty and Spekman 1984). In addition to situation, information source is often related to experience. Those individuals with higher levels of experience tend to rely more on information they already have, and are less likely to search for additional information (Weiss and Heide 1993). However, if more experienced employees do search for information, they may have the tendency to perceptually distort information so that it confirms their previous point of view (Sheth 1973).

The results of present research on information search and use in organizational buying provide a somewhat significant picture; as the level of purchase importance increases, the level of information sought by the organization to make the purchase also increases. The impact of acquired information can have a positive and negative effect on OBB. On the positive side, information often gives firms a more competent and confident choice in their selection (Krapfel 1985). The major downside to information search is an increase in the amount of time needed to make a decision (Dholakia et al. 1993; Weiss and Heide 1993). Interestingly, information search is noted as occurring early in the organizational buying process and decreases as the buying process progresses (Vyas and Woodside 1984). Early research noted that information search can be expensive and time consuming (Moriarty and Spekman 1984), and as such, buyers may have been incentivized to collect all necessary information in the beginning of the process.



Recent developments in technology have lowered these barriers to information search in terms of both cost and ease (Grewal et al. 2015). As a result, traditional models of information search in the organizational buying process are needed (Lilien 2016). Access to information is now much less expensive and much easier to acquire thanks to such tools as the internet (Alejandro et al. 2010; Deeter-Schmelz and Kennedy 2004; Grewal et al. 2015). The results of this increased access to information on the organizational buying process are likely to be numerous. For example, how and when do buying center members acquire information? It is possible that due to technology, buying center members acquire information at a greater frequency throughout the different stages of the buying process. Verville and Halington (2003) provide evidence that information search at early stages affect future information search and decision making processes, which highlight significant need for better understanding of this process.

This dynamic process of information search behavior has implications for both interactions among buying center members, as well as interactions between buying centers and suppliers. For example, buyers may adapt their buyer specifications more frequently throughout the buying process than previously. This may in turn impact the speed and extent to which suppliers must adapt their sales approaches (Spiro and Weitz 1990). Future research on organizational buying should examine in greater detail how and why information search changes at different stages in the buying process in order to better understand its impact on OBB. Based on this, I offer the following research questions:

RQs: a) How do recent technological innovations affect information search at each stage in the buying process? b) How does information search affect subsequent stages in the buying process?

#### 2.4.2 Individual Participation

Early research regarding participation in the organizational buying process highlighted purchase importance and risk as two key antecedents to lateral and vertical involvement (Anderson, Chu, and Weitz 1987; Johnston and Bonoma 1981a; Lewin and Donthu 2005; McQuisten 1989). That is, greater purchase importance and risk lead to a greater number of departments represented in the buying center (lateral involvement), as well as a greater number of managers from different organizational levels (vertical involvement). Once individuals are chosen to be a part of the buying center, there are several factors that determine when and how much they participate in the buying process.

While several studies have examined participation within specific stages of the organizational buying process (e.g., Silk and Kalwani 1982; Lilien and Wong 1984; Verville and Halington 2003; Vyas and Woodside 1984), the majority of research has examined individual participation as total participation across all stages (e.g., Anderson, Chu, and Weitz 1987; Dawes, Lee, and Dowling 1998; Johnston and Bonoma 1981a; Krapfel 1985; Michaels, Day, and Joachimsthaler 1987). Overall, results have shown that higher levels of participation in the buying process occur when individuals are stakeholders in the decision outcome (Dawes, Lee, and Dowling 1998; Kohli 1989) or when they are incentivized to participate through rewards (Anderson and Chambers 1985; Morris, Paul,

and Rhatz 1987; Tanner 1996). Examples of stakeholders include individuals who will be using the end product, or those whose budget is affected by the purchase decision. Individuals may also be incentivized to participate due to their reward structure within the organization (Anderson and Chambers 1985). An example of this would be a purchasing manager who is compensated through cutting costs. In this case the purchasing manager may become more involved in advocating a low cost provider whereas a purchasing manager with no incentive based on the outcome may act more passively, such as taking a project manager role within the buying center.

The result of higher levels of involvement by individuals in the buying center are increased influence (Dawes, Lee, and Dowling 1998; McQuisten 1989), control of information (Dawes, Lee, and Dowling 1998), and increased advocacy behavior towards specific suppliers (Krapfel 1985). Interestingly, research has not examined the behaviors of individuals in the buying center who have low incentive towards the outcome. Often, OBB research assumes individuals are interested in achieving greater influence in the buying process and thus are likely to participate more. However, the opposite is also likely to occur for those individuals with not much to gain (low reward) and much to lose (high risk). A significant gap in existing OBB literature can be filled through greater understanding of how low participating individuals affect the buying process.

A significant gap in existing OBB research is that many studies often use “key informants” as the information source. Key informants are often highly knowledgeable individuals who have deep understanding of the purchase being studied (Dholakia et al. 1993; McQuisten

1989; Weiss and Heide 1993). Since reward and motivation significantly affect buyer behavior, existing findings may miss key insights about buyers who are engaged in the buying process but much less motivated (e.g., Tanner 1998). Future research may better understand the organizational buying process by gaining perspective from individuals who participate less in the buying process. For example, it is assumed that buyers in the present environment are more knowledgeable because they have greater access to information than ever before (Grewal et al. 2015). However, with the growing technological and organizational complexity (Schmitz and Ganesan 2014), there may be significant gaps in knowledge between buyers with low and high motivation. The question, then, is how does buyer motivation and engagement affect the organizational buying process in the present environment? As a result, I offer the following research question:

RQ<sub>6</sub>: How do differences in individual participation between buyers affect group decision-making?

#### 2.4.3 Interpersonal Influence

With the integrative nature of buying decisions among group members, interpersonal influence has been of particular interest to organizational buying behavior scholars. Early research regarding organizational buying behavior examined which individuals were influential during decision making within the organizational buying process (e.g., Silk and Kalwani 1982). Influence within buying centers is often determined by those who are most involved in the buying process (McQuisten 1989) and those with higher levels of power (Kohli 1989; Silk and Kalwani 1982). However, not all types of power are created equal in

their influence during the organizational buying process. Research has consistently shown that buying center members with high levels of expert and reinforcement power carry the most influence, while referent power, information control, and legitimate power appear to have less of an effect (Kohli 1989; Ronchetto, Hutt, and Reingen 1989; Silk and Kalwani 1982).

Expert power refers to those individuals that are perceived by others within the group to have a high level of knowledge prevalent to the buying task (Kohli 1989). Reinforcement power on the other hand refers to an individual's ability to mediate positive or negative rewards (Kohli 1989). Research has shown that expert power appears to have the strongest influence on members within the buying center regardless of time pressure or group cohesiveness (Kohli 1989; Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman 1995). However, expert power is weakened when individuals use strong influence attempts (Kohli 1989). Conversely, reinforcement power appears to be more effective when strong influence attempts are used by the individual, and also when groups are less cohesive (Kohli 1989). For example, research has shown that engineers (experts) tend to be more influential when purchasing components for manufacturing, while purchasing managers are more influential when purchasing services (Jackson, Keith, and Burdick 1984). While far from extensive, some research has examined how influence changes depending on stage of the purchasing process (e.g., Silk and Kalwani 1982). Users of the product tend to be more influential when developing purchasing specifications and purchasing managers more influential when choosing the final supplier (Silk and Kalwani 1982; Vyas and Woodside 1984). These differences in influence are suggested to be a result of the general stake each member

has at that point in the process. For example, the cost of the purchase comes out of the managers' budget so they are more likely to be involved in final supplier selection than specification development.

Finally, research regarding influence has examined the types of influence attempts used by members within the buying center. Kohli (1989) noted that strong versus weak influence attempts changes the amount of influence an individual has within the buying center, depending on if their type of power expert or reinforcement. When experts used strong influence attempts (e.g., repeated attempts) level of influence decreased. Conversely, when individuals with reinforcement power used strong influence attempts, perceived influence increased. Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman (1995) followed with an examination of coercive versus non-coercive influence attempts and the impact on influence within buying centers. Results of their research showed again that the type of power was related to influence, depending on the strategy employed. For example, those with expert power were more influential when they used low coercive strategies such as making a recommendation, while those with reinforcement power were more influential when using harder coercive strategies such as making threats.

One area overlooked regarding influence in the organizational buying process is how influence strategies change depending on the stage of the buying process. With research showing differing effects of influence by power type, future research should examine how different stages in the buying process affect influence strategies. For example, non-coercive strategies might be used differently depending on whether the individual is trying to

influence others to develop specifications, or select a final vendor. The type of influence strategy used can provide interesting implications for how buying center members interact with each other following the attempt. For example, use of coercive strategies early in the buying process may lead to negative responses later in the process. As a result, I propose the following research question:

RQ7: How does buying center influence change at different stages in the buying process?

#### 2.4.4 Conflict Management

“[C]onflict becomes a common consequence of the joint decision-making process; the buying motives and expectations about brands and suppliers are considerably different for the engineer, the user, and the purchasing agent, partly due to different educational backgrounds and partly due to company policy” (Sheth 1973, p. 55). As highlighted by Sheth, group decision making is likely to lead to conflict, and how the group handles this conflict is a strong predictor of the outcomes the buying center is likely to achieve (Barclay 1991; Lambert, Boughton, and Banville 1986).

Within organizational buying, conflict typically arises from differing individual preferences such as product specification importance or reward structure of buying center members (Barclay 1991; Sheth 1973). In order to lessen negative outcomes of conflict within the buying center, there are several options the group may choose. First, open communication between buying center members has been shown to directly reduce conflict

(Barclay 1991). In their research, Vyas and Woodside (1984) noted that any disagreements between members of the buying center were settled through mutual discussion. “We have to deal with many departments within the company. If differences arise (in choice criteria or in dealing with the vendors), I voice my opinion. We discuss it, see each other's point of view, and try to decide what is best for the company. We try not to get personalities involved. I have been in purchasing for over 25 years and this approach has always worked” (purchasing manager, Vyas and Woodside 1984, p. 34). Informants within their study noted that it was important for purchasing members to keep an open mind and be willing to compromise as needs constantly change throughout the buying process.

Some strategies that have been shown to reduce conflict include increasing formalization (Barclay 1991) and greater information sharing among buying center members (Lambert, Boughton, and Banville 1986). Greater formalization governing the decision making can lower the amount of ambiguity experienced by group members and thus decrease the potential for conflict (Barclay 1991). Barclay noted that formalization may act as a way for leaders in the buying group to control other buying center members’ behavior. Information sharing brings greater clarity to the reasons behind buyer perceptions and thus allows for buying center members to discuss disagreements and resolve them (Lambert, Boughton, and Banville 1986).

Interestingly, little research has examined the outcome of conflict resolution on purchase satisfaction of individual buyers and buying centers. It is possible that using different conflict resolution strategies may lead to a supplier selection, but it is unclear if buyers who



compromise may fully support the selection. As a result, I propose the following research question:

RQ<sub>8</sub>: How do buyer conflict resolution strategies affect buyer purchase satisfaction?

## 2.5 Organizational Buying Outcomes

The typical outcome of the organizational buying process is final selection of a supplier or multiple suppliers that the buying center perceives can best meet the organization's needs. Other outcomes of the organizational buying process include individual and group level satisfaction with the final decision, however research in this area is somewhat limited. Information search, influence, and conflict management are critical to reaching a final solution across each of the stages in the decision making process (Bunn 1993; Choffray and Lilien 1978). However, few studies have examined differences within each process stage, likely due to the difficulty of acquiring this data (Anderson, Chu, and Weitz 1987; Vyas and Woodside 1984). This difficulty occurs due to the fact that often buying center members include somewhere between three and eight members, and that the process occurs over an extended period of time, usually many months.

Much of the existing literature regarding decision making in organizational buying has focused on modeling the overall process (e.g., Choffray and Lilien 1978; Crow, Olshavsky, and Summers 1980; Wilson, Lilien, and Wilson 1991). In the initial stage of the process, individuals within the buying center develop a set of suppliers that may be able to provide

a solution for the organization (Choffray and Lilien 1978; Vyas and Woodside 1984). Once individuals determine this set of suppliers, individuals narrow the set of alternatives down based on environmental constraints such as technology, and organizational requirements such as budget (Choffray and Lilien 1978; Crow, Olshavsky, and Summers 1980). Once a set of feasible alternatives is developed, individuals form their own preferences based on personal evaluation criteria. Group preferences are then developed based on each buying center members' individual preferences and the interaction between buying center members (Choffray and Lilien 1978).

Seven models of group choice have been proposed and tested in organizational buying literature (Choffray and Lilien 1980; Wilson, Lilien, and Wilson 1991). The seven models are weighted probability model (combination of individual preferences weighted by influence and importance of each member), equiprobability model (all decision participants have equal weight and decide what proportion of business to give each supplier), voting model (choice is based on a vote by members), preference perturbation model (choice is made of vendor that makes all members least upset), majority rule model (supplier is chosen by accumulating a specific number of votes), unanimity model (supplier is chosen when all buying center members agree on one supplier), and autocracy model (choice of supplier is ultimately decided by a single member of the buying center).

Wilson, Lilien, and Wilson (1991) tested a contingency model of group choice by examining how well each decision making model predicted choice in different buying situations (e.g., new task vs. rebuy). Results of their analysis showed that no single decision

making model best predicted group choice, and processes were dependent on the specific buying task. However, results did support the notion that individual decision making (e.g., autocracy model) was used more often when purchase risk was low, such as in a straight rebuy situation. Interestingly, in their study of organizational buying behavior, Vyas and Woodside (1984) noted that none of the buying centers examined used any formal type of decision making process. This highlights the conclusion that while present research highlights what types of decision processes *can* be used to make a decision, *why* these processes are chosen remains less clear (Wilson, Lilien, and Wilson 1991). Further research is needed to examine the decision making process in its entirety to better understand why buying centers use the decision making processes that they do (Wilson, Lilien, and Wilson 1991). As a result, I propose the following research question:

RQ<sub>9</sub>: How and why do buyers select different decision making processes?

## 2.6 Discussion

Based on my review it appears there are several key gaps in existing organizational buying literature that could provide significant contributions to marketing theory and practice. First, organizational buying literature has generally focused on organizational buying in the private sector, largely ignoring the public sector altogether (Lilien 2016). This gap is surprising considering both the financial magnitude of purchasing in the public sector and the significant differences in rules governing purchasing practices in the public sector. For example, government organizations must follow strict purchasing policies that are derived

from state and federal laws (e.g., General Services Administration 2005), that may go beyond policies in private practice. Another significant difference is the fact that employees and managers are often the key stakeholders for organizational purchases in the private sector, while citizens are also key stakeholders in public sector purchases. As noted previously, formalization and stakeholding are key components of the organizational buying process, so it should be expected that public versus private purchases will vary in both their processes and outcomes. As such, a greater focus on research in the area of organizational buying in the public sector should provide valuable insight for marketing theory and practice.

In addition, future organizational buying research would benefit by greater examination of the dynamic nature of the organizational buying process. Much of the existing literature looks at variables such as formalization, participation, and information search in aggregate rather than by stage of the buying process. Bunn (1993) noted that the organizational buying process is much more dynamic than is often examined in existing organizational buying research. Verville and Halington (2003) used an inductive process to examine the buying process for ERP Process Software and provided greater evidence supporting this proposition. For example, they highlighted that information search was an iterative process where information gathered in one stage appeared to significantly affect actions in subsequent stages. In addition, other research has shown that the buying process is often embedded in many different processes within an organization (Makkonen, Olkkonen, and Halinen 2012). However, in the review of existing literature there still appears to be limited research examining how buyer and supplier behaviors in one stage affect subsequent

stages. Specifically, how suppliers engage buyers at different points in the buying process is especially limited. While several studies provided evidence that suppliers were valuable sources of information (Alejandro et al. 2010; Bunn and Clopton 1993; Moriarty and Spekman 1984; Verville and Halington 2003), little research has examined how being a valued source of information helps (or hurts) suppliers during this process. Existing buying and selling literature would benefit from greater focus on this important topic.

