Big Ideas
for smaller police departments

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Editor's Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of *Big Ideas For Smaller Police Departments.* This quarterly newsletter is designed to respond principally to the needs of smaller police departments—those serving populations under 25,000 and/or with fewer than 25 sworn officers.

The IACP is focusing its resources on smaller departments for several reasons:

- *Numbers.* When looking at the 13,578 city and county agencies in the U.S., the majority are smaller—specifically, 10,580 have fewer than 25 sworn officers (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997).

- *Need for support.* These agencies, while facing many of the same policing issues of larger departments, have far fewer resources to meet those needs.

- *Interest from the field.* Smaller agencies expressed a strong interest in, and a need for, this IACP initiative.

The Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance has provided an ongoing grant to the IACP to help smaller departments through information dissemination and on-site technical assistance.

The topic for this first edition of *Big Ideas, Acquisition of New Technology,* comes from the field. An IACP survey of smaller departments found that *the acquisition of technology* is one of the most challenging and complex issues of the new century. Future topics will also come from our continuing research on the needs of smaller departments.

We hope you find this newsletter of value. In addition to publications such as this, the IACP's Services, Support and Technical Assistance to Smaller Police Departments project provides *on-site technical assistance and training,* through a regional format. To take advantage of these additional project features, call us at 1-800-THE-IACP, extension 262.

If you have comments on this edition of *Big Ideas for Smaller Police Departments,* or have suggestions for future issues, please contact Elaine Deck, editor, at decke@theiacp.org

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Acquisition of New Technology
A Best Practices Guide

By Chief David Kurz, Durham, New Hampshire, Police Department; Major Sharon Stolting, Fairfax County, Virginia, Sheriff's Office; and Captain Shawn M. Barrett, Fairfax County, Virginia, Police Department

Law enforcement technology is advancing into the twenty-first century with the realization that technology alone does not solve problems.

However, as technology links information systems between agencies and communities, it can provide an accurate, speedy information exchange, resulting in increased safety for all citizens.

Today's smaller city police executives need the ability to effectively design and manage evolving technologies. For this reason, the IACP, has developed a *Best Practices Guide on Acquisition of New Technology.*

Why invest in new technology?

Smaller police departments are unique entities. They serve diverse communities with unique needs. Local government agencies often dictate the direction a department can take, determine its budget and how it may use its resources. If you, as a chief of police, plan to acquire *new technology*—whether it may be a *desktop or laptop computer, a laser printer, an MDT, new frequency radios, livescan devices, or a digital mugshot system*—you will be asked, "Why?"

You, as the chief of your department, are the one who must justify:

- the aquisition of new technology
- the expense of new technology
- the usefulness of new technology

What is new technology?

In the context of this article, the term *technology* is used in a general sense and can include new computers, a management information system (MIS), and sophisticated software for data analysis. The term is used generally because smaller police agencies will have a variety of needs and uses for technology. The focus of this work is to guide the local chief through the planning and acquisition for any emerging new technology.

As a plan develops, it is important to factor in any departmental changes resulting from the implementation of any new technology. For example, as a result of acquiring new technology, a department could experience adjustments to personnel, budget, cooperative agreements, or information sharing,

How to use this guide

There are three steps to successful acquisition of new technology—an Acquisition Plan, the Acquisition and Delivery of the Technology, and Implementation and Training.

The three sections of the guide are designed to be followed sequentially. The local chief may proceed through the steps, or use them as a reference guide, when considering the acquisition of any new technology. The steps are all essential; however, the information is general enough to apply to the purchase of many types of technology.

THE THREE STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL ACQUISITION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY:

Step One: The Acquisition Plan

Step Two: Acquisition & Delivery

Step Three: Implementation & Training

The Acquisition Plan

The goal of the acquisition plan is to help smaller police departments plan and develop their own technology acquisition plans successfully. This guide is intended to help the local chief avoid the pitfalls leading to project failure.

Research Steps:
1. Develop a planning committee.
2. Review compliance guidelines.
3. Develop a project budget

Action Steps:
1. Choose a spokesperson.
2. Develop a mission statement.
3. Set project goals and objectives.
4. Develop a project timeline with milestones.
5. Complete a risk assessment.
6. Gain staff consensus.

Acquisition & Delivery

The goal of acquisition is to purchase the desired technology. Before purchase, the planning committee must determine vendor selection criteria, develop an RFP, select a vendor, and finally purchase the equipment. The next steps are to determine the cost of product installation, upgrades or additions.

