

THE FOUNDING OF HARFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL'S VENDOR SHOW

Our Purchasing Department issues Contracts for various products that our Custodians and Facilities Personnel can purchase from for items currently used on an every-day basis (Just-In-Time). Notification and information is sent out to these individuals as needed, but sometimes this information didn't get to the appropriate people; or, if there was turnover at a school or office, the information was not passed on to the correct person. This lack of communication started a trend of some "out of contract" spending that wasn't directed to the vendors that were actually awarded the contracts.

Our goal at this point was to identify the "appropriate" contracted vendors and make the custodian/facility end users aware of them. By doing this it would direct the actual spend to the correct contract, resulting in cost savings. This would also introduce the end user directly to the local representatives to clarify how to place orders for their products, whether it would be directly to the Vendor or through their dedicated web site, etc.

Purchasing decided to bring in the top vendors and introduce them to the "end users". In 2011 we held our first Vendor Fair at the Facilities Department "College" and we were able to put the two together – End Users with the Vendors. The first Vendor Fair was a huge success with positive comments from everyone. It was a tremendous morale boost for the Custodians to be able to meet each of these vendors and discuss issues, and products, with each one of them. The vendors helped to make it a success by having handouts and information for everyone.

The second Vendor Fair, in 2012, turned out even better! The custodians had spread the word to others who didn't attend the year before. This created a huge turnout for the second year. Once again the major vendors attended with items that they worked with, to demonstrate their product offerings, and the custodians could view those products and ask questions.

The Vendor Shows have proven to be a tremendous success for everyone, both employees and vendors. The Fairs have increased "in-contract spend" and proven to be a boost in morale for the custodians, and individuals that attended.

In conclusion, the Purchasing Department at, Harford County Public Schools, has accomplished what we intended to do – bring the contract vendors to the end users. We hope to continue this practice during our upcoming 2013 Vendor Fair.

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