## 2.7 Tables and Figures

Table 2-1: Review of Organizational Buying Literature

Article	Variables	DVs	Context	Conclusions
Webster and Wind 1972	environment, organization, group, purchase (task), and individual characteristics	OBB Process	N/A	Environmental, organizational, purchase, group, and individual characteristics should affect decision making across the organizational buying process.
Sheth 1973	organization, product, individual characteristics; joint decision process	OBB Process	N/A	Supplier or brand choice is determined through an integrative process of company, product, individual, and joint decision making factors.
Grønhaug 1976	buyclass, product/service firm, organization size	information search	survey of 160 organizational buyers of an industrial computer manufacturer	An organization's size leads to greater likelihood of purchasing department, search for information was lower for modified-rebuy than new task purchase, product independent firms were made riskier decisions
Spekman and Stern 1979	environmental uncertainty	buying center structure	survey of 320 members of buying groups across 20 organizations in 11 industries	Results showed that as the level of uncertainty in the environment increases, there is an increase in the number of members of the buying center in the final decision (joint decision making)

Crow, Olshavsky, and Summers 1980	number of vendors, time pressure	request for quotation, purchase decision	simulation of decision making with 14 purchasing managers in the industrial manufacturing industry	Authors showed that purchasing managers used conjunctive decision model to reach a selection of suppliers for an RFQ (narrow the decision set), and used a lexicographic choice model to choose a final supplier.
Johnston and Bonoma 1981a	organization size, complexity, formalization, centralization; purchase situation importance, complexity, novelty, and product class	extensivity, lateral involvement, vertical involvement, connectedness, purchasing manager centrality	interviews with 241 buying center members over 60 different purchases	Organization formalization and purchase importance had the highest impact on buying center network. Importance lead to greater extensivity, and lateral and vertical involvement. Org. formalization lead to extensivity, lateral involvement, and connectedness.
Ryan and Holbrook 1982	responsibility, time	conflict	survey of 135 fleet administrators across multiple industries	Some sub-decisions within the buying process result in more conflict than others
Silk and Kalwani 1982	job position, decision stage	influence, involvement	interviews and surveys of 50 buying center members, in 25 purchases, across 12 organizations in the commercial printing industry	Managers were more influential in final decisions, users were more influential in initiating changes. Involvement was somewhat accurately measured, influence was not.
Jackson, Keith, and Burdick 1984	product, buyclass, decision type, and member	influence	survey using a role play scenario of 254 buying center members from 25 different companies across multiple industries	Purchasing managers were more influential in choosing suppliers, while engineers were more influential when choosing parts. Results also showed that buyclass

				didn't affect influence of participants.
Leigh and Rethans 1984	purchase situation	script norms	109 members of a local purchasing managers association	Organizational buyers have pre-developed scripts of how a buying process is likely to be carried out. In addition these scripts are likely to change depending on characteristics of the purchase situation
Lilien and Wong 1984	job position, decision stage	involvement	survey of 2151 individuals involved in organizational purchasing within industrial manufacturing organizations	Users (as classified by Webster and Wind 1972) are involved in earlier stages of the purchase process involving developing specifications, while deciders (such as managers) were involved more in later stages of the process such as selecting a supplier.
Moriarty and Spekman 1984	purchase, organization, and individual characteristics; buying phase	sources of information	survey of 663 buying center members across five industries (business services, transportation, retail/wholesale, finance, and manufacturing)	Buying center members relied more on personal sources of information (colleagues, salespeople) than impersonal sources of information (advertisements, news publications). Salespeople were especially important when buying center participants were heavily concerned with making the right decision.
Anderson and Chambers 1985	individual motivation, role perceptions and	individual decision	N/A	Buying center member motivation to engage in buyer behavior is a function of intrinsic and extrinsic



	abilities; group social influence, rewards, coalition, and hierarchical decision making	making, group consensus		motivation, group motivation is also dependent on extrinsic motivation (e.g., rewards).
Krapfel 1985	information diffusion, source credibility, valence	problem self-confidence, advocacy, choice	scenario based survey of 42 buying centers consisting of 2 to 3 members each, within a single industrial manufacturer	Individuals can become advocates through being provided with more task relevant information, and advocacy is related to final group decisions
Puto, Patton, and King 1985	perceived risk, supplier loyalty, supplier price/quality, risk avoidance behavior	supplier choice	survey of 271 organizational buyers across multiple industries	When vendor loyalty is high, PMs award contracts to their preferred vendor. When loyalty is low, PMs choose supplier with the highest perceived value.
Anderson, Chu, and Weitz 1987	problem newness, information needs, consideration of alternatives, buyclass		survey of 169 sales managers from 16 organizations in the electronic component manufacturing industry	New task purchases appear to be related to larger buying centers, slower decision making, greater uncertainty of needs, concerned with finding a good solution (rather than price), higher consideration of alternatives (e.g., "outsuppliers"), more influenced by technical personnel, and less influenced by purchasing agents.
McCabe 1987	environmental uncertainty	decision making centralization	survey of 115 individuals from 68 buying centers in the airline and corrugated box industries	Higher levels of uncertainty lead to decentralization of decision making.

Michaels, Day, and Joachimsthaler 1987	leader behavior, formalization	role stress, role ambiguity, work performance	survey of 1036 members from the national association of purchasing managers	Positive leader behavior is related to lower role stress and lower role ambiguity.
Kohli 1989	individual power; buying center size, familiarity, viscosity; purchase risk, time pressure, influence attempt strength	manifest influence	survey of 214 individuals from the national association of purchasing managers	Expert power had the largest impact in influence. Reinforcement power had the second biggest influence. Expert power has greater impact when influence attempts are weak while Reinforcement power has the strongest impact when influence attempts are strong.
McQuisten 1989	product novelty, complexity, and importance	individual participation, influence	survey of 182 members within 82 different buying teams that were customers of one industrial equipment manufacturer	Results showed that both novelty and importance were related to participation while only importance was related to influence. Research also showed that greater levels of participation lead to influence.
Ronchetto, Hutt, and Reingen 1989	centrality, formal rank, departmental membership	latent influence, manifest influence	interviews with 171 members of a network within an electrical systems producer	Both centrality of the buying center member among the group network as well as formal rank determine the level of influence of the buying center member.
Barclay 1991	organization size, complexity, formalization, centralization; purchase situation importance,	conflict	Survey of 328 matched pairs (purchasing manager/engineer) from Ontario Association of Purchasing Managers	Centralization and differing reward structures among buying center members are related to increased conflict. Formalization can reduce the level of conflict among buying center members.

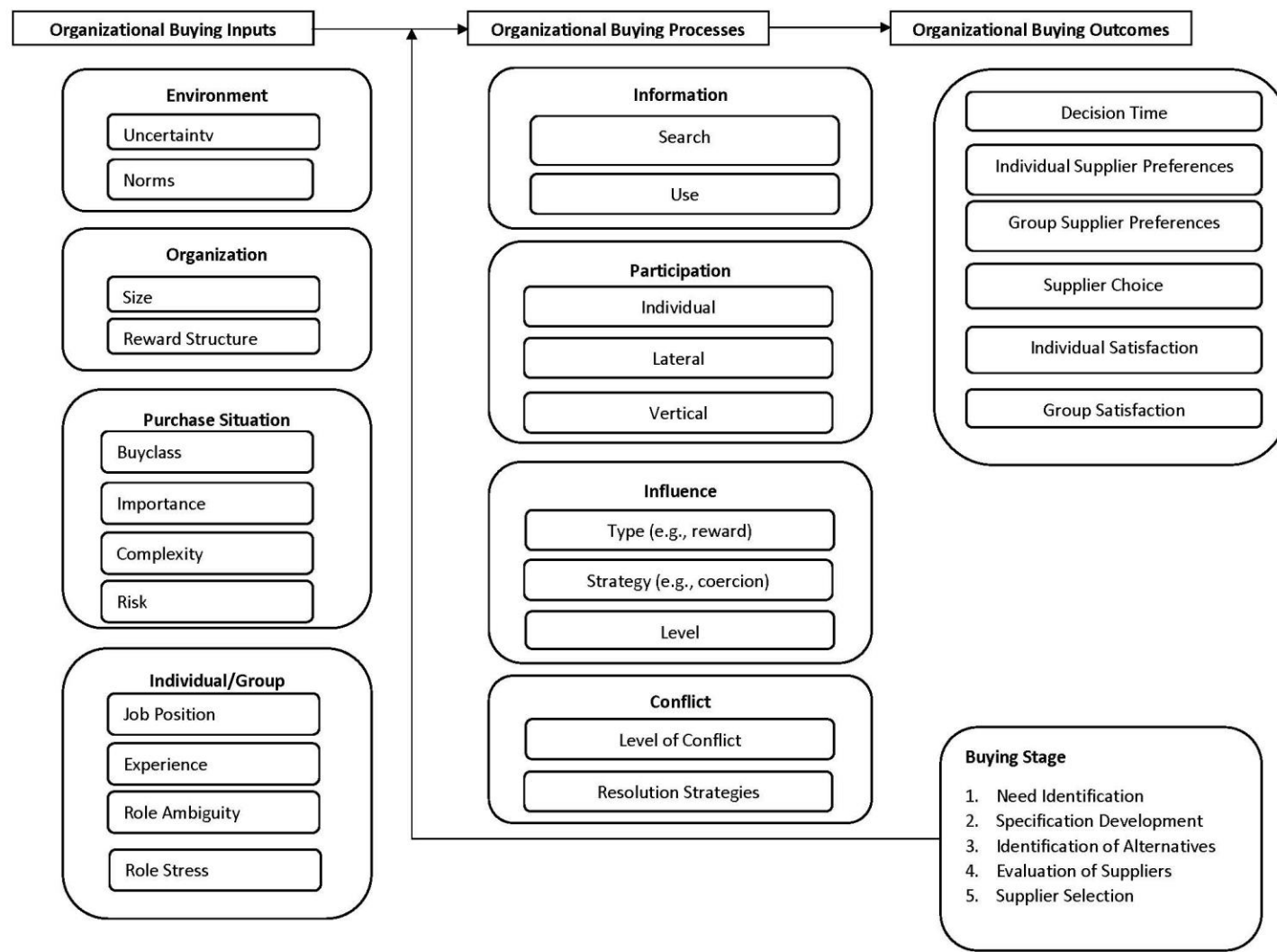
	complexity, novelty, and product class			
Wilson, Lilien, and Wilson 1991	buyclass, financial risk, technical uncertainty	decision choice	Survey of purchasing teams from 32 organizations belonging to the National Association of Purchasing Managers, split into groups of 3 (24 groups, 72 participants) and 2 (8 groups, 16 participants)	Perceived risk and buyclass determine the decision making process likely to be used by buying centers. For example low risk re-buys are likely to use autocratic while high risk new purchases appear likely to use a unanimity model.
Bunn 1993	buyclass	information search, analysis techniques, procedural control, proactive focus, purchase importance, task uncertainty, buyer power, extensiveness of choice	Interviews with 11 purchasing managers and 3 surveys consisting of 826 members of the National Association of Purchasing Managers, from 52 industries	There are 5 types of analysis used by buying centers; casual purchase, routine low priority, simple modified rebuy, judgmental new task, complex modified rebuy. Routine low priority, modified rebuy, and judgmental new task follow the original Robinson, Faris and Wind (1967) buying models of straight rebuy, modified rebuy, and new purchase.
Bunn and Clopton 1993	purchase importance, decision time, level of influence, negotiation intensity	information use	Survey of 636 members of National Association of Purchasing Managers	Higher levels of purchase importance and purchase complexity lead to a wider number of information sources used. Lower levels of purchase importance and complexity lead

				buying center members to use personal information sources such as internal experts or salespeople.
Dholakia et al. 1993	organization size, buyclass, buying center size	information sources used, number of alternatives considered, decision making time	Survey of 1,199 organizational buyers of telecommunications equipment	Results showed that as decision making units grow in size, the greater the number of information sources used and the larger the number of suppliers considered. All of these factors in turn lead to longer decision making time.
Weiss and Heide 1993	compatibility, vendor switching costs, experience, technological change	search effort, duration of purchase process	Survey of 219 key contacts for organizations who had purchased computer workstations across multiple industries	Overall, information search was related to compatibility concerns, vendor switching costs, and low levels of experience with the purchase. In turn higher effort increased the duration of purchase time.
Kline and Wagner 1994	experience	information sources used	Survey of 127 buyers of Fashion Group International	Buyers with higher levels of experience relied more on their own knowledge, while salesperson information and customer needs were the other significant sources of information for making buying decisions
Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman 1995	power, group viscosity, familiarity with target	influence Strategy	Survey of 187 members of the National Association of Purchasing Managers	Individuals with higher referent power used less coercive strategies (e.g. threats) while those high in information power used information exchange, and those with expert power used recommendations

Brown 1995	reputation, salesperson attitude, experience, product cognition, purchase importance, risk, insupplier/outsupplier status	attitude towards salesperson, attitude towards product	Survey of 379 members of the National Association of Purchasing Managers	Purchasing managers were more likely to use extrinsic cues for decision making with outsuppliers versus insuppliers.
Heide and Weiss 1995	technological change, product heterogeneity, compatibility, switching cost, purchase importance	consideration set, supplier choice	Survey of 219 members of the National Association of Purchasing Managers	When technological change is rapid the result is a smaller consideration set and a higher probability of choosing an existing supplier. Prior experience did not affect decision set. Lack of experience and centralization lead to higher search behavior.
Dawes, Lee, and Dowling 1998	stakeholding, participation, innovative orientation, decentralization, formalization, information control	manifest influence	Interviews with 98 buying center members within 41 organizations (at least 2 members from each buying center)	Results show that individuals with higher stakeholding in the purchase participate more in the buying process, those more involved in the process tend to have higher control over information. Information control is significantly related to influence but appears to be low (.10)
Hunter, Bunn, and Perrault 2006	procedural control, information search, proactive focus	formal analysis	Survey of 636 members of Institute for Supply Chain Management	Purchase importance leads to search for information, while information search, buyer power, and proactive focus lead to use of formal analysis of potential suppliers.

Palmatier et al. 2008	industry norms, reward, salesperson competence, product dependence	relationship orientation	Survey of 269 buyer- salesperson dyads from 538 companies, across multiple industries	Industry norms and reward structure were significantly related to the buyer's relationship orientation towards the salesperson.
Hada, Grewal, and Lilien 2014	referral valence, referrer credibility, insupplier experience, outsupplier reputation	referrer credibility, selection likelihood	Two lab experiments conducted with MBA students.	Supplier referrals matter more for outsuppliers than insuppliers. Balanced referrals lead to greater credibility but all-positive referrals lead to higher supplier evaluations.

**Figure 2-1: Input-Process-Outcome Model of Organizational Buying Behavior**



## 3 Selling to Barricaded Buyers

### 3.1 Introduction

“From the issue date of the solicitation [request for proposal] and until a supplier is selected for contract award and the selection is made public, suppliers are *not allowed to communicate for any reason* with any state staff regarding the solicitation...” (Georgia Procurement Code 2011, p. 83, *emphasis added*).

“In 2008, nearly 80% of prescribers (Doctors) were considered accessible. Since then, that number has declined steadily, and just 47% of physicians are now accessible to sales reps” (ZS Associates AccessMonitor 2015, p. 1).