Research Steps:

1. Determine vendor selection criteria.

2. Develop a request for proposals (RFP).

3. Select a vendor.

Action Steps:

1. Develop a delivery schedule.

2. Develop a contract penalty clause.

3. Include millennium compliance.

4. Negotiate a price for upgrades.

5. Consider contract additions.

6. Consider equipment substitution costs.

7. Ensure accountability.

8. Develop a payment schedule.

9. Purchase the technology.

Implementation & Training

The goal of implementation and training is to install and test the technology, then train staff to utilize the technology successfully in their everyday activities. An essential step in this process is to ensure that the agency is protected from any equipment defects.

Research Steps:

1. Develop infrastructure support.

2. Develop an acceptance test plan (performance check).

3. Develop staff training schedule.

Action Steps:

1. Write warranty and maintenance agreement.

2. Install the equipment (delivery and set up).

3. Train staff.

The Acquisition Plan

"No one starts out to make a mistake."
— *Chief David Kurz, Durham, N.H.*

Facts:

● Only 16% of *all* systems development projects are completed on time and on budget.

● More than 40% of new technology development projects are abandoned before implementation. (The Standish Group, 1999)

Questions the acquisition plan is intended to answer:

● **Why do you want to purchase this technology?**

● **What will be purchased?**

● **Who will use the technology?**

● **Where will it be used?**

● **How will it be used?**

● **When will it be implemented?**

Elements of a Successful Acquisition Plan:

An acquisition plan is a map and project guide. It is also a tool to evaluate project milestones and successes and a concise way to inform others about project goals and objectives. Essential elements are divided into research and action steps.

Research Steps

Research Step 1: Develop a planning committee.

This group is usually selected by the chief and will assist in the planning, design, sales, and implementation of the plan. Divide the committee into work groups according to individual skill and interest. The committee will produce the bulk of the research and action steps needed to complete the acquisition. Consider these factors as you choose your committee:

● Limit size to 10. Three to five members is optimal number, depending on agency.

● Include a membership from various backgrounds/fields. A broad perspective is always helpful in achieving overall success.

● Always include the training staff as well as officers who will be using the new technology. This encourages buy-in from staff and provides a valuable perspective on use and training issues.

● Select from technical schools, university professors or graduate students with technology expertise.

● Include community business professionals who may have technology expertise or interest.

● Include a selectman/council member on the committee who can provide political support.

● Choose a spokesperson or project manager who can *best* describe and sell the project. This person—who must be well-spoken, determined, credible, enthusiastic, and a consensus-builder—could be a chief, project coordinator or another individual.

Research Step 2: Review compliance guidelines.

Any new technology acquisition must be checked against national and

state guidelines. The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) set the federal guidelines. To view these guidelines, check www.nist/gov.public_affairs/welcome.htm. Check what local agencies may have recently purchased. If you are interested in compatibility, make sure all the systems or equipment you purchase is compatible with local, county and state quidelines.

Research Step 3: Develop a project budget.

While each department and municipal budget process is unique, some recommendations apply to all jurisdictions. If you are planning to purchase new equipment or technology, include the following suggestions to your budget or acquisition planning process.

- Plan for the technology upgrade or purchase 1-3 years in advance, if possible.

- Include technology estimates in the budget projections you submit to your municipal governing body each year prior to the purchase. This will alert the governing body to the concept of a large, new purchase on the horizon.

- Research any local or state departments that have purchased the same or similar technology within the past year. Interview planners and users of this technology. Make a site visit if you can. Take members of the Planning Committee with you.

- Research all recent state and federal purchases to see if you can utilize the same contract and same vendor. This will allow you to purchase the same equipment/technology at the state or federal contract price. This will save both time and money.

The Role of a Budget Subcommittee

If your agency is responsible for budget development, establish a subcommittee within the Planning Committee to develop a project budget. Make sure these individuals are familiar with the process of budget development, contracts, and/or procurement. The committee should have legal representation. An attorney with a background in contract law would be helpful.

It is difficult to project a budget for technology or equipment never before purchased. Pay close attention to installation and training costs in the budget (Section Three: Acquisition). Review this entire guide before completing the budget. Research agencies that have recently purchased similar equipment. Any equipment contract purchased by public dollars is open to public review.

The most reliable way to develop a realistic budget is to research other departments that have recently purchased similar equipment. Complete a site visit and discuss the budget with them. Take a group with you that includes members from the budget subcommittee.

