

## Roundtable Take-A-Ways

Topic: Managing Customer /Contractor (Partner) Teams for Product Development

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Government (and ARDEC) is moving away from single contractor and toward Integrated Product Teams (IPTs), including Core Team membership by multiple contractors.

- IPTs permit government to be actively involved in the design tradeoffs.
- Teams develop own goals, schedules, milestones and are empowered.
- Program Manager delegates vendor/partner decisions to team including any changes to vendor base.

ARDEC has been somewhat successful in breaking down customer/supplier barriers to achieve teaming. They are experimenting with having a vendor representative act as IPT leader. Lucent partners with both suppliers and end users because of their unique position in the food chain. Other Roundtable participants indicate that although they generally encourage involvement, suppliers most often recommend rather than make decisions

Issues to address:

- Biggest issue with IPTs has been conflict resolution. Important to have procedures in place to address conflicts.
- Early team resolution of Intellectual Property issues, including the ownership of jointly developed products, is critical. GTECH and Best Foods report that they have been successful using non-disclosure agreements but, in the end, it is up to the individual members of the team to arrange
- The quality of the team working agreements and relationships are key.- all believe that early professional training of teams is critical, including obtaining the buy-in of all members.
- Teams must identify and clarify the vision; not only what is to be accomplished but how the team proposes to proceed (process) and assuring contributions from all team members.

Rewarding of teams remains a big issue (especially in the military). Arguments still prevail as to how to provide incentives to teams. Discussants have found that team members are reluctant to rate the performances of other team members.

- Geographically dispersed development teams are becoming more common but is uniquely challenging. GTECH reports that this is particularly difficult with software, especially architecture development.

*For more information on future Roundtables, contact Dr. Lem Tarshis at [ltarshis@aol.com](mailto:ltarshis@aol.com)*