As noted above, a common practice in business-to-government (B2G) and business-to-business (B2B) transactions is for buyers to restrict suppliers’ access to them during the buying process. I term these buyers “barricaded buyers.” The incidence of barricaded buyers is pervasive, especially in the public sector. For instance, a detailed review of federal and state purchasing practices suggests that buyers restrict access to suppliers (barricade themselves) in some form or fashion at some point in the buying process (see Table 3.1). Why are buyers instituting policies that restrict suppliers’ access to them? The reasons appear to be the desire to increase their control and objective decision making during the buying process. For example, the state of California states that the restrictions are in place to create “fair and competitive [buying] processes” (2013 California Institute for Local Government, p. 1).

Despite its prominence in practice, research related to barricaded buyers remains virtually non-existent. This may be due to the reliance on classic models of buyer behavior that implicitly assume that suppliers have unrestricted access to buyers across all stages of the



sales cycle (e.g., Lilien and Wong 1984; Sheth 1973; Webster and Wind 1972). The assumption may also be that research on “gatekeepers” addresses this issue (e.g., Dawes, Lee, and Dowling 1998; Robinson, Faris, and Wind 1967; Webster and Wind 1972). Gatekeepers are typically *individuals* who control the flow of information into and out of the buying center (e.g., Kohli 1989). As with classic models of buyer behavior, it is generally assumed that suppliers have the ability to contact gatekeepers (or other decision influencers) at any time during the buying process. In contrast, the barricades in the present research reflect the *policies* written into the purchasing process that limit supplier access. Once the barricade is erected, supplier contact with anyone involved in the purchase is significantly restricted and, in fact, can result in supplier disqualification if the barricade is violated. As such, the question remains, “How can suppliers sell to barricaded buyers?” The present research begins to address this question and, in doing so, makes the following contributions to the literature.

I draw on extensive field work to develop a conceptual framework that highlights actions a focal supplier can take to gain a competitive advantage when selling to barricaded buyers (Figure 3.1). The framework identifies key variables across two phases of the buying process that impact the barricaded buying process. For instance, my results suggest that a focal supplier can increase its selection likelihood by disclosing novel solutions in its RFP (request for proposal) response rather than in its pre-RFP sales pitch. Thus, rather than implying that information sharing is broadly beneficial across all phases of the sales cycle, this framework suggests that a focal supplier can gain an advantage by strategically disclosing different types of information at different phases of the buying process.

Correspondingly, my research also addresses recent calls in the organizational buying and selling literature to take a more holistic view of the buying process (Franke and Park 2006; Hall, Ahearne, and Sujan 2015). More specifically, in addition to examining how a supplier's actions affect buyers (e.g., Franke and Park 2006; Mullins et al. 2014), I demonstrate how a supplier's actions can affect its *competitors*. For instance, I introduce the notion of "relationship peacocking" (i.e., the degree to which a supplier signals the strength of its relationship with the buyer to competitors) and demonstrate how it can demotivate a supplier's competitors from responding to an RFP. Thus, I also complement research that examines competition at the firm level (e.g., Kumar, Jones, Venkatesan, and Leone 2011) by offering insights into how to impact competition at the transaction level.

In addition, despite recent commentary questioning the significance of RFPs (Solis 2016), my research corroborates recent research that suggests a reemergence of the importance of RFPs (Johnson, Friend, and Malshe 2016). RFPs are especially important in barricaded buyer settings because buyers must rely more on the written supplier RFP response. Although prior research documents the importance of RFPs in the buying process (Johnson, Friend, and Malshe 2016; Leigh and Rethans 1984), examines how buyers use RFPs as an evaluation tool to narrow down the number of potential suppliers (Crow, Olshavsky, and Summers 1980; Vyas and Woodside 1984), and demonstrates how RFPs may be used as a learning tool to develop more fine-grained and updated RFPs (Nutt 1993), the literature remains limited in a couple of ways. First, research on how suppliers can shape buyer RFPs *ex ante* remains largely unaddressed. The present research identifies variables (e.g., unique

language) that a supplier can use to help buyers craft RFPs in the supplier's favor. In addition, the implicit view in prior research is that RFPs are evaluated in an objective fashion *ex post* (e.g., lowest price, fastest delivery, and performance ratings) (Vyas and Woodside 1984). This research, however, suggests that subjective factors (e.g., tone, explicitness, and tailoring) may be as or more important than objective factors when making decisions. Somewhat ironically, therefore, buyers who barricade themselves in an effort to be more objective, may unknowingly increase their reliance on subjective factors when making decisions.

Due to the limited research on barricaded buyers during the organizational buying process, I use a qualitative research approach to build my conceptual framework (e.g., Gebhardt, Carpenter, and Sherry 2006; Tuli, Kohli, and Bharadwaj 2007). My findings and contributions are based on a longitudinal participant observation of eight organizational purchases within a large public organization. The data collection encompasses multiple sources, including 46 depth interviews, 22 observations of buyer meetings, and analysis of 29 supplier RFP responses over a period of approximately eighteen months.

### 3.2 Method

The present research develops a conceptual model of selling to barricaded buyers through a qualitative, grounded-theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1998) using case study methodology (Eisenhardt 1989; Narayandas and Rangan 2004). As in the present case, grounded-theory is best utilized when there is little existing knowledge

of the topic or when there are significant knowledge gaps (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Below, I provide additional details about the research setting, case selection, and data collection and analysis.

### 3.2.1 Research Setting

Our data collection took place within a large state organization that employs over 14,000 people, and operates departments responsible for education, healthcare, law enforcement, construction, agriculture, and transportation, among others. The organization manages purchasing contracts totaling approximately \$2 billion worth of products and services across all departments. I partnered with this organization because it uses a barricaded buying process and provided the opportunity to examine a variety of cases across diverse purchasing contexts (see Table 3.2). The organization follows state purchasing guidelines and processes that are consistent with those highlighted in Table 3.1. Therefore, my findings are likely to be applicable to buying and selling processes across most state and federal purchases involving RFPs.<sup>1</sup>

### 3.2.2 Case Selection

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<sup>1</sup> An important distinction in the present research is the difference between the Request for Proposal (RFP) process and the Request for Quote (RFQ), also known as the Invitation for Bid (IFB), process. In the public sector, RFPs are generally used “[to] obtain complex services in which professional expertise is needed and may vary,” whereas RFQ/IFBs are generally used “[to] obtain simple, common, or routine services that may require personal or mechanical skills. Little discretion is used in performing the work” (California Procurement Code, p. 52). Generally, the RFP process is used for modified rebuy and new purchases, which is why we focus solely on RFPs.

I used a theoretical, rather than random, sampling procedure to provide a rich, diverse set of cases for the present research (Eisenhardt 1989). Specifically, I relied on two factors consistently linked to organizational buying behaviors and outcomes: buyclass (e.g., new purchase or rebuy) and type of purchase (i.e., products or services), in order to select cases. Buyclass and type of purchase are important considerations because they both affect the decision-making processes used in supplier selection (e.g., Anderson, Chu, and Weitz 1987; Vyas and Woodside 1984).

### 3.2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Prior to collecting data, I conducted several meetings with the Chief Purchasing Officer (CPO) and two procurement managers within the buying organization. The purpose of these meetings was to familiarize ourselves with the organization's purchasing process. Procurement managers primarily serve an administrative function by acting as project managers in charge of ensuring buying center members follow procurement protocols laid out by the organization and the state.<sup>2</sup> In this organization, procurement managers are purposely excluded from direct decision-making. This process is consistent with those found at the federal level and in other states.

Buying centers typically included individuals across the organization who had expertise in the product or service being purchased and/or those who would be affected by it. For

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<sup>2</sup> State organizations are each governed by a set of purchasing regulations determined by the State Procurement Division. Organizational rules may also be applied to the required state regulations.

instance, in the general office software case, the buying center included the director of the department that would be using the software the most, an employee within the director's department who would be working with the software program on a daily basis, an IT manager who would assist in implementation, and two potential users from other departments. Buying center members were tasked with making the ultimate decision. Typically, each buying center member voted on a supplier with the winning supplier receiving the most votes.

The first author was granted full access to the buying process for each of the eight cases. This was achieved by adding the first author to the buying center as a full, non-voting member of each buying center. Access included the ability to collect direct and indirect communications for the duration of each case. Indirect communications included email correspondence among buying center members and between purchasing and suppliers, the written RFP sent to suppliers, and the written responses received from suppliers. Direct communication included individual interviews with buying center members at multiple points in the process, observation of buying center meetings, and observation of meetings with potential suppliers.

Individual interviews followed the semi-structured interview process. The following questions were used as a guide: Please describe how you gathered information to develop the RFP; What specifications are/were important to consider for this purchase?; What did suppliers provide that was (un)helpful in evaluating the RFPs?; What are your overall perceptions of suppliers based on their RFP responses? In total, I conducted 46 interviews

across 31 buying center members of the eight cases resulting in approximately 18 hours of interview data (see Table 2). Most interviews were recorded using an IC Digital Voice Recorder with audio files transcribed verbatim. For those interviewees who declined to be recorded (five total), I took extensive notes and audio recorded field notes within 15 minutes of interview completion.

Consistent with prior research (e.g., Challagalla, Murtha, and Jaworski 2014), I analyzed the data via open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss and Corbin 1998). To begin the open coding process, I read through the transcripts independently to familiarize myself with the data. Once a level of familiarity was achieved, I identified high level concepts within the data. Next, I conducted axial coding that involves relating higher level categories to each other and to subcategories along more specific properties and dimensions. Finally, I conducted selective coding, which involves developing a theoretical framework through the identification of key variables within the data. Open, axial, and selective coding were performed through an iterative process whereby emerging themes were coded individually, followed by ongoing analysis throughout data collection to tighten the theoretical framework. This coding process has been used frequently in previous marketing research to provide important insights into novel phenomena (e.g., Homburg, Wilczek, and Hahn 2014; Ulaga and Reinartz 2011). To facilitate the coding process, I used QSR International's NVivo® 11 software. This process yielded a conceptual model that highlights important variables and mechanisms in the barricaded buying process (see Figure 3.1). The result of this process was development of ten research propositions that

focus on how suppliers can increase their selection likelihood when selling to barricaded buyers (see Table 3.3 for list of propositions).

#### 3.2.4 Purchasing Process in the Present Setting

The traditional view of the buying process involves a number of steps, which typically includes the following activities: identification of a need, development of specifications that form a solution, identification of suppliers that may provide a solution, evaluation of suppliers, and final selection of a supplier or suppliers (Choffray and Lilien 1980; Crow, Olshavsky, and Summers 1980; Robinson, Faris, and Wind 1967; Sheth 1973; Vyas and Woodside 1984; Webster and Wind 1972). Traditional buying process models also implicitly assume that suppliers have relatively unrestricted access to buyers across these steps (Moriarty and Spekman 1984). The barricaded buying context, however, is quite different.

Buyers may barricade themselves (i.e., restrict suppliers' access) at any of point in the buying process. As is the case in many public organizations, the organization in the present research barricaded its buyers after the RFP was announced and made publicly available. Thus, until the announcement of the RFP, suppliers had relatively broad access to buying center members. As such, I focus on two key phases in the present research: the pre-RFP (or pre-barricade) phase and the post-RFP (or post-barricade) phase.<sup>3</sup> In the pre-RFP phase,

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<sup>3</sup> In the present context, the post-RFP phase was particularly restricted. For instance, in the post-RFP phase, a buyer with a question for a supplier needed to write and submit the question(s) to a central procurement officer, who then forwarded the question to the supplier. The supplier, in turn, had to submit its response in writing to the procurement officer, who then forwarded the response to the buying team member.



buying center members sought to identify potential suppliers and began developing specifications that addressed their need(s) in the form of an RFP. In the post-RFP phase, buyers shifted their attention to the evaluation of suppliers and making a final selection.

### 3.3 Conceptual Framework

In the following sections, I integrate insights from my fieldwork to develop a conceptual framework (see Figure 3.1). I take the perspective of a focal supplier vying for a buyer's business against other suppliers. This framework proposes two underlying mechanisms through which suppliers can impact their selection likelihood: reducing competitive intensity in the pre-RFP phase and enhancing RFP response quality in the post-RFP phase.

Competitive intensity, as conceptualized here, refers to the degree of rivalry among suppliers bidding for a particular purchasing contract. Although competitive intensity is generally examined at the firm level (e.g., Grewal and Tansuhaj 2001; Kumar et al. 2011), my research suggests that it has significant implications at the transaction level as well. In particular, a focal supplier can increase its likelihood of selection by reducing the number and/or motivation of competing suppliers pursuing the contract (i.e., reducing competitive intensity).

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Respondents in the present research suggested that this (laborious) process often precluded them from asking questions.

RFP response quality refers to the buyer's evaluation of the overall superiority of the RFP response from a supplier (e.g., Zeithaml 1988). In the post-RFP phase, suppliers are less able to influence their competitors; therefore, they need to distinguish themselves by focusing their efforts on developing a quality RFP response. These overarching insights lay the foundation for a more in-depth discussion, which follows next.

### 3.4 Results

I divide the discussion of results into two phases: 1) the pre-RFP phase and 2) the post-RFP phase. Within each phase, I identify novel variables under the control of a focal supplier that ultimately impact selection likelihood. I begin with the pre-RFP phase.

#### 3.4.1 Pre-RFP Phase

As previously mentioned, suppliers have relatively broad access to buyers in the pre-RFP phase of the buying process. This is due to the fact there is no official purchase to be made; thus, there are few rules restricting buyer-supplier interactions. In this phase, buying center members are typically engaged in information search behavior in order to gather enough information to develop specifications for the RFP. My research shows that this information search behavior by buyers provides suppliers with unique opportunities to enhance their competitive position –via *RFP shaping* and *competitor perception shaping* – thereby resulting in greater selection likelihood.

### 3.4.2 RFP shaping

RFP shaping is the degree to which a supplier influences the content contained in the buyer's formal RFP. Influencing the content of the RFP is important because it can preclude competitors from responding effectively to the RFP. The present research identifies two key ways that suppliers can shape the RFP –by instilling their *unique language* and by focusing on their *unique capabilities*.

### 3.4.3 Unique Language

Unique language refers to terminology for products and services that is distinctive to a specific supplier. The present research suggests that a supplier can reduce competitive intensity if buyers include its unique language in their formal RFPs. Suppliers can increase their likelihood that buyers will include their unique language in their RFPs in a couple of ways. Buying center members often came from various parts of the participating organization and had very little purchasing experience. Thus, they frequently asked vendors to give product demonstrations (e.g., software demonstrations) and/or to provide them with sample RFPs they had responded to in other instances. For example, the buying committee chair in the general office software case, who included a supplier's unique language in his buying center's RFP, described the process he used to develop the RFP:

I had never done an RFP before so I started piecing it together from multiple sources.... The supplier demo, the sample RFP from the [demo] supplier...

By educating buyers via product demonstrations and other materials, a supplier familiarizes buyers with its unique language, which increases the likelihood the buyer will incorporate this language into its formal RFP. When a focal supplier's unique language is included in an RFP, it becomes difficult for competitors to respond effectively because they are less clear about what buyers are asking for. As such, competing suppliers may be unable to identify appropriate solutions which can preclude them from submitting an RFP response at all.

In addition, a focal supplier who is able to instill its unique language into an RFP gains an advantage because buyers understand the supplier's solution (in the post-RFP phase). The buying committee chair in the general office software case elaborated:

When we looked at [the] proposal, some of the language, we kind of knew what they were talking about when they would say dash 4 or whatever, because we had seen what those [screens] look like. I mean we kind of knew what we were looking at when we got an RFP, because you know RFPs, there are very few screen shots. Sometimes it could be hard to relate the language that you see in an RFP to an actual visual product that you're purchasing, so that helps for the [suppliers] that we had [met with] prior to the RFP.