Budget questions to ask during a site visit:

- How close to actual cost was your projected budget?

- Are there costs that you forgot to add to the budget?

- Will you review our budget and give us input?

- Do you know if this equipment (technology) will undergo changes soon?

- If you do not have all the funding you need, what can you do incrementally?

- Did the vendor you used stay within the budget?

- Would you recommend this vendor?

- Do you know of any local or State departments intending to purchase this equipment?

> **Tip:**
> Equipment can be purchased at state or federal contract prices. Do the research to find if the same or similar equipment has been purchased recently or is scheduled to be purchased.

Lease versus Purchase Option:

Technology is changing at such a rapid rate that vendors are producing better and faster products each year. A lease option could save money in the long run if the jurisdiction is able to anticipate rapid product changes by their research steps. Make a point to be aware of new products being developed during the planning and evaluation stages.

Action Steps

Action Step 1: Choose a spokesperson or project manager.

This step is essential and pivotal. Each project needs a spokesperson, usually the chief. This person's responsibility is to inform the agency, the community and sell the project's goals and objectives to community and political leaders. When making a selection, consider the following:

- Include the spokesperson or project manager on the Planning Committee. They need to be involved and informed.

- Select someone who is politically linked but not politically at risk by advocating for the project. Political support is essential to project success.

The Acquisition Plan

- Select someone (if not the chief), who is familiar with police activities, philosophy, and needs. Often questions about the project can be strategically linked to previous projects, department successes, and new linkages. This spokesperson must include that information in any attempt to promote a persuasive argument for this project to an audience with little frame of reference.

Action Step 2: Develop a mission statement.

The purpose of this statement is to accomplish the following:

1. Define the project goal.
2. Set the project direction.
3. Define the project purpose.
4. Promote the project plan and structure.

This short, descriptive statement briefly describes the project goal. It is used in media coverage, for public relations and to build staff consensus. The statement should be linked to the values and philosophy of the police department and the citizens it serves.

Public safety, cost-benefit analysis, or public trust are all persuasive issues to include with the following:

- Linking the statement to local police department philosophy, goals, and accomplishments.
- Speaking to future plans *only* when those plans have been discussed and accepted by the community governing body and can be linked directly to this acquisition. Avoid introducing any new issues not directly connected to this project when writing the mission statement.
- Making the statement short, descriptive and compelling by using action words—produce, provide, develop, ensure, promote.

Action Step 3: Set the project goal and objectives.

The project goal is directly related to the mission statement. Essentially, the goal will be to complete the successful planning and implementation of the new technology you plan to purchase.

Project objectives are the steps that must be taken in order to reach the project goal. Consider the following suggestions:

- Work across organizational boundaries to promote sharing of data where appropriate. (Many projects are funded because they link to or collaborate with other systems).
- Inform agency personnel and the community of the need for and benefit of an equipment change.
- Improve current work procedures to maximize the use of the new technology.
- Study the current system for strengths and weaknesses. From that study, make defensible recommendations for the new technology requirements.
- Maintain a responsive relationship to those served by the new technology—the local community, neighboring communities.
- Clearly define the technology terms and the police jargon so that the new technology—its application to and how it will enhance the current system—is understood.

Action Step 4: Develop a project timeline that includes milestones.

This step enables the chief, project manager, the Strategic Planning Committee, and the community to mark the project's progress and completion of objectives. This is a good way to sustain interest in the project over time.

With each successive achievement will come an opportunity to build support and consensus for the project. Consider the following recommendations:

- Forecast a project timeline and milestones that is flexible and achievable.
- Celebrate each milestone reached. Remember to invite and thank the following:
  - Planning committee members
  - Key political people, especially allies
  - Staff members
  - The media
  - Vendor representatives
  - State or local criminal justice organizations

Action Step 5: Complete a risk assessment.

A thorough risk assessment will provide you with the information and documentation to move forward on your acquisition. It will advise you as to what you need, can afford, and what you can get approved by the local political review process. This risk assessment includes a state and federal guidelines search, a compatibility study with other local or county departments, and a determination of and recommendation for equipment you need. Know what technology is best suited for your agency, what will be compatible with other regional or state departments, and what you can successfully negotiate through the local political process. First, you must determine what technology is currently in use or planned to be used in your county and state. Here are suggested steps to follow:

- Conduct site visits to any local agencies that use the technology you want to purchase.

- Develop a list of questions that will ascertain the types of technology in use, the vendor name and/or contact person.

- Ask for an honest assessment by that department of the product and its performance.

- Ask if your group can view the technology in field/actual use.

- Ask about the vendors they *rejected* and why.

Site Visit Questions:

- **What type of technology is currently in use?**

- **How is the product working? Has it met expectations?**

- **What is the name of the vendor used? Name of vendors that were rejected, and why?**

- **Who is the *contact person* for the vendor?**

- **Who is the contact person for the police department?**

- **Can you arrange for a site visit to see the product application in real situations?**

- **Is the product compatible with other technologies (new or old)?**

- **Does the product satisfy state public safety department guidelines?**

- **Does the department contemplate changing this or other technology? (If so, can you piggyback their project and purchase at state prices?)**

- Contact your state public safety department to determine if they are contemplating a technology change in the near future. If so, you may be able to piggy-back on their project at state prices.

- Contact other information resources outside local and state sources such as **the Internet.** This source may provide a quick method of searching but requires follow-up and meetings with potential vendors. The following are potential sources:

  - The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) has three websites with information on assistance—www.theiacp.org, www.iacpnet.com, and www.IACPtechnology.org.

  - The IACP Technology Clearinghouse (www.IACP technology.org) provides technical assistance and resources, including program summaries, reference articles, and grant opportunities. Contact either Tom Robey or Matt Snyder at 800-THE-IACP.

  - The IACP Law Enforcement Management Section is comprised of over 300 law enforcement technologists from agencies of all sizes. This group produces technology resource materials and conducts an annual law enforcement technology training conference. The next conference will be held May 22-26 in Denver, Colorado. See www.IACPtechnology.org/LEIM/2000.HTM

  - The IACP Technology Center and Technical Assistance Program: makes IACP technology assets and activities available to the law enforcement community. To participate in the various technology committees and sections, or to contact the IACP technical assistance program, e-mail Matt Snyder at Snyderm@theiacp.org.

  - The National Law Enforcement Corrections Technology Center's *Law Enforcement & Corrections Technology News Summary* is a comprehensive and free list service published weekly and sent electronically to the subscriber via e-mail. NLECTC summarizes technology news articles from many different sources and provides a synopsis for the reader. To subscribe, send the command "subscribe JUSTNETNews first name last name" to the address, listproc@nlectc.org. For assistance, contact dengler@nlectc.org or call NLECTC at 1-800-248-2742.

Action Step 6: Gain staff consensus.

Staff at all levels will need to support the plan and be able to implement the new acquisition successfully and on time.

One way to ensure cooperation, is to include staff representatives on either your Acquisition Planning Committee or as a separate ad hoc advisory group.

An effective training schedule is essential if staff are to be trained and informed. Consider these recommendations:

- Include staff on committees that represent administrative, line, and support positions. You will need each group to successfully implement the technology. The sooner you engage staff support, the easier it will be to incorporate the new technology into standard business process.

- Gain staff input as the product (technology) is being developed or researched. Many projects have failed to introduce staff to the new project until it was delivered only to find the implementation process seriously undermined.

Acquisition & Delivery

The goal of acquisition and delivery is to purchase and receive the desired technology. Before purchase, the project team must determine vendor selection criteria, develop an RFP, select a vendor, and finally purchase the equipment. The next steps are to determine the cost of product installation, upgrades, or additions after the purchase. Research steps are important to the RFP guidelines for product and vendor selection.

> **Tip:**
> Vendor contracts are legally binding documents created at the local, state, federal or tribal level. The helpful tips presented in this newsletter are not intended as final contract language since they may or may not be applicable in your particular jurisdiction. Consult your legal counsel before entering into any vendor agreement.

Research Steps

Research Step 1: Determine a vendor selection criteria.

Vendor selection criteria is vital to the project acquisition plan. The goal of this step is to be able to clearly and fairly evaluate all vendors responding to the RFP.

An effective way to develop vendor selection criteria is to contact other police departments or other agencies that have recently bought any technology. You can get some valuable suggestions from agencies that have successfully or unsuccessfully dealt with vendors, even if the purchase was not new technology. Learning what not to do is often as valuable as learning what strategies are effective.

These are some important suggestions for deciding vendor selection:

- Include specific equipment specifications in the RFP that will weed out any vendor not able to deliver.
- Once a number of vendors have applied, research any referrals they include in their organizational descriptions. Call any companies that have done business with them and ask the following:

  Were you satisfied with the product and service of this vendor?