As a result of instilling its unique language into the buyer's formal RFP, a focal supplier can decrease the competitive intensity of the transaction by decreasing its competitors' motivation and capability of submitting a quality RFP response (Chen, Tsu, and Tsai 2007; Smith, Ferrier, Ndofor 2001). These assertions align with existing theories of communication and motivation within work settings. For instance, prior research suggests that individuals who work together often develop a shared language (Wiersema and Bantel 1992). This shared language has positive outcomes on work performance because there is

greater understanding of the task (Barrick et al. 1998). In contrast, individuals who have difficulty understanding the task are likely to feel unmotivated to complete the work, and may give up on the work altogether (Thomas and Velthouse 1990). Formally,

P<sub>1</sub>: A focal supplier can increase its selection likelihood by increasing buyer familiarity with its unique language during the pre-RFP phase.

#### 3.4.4 Unique Capabilities

Our research suggests that a focal supplier can benefit by focusing its efforts on communicating the value of its unique capabilities to buyers in the pre-RFP phase. Unique capabilities are firm-specific competencies and/or skills that provide an advantage over the competitors (Makadok 2001; Teece, Pisano, and Shuen 1997). Communicating unique capabilities is beneficial for suppliers because it can induce buyers to include them as requirements in the RFP. As a result, competitors are likely to be less motivated and less capable of developing quality RFP responses (Chen 1996; Chen, Tsu, and Tsai 2007; Smith, Ferrier, Ndofo 2001). For example, in the pest control case, Supplier 1 promoted its round-the-clock service (a capability unique to them). This capability was subsequently included in the formal RFP. Consequently, one competitor [Supplier 2] alerted the purchasing manager they would not be submitting an RFP response due to their perceived inability to offer the solution requested. The committee chair provided additional insights as follows:

I think [our RFP] evolved into so much more than what [Supplier 2] expected. [We added] the 24/7 365 emergency call requirement offered by [Supplier 1], which probably drove [Supplier 2] away. We requested that they [the RFP responders] are available all the time which most suppliers

likely can't or don't want to do. Companies don't want to handle [unique situations], it takes a special person to do that.

Somewhat surprisingly, however, suppliers frequently “shot themselves in the foot” by identifying needs for which they were not uniquely capable of addressing. For instance, in the general office software case, a focal supplier identified the buyer's need for customization (a need the focal supplier could address). As a result, the buying committee chair wrote the following question directly into the RFP that was distributed to all potential suppliers:

Describe the system configurations and customizations. Applications should be flexible, scalable, and configurable for ease of use of the end users.

Unfortunately, in this purchasing project, the result was the selection of a competitor who was able to provide a superior level of customization over the focal supplier who had originally identified the need. The focal supplier in question had identified a need for which it was at a competitive disadvantage. Thus, it is important for suppliers to elicit needs and offer capabilities in the pre-RFP phase that they are uniquely able to address in order preclude competitors from effectively responding.

P<sub>2</sub>: A focal supplier can increase its selection likelihood through greater focus on its unique capabilities during the pre-RFP phase.

While P<sub>2</sub> is somewhat straightforward, it provides the foundation for a broader discussion about *strategic information disclosure*. Strategic information disclosure is the thoughtfulness and timeliness with which a focal supplier provides information to buyers. Although prior research on buyer behavior naturally highlights the importance of identifying customer needs in order to identify solutions (Sheth 1973; Tuli, Kohli, and

Bharadwaj 2007; Ulaga and Reinartz 2011; Webster and Wind 1972), rarely does it specify *when* suppliers need to convey *what* types of information about the solution in order to ensure supplier success in the face of competition. As a result of the present exploration, it is apparent that suppliers can enhance their competitive position by identifying unique information in the pre-RFP phase in order to shape the buyer's RFP in their favor. However, if the information is not unique, suppliers may benefit from *withholding* the information until a later time when competitors are incapable of responding with their own solution (discussed in the post-RFP section).

#### 3.4.5 Competitor Perception Shaping

Competitor perception shaping is the degree to which a focal supplier influences competitors' beliefs about its connection to the buying organization. I identify two behaviors that shape competitor perceptions and, in turn, their motivation to engage in the transaction: relationship peacocking and information peacocking.

#### 3.4.6 Relationship peacocking

Relationship peacocking is the degree to which a supplier signals the strength of its relationship with the buyer to competitors. It is common practice for government purchases to have a pre-RFP meeting or series of meetings with potential suppliers (which may include facilities walk-throughs and/or inspections) in order to clarify complex information that will be included in the RFP. These meetings also allow suppliers to ask any clarifying

questions they may have prior to responding to the RFP. They are attended by most, if not all, competing suppliers, which provides opportunities to shape competitors' perceptions.<sup>4</sup> I reviewed state purchasing policies to identify the prevalence of these pre-RFP conferences. In my review I noted that all state purchasing policies at the state and federal level mentioned the potential for pre-RFP meetings (see Table 3.4).

For instance, during one of these meetings in the waste management case, the incumbent supplier confidently discussed its chances of keeping the account. When I subsequently asked a member of the buying team why the supplier was exhibiting this behavior, he offered:

I think it's just arrogance and entitlement on the part of the CEO of the [incumbent supplier]. He has connections inside the [buying organization] that go beyond his business connections, and he's just kind of resting on some of those laurels since they [competitors] know about it.

Consequently, one of the suppliers who was present during the pre-RFP meeting chose not to submit an RFP response. The purchasing manager reached out to this supplier to inquire why it chose not to respond to the RFP. The supplier explained that it felt it would not be able to submit a competitive RFP response against the incumbent.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In many cases, pre-RFP meetings *require* attendance by suppliers in order to submit an RFP response later in the process.

<sup>5</sup> In this case, the incumbent won the deal despite the negative impression peacocking evoked from the buying team. Note that peacocking behavior is most likely to come from an incumbent; however, this need not always be the case. For example, a supplier might have established a good relationship with a buyer outside of work, or from previous sales encounters for other products at the current buying organization. In some cases, a supplier might have developed a relationship with a buyer when the buyer was at a different organization.



### 3.4.7 Information Peacocking

Information peacocking is the degree to which a supplier signals the strength of its knowledge about the buyer to competitors. In both the waste management and pest control cases, a supplier made explicit comments about how much it knew about the buyer's account. For example, the incumbent supplier in the pest control case took over much of the buyer's two-hour initial facility walkthrough. The supplier even corrected the purchasing manager about information that was incorrect:

Procurement Manager:	As you will note on page 6 of the proposal we are requesting service for seven buildings.
Supplier 1:	It says seven, but the current service is for eight buildings. I think that needs to be corrected.
Procurement Manager:	Oh, you are correct, I don't think that number got updated.

The supplier also made several comments about the level of service the buying organization was receiving throughout the walkthrough. It mentioned that the buying organization received service every 30 days for each building and often required "spot checks" for areas that could be potential future problems. These comments made a strong impression on the buyers who were present during this meeting and were mentioned several months later when the buying center met to evaluate RFP responses:

[Supplier 1] was Johnny on the spot with his walkthrough. You can definitely tell that [they] know our account inside and out.

Presumably, these comments also made a strong impression on competitors because seven of the eight suppliers chose not to even respond to this RFP.

Although I am unaware of peacocking behavior in extant marketing literature, such behavior has a foundation in the interpersonal relationship literature on mate retention (Buss 1988; Buss and Shackelford 1997; Sela et al. 2017). Mate retention tactics are those behaviors individuals exhibit to prevent a partner from getting involved with someone else (Buss 1988). By using a retention tactic, such as relationship peacocking, a supplier signals the strength of its customer relationship to competitors. Similar tactics used to protect interpersonal relationships have been shown to reduce a competitor's motivation to try to "poach" a mate (Buss and Shackelford 1997). My observations in the organizational buying and selling context appear congruent with these findings. Thus, suppliers who use a peacocking strategy may reduce their competitor's motivation to invest time and effort into their RFP response and, in fact, may demotivate competitors from responding at all. As a result, suppliers can decrease competitive intensity and increase their selection likelihood. More formally, I propose:

P<sub>3</sub>: A focal supplier can increase its selection likelihood through greater use of relationship peacocking during the pre-RFP phase.

P<sub>4</sub>: A focal supplier can increase its selection likelihood through greater use of information peacocking during the pre-RFP phase.

#### 3.4.8 Post-RFP Phase

In the post-RFP phase, suppliers have very little access to buying team members (i.e., buying teams barricade themselves in this phase).<sup>6</sup> As a result, competitors are generally

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<sup>6</sup> As mentioned, this phase is highly formalized in the public/government sector because it is governed by the state procurement code. The state procurement code for the participating organization precludes buying team members from having any direct contact with suppliers until after the buying process is complete. Any

unaware of each other's actions and, as such, unable to respond to them. For example, suppliers do not know the content of other suppliers' RFP responses or whether they submitted an RFP response at all. The present research suggests that a focal supplier can take advantage of its competitors' inability to respond by focusing on key variables that are particularly influential to the buyers' perceptions of RFP responses.

#### 3.4.9 RFP Response

Through my interviews and observations of buying center meetings, RFP response quality was a consistent topic of discussion. Recall that RFP response quality refers to the buyer's evaluation of the overall superiority of the RFP response from a supplier (e.g., Zeithaml 1988). The present research suggests two sets of variables that can significantly impact RFP response quality – RFP *content* and *delivery*. RFP content refers to what is included in the RFP response, while RFP delivery refers to the presentation of the content. I identified novel solutions, consummate solutions, and reference congruency as important *content* factors that impact RFP response quality. Somewhat surprisingly, buying team members focused much, if not more, of their attention on the *delivery* of the content in the RFP responses. Correspondingly, the present research suggests RFP response tone, explicitness, and tailoring as important delivery variables associated with RFP response quality. Careful attention to RFP content and delivery can increase the perceived quality of the RFP, thereby increasing a supplier's selection likelihood.

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unauthorized contact leads to the dismissal of buyers from the decision-making process. This language is common across many states' procurement codes (see Table 3.1).

### 3.4.10 Content: Novel Solutions

Novel solutions are supplier offerings that address customer needs in an imaginative way. I find that buyer perceptions of RFP response quality are significantly enhanced when novel solutions are included in a supplier's RFP response. To be most effective, the present research suggests that suppliers should offer novel solutions in the RFP response, rather than in the pre-RFP phase. Doing so precludes competitors from responding to the novel solution, thereby enhancing the perceived quality of the supplier's RFP. If a focal supplier discloses a novel solution to the buyer in the pre-RFP phase, it may lose its advantage if the solution is included as a requirement in the RFP. To illustrate, a supplier in the waste management case provided a novel solution in its RFP response that could save the buying organization money over time. By withholding this novel customer solution until the post-RFP phase, the supplier gained an advantage over its competitors because no other competitors offered a similar solution in their RFP responses. A buying center member elaborated on how the novel solution distinguished the supplier:

But this other vendor [Supplier 2] offered more services. And so some of those services, for example, weights, so that when you're tipping dumpsters, you're able to determine the exact weights of each tip. You can use that information to optimize your routes and determine if you're tipping air or if you can cut your frequencies. And we currently don't have that. And unfortunately, we didn't write that in our RFP to begin with to require that. We did ask for collaborative processes and so this other company offered that as one possible thing. But because they offered that and the other company didn't, that was one of the things, in my opinion, that contributed to a wide gap in the [RFP responses].

In this situation, Supplier 2 enjoyed an advantage by providing a novel solution –an advantage which would have likely been forgone had they disclosed it in the pre-RFP phase. Here, the focal supplier created an advantage by strategically disclosing a novel solution when their competitors were unable to respond. While their competitors may have been able to provide a similar solution, they were unaware and, as such, did not provide one. Based on these findings I formally propose:

P5: A focal supplier can increase its selection likelihood through greater use of novel solutions in its RFP response.

#### 3.4.11 Content: Consummate Solutions

Consummate solutions are supplier offerings that go above and beyond what is required by the RFP. Recent research highlights the importance of providing such discretionary effort because it can enhance customer satisfaction (Kashyap and Murtha 2017). Somewhat surprisingly, I found that the majority of supplier RFP responses simply answered the questions as written (i.e., perfunctory compliance). This may be explained by the literature on obedience, which highlights individuals' proclivity to simply follow directions (Blass 1999) and, perhaps, even follow directions to the point of causing personal discomfort (Slater et al. 2006). What buyers really appreciated, however, were suppliers who provided solutions that went beyond the requirements in the RFP. For instance, in the waste management case, the buyer requested a weekly report as part of the service agreement. Two of the three suppliers responded that they could provide the report as requested. The third supplier chose to take a different approach. It offered a solution that went above and beyond what the RFP had requested. As one buying center member noted:

I think they [focal supplier] met requirements first, [they] answered the questions that were posed to them, and then they said, ‘And also, we can offer you this and also we can offer this...’ So that was sort of the other thing that stood out to me... it just seems clear that there were more resources that they have available than [the other suppliers].

In this case, the focal supplier offered both weekly reporting, as well as the ability to provide customized reports that buyers could generate themselves. In the general office software case, a buying center member mentioned the value added from a supplier who took a similar approach:

I thought one thing that was helpful was [Supplier 4] provided an alternate proposal. The alternate proposal was pretty much take two steps back and think about your overall needs, not just your needs for these two systems. I actually, when [procurement manager] said there was an alternate proposal from [Supplier 4], I was like, “That’s weird,” but actually it was valuable in the overall thinking about what we were doing. No one else did that.

Thus, suppliers who take the initiative and voluntarily go beyond the requirements of the RFP can increase the buyer’s quality perceptions of their RFP response. This approach appears beneficial for two reasons. First, when buyers barricade themselves, other suppliers are generally unaware of a focal supplier’s discretionary RFP response efforts. As a result, they are less likely to offer similar solutions in their own RFP responses, thus creating an advantage for the focal supplier. In addition, buyers view consummate solutions in terms of exceeding expectations (i.e., positive disconfirmation) (Anderson and Sullivan 1993; Oliver 1980), which signals that the potential supplier is likely to be a good partner. Since buyers have limited access to suppliers, they must use alternative methods to evaluate which suppliers will be good suppliers to work with, something they would have normally tried to do through face-to-face interaction. By withholding consummate solutions until the

post-RFP phase, suppliers can increase their chances of exceeding buyer expectations and, consequently, enhance their selection likelihood.

P<sub>6</sub>: A focal supplier can increase its selection likelihood through greater use of consummate solutions in its RFP response.

#### 3.4.12 Content: Reference Congruency

A final important content piece of the supplier RFP response was reference congruency, which refers to the degree of similarity between the buying organization and the organizations provided as references in the supplier's RFP response (Kumar, Peterson, and Leone 2013). This issue was first mentioned during my initial interview with the committee chair of the veterinary services RFP. She mentioned that one thing she wanted to see in the supplier RFP responses was references that were similar in size and scope to the buying organization. I later observed the reason for these intentions. It appeared that when suppliers provided references different in size and scope from the buying firm, buyers perceived this as an indication that the supplier may lack the adequate experience to service their needs. For instance, a buying team member for the networking hardware case commented:

I'm pretty sure that [supplier 1] has worked with more organizations and they've got their product in more organizations of our size. That kind of thing. For [supplier 2], they kept going back to this one reference, this one example, 'oh you can contact this group for this. You can contact the same group for this.' I'm trying to remember it was some kind of institute or whatever. It wasn't a public organization like we were. It was something else. That jumped out at me too. We definitely need a vendor that has more experience working with large public organizations.

This theme was common across buying center meetings. For instance, a member of the buying center for the general office software case mentioned:

One thing I noticed is that [Supplier 1] provided a reference for [Public Organization 1] which is small compared to us, [Supplier 2] gave [Public Organization 2] as a reference, which feels more like us.