  Would you use them again if you could? If not, why not?

  Did the vendor adhere to the budget or not. If not, why?

  Was the installation process on schedule?

  Did the product work according to expectations?

  Was there appropriate technical support for operation and training?

  Ask to see the contract. Check for essential items such as warrantee, delivery schedule, payment schedule, and penalty clause. (These issues are discussed later in this section.)
- Visit any site the vendor has referred you to. See if the equipment actually works. Ask some hard questions about the reliability, service, and support functions of the company.
- Do a financial review of all companies responding to the RFP. Don't take anyone's word on how financially sound the companies are. Judge them all equally.

- Once the selection criteria are determined, develop forms that document scoring. You may need proof of evaluation if a company appeals the award.
- Include an interview with each company that requires referrals of agencies the company has recently worked with.
- Make the award based on a total score, not just dollar bid alone. The lowest bid may not be the best bid. Specify award criteria in the RFP. Vendors unable to deliver will often not apply.

The essential point is to do as much research as possible prior to selection.

Research Step 2: Develop a request for proposals (RFP).

An RFP is written after the acquisition plan is complete and after the research has provided you with several possible vendors for the technology you have chosen to purchase.

Check the financial background of each vendor. *Caution:* Do not use the words *"the same as"* when describing the equipment in the RFP. You may be forced to accept equipment a vendor claims is the same, even if it clearly is not the same. RFP language must be direct and specific. Include the following:

- Your department's requirements of the product;
- Exact product specifications (not *"or the same as"*) or expectations*;
- A standard for assessing bids from vendors (vendor selection criteria); and
- Contract guidelines and expectations regarding delivery, warranty, penalty clause, millennium compliance, installation guidelines, test plan, project expectations.

The local purchasing department of your municipality, a local attorney, or a sample RFP from a neighboring department may provide you with the needed legal language to include in the contract. The local library often carries the National Register, which is a government publication of RFPs and will have useful examples.

Prior to publication, make sure to get several RFP reviewers who can give you honest input on content and form. This step is essential. Include several Planning Committee members on the committee to write and review the RFP.

Research Step 3: Select a vendor.

This step requires research much like what was suggested in Research Step One. Make sure you have the selection subcommittee (see page four) present their vendor evaluations and recommendations to the Planning Committee. Ask probing, specific questions about the product, services, and/or scoring of these choices. Be prepared to reopen the bidding process if the subcommittee is unsure about which vendor to select. A choice should be based upon total score. The winning vendor should not be selected upon the dollar bid alone; make certain that the RFP states that.

Selection of a vendor is a pivotal step in the acquisition of new technology. It is not uncommon for law enforcement executives to be intimidated by the terminology or the selection process. In an effort to simplify this process, think of it as though you were buying an automobile—there are similar steps to take in each decision.

There will be multiple manufacturers who will all be vying for your dollar and trying to sell you on their models. Consider these checkpoints:

- **Performance**. Vendors often say their product performs *the same* when, in fact, it performs only similarly. One product may vary considerably from others.

- **Extras**. Determine what is considered standard features of the new technology and what is considered extras. If the extras are costly and your department requires those features, the cost will be significantly higher.

- **Resale Value**. Vendor companies have a past and a future in much the same way Ford and Chevrolet do. Many people have favorites based upon familiarity and name recognition. Do a background check on the reliability of the company with regard to parts, service, reputation, and follow-through.

- **Test Drive.** Find out how the product operates in the real world by viewing the product in operation. Interview the purchaser, the operator, and the chief of the department that utilizes the equipment you are considering.

- **Location.** Is there a vendor located near you in the event you require repairs to the new equipment? If the vendor is not located near you, determine what the repair cost will be and if your department may be charged for their travel expenses or for postage if shipping is required.

- **Parts and Service.** Each vendor will have a customer service reputation. When you interview departments or companies that have purchased this equipment before you, ask them specifically about the reliability of the vendor's parts and service contract. Did they perform as contracted, or not?

When repairs were needed did the vendor provide replacement items or "loaners" in place of the equipment you purchased that is now in "the shop?" Were repairs completed in a timely fashion and was the charge the same as the estimate?

Planning and research provided by the Acquisition Plan provides the basis for developing a vendor contract that will enable accurate and timely acquisition and delivery of the purchase.

Action Steps

Action Step 1: Develop a delivery schedule.

The delivery schedule is developed between you, the planning committee and the vendor. It should include the following:

- A delivery start date with specifications for the type of delivery (FOB destination and location of the delivery).

- Implementation milestones (accomplishments throughout the contract)

- An end date for product delivery

- Quality assurance testing by the vendor prior to shipment

- Installation procedure and dates

- Product field testing and final acceptance procedures

Action Step 2: Develop a contract penalty clause.

Financial penalties may be included in the contract for late delivery of the product, for damaged goods, or for services not received.

Acquisition & Delivery

> **Tip:**
> It is wise to include a sum to be assessed per day for late delivery of the product.

Usually this sum is developed using a percentage of the contract total spread over a specific amount of time. Use figures comparable to other local contract fees.

This strategy holds vendors accountable to the contract timeline. It is common to have vendors run concurrent projects. So avoid costly delays by using the penalty clause to your advantage.

Action Step 3: Include millennium compliance.

Mandate the vendor be compliant with millennium date structures, i.e., 2/29/2000. Hold the vendor accountable for any damages incurred as a result of noncompliance.

"Century compliance" means (1) the product can recognize the same and different centuries when using those dates to compile and process formulas; and (2) the product will *not* terminate its functionality with calendar year changes.

Action Step 4: Negotiate a price for technology upgrades.

Product upgrades, due to obsolescence, are usually not included in a contract price because they have not yet been developed. Plan on upgrades if you plan to use the same vendor.

Vendor competition has created an arena for new products. Ensure that hardware and software are compatible, particularly if using multiple vendors. Add this as a

contract clause. Police departments can benefit from this competition if a *replacement price* is negotiated in the product contract.

> **Tip:**
> When negotiating upgrades for possible obsolescence, require additional funding to be paid to the vendor over several years. Plan ahead for this eventuality by negotiating a replacement price if possible. (It is a risk to the purchaser that is based upon the vendor's financial future and growth).

Action Step 5: Consider contract additions due to increased/decreased product function.

It is normal to have additions to contracts after final acceptance. As the user gains a better understanding of the product capabilities, enhancements may become evident.

Enhancements may include faster response time, speed of information retrieval, or linkage to nearby area systems. Product functioning may be enhanced or reduced by changes in the law or community initiatives. Additions to the contract occur when equipment functions increase or decrease unexpectedly.

Action Step 6: Reserve the right to accept or reject all substitution of equipment without additional cost to the vendor.

It is commonplace to have substitution of equipment occur between the signing of a contract and the delivery of the product. Technology changes so quickly that components may become obsolete between

the time a contract is signed and a product is delivered.

> **Tip:**
> *Include a title clause* to guarantee that the title of the product passes to the police department or local governing body when *payment in full* is received by the vendor.

Contract clauses may protect your acquisition, but pitfalls may befall you throughout the project.

Be wary of salespeople who promise that their product can meet or exceed your expectations/needs. The promise from the salesperson may be more influenced by a product commission than by actual fact.

Once a sale is made, a salesperson may be replaced by a *project manager* never to be seen again. Ask the vendor if you will receive a project manager after the sale. If so, insist that this individual is included in all project negotiation.

A project manager does the following:
- Monitors the contract and deliverables to ensure the product arrives on time to the satisfaction of the purchaser.
- Notifies the purchaser of any product delays.

> **Tip:**
> Use the penalty clause to your advantage if the project manager attempts to get you to waive the penalty charge when a delay occurs. Legally acceptable project delays include the following:
> - An Act of War (including civil war or civil unrest).
> - An Act of God (including fire, flood, explosion, earthquake, epidemics or quarantine restrictions).
> - An Act of Government (strikes, lockouts, plant shutdowns, material shortages, transportation delays).

Action Step 7: Ensure accountability.

Include a statement that will ensure the vendor complies with city, county, state, and federal mandates. They must be electronically acceptable according to state standards.

Action Step 8: Develop a payment schedule.

Payment schedules are based on agreed delivery schedule and accomplished milestones. Most vendors request a large portion of the negotiated price *before* actual product delivery.

This payment schedule should be negotiated according to local financial procedures. It is wise to negotiate payment based on product *delivery date,* not contract signing date. Vendors often ask for as much as 40 percent of your funding upon contract signing.

- Negotiate a manageable payment schedule for your department.

Example: 25 percent upon delivery, 50 percent within 45-60 days after delivery based on success of delivery, setup, installation, training and initial performance. May be extended due to poor performance. 25 percent within 6 months after delivery to ensure a formal review and acceptance of the system for compliance with mandates, proper data conversion is completed, interfaces are working and the system is reliable.