References that were more prominent and/or prestigious than the buying organization often triggered fears of supplier inattentiveness to the buyer's account. For instance, the IT manager buying center member for a network hardware case expressed his concerns thusly:

I feel that [Supplier 1] and [Supplier 2] aren't focused on this [project]. For example, [Supplier 2] gave [very prestigious organization] as a reference. So if [very prestigious organization] calls, I feel we would get bumped to the bottom of the queue. I think we'd be a small fish in a large pond with [Supplier 1] and [Supplier 2].

It is clear that the references suppliers include in their RFP responses convey important information to buyers (whether the references are contacted or not). The findings of the present research reinforce recent research suggesting that congruent references are more valuable than non-congruent references (Hada, Grewal, and Lilien 2014) and that incongruent references engender negative buyer perceptions (Johnson, Friend, and Malshe 2016). The present research suggests that reference congruency may be particularly important in barricaded buying environments. When buyers are barricaded, they rely heavily on the references suppliers provide to get a sense of supplier capabilities. Thus, in barricaded environments, it becomes even more important for suppliers to include congruent references in their RFP responses because they may not get the opportunity to



amend buyer perceptions, or to respond to the negative inferences buyers make about the supplier as a result of incongruent references.

P<sub>7</sub>: A focal supplier can increase its selection likelihood through greater reference congruency in its RFP response.

### 3.4.13 Delivery: Tone

Tone refers to the buyer's perception of the supplier's attitude conveyed in its RFP response. The tone of suppliers' responses is an important factor in the buying team's decision-making. As one buying center member in the networking hardware case noted:

Someone who didn't provide a good RFP response was [Supplier 1]. [Supplier 1's] response was pretty much abysmal. They seemed mad in their response.

In the general office software case, supplier tone was brought up immediately during the initial meeting to evaluate supplier RFP responses. A buying center member's reaction to the negatively toned response was as follows:

[Supplier 2] is eliminated in my mind... they came across as really arrogant in their RFP [response]. For example, for our question about bankruptcy they just put "we're not going to answer that." What type of response is that? [*see actual RFP response, below*]

This reaction was echoed by several other members of the committee. Following the meeting, I identified RFP responses that buyers indicated as having different tones. The

following is a comparison of responses to the RFP question, “Explain the consequences for the organization should the offeror be sold or go out of business?”

*Positively perceived supplier tone:*

While there are no plans for a sale of the company and [Supplier 1] is in a very strong and well capitalized financial position to mitigate the risk of going out of business, our contracts are written such that product support and hosting would be provided to the customer for as long as the current term of the contract.

*Negatively perceived supplier tone:*

[Supplier 2] does not engage in this speculation.

In barricaded buyer settings, suppliers must be careful in the way they write their RFPs. Answers that come across as short or negative are interpreted by buyers as evidence the supplier is not fully engaged in the buying process. Unfortunately, the barricade allows few opportunities to change the negative impressions buyers form as a result of poorly perceived tone.

The importance of tone in the present research aligns well with existing communications research. When individuals receive written messages, they often use perceived tone in evaluating the intended meaning of the message sender (Byron 2008). More importantly for the present research context, individuals respond more favorably to written messages perceived as having a positive tone (Butts, Becker, and Howell 2015). Since barricaded buyers rely heavily on the written word in RFPs to evaluate suppliers, it makes sense that RFP tone is likely to impact RFP response quality. Based on this discussion I propose the following:

P<sub>8</sub>: A focal supplier can increase its selection likelihood through greater use of positive tone in its RFP response.

#### 3.4.14 Delivery: Explicitness

In addition to tone, the importance of RFP explicitness was commonly alluded to during the post-RFP selection phase. RFP explicitness refers to the degree to which buyers have a clear understanding of what the supplier is offering in its RFP responses. Buying center members noted different aspects of suppliers' RFP responses when determining how explicit they were. In the commercial printing case, for example, one supplier provided a tri-fold brochure as a sample of its print capabilities. However, the committee was most interested in the supplier's ability to print large signs, which was not clear from the tri-fold sample. The inclusion of clarifying visuals, such as screenshots for software, detailed descriptions of processes, and clearly formatted responses to RFP specifications enhance the explicitness of suppliers' responses. A manager involved in the waste management RFP provided his insights accordingly:

The biggest differences [between proposals] were both the content, and sort of the formatting, and actual language used. Yeah. [Supplier 1] works differently – it's much more clear, and descriptive, and detailed, again, much more concrete in the way that they provide service, they do pickups, where they're taking them, how it's processed once they get there, what they do in case of emergencies and delays. And I mean, we had org. charts to look at and route maps to look at, and as small as that might-- as petty as that may sound, it makes the details that much more clear.

An IT manager in the specialized software case offered similar sentiments:

I do think that the quality of the RFP, not necessarily what they're willing to offer, but the quality of how the look and feel of the RFP, the narrative really helps make the decision I think. The ones that were hard to follow and understand, were messy, were the ones that ended up on the bottom of

my list...I couldn't get a true sense at what they were trying to say in the RFP. Whereas those that were laid out with tables and examples and formatted nicely were the ones that rose to the top because I could clearly see and understand what they were trying to say in the narrative.

The following responses to the question in the waste management RFP, "Please explain how your company provides accurate and timely reporting," further illustrate the difference between more and less explicit responses by suppliers:

*More explicit RFP response:*

[Supplier] has numerous automated reporting options to choose from that can be utilized to meet [buyer's] needs. The first option is through the Web Based Customer Portal reporting system. Through this option, [buyer] can retrieve, at their convenience, detailed data reports that can be downloaded into Excel or full image to PDF...

*Less explicit RFP response:*

We will provide any and all requested information from [buyer].

As highlighted by the previous examples, explicit RFP responses are easier for buyers to evaluate. Explicit responses positively affect buyer impressions of the supplier because they instill confidence in the supplier's abilities and make clear what is offered. The information processing and decision-making literature reinforce the importance of explicitness. For instance, prior research suggests that information that is easy to understand results in more favorable product evaluations (Anand and Sternthal 1990; Hong and Sternthal 2010). Moreover, when information is difficult to process, individuals may switch preferences (Johnson, Payne, and Bettman 1988). When buyers are unbarricaded, less explicit RFP responses may be remedied through additional discussion and clarification. Barricaded buyers, in contrast, do not have this luxury and, as such, must interpret supplier responses on their own. As a result, the greater the level of explicitness, the greater are buyer perceptions of RFP quality. Thus, I propose:

P<sub>9</sub>: A focal supplier can increase its selection likelihood through greater explicitness in its RFP response.

#### 3.4.15 Delivery: Tailoring

Another common theme pervading discussions with and among buying team members about RFP delivery was the perceived level of tailoring in suppliers' RFP responses. RFP response tailoring refers to the degree to which buyers feel an RFP response is customized to their organization. When suppliers submit highly tailored RFP responses, buyers view these suppliers as more committed to the purchase and the buying organization. In contrast, buying center members often objected to "canned" responses as they seemed generic and unhelpful (also see Johnson, Friend, and Malshe 2016). As a consequence, buyers question how well the supplier knows their account, and perceive the supplier as lazy and indifferent about winning the business. A manager in the network hardware case elaborated:

You take [Supplier 4] for instance... they did a lot of copying and pasting. When they don't know some of the nuances, that's kind of a warning...In the case of the [Supplier 4] response, you get stuff where they literally, it's like they didn't read the RFP, they were just doing cutting and pasting.

To illustrate further, consider a particular section of the RFP for the network hardware case which stated, "These are the general areas of activity for which the [buyer] may seek assistance for the networking services provider to administer for the [buyer]. These areas are described in Section 7.0. Describe in narrative form how your firm will perform the proposed services." The following responses from two different suppliers demonstrate differences in tailoring.

*Highly tailored response:*

In regards to Financing and Leasing, the [Buyer] has an executed Master Lease Agreement with [Supplier 1], which will be the basis for any lease or financing transaction resulting from this RFP. We look forward to working closely with the [Buyer] to meet your leasing and financing needs. As required in Section 4.6.2, [Supplier 1] will offer a Tax-Exempt Lease Purchase for a financing period of 60 months with a \$1.00 buyout at the end of the five year term. Per the answers to the submitted questions, [Supplier 1] will provide 3, 4, or 5 annual payments based on [Buyer]'s preferences. Given there is not a specific configuration and quote being offered, [Supplier 1] anticipates providing a 0% interest rate, but that is subject to specific quotes generated as a result of this RFP.

*Poorly tailored response:*

[Supplier 2] is offering Procurement and Lease Services.

As noted in the highly tailored response, the supplier mentions the buyer by name and also references questions that came up in the pre-RFP phase of the buying process. Alternatively, Supplier 2 does not mention any specific information about the buyer or this particular purchase.

In concert with the results of the present research, prior research suggests that tailoring messages enhances the receivers' perceptions of the sender (Godfrey, Seiders, and Voss 2011; Johnson, Friend, and Malshe 2016; Song and Zinkhan 2008). These enhanced perceptions result from the receiver's appreciation of the sender's effort to tailor, which they may reciprocate by increasing their purchase intentions (Godfrey, Seiders, and Voss 2011). As mentioned, barricaded buyers often rely heavily on the written RFP responses to develop supplier perceptions. If buyers perceive a lack of effort or interest stemming from a poorly tailored RFP response, there are few opportunities for suppliers to overcome this issue. Thus, tailored RFP responses become particularly important when buyers barricade themselves in the post-RFP phase. As a result of my findings I propose the following:

P<sub>10</sub>: A focal supplier can increase its selection likelihood through greater tailoring of its RFP response.

### 3.5 Discussion

Dealing with barricaded buyers is common for suppliers doing business in the public sector, and is increasingly common within the private sector. The purpose of this research was to explore the barricaded buying environment in order to begin answering the question, “How can suppliers sell to buyers they have limited access to?” An examination of eight organizational purchases in the public sector provides significant insights into how suppliers can affect buying outcomes when selling to these barricaded buyers. The results of my research suggest that while suppliers may be restricted from accessing buyers directly, they may nevertheless have a significant opportunity to influence the buying process in their favor. This occurs with the caveat that suppliers must be strategic about the information they provide to buyers because it affects both competition and buyer perceptions. Below, I provide implications for theory and practice, discuss the limitations of the present research, and offer future research directions.

#### 3.5.1 Theoretical Implications

Despite its pervasiveness in practice, research has been noticeably absent on the topic of buyers who limit access to suppliers during the sales cycle. As such, we advance the literature by introducing and examining the notion of barricaded buyers. In doing so, I

complement research on “gatekeeping” by highlighting the incidence and importance of impersonal, policy barricades. In addition, I begin to shed light on the underdeveloped area of business-to-government (B2G) selling (see Lilien 2016) and, relatedly, on requests for proposals (RFPs). Although academic examinations of B2G settings and RFPs are scarce (see Johnson, Friend, and Malshe 2016), existing RFP research tends to ignore important RFP content factors (e.g., novel and consummate solutions) and to focus on objective factors, such as price and delivery terms (Crow et al. 1980; Vyas and Woodside 1984). The present research, in contrast, points to the importance of subjective factors, such as how content is delivered in the RFP responses (e.g., tone, explicitness, and tailoring). Making positive impressions through these subjective factors is particularly important in barricaded buyer settings because suppliers have limited opportunities to overcome negative perceptions. Thus, the present research also moves the literature on RFPs beyond its traditional focus on objective factors to one that also incorporates buyers’ subjective evaluations.

Our research also highlights the importance of *strategic information disclosure* (i.e., the thoughtfulness and timeliness with which a focal supplier provides information to buyers) when selling to barricaded buyers. Prior research implicitly assumes that information exchange between buyers and suppliers tends to be beneficial across all phases of the sales cycle (MacDonald et al. 2016; Moriarty and Spekman 1984). However, the present research suggests that it is important to know *when* to convey *what* types of information in barricaded buying environments.



For instance, the present research lends some nuance to when a supplier should communicate different types of solution information to a prospective buyer (e.g., Tuli, Kohli, and Bharadwaj 2007). I suggest that in the pre-RFP phase, supplier's should identify solutions that highlight their unique capabilities, while withholding novel and consummate solutions that may not reflect their unique capabilities until the post-RFP phase. Thus, the present research takes a first step in understanding how suppliers can use buyer barricades to their advantage, which, until now, has remained largely unexamined.

In addition, to the best of my knowledge, I am the first to integrate elements of competitive dynamics (e.g., competitor motivation and capability) from the firm level (e.g., Chen 1996; Chen, Tsu, and Tsai 2007; Smith, Ferrier, Ndofor 2001) to the transaction level. Thus, I advance extant views that tend to focus on interactions between one buyer (or buying firm) and one seller (or selling firm) (e.g., Hall, Ahearne, and Sujan 2015; Homburg, Müller, and Klarmann 2011; Mullins et al. 2014) to a view of selling that incorporates competitive dynamics among multiple sellers vying for a buyer's business. Doing so leads to the introduction of new variables such as peacocking, which show how suppliers can demotivate their competitors. As such, I provide evidence that examinations of salesperson performance should consider including variables that incorporate a salesperson's impact on the competition (e.g., peacocking, instilling unique language) in addition to traditional selling variables that directly affect customers (e.g., adaptive selling).

### 3.5.2 Managerial Implications

The results of my research have implications for suppliers who sell to barricaded buyers. Although suppliers could find it frustrating to be restricted from buyers in barricaded settings, my research suggests they can use the barricade strategically to increase their likelihood of selection. In particular, suppliers should be mindful about *when* to share *what* information, and how to *deliver* it.

In the pre-RFP phase, competitors often have the ability to respond to a supplier's competitive actions. As such, suppliers should attempt to elicit customer needs they are uniquely capable of addressing and offer solutions they are uniquely capable of providing. In addition, suppliers should seek opportunities to inject their firm's idiosyncratic terminology into their discussions with buyers. Doing so develops a common language with the buyer, which may result in its inclusion in the formal RFP. Suppliers should also consider opportunities to "peacock" to their competitors by announcing their tight connections and relationships to the buyer. Adopting these strategies can undermine the ability and motivation of competitors to respond to the RFP, thereby enhancing a supplier's selection likelihood.

In the post-RFP phase, competitors are less capable of responding to a focal supplier's RFP response. Thus, suppliers have the opportunity to distinguish themselves by providing a high quality RFP. The present research provides insight into what constitutes a high quality RFP. First, suppliers should resist the urge to share a novel and consummate solutions prior

to submitting them in their RFP response. Doing so can help prevent a competitor from offering the same or better version of the solution to the buyer, thereby negating the supplier's opportunity to differentiate itself. Along these lines, suppliers need to resist the urge to answer RFP questions in kind. Rather, the present research suggests that thinking outside the box (i.e., novel solutions) and providing solutions and ideas that go beyond what is expected (consummate solutions) provide positive signals to buyers.

Our research suggests that suppliers should also provide references that are similar to the prospective buyer (e.g., in size, scope, and industry). Doing so signals they are more likely to understand the customer's needs and can offer the appropriate solutions. These signals are important to buyers as they appear to take the place of information that buyers typically gather during face-to-face interactions with suppliers.

Finally, my research suggests that buyers frequently rely on subjective factors in RFP responses when eliminating suppliers from consideration. I were surprised by the lack of attention to these factors by suppliers in my research, especially because buyers hinted they may be as, or more, important than objective factors (such as price) when selling to them. Thus, suppliers need to be conscientious about "soft" factors, such as the tone, explicitness, and tailoring of their RFP responses.

### 3.5.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions

As with most research, the present research has its limitations. The present research was conducted within one large public organization. Although my findings reflect a diverse set of purchases, future research should examine other organizations and types of purchases. In addition, future research could provide additional insights by examining purchasing practices across different government levels (e.g., local, county, state, and federal). Also, although my focus was on barricaded buying in the public domain (Lilien 2016), future research should examine barricaded buying in the private sector (e.g., pharmaceuticals and financial services).