- A *performance bond* can be written into the contract to further protect your agency's investment, or in the absence of any payment schedule. Compel the vendor to obtain a performance bond payable to the buyer, i.e., your police department, for the total dollar amount of your contract. If the project's identified vendor is bought out by another vendor, insist upon and add into the contract, that your agency wants the *same product and service, or better.*

> **Tip:**
> Be aware that there is no such thing as a turn-key system. Each agency is unique with local requirements.

Action Step 9: Purchase the technology.

A vendor will be selected on the basis of the quality of the product, the price of the product, service and delivery schedule, maintenance and training, financial background, client references, and any other criteria you or your planning committee determines is important. The following are important to include in the vendor selection criteria or the contract discussions once a selection and purchase has been made.

> **Tip:**
> An additional contract, or an addendum to the original contract, may be needed if product liability law changes or product enhancement/ reduction of functionality occurs. Include funds in the budget for unforeseen product changes. (Look in other contracts for an amount).

Implementation & Training

The goal of Implementation and Training is to install and test the technology, then prepare and train staff to successfully utilize the technology in their everyday business practice. An essential step in this process is to ensure that the agency is protected from any equipment defects.

Research Steps

Research Step 1: Develop infrastructure support.

Infrastructure consists of any element required to successfully complete the new product installation and/or operation. For example:

- Personal computers require electrical power, surge protectors, or a battery unit. They may be connected to a network or management information system (MIS). Any network or MIS requires wiring, cables, a back-up unit, and network administrator. (Networks are expensive to maintain).
- MDTs, or MDCs, and radios require a communications infrastructure capable of transmitting signals throughout a jurisdiction or region.
- Livescan devices and mugshot systems require high-speed telephone lines for speedy transmission of data or images.

> **Tip:**
> Coordinate infrastructure requirements with your jurisdiction and the vendor in advance of contract signing. Determine who will maintain the infrastructure, network, or equipment.

Research Step 2: Develop an acceptance test plan, warranty and maintenance agreement within the installation guidelines.

The acceptance test plan determines the functionality of your acquisition and ensures the product performs as expected. The plan can be can be negotiated with a vendor and included in the contract.

> **Tip:**
> Negotiate an acceptance plan that extends for a 30-day acceptance period. This is sufficient time for defective or failed equipment or parts to materialize, be repaired or replaced.

Research Step 3: Develop a staff training schedule.

Training is considered one of the key components of product implementation. Levels of training, its duration and content, and who will provide the training can, and should, be included in the contract.

Types of Training:

(1) Vendor training: The vendor agrees to train the entire staff at a cost negotiated within the contract.

(2) Train-the-trainers: The vendor trains a selected group of key staff who then train all other staff within their divisions. These individuals can be officers, staff, or citizens.

(3) Shared training: A jurisdiction near you may have the same or similar equipment and could provide product training at a significantly lower cost.

> **Tip:**
> Have the vendor provide course materials and a training schedule (more intensive during product implementation) to be included in the contract if the vendor training option is chosen.
>
> If a train-the-trainer option is chosen, provide staff with a helpful tool: "The Accidental Trainer" by Elaine Weiss. This book is easy to read, informative and often humorous.

Networking among police departments is often the least expensive and most productive means of technical assistance and/or training resource development.

A few telephone calls to regional departments can achieve results. It proves again that many smaller departments face the same challenges as do larger departments when dealing with technology acquisition and vendors.

Networking can also be effective between police departments and local civic organizations and/or technology companies. Networking can reveal unknown resources that may produce improved relationships between smaller departments and the constituents they serve.

More information on actual training is found in the next section in Action Step 3.

Implementation & Training

Action Steps

Action Step 1: Write warranty and maintenance agreement.

The *warranty period* begins once the acceptance test plan has been completed. Although the warranty exists, it may not include all the additional services required to maintain the product.

> **Tip:**
> Include a period of time for the product warranty. A suggested time is one year from the date of final acceptance. It is suggested to negotiate this warranty and include it in the contract.

Under a separate *maintenance agreement,* additional services such as parts replacement, preventative maintenance, emergency repairs, a method for fixing "bugs" in the system, and after- hours technical assistance are most often charged to the police department.