The present research reflects a policy-based and impersonal barricade that suppliers frequently encounter in the government selling environment. As noted, however, there are other types of barricades that suppliers may face, such as gatekeepers, which affect buyer and supplier behaviors. As such, it would be beneficial to identify different types of barricades and how they might interplay to affect the buying process. Such an endeavor could provide valuable insights to sales managers and salespeople about the challenges they face in different industry contexts.

Finally, like Tuli, Kohli, and Bharadwaj (2007), I do not integrate variables customarily associated with sales performance such as trust, adaptive selling, or customer orientation (Franke and Park 2006; Spiro and Weitz 1990) into my framework. Rather, my focus was on variables that emerged from my research and on those that are less frequently discussed

in the literature. Future researchers, therefore, should integrate these important variables into their studies to ensure the veracity of those proposed here.

### 3.6 Tables and Figures

Table 3-1: Barricaded Buying Language in State and Federal Purchasing Policies

Municipality	Timing of Barricade	Policy Language	Source
Federal	Post-RFP	*General information about agency mission needs and future requirements may be disclosed at any time. <b>After release of the solicitation, the contracting officer must be the focal point of any exchange with potential offerors.</b> When specific information about a proposed acquisition that would be necessary for the preparation of proposals is disclosed to one or more potential offerors, that information must be made available to the public as soon as practicable, but no later than the next general release of information, in order to avoid creating an unfair competitive advantage.	State Procurement Code Manual, Section 15.200(f)
Alabama	Post-RFP	From the issue date of this Solicitation until a Contractor is selected and a contract award is made, Respondents are not allowed to communicate about the subject of the RFP with any [Organization Employees] except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Purchasing Department representative, any University Purchasing Officer representing the organization, or others authorized in writing by the Purchasing Office and organization representatives during Respondent presentations.</li> </ul>	State RFP Section 5.13
Alaska	None	No mention	

Arizona	Pre and Post RFP	Arizona Revised Statutes §§ 38-503 through 38-505, 41-741, 41-753, 41-2503, and 41-2517 imposes certain restrictions on communications between an agency and an offeror/bidder during the procurement process. An offeror/bidder is restricted from making contacts from the date of the earliest notice of intent to solicit offers/bids through the date of the final award, and, one year after award with the successful contractors. The interval between these points is known as the “restricted period.” Certain exceptions to this restriction are set forth in the Arizona Procurement Code.	Arizona Procurement Code Section 3.6
Arkansas	Post-RFP	Prior to any contract award, address all communication concerning this Bid Solicitation through OSP (Office of State Procurement)	State RFP Section 1.17 (A)
California	Post-RFP	All questions must be submitted in writing to the individual listed on the RFP.	State RFP Template
Colorado	Post-RFP	The Purchasing Agent shall coordinate the offerors' responses for review by the evaluation team. The Purchasing Agent shall be the SOLE point of contact throughout the process for all offerors.	State RFP #99439321 Section IV (A)

Connecticut	Post-RFP	Communication with Potential Bidders: All communications with potential bidders regarding the RFP or the RFQ shall be in writing and shall be conducted through the Procurement Services Department. Members of the selection committee (see subsection 4 below) shall not have direct communication with bidders relating in any manner to the RFP or the RFQ. A pre-bid conference may be convened by the agency if deemed to be in its best interest.	State Procurement Manual Section K-4
Delaware	Post-RFP	All requests, questions, or other communications about this RFP shall be made in writing to the State of Delaware. Address all communications to the person listed below; communications made to other State of Delaware personnel or attempting to ask questions by phone or in person will not be allowed or recognized as valid and may disqualify the vendor. Vendors should rely only on written statements issued by the RFP designated contact.	State RFP Section IV (4)
District of Columbia (DC)	Post-RFP	Exchanges with offerors after receipt of proposals are allowed. These may take the form of clarifications, communications, or discussions. Exchanges shall take place as part of the formal selection process and only with the Authority representative who is specifically identified to receive or transmit information.	DC Water Authority Procurement Manual Chapter 7.4.3.2



Florida	Post-RFP	*Stage Four of the Public Procurement Process is the Solicitation process. The purpose of this Stage is to publicly release the <b>competitive solicitation</b> to the <b>vendor</b> community and collect responses that are submitted by the date and time listed in the solicitation Timeline of Events. During stage four, the <b>Procurement Officer</b> will serve as the sole point of contact for the solicitation.	State Procurement Manual, Section 4.1 - Introduction to the Solicitation Process
Georgia	Post-RFP	From the issue date of the solicitation and until a supplier is selected for contract award and the selection is made public, suppliers are not allowed to communicate for any reason with any state staff regarding the solicitation except through the issuing officer (or his/her designee) named in the solicitation. Prohibited communication includes all contact or interaction, including but not limited to telephonic communications, emails, faxes, letters, or personal meetings, such as lunch, entertainment, or otherwise.	State Procurement Manual, Section 4.4.2. - Restrictions on Communications
Hawaii	Post-RFP	1.6 RFP Point-of-Contact From the release date of this RFP until the selection of the successful provider(s), any inquiries and requests shall be directed to the sole point-of-contact identified below.	State RFP Section 1.6
Idaho	Post-RFP	If an evaluator is contacted by a proposer or other interested party, the evaluator may not discuss anything related to the RFP, the process, or the proposal(s), and must direct the individual to DOP.	State Procurement Manual P. 29
Illinois	Post-RFP*	The sole point of contact in this Commonwealth for this RFP shall be the Issuing Officer [procurement officer].	State RFP Template
Indiana	Post-RFP	Inquiries are not to be directed to any staff member of FSSA, or any other participating agency. Such action may disqualify Respondent from further consideration for a contract resulting from this RFP.	State RFP Section 1.7

Iowa	Post-RFP	During the publication period, prospective respondents may not contact the issuing PA in person or by phone. However, vendors may contact the PA via email. The PA posts all responses to email inquiries on the Bid Opportunities website such that all prospective vendors receive consistent information and no vendor receives information not provided to all vendors.	State Procurement Manual Pg. 24
Kansas	Post-RFP	<p>The Bid Event ID / RFP number, indicated in the header of this page, as well as on the first page of this proposal, has been assigned to this RFP and MUST be shown on all correspondence or other documents associated with this RFP and MUST be referred to in all verbal communications. All inquiries, written or verbal, shall be directed only to the procurement officer reflected on Page 1 of this proposal. There shall be no communication with any other State employee regarding this RFP except with designated state participants in attendance ONLY DURING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiations</li> <li>• Contract Signing</li> <li>• as otherwise specified in this RFP.</li> </ul> <p>Violations of this provision by bidder or state agency personnel may result in the rejection of the proposal.</p>	State RFP Section 1.1

Kentucky	Post-RFP	Communications with Vendors: In order to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all vendors, communication regarding a particular procurement shall cease at an appropriate date prior to the issuance of a Solicitation. Questions regarding the Solicitation, once issued, shall be submitted in accordance with the directions in the Solicitation.	KY FAP 110-10-00 #27
Louisiana	Post-RFP	It may be advantageous to have a period of inquiry on a solicitation prior to opening bids to answer bidder questions and clarify specifications. If an inquiry is in order, include language in the solicitation. Example: This solicitation includes a period of inquiry. No decisions or actions shall be executed by any bidder as a result of any oral discussions with any State employee, or State consultant. Only those transactions which are in writing may be considered as valid. Likewise, the State will only consider communications from bidders that are signed and in writing.	Louisiana Procurement Handbook Section 11
Maine	Post-RFP	From the time this RFP is issued until award notification is made, <u>all</u> contact with the State regarding this RFP <u>must</u> be made through the aforementioned RFP Coordinator. No other person/ State employee is empowered to make binding statements regarding this RFP. <u>Violation of this provision may lead to disqualification from the bidding process, at the State's discretion.</u>	State RFP Part I Provision B (1)

Maryland	Post-RFP	Procurement Officer – The State representative for this Contract who is, prior to the award of any Contract, the sole point of contact in the State for purposes of this solicitation. After Contract award, the Procurement Officer has responsibilities as detailed in the Contract (Attachment A), and is the only State representative who can authorize changes to the Contract. The Department may change the Procurement Officer at any time by written notice to the Contractor.	State RFP Section 1.2
Massachusetts	Post-RFP	Respondents are prohibited from communicating directly with any employee of the [Organization] except as specified in this RFP, and no other individual Commonwealth employee or representative is authorized to provide any information or respond to any questions or inquiries concerning this RFP.	State RFP Section 6.1 (f)
Michigan	Post-RFP	Once the solicitation is published, communication with vendors regarding the content of the solicitation must be limited. Strict State and vendor communication protocol is essential to ensure a fair and competitive purchasing environment. State and vendor communication protocol is as follows: The Solicitation Manager is the individual responsible for leading and facilitating all aspects of the solicitation process through contract award, and will serve as the point of contact for potential vendors during this period. Once the solicitation is released, all communication with vendors must be through only the Solicitation anager.	State Procurement Manual - Section 7.3
Minnesota	Post-RFP	Other personnel are NOT authorized to discuss this request for proposal with responders, before the proposal submission deadline. Contact regarding this RFP with any personnel not listed above could result in disqualification.	State RFP p. 4

Mississippi	Post-RFP	<p>Communications with State</p> <p>From the issue date of this RFP until a Vendor is selected and the selection is announced, responding Vendors or their representatives may not communicate, either orally or in writing regarding this RFP with any statewide elected official, state officer or employee, member of the legislature or legislative employee except as noted herein. To ensure equal treatment for each responding Vendor, all questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing to the State's contact person for the selection process, and not later than the last date for accepting responding Vendor questions provided in this RFP.</p>	State RFP Section 13
Missouri	Post-RFP	<p>Questions Regarding the RFP – Except as may be otherwise stated herein, the offeror and the offeror's agents (including subcontractors, employees, consultants, or anyone else acting on their behalf) must direct all of their questions or comments regarding the RFP, the solicitation process, the evaluation, etc., to the buyer of record [Procurement Manager] indicated on the first page of this RFP.</p> <p>Inappropriate contacts to other personnel are grounds for suspension and/or exclusion from specific procurements. Offerors and their agents who have questions regarding this matter should contact the buyer.</p>	State RFP Section 3.1.4

Montana	Post-RFP	<p>Single Point of Contact. The purpose of naming one contact person, usually the procurement officer who issues the RFP, is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ü Ensure that all questions will be routed through one person;</li> <li>ü Provide the same information to all offerors;</li> <li>ü Eliminate confusion (“Well, someone else said I could do it this way”);</li> <li>ü Inform potential offerors that they may not contact members of the evaluation committee or agency staff;</li> <li>ü eMACS provides the procurement officer’s name and contact information.</li> </ul>	State Procurement Manual pg. 23
Nebraska	Post-RFP	<p>From the date the RFP is issued until the Intent to Award is issued communication from the Bidder is limited to the POC listed above. After the Intent to Award is issued the Bidder may communicate with individuals the State has designated as responsible for negotiating the contract on behalf of the State.</p>	State RFP Section I (B)
Nevada	Post-RFP	<p>9.1.7 For purposes of addressing questions concerning this RFP, the sole contact will be the Purchasing Division as specified on Page 1 of this RFP. Upon issuance of this RFP, other employees and representatives of the agencies identified in the RFP will not answer questions or otherwise discuss the contents of this RFP with any prospective vendors or their representatives. Failure to observe this restriction may result in disqualification of any subsequent proposal per NAC 333.155(3). This restriction does not preclude discussions between affected parties for the purpose of conducting business unrelated to this procurement.</p>	State RFP Section 9.1.7

New Hampshire	Post-RFP	Any questions, clarifications, and/or requested changes shall be submitted by an individual authorized to commit their organization to the Terms and Conditions of this bid and shall be received in writing at the Bureau of Purchase and Property no later than 4:00 PM on the date listed in the timeline below. Questions shall not be submitted to anyone other than the Purchasing Agent or his/her representative. Bidders that submit questions verbally or in writing to any other State entity or State personnel shall be found in violation of this part and may be found non-compliant.	State RFP pg. 2
New Jersey	Post-RFP	From the moment a procurement process begins, with notice of a solicitation, to the moment it ends, with the final contract or award, vendors/contractors and their representatives may contact the Port Authority with respect to that procurement only via the Procurement Department individual or individuals explicitly designated for that purpose. Contact is limited to obtaining clarifications and not for the purpose of influencing selection. The complete contractor integrity provisions can be viewed on the Port Authority website.	NJ Port Authority Guide to Procurement p. 9
New Mexico	Post-RFP	Any inquiries or requests regarding this procurement should be submitted, in writing, to the Procurement Manager. Offerors may contact ONLY the Procurement Manager regarding this procurement. Other state employees or Evaluation Committee members do not have the authority to respond on behalf of the FMD.	State RFP Section I-D (3)

New York	Post-RFP	<p>*State Finance Law §§139-j and 139-k impose certain restrictions on communications between an agency and an offerer/bidder during the procurement process. An offerer/bidder is restricted from making “<b>contacts</b>” (defined in the law as communications intended to influence the procurement) from the date of the earliest notice of intent to solicit offers/bids through the date of the final award, and, if applicable, approval of the contract by the Office of the State Comptroller, to other than designated staff (as identified by the agency). The interval between these points is known as the “restricted period.” Certain exceptions to this restriction are set forth in State Finance Law §139-j (3) (a). An example of an exception would be communication during contract negotiations.</p>	State Procurement Manual - Section III Guidelines for Solicitations, Section F
North Carolina	Post-RFP	<p>During the period of evaluation and prior to award, only the information provided in the tabulation is public record. Possession of offers, including any accompanying information submitted with the offers, shall be limited to persons in the agency who are responsible for processing and evaluating the offers and accompanying information. Vendor participation in the evaluation process shall not be permitted.</p>	State Procurement Manual - Section 5.3
North Dakota	Post-RFP	<p>The procurement officer is the point of contact for this RFP. All vendor communications regarding this RFP must be directed to the procurement officer. Unauthorized contact regarding the RFP with other State employees of the purchasing agency may result in the vendor being disqualified, and the vendor may also be suspended or disbarred from the state bidders list.</p>	State RFP Section 1.02



Ohio	Post-RFP	During the evaluation phase, offerors may not initiate any communication with the evaluation team.	State Procurement Manual - Section 5.3.4
Oklahoma	Post-RFP	Limited contact. The State Purchasing Director may limit contact regarding a solicitation between suppliers and agency personnel during the solicitation process. The limitation of contact may be described in the solicitation. All communication between suppliers and agency personnel regarding a solicitation shall be documented and submitted to DCS for inclusion in the bid file.	Oklahoma Central Purchasing Rules Chapter 15, 580:15-2-7C
Oregon	Post-RFP	SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT (SPC) The SPC for this RFP is identified on the Cover Page, along with the SPC's contact information. Proposer shall direct all communications related to any provision of the RFP only to the SPC, whether about the technical requirements of the RFP, contractual requirements, the RFP process, or any other provision.	State RFP Section 1.3
Pennsylvania	Pre and Post RFP+	SOLICITATION CONTACT: The individual listed below shall be the single point of contact for this solicitation. Unless otherwise directed, Offerors should only communicate with the Solicitation Contact. The State/Agency/University shall not be held responsible for information provided to any other person.	State RFP Template
Rhode Island	Post-RFP	Questions concerning this solicitation must be e-mailed to the Division of Purchases at [...@purchasing.ri.gov] no later than the date and time indicated on page one of this solicitation. No other contact with State parties is permitted.	State RFP Section 6