The following are types of maintenance agreements:

- Annual agreement*:* Covers service and repair during the regular work week, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

- Cost of the annual maintenance agreement is based on a fixed percentage of the actual, total contract.

- *After-hours* repair are charges at an hourly rate (usually a higher percentage).

- Lease agreement*:* Some maintenance agreements are made in the form of a lease between the police department and a financial institution. The lender pays the vendor and the department makes payments to the lender, much like a mortgage.

These payments can be amortized annually over several years, lessening the financial impact to the local department or jurisdiction.

The advantage of the lease agreement: Technology is changing at such a rapid rate that vendors are producing better and faster products each year. This option could save money in the long run if the jurisdiction is able to anticipate rapid product changes.

> **Tip:**
> To determine the type of maintenance agreement, ask how *mission critical* is the operation of this technology to the department. Negotiation of long-term, low-rate maintenance agreements during the contract signing is advantageous, because this agreement has the potential to save the department thousands of dollars over the life expectancy of the equipment.

Action Step 2: Install the equipment/technology.

Installation means delivery and setup of all product components.

- Hold vendor accountable for proper delivery and setup according to terms negotiated in your contract.

- Decide who will install the equipment and then include that responsibility in the contract.

- The department will be required to provide space for product installation and setup.

> **Tip:**
> Consider power distribution, cabling, air conditioning, and other environmental conditions in the installation cost and timeframe. Factor in these additional costs. Facilities management personnel must be included at this stage.

Action Step 3: Train staff.

The process of training is crucial to successful procurement or implementation of new equipment or technology. Too frequently, administrators overlook or diminish the important role of training in the acquisition plan. It is possible, depending upon the impact of any new equipment/technology, for a small number of persons either to undermine the product implementation because of dissatisfaction, or to disrupt department functions if the training phase is not planned or supervised appropriately.

Implementing the purchase will succeed with greater certainty if the planning process includes the following points:

- Delegate a training supervisor or someone who can oversee the training process and monitor its progress. If it is necessary to implement and train in stages, make sure that the schedule is understood and that allowance is made for any disruption of services because of training. If you have to assign staff to train on the new equipment/technology, or if support staff is training during core working hours, they will be missed and service may be disrupted.

- Determine if training will be on or offsite.
- It is preferable to train staff in stages prior to the actual implementation of the purchase. Staff training may be done all at once or in stages, but is generally more efficiently carried out in stages.

    Staff involvement in the project through representation on subcommittees or during the planning stage will avoid implementation and/or training difficulties caused by disgruntled or resentful staff. The important step of including users of the purchase in the project planning and implementation stages will provide good will between this group and administration.

    Positive suggestions for successful training procedures can be obtained during a site visit prior to purchase.
- Include funds for travel/training if not already included in contract.

Training Tips:
- Notify all staff of the training schedule. This step provides credibility and support to the trainers and justifies any staff reassignment.
- Budget for any reassignment or overtime that may be needed while staff train on the new equipment.
- Budget and account for any delays in department response, services, or reports that may be caused by staff training or reassignment.

IACP Sections/Committees

- Chief Joseph G. Estey, IACP fifth vice president and board member oversight of the Communication and Technology Committee; Hartford Police Department, White River Junction, Vermont jestey@dps.state.vt.us

- G. Matthew Snyder, IACP Law Enforcement Information Management Section (LEIM) Snyderm@theiacp.org

For More Information

The following are IACP contacts who can assist you with technology questions:

- G. Matthew Snyder, administrator, IACP Technology Center and Technical Assistance Program (Snyderm@theiacp.org)

- Katherine Spivey, technical support specialist, IACP Website (Spiveyk@theiacp.org)

- Mark Henriquez, project coordinator, Use of Force/Internal Affairs (Henriquezm@theiacp.org)

- Laura Nichols, project coordinator, Criminal Justice Information Sharing, and acting project coordinator, Cutting Edge of Technology (Nicholsl@theiacp.org)

Trends/News from the Field

IACP/NIJ Technology Conference

The Office of Science and Technology, National Institute of Justice, is holding its annual conference on *Technologies for Public Safety in Critical Incident Response,* June 7-10, 2000, in Denver, Colorado. Professionals from law enforcement, fire, EMS and other first responders will be available to share information, examine the latest technologies for incident response and management, and attend various plenary and break-out sessions. Among the plenary session topics are "Identifying Federal Funding Sources for Technology" and "Technolgies for School Safety." Conference information can be found at http://www.nlectc.org

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Attention: Elaine F. Deck

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