South Carolina	Post-RFP	Prior to the issuance of an award or notification of intent to award, whichever is earlier, state personnel involved in an acquisition shall not engage in conduct that knowingly furnishes source selection information to anyone other than the responsible procurement officer, unless otherwise authorized in writing by the responsible procurement officer.	State Code R445.2010(B)
South Dakota	Post-RFP	Offeror's Contacts: Offerors and their agents (including subcontractors, employees, consultants, or anyone else acting on their behalf) must direct all of their questions or comments regarding the RFP, the evaluation, etc. to the buyer of record indicated on the first page of this RFP. Offerors and their agents may not contact any state employee other than the buyer of record regarding any of these matters during the solicitation and evaluation process. Inappropriate contacts are grounds for suspension and/or exclusion from specific procurements. Offerors and their agents who have questions regarding this matter should contact the buyer of record.	South Dakota RFP Process Workgroup Report Section 4.2
Tennessee	Post-RFP	Unauthorized contact about this RFP with employees, officials, or consultants of the State of Tennessee except as detailed below may result in disqualification from consideration under this procurement process.	State RFP Section 1.4.2

Texas	Post-RFP	All communication with potential respondents should be made only through the Purchasing Department or other designated staff. The program staff should not have contact with potential respondents outside of pre-solicitation conferences. Likewise, a respondent that contacts someone other than authorized staff in regards to a solicitation maybe disqualified. While the Purchasing Staff or other designated staff may not be able to answer all of the technical questions asked by potential respondents, they will ensure that the information is provided to all potential respondents.	State Contract Management Guide, p. 71
Utah	Post-RFP	The conducting procurement unit shall ensure that each member of an evaluation committee and each individual participating in the evaluation committee process: does not contact or communicate with a vendor concerning the evaluation process or procurement outside the official evaluation committee process	Utah State Procurement Code Section 63G-6a-410, 9.A.ii.c
Vermont	Post-RFP	3.1 Single Point of Contact All communications concerning this RFP are to be addressed in writing to the State Contact listed on the front page of this RFP. Actual or attempted contact with any other individual from the State concerning this RFP is strictly prohibited and may result in disqualification.	Vermont Sample RFP Section 3.2
Virginia	Post-RFP	The evaluators should be instructed not to contact any of the offerors. They must also be instructed not to reveal any information or tentative conclusions on the relative merits of proposals.	State Procurement Manual p. 159

Washington	Post-RFP	The RFP Coordinator is the sole point of contact in OSOS for this procurement. All communication between the Bidder and OSOS upon receipt of this RFP shall be with the RFP Coordinator, Any other communication will be considered unofficial and non-binding. Bidders are to rely only upon written statements issued by the RFP Coordinator. Communication directed to parties other than the RFP Coordinator may result in disqualification of the Bidder.	State RFP Section 2.1
West Virginia	Post-RFP	He or she [Committee members] has not had or will not have contact relating to the solicitation identified herein with any participating vendors between the time of the bid opening and the award recommendation without prior approval of the Purchasing Division.	West Virginia Procurement Handbook Section 7.1.3
Wisconsin	Post-RFP	This Request for Proposal (RFP) is issued by the Wisconsin Department of [ ] which is the sole point of contact for the State of Wisconsin during the selection process. The person responsible for managing the procurement process is [ ].	State RFP Section 1.3
Wyoming	NONE	APPOINTMENTS WITH BUYERS AND AGENCIES Although every effort will be made to accommodate salesmen or representatives who arrive unannounced, it is preferred that appointments be made in advance. Buyers and agency personnel operate under substantial workloads and prior appointments will help assure full consideration be given to presentations or discussions.	Wyoming Vendor's Guide p. 2

Table 3-2: Characteristics of Buying Center Cases

	<b>Buying Project</b>	<b>Product/Service</b>	<b>Buyclass</b>	<b>Decision Makers</b>	<b>Supplier RFP Responses</b>	<b>Total Interviews</b>	<b>Average Interview Length</b>	<b>Total Interview Hours</b>	<b>Meetings Observed</b>	<b>RFP Duration (Months)</b>
1	Pest Control	Service	Rebuy	3	1	4	32	2.13	4	2
2	General Office Software	Product	New	5	4	11	25	5.00	2	3
3	Waste Management	Service	Rebuy	10	2	9	45	7.50	4	9
4	Specialized Software	Product	New	8	4	7	22	2.57	5	10
5	Veterinary Services	Service	Rebuy	6	2	6	20	1.67	2	2
6	Network Hardware	Product	New	6	8	8	22	2.93	2	2
7	Transportation Rental Services	Service	New	6	2	0	0	.00	2	4
8	Commercial Printing	Service	Rebuy	5	6	1	20	.33	1	2
	Totals			49	29	46	23.25	17.83	22	4.25

Table 3-3: List of Propositions

P1:	A supplier can increase its selection likelihood by increasing buyer familiarity with its unique language during the pre-RFP phase.
P2:	A supplier can increase its selection likelihood through greater focus on its unique capabilities during the pre-RFP phase.
P3:	A supplier can increase its selection likelihood through greater use of relationship peacocking during the pre-RFP phase.
P4:	A supplier can increase its selection likelihood through greater use of information peacocking during the pre-RFP phase.
P5:	A supplier can increase its selection likelihood through greater use of novel solutions in its RFP response.
P6:	A supplier can increase its selection likelihood through greater use of consummate solutions in its RFP response.
P7:	A supplier can increase its selection likelihood through greater reference congruency in its RFP response.
P8:	A supplier can increase its selection likelihood through greater use of positive tone in its RFP response.
P9:	A supplier can increase its selection likelihood through greater explicitness in its RFP response.
P10:	A supplier can increase its selection likelihood through greater tailoring of its RFP response.

Table 3-4: Pre-RFP Conference Language in State and Federal Purchasing Policies

Municipality	Pre-RFP Conference Language	Source
Federal	14.207 Pre-bid conference. A pre-bid conference may be used, generally in a complex acquisition, as a means of briefing prospective bidders and explaining complicated specifications and requirements to them as early as possible after the invitation has been issued.	Section 14.2-6 (FAC 2005-92)
Alabama	A Pre-Proposal Conference / On-site visit will be held at [Organization], MARCH 1, 2018, at 1:30pm CST, to clarify the Organizations's expectations to Respondents and to visit the site(s). All participants shall meet at GATE 1. Respondents whom meet the qualifications of this RFP and have intentions of submitting a full response shall participate in the pre-proposal conference and site tour.	State RFP #T054715
Alaska	If your agency plans to have a pre-solicitation conference, you should either tape record the proceedings for possible preparation of a transcript or keep accurate written notes. If your agency responds to substantive questions during the conference, you must reaffirm those answers in writing via an amendment after the conference and distribute the answers to all potential offerors.	Alaska Procurement Manual Section AAM 81.110
Arizona	Prior to the due date for bids, an agency may require site visits to ensure that bidders are aware of site conditions. The agency may also hold a pre-bid conference to allow bidders to ask questions and/or exchange information with agency staff.	Arizona Procurement Manual Section 5.2.5

Arkansas	OSP will host a Pre-Proposal Conference session that is mandatory for all Vendors submitting Proposals. Vendors are encouraged to attend in person, however, a teleconference option is also available. Vendors will have the opportunity to gain further understanding of the RFP requirements, process and procedures.	Arkans RFP SP-17-0006 Section 2.1.2
California	Prepare the Notice to Contractors, including the following notifications include... Date, time, and place of a pre-bid meeting and/or site inspection. Mandatory pre-bid meetings shall not occur fewer than five (5) calendar days after the first publication of the initial Notice to Bidders (PCC § 6610).	Pg. 113-114
Colorado	Pre-bid conferences may be conducted to explain the procurement requirements. They shall be announced on BIDS. The conference should be held long enough after the Invitation for Bid has been issued, to allow bidders to become familiar with it, but with adequate time before bid opening to allow bidders consideration of the conference results in preparing their bids. Nothing stated at the pre-bid conference shall change the Invitation for Bids unless a change is made by written amendment, posted on BIDS.	State Procurement Manual Section R-24-103-202a-02
Connecticut	See barricaded language	State Procurement Manual Section K-4
Delaware	Pre-bid conferences. — An agency may conduct a pre-bid conference within a reasonable time but not less than 7 days before a bid opening to explain the requirements of an invitation to bid. An agency may require mandatory attendance by bidders at such pre-bid conferences to qualify as a responsible and responsive bidder. Statements made at the pre-bid conference shall not be considered amendments to	State Procurement Code § 6923 (f)



	the invitation to bid unless a written amendment is issued pursuant to subsection (g) of this section.	
District of Columbia (DC)	Pre-proposal conferences are generally used in complex acquisitions as a means of briefing prospective offerors and explaining complicated specifications and requirements. Although various aspects of the RFP and the requirements may be discussed, a statement during the pre-proposal conference by itself shall not change the RFP. All changes to the RFP shall be issued through an amendment.	DC Water Authority Procurement Manual Chapter 7.3.3
Florida	The Procurement Officer may host a Pre-Response Conference that will serve as the first opportunity for potential respondents to ask questions about the solicitation	Section 4.1, pg. 63
Georgia	Additional scheduled activities may include, but are not limited to, receiving and answering suppliers' questions or conducting an offerors' or pre-bid conference.	Section 3.5.2
Hawaii	Generally; At least 15 days prior to the submission of bids pursuant to §103D-302 for a construction or design-build project with a total estimated contract value of \$500,000 or more, and at least 15 days prior to the submission of proposals pursuant to §103D-303 for a construction or design-build project with a total estimated contract value of \$100,000 or more, the head of the purchasing agency shall hold a pre-bid conference and shall invite all potential interested bidders, offerors, subcontractors, and union representatives to attend. HRS §103D-303.5.	State Procurement Manual Section V.

Idaho	The Pre-Bid or Pre-Proposal conference is conducted/led by DOP (DOP will introduce the procurement, have attendees introduce themselves, provide an overview of the solicitation process and highlight the mandatory (M) requirements of the solicitation).	Chapter 8, pg. 22
Illinois	e. Notifies BSBO, in writing, of the pre-proposal conference date and offers BSBO the opportunity to participate.	Part II, Ch 07 - pg. 3
Indiana	Pre-RFP Informational Session In order to ensure that State agencies are developing RFPs that are reflective of the latest technology and processes and that the agency has input from local industry representatives, a pre-RFP informational session is required prior to the planned issuance of any RFP. In some cases, IDOA may determine a combined session of the pre-RFP informational session and the pre-proposal conference may best suit the process. This session is a great opportunity for Indiana certified minority and women businesses to identify prime bidders they may wish to partner with.	<a href="https://www.in.gov/idoa/3110.htm">https://www.in.gov/idoa/3110.htm</a>
Iowa	Pre-Proposal Conference/Site Visit Some RFPs include a conference or site visit as specified in the solicitation documents prior to the due date for proposals. Occasionally, site visits are necessary or helpful to provide respondents with additional information.	State Procurement Manual Pg. 28
Kansas	RFP will typically involve a Pre-Bid Question & Answer Period or may include a Pre-Bid Conference if on-site discussions/tour are needed, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows potential vendors to request clarification of RFP information</li> <li>• Q&amp;A released to all known interested vendors via addendum, posted to the Internet</li> </ul>	State Procurement Manual Pg. 10

Kentucky	<p>3.8 Pre-Bid Conferences</p> <p>A pre-bid conference may be conducted to explain the procurement requirements for any particular procurement. The conference shall be open to the public, and the date, place and time of the conference shall be announced to all prospective bidders known to have received the invitation for bids, or a notice of availability of the invitation for bids.</p>	Kentucky Model Procurement Code 45A.360
Louisiana	<p>There are two types of prebid conferences – mandatory and non-mandatory. If the prebid conference is mandatory, only the companies represented by attendees may be considered for an award. A mandatory pre-bid conference must have compelling reasons and should be avoided wherever possible in an effort to increase competition. Note: State Purchasing requires all mandatory pre-bid conferences other than those substantiated by an architect’s letter on construction, to have management approval prior to bidding.</p>	Louisiana Procurement Handbook Section 10
Maine	<p>Pre-Bidders conferences are allowed, but are not required. These conferences are used to be certain that all bidders have an equal understanding of the state requirements.</p>	Chapter 110, Section II, A-IV
Maryland	<p>A Pre-Proposal Conference (the Conference) will be held at the date, time, and location indicated in the RFP Key Information Summary Sheet (near the beginning of the solicitation, after the Title Page and Notice to Vendors). All prospective Offerors are encouraged to attend in order to facilitate better preparation of their Proposals.</p>	State RFP Section 1.7

Massachusetts	<p>You may hold a bidders' or proposers' conference to supplement the purchase description. A pre-bid or pre-proposal conference may be necessary if, for example, vendors must examine a particular piece of equipment or inspect a facility that will be operated or managed under the contract you are awarding. However, a sufficiently detailed purchase description may make a conference unnecessary. You may choose to make the conference optional or mandatory. In either case, you should include notice of the conference in the purchase description, record all comments, questions, and answers at the conference, and distribute this record to all vendors in time for them to prepare their submittals.</p>	State Procurement Manual Chapter 2 p. 16
Michigan	<p>Use pre-bid and pre-proposal conferences for complex acquisitions, such as facility construction, or acquisitions that will likely receive a single bid, such as recent MDOT procurements for the MichiVan Program and intercity services. Conferences can be used as a means of briefing prospective offerors and explaining complicated specifications and requirements to them as early as possible after the solicitation has been issued and before offers are received.</p>	Pg. 29
Minnesota	<p><b>Pre-Bid Conference</b> If a pre-bid conference is indicated, you are encouraged to attend as this is an open discussion of the bid documents. City staff and any other involved parties are available to answer any questions.</p>	Minneapolis Procurement Guide

Mississippi	Pre-bid conferences may be conducted to explain the procurement requirements. They must be announced to all prospective bidders known to have received an Invitation for Bids. The conference should be held long enough after the Invitation for Bids has been issued to allow bidders to become familiar with it but sufficiently before bid opening to allow bidders to make any adjustments based on clarifications made during the conference.	State Procurement Manual Section 3.106.07
Missouri	Occasionally, the nature and complexity of a particular solicitation will necessitate a conference with potential bidders prior to the submission of bids to ensure the clarity of the requirements. The specific date, time, and place of the pre-bid conference will be announced in the solicitation document.	Missouri Procurement Manual Section 24
Montana	If desired, the State may conduct a face-to-face or conference call pre-proposal conference for potential offerors. This conference may either be mandatory or optional for the offerors to attend and must be stated as such in the RFP. Mandatory conferences should be used only when absolutely necessary.	State Procurement Manual pg. 13
Nebraska	A pre-bid conference is conducted to explain the procurement requirements to potential bidders and allow potential bidders to ask questions. Pre-Bid Conferences may be mandatory or optional at the discretion of the agency. Responses to questions during the Pre-Bid Conference are not binding on the State unless answered in writing, and posted to the SPB website.	Section 6.3, pg. 50

Nevada	*Undefined in Procurement Manual but pre-bid conferences are common according to Nevada purchasing website.	Nevada purchasing website <a href="http://www.clarkcountynv.gov/administrative-services/purchasing/Pages/listings.aspx">http://www.clarkcountynv.gov/administrative-services/purchasing/Pages/listings.aspx</a>
New Hampshire	The RFP states a specific date and time deadline for proposal receipt and often has mandatory pre-proposal meetings for vendors to attend. This meeting offers the opportunity to ask questions and gives the University a chance to determine whether any changes need to be issued (addenda) to the RFP. This is also an excellent time to conduct any requisite site visits to familiarize vendors with the project site(s).	New Hampshire University System Procurement Procedures Section 06-007
New Jersey	§ Will there be a pre-bid conference? Where? When? (State law does not permit mandatory attendance at a pre-bid conference. The term “strongly encouraged” is advised.	New Jersey Standard Bid Document Section C-I
New Mexico	Prepare, conduct /attend Pre-Proposal Conference	State Procurement Manual p. 16
New York	Prior to the due date for bids, an agency may require site visits to ensure that bidders are aware of site conditions.	Pg. 24
North Carolina	Conferences or site visits early in the solicitation cycle provide an opportunity to emphasize and clarify critical aspects of solicitations, eliminate ambiguities or misunderstandings, and permit vendor input.	Section 2.1.C

North Dakota	<b>PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCES:</b> Pre-proposal conferences may be conducted in accordance with 1.4.1.18 NMAC of this rule. Any such conference should be held prior to submission of initial proposals.	State Procurement Regulation 1.4.1.33
Ohio	Some bids include a pre-bid conference or site visit. Such events will be specified in the ITB.	Section 5.2.1
Oklahoma	Pre-bid conference. The State Purchasing Director shall state in a solicitation if the State Purchasing Director shall hold a supplier pre-bid conference and shall state whether supplier attendance is mandatory or non-mandatory.	Oklahoma Central Purchasing Rules Chapter 15, 580:15-4-5 (h)
Oregon	Purpose. A Contracting Agency may hold pre-Offer conferences with prospective Offerors prior to Closing, to explain the Procurement requirements, obtain information, or to conduct site inspections.	OAR 137-047-0420
Pennsylvania	A pre-bid conference may be conducted to enhance understanding of the procurement requirements. The pre-bid conference shall be announced as a part of the Invitation for Bids notice. The conference may be designated as "attendance mandatory" or "attendance optional".	Title 44, Code 1, Subtitle A, Section C
Rhode Island	*Pre-bid conference is not defined in the procurement manual, however pre-bid conferences are listed on the purchasing department website	<a href="http://www.purchasing.ri.gov/bidding/ExternalBidListing.aspx?Status=Active(Scheduled)">http://www.purchasing.ri.gov/bidding/ExternalBidListing.aspx?Status=Active(Scheduled)</a>
South Carolina	PRE-BID CONFERENCES AND SITE VISITS – SC Code Ann Reg. 19-445.2042 6.4.1 Agencies must advertise pre-bid conferences and site visits in SCBO.	State Procurement Manual

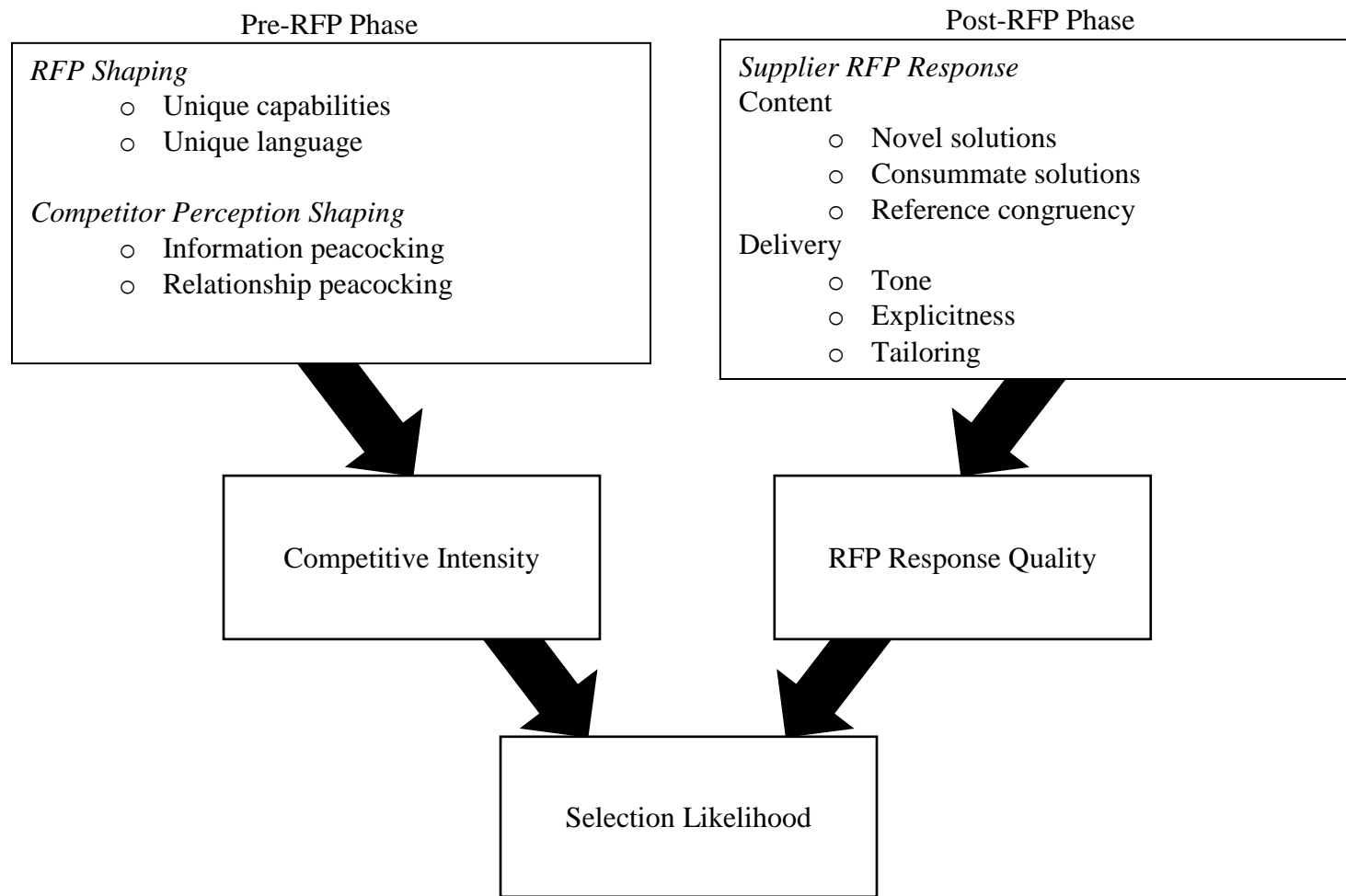
	6.4.2 The Agency should schedule the conference to occur no less than 14 days prior to bid opening. This will allow the Agency to clarify by addendum any issues bidders raise at the pre-bid conference	
South Dakota	<p>Bidders Conference</p> <p>A meeting held with prospective bidders or offerors prior to submission of bids or proposals, to review, discuss and clarify technical considerations, specifications and standards associated with a proposed procurement.</p>	South Dakota Vendor Manual p. 6
Tennessee	Pre-Bid/Proposal Conference/Question and Answer Period. If appropriate, a prebid/proposal conference and/or a question and answer period shall be included in the solicitation process. The purpose of the pre-bid/proposal conference and question and answer period is to provide prospective bidders/proposers the opportunity to submit questions/comments regarding the solicitation.	Tennessee Procurement Manual Section 8.5.6
Texas	Agencies may conduct mandatory or non-mandatory pre-solicitation conferences.	Page 69
Utah	Mandatory pre-bid conferences and site visits may be held to explain the procurement requirements in accordance with the following...	Utah Code R33-6-101
Vermont	<p>Pre-Bid (Bidders') Conferences and Adjustments to Bid Documents</p> <p>RFPs for large or complex projects shall require a pre-bid meeting (conference). The purpose of the pre-bid meeting (conference) is for the State to have an opportunity to review the statement of work and other RFP documents with bidders to ensure the State and the Vendors fully understand the requirements of the RFP.</p>	Vermont Procurement Bulletin 3.5 Section VII-B-2-6



Virginia	Pre-bid or Preproposal Conference: Meeting held with prospective bidders or offerors prior to submission of bids or proposals, to review, discuss, and clarify technical considerations, specifications, and standards relative to the proposed procurement.	Virginia Procurement Code p. 279
Washington	Pre-bid conferences and site visits provide an opportunity for dialogue between the Purchasing Activity, its customers, and the vendor community. Both facilitate the timely exchange of information to enable the Purchasing Activity and vendors to clarify solicitation requirements. In addition, any need for changes in specifications or solicitation requirements may be addressed to facilitate a more competitive environment, meet industry standards, or better define state needs.	Section 4.3, pg. 22
West Virginia	Pre-bid Conference - A meeting between vendors and agency personnel which offers an opportunity to emphasize and clarify critical aspects of a solicitation, eliminates misunderstanding and permits vendor input. Vendor attendance may be mandatory or voluntary as specified in the bid document.	West Virginia Procurement Handbook p. 13
Wisconsin	Conduct and document pre-bid conference, if approved for use. In most instances, a pre-bid conference is not necessary. For more complex procurements, the pre-bid conference may provide an opportunity to discuss the solicitation requirements, including explaining complicated specifications, and to address any questions from potential bidders. Such conference is held as early as possible after the IFB has been issued and before bids are submitted and opened. It must never be used as a substitute for amending a defective or ambiguous specification or IFB.	Wisconsin Invitation for Bid Toolkit Section 6.2

Wyoming	Pre-bid conferences are held in cases where vendor or manufacturer input is desired. Invitations to attend such a conference are issued to prospective bidders.	Wyoming Vendor's Guide p. 2
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**Figure 3-1: Conceptual Framework**



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**Kevin S. Chase**

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**Education**

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2010-2012	M.B.A. (Marketing)	University of Portland
2002-2006	B.A. Finance	Linfield College

**Research Interests**

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- Sales Strategy and Management
  - Organizational Buying Behavior
  - Digital Marketing and Advertising

**Dissertation**

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**Title:** An Exploration of Organizational Buying Behavior in the Public Sector

**Committee Members:** Dr. Brian Murtha (Chair), Dr. David Hardesty, Dr. John Pelozo, and Dr. Alan DeSantis

*Dissertation Proposal Successfully Defended: June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016*

**Research in Progress**

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**Chase, Kevin S.** with Brian Murtha, “Selling to Barricaded Buyers”

*(Selected as a Finalist for the 2017 ISBM Doctoral Dissertation Award Competition)*

*Status:* Multi-source data collection and analysis complete. Participant observation data includes unrestricted longitudinal observation of 8 organizational purchasing projects as a non-voting buying center member, including 46 interviews, 22 buyer meeting observations, 29 written supplier RFP responses.

*Status:* Invited for revision at the *Journal of Marketing*

**Chase, Kevin S.** with James Mead and Jonathan Hasford, “Exploring the Attachment Contribution Effect: The Impact of Device Attachment on Customer Product Perceptions”  
*(Selected for 2017 Society for Marketing Advances Conference, Best Paper Award)*

*Status:* In final preparation for submission to the *Journal of Marketing Research*

**Chase, Kevin S.**, with Molly Burchett and Brian Murtha, “Examining the Effect of Supplier RFP Responses Quality on Selection Likelihood”

Data analysis currently in progress. Data includes approximately 52 buying projects (RFPs) and 249 supplier responses within a large public organization

*Status:* Targeted for publication in the *Journal of Marketing*

**Chase, Kevin S.** with Brian Murtha, “Configuring Sales Encounters with Customers”

*Status:* Ten field interviews and four experiments complete. Targeted for publication in the *Journal of Marketing*

**Chase, Kevin S.**, “Test Equating Using Rasch Models for Better Marketing Education Research”

*Status:* In final preparation for submission to the *Journal of Marketing Education*

### Conference Presentations

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**Kevin Chase**, Brian Murtha, and Goutam Challagalla, “Selling to Barricaded Buyers” *2018 American Marketing Association Winter Educator’s Conference*, New Orleans, LA.

**Kevin Chase** and James Mead, “The Impact of Device Attachment on Consumer Perceptions,” *2017 Society for Marketing Advances*, Louisville, KY.

**Kevin Chase**, “The Effect of Restricted Supplier Access on Organizational Buying Behavior” *2017 Southeast Marketing Symposium*, Lexington, KY.

**Kevin Chase** and Brian Murtha, “Configuring Sales Encounters with Customers” *2016 American Marketing Association Winter Educator’s Conference*, Las Vegas, NV.

**Kevin Chase** and Brian Murtha, “Configuring Sales Encounters with Customers” *2016 Southeast Marketing Symposium*, Starkville, MS.

**Kevin Chase** and Brian Murtha, “Sales Managers and Salesperson Joint Sales Calls: When Should the Boss Stay Home?” *2015 Salesforce Productivity Conference*, Atlanta, GA.

**Kevin Chase**, “Sales Managers and Customer Interactions” *2015 Southeast Marketing Symposium*, Tallahassee, FL.

**Kevin Chase**, “The Impact of Product Eliminations on Firm Value” *2014 Southeast Marketing Symposium*, Fayetteville, AR.

(**Bold** = presenter)

### Teaching Interests

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Personal Selling, Sales Management, Marketing Strategy, Marketing Research

<b>Courses Taught</b>	<b>Semester</b>	<b>Instructor</b>
<b>Rating*</b>		
Principles of Marketing	Fall 2014	3.0/4.0
Personal Selling	Summer 2015	3.5/4.0
	Fall 2015	3.6/4.0
	Spring 2017	5.0/5.0
	Spring 2018	TBD

\*Overall Instructor Quality

### Honors and Awards

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Society for Marketing Advances Conference Best Paper Award, 2017

Finalist for ISBM Doctoral Research Award, 2017

Department of Marketing Outstanding Student Research Award, 2017

AMA-Sheth Doctoral Consortium Fellow, 2016

Department of Marketing and Supply Chain Teaching Award 2016

Gatton College of Business and Economics Lockett Fellowship 2015, 2016, 2017  
Gatton College of Business and Economics Fellowship Award, 2013, 2014  
Linfield College Faculty Scholarship, 2002-2006

### **Doctoral-Level Course Work**

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#### **Marketing and Management Theory**

Consumer Behavior I	Dr. David Hardesty
Consumer Behavior II	Dr. John Peloza
Management Strategy	Dr. Walter Ferrier
Marketing Strategy	Dr. Brian Murtha
Organizational Theory	Dr. Joe Labianca

#### **Methods**

Applied Statistics (Regression)	Dr. Michael Toland
Hierarchical Linear Modeling	Dr. Xin Ma
Multivariate Analysis	Dr. Hongwei Yang
Rasch Modeling	Dr. Kelly Bradley
Research Methods	Dr. Stephen Borgatti
Structural Equation Modeling	Dr. Hongwei Yang
Teaching Methods in Business	Dr. Gail Hoyt

#### **ISBM Doctoral Seminars**

Personal Selling and Sales Management	Dr. Michael Ahearne
Relationship Marketing Theory & Research	Dr. Robert Palmatier, Dr. Lisa Scheer

### **Reviewer**

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AMA Winter Educators Conference, 2018

Sales, Leadership, and Human Resources Track  
Sustainability Track

Society for Marketing Advances, 2017

Digital Marketing Track

AMA Winter Educators Conference, 2017

Customer Relationship Management and Sales Track

AMA Winter Educators Conference, 2016

Customer Relationship Management and Sales Track  
Marketing Strategy Track

AMA Summer Educators Conference, 2016

Customer Relationship Management and Sales Track  
Social Responsibility, Sustainability, & Public Policy Track



**Service**

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Kentucky Behavioral Research Lab Assistant 2013 to Present

AACSB Accreditation Student Representative, Gatton College of Business and Economics, 2017

Strategic Planning Committee, Gatton College of Business and Economics, 2014

Budget Finance Committee, Linfield College, 2006

**Affiliations**

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American Marketing Association

Academy of Marketing Science

Institute for Supply Management

Beta Gamma Sigma Honor Society

**Software Programs**

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SPSS, AMOS, STATA, SAS, HLM, R, Python, NVivo, Winsteps, Qualtrics, BlackBoard, Canvas

**Professional Experience**

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Product Marketing Manager, Standard Financial Group, 2009-2013

Sales and Marketing Specialist, USI Insurance Group, 2006-2009

Field Sales Manager (sales rep), Vector Marketing, 2002-2006