

1,000 and Counting

Written by Nick Sanders

Friday, 13 January 2017 00:00 -

So we've now passed 1,000 individual articles on this blog site. It's not an exact count, because there are a couple of comments left posted after we eliminated the comment feature. But we are over 1,000 now for sure. Assuming an average of 1,000 words per article—which is about right—that's a million words of alleged wisdom and news about government contracting and government contract costs and government contract compliance.

One million words.

One million words about technical topics, allegedly asserting a point of view that adds value. We decided long ago that simply posting links to stories and judicial decisions without comment—as many others do—was not interesting nor was it showcasing our potential as consultants. That decision was a two-edged sword, of course, since some of our opinions have been controversial and certainly turned-off some of the more buttoned-down clients who may have otherwise hired us. But in the end, I (the author) decided that I was going to be myself and report my honest feelings and emotions about what I saw happening around me. Like us or hate us (as some do), you get our honest opinion.

DCAA auditors, in particular, seem to have issues with our opinion about DCAA auditors and their audit guidance. That doesn't keep several of them from sending us emails from time to time, often giving us leads and otherwise hidden audit guidance. (Thanks for those!) The emails tend to get nicer the closer the auditors are to retirement, or to moving on in their careers. Those auditors who've already left the audit agency for greener climes (e.g., DCMA) tend to agree with our thoughts, according to the emails. Some auditors prefer to stay silent but then feel free to send a nice goodbye email on their way out the door, thanking us for the articles—as one (now former) Supervisory Auditor at the Pax River Suboffice recently did.

One million words is more than ten novels worth of stuff. And we do it for free. (Or should I say I? It's tough to keep a consistent point of view, as I once [discussed](#).)

The first article is dated 19 May 2009. In the seven and a half years since then, we've done our best to record the evolution (some might say devolution) of the world of FAR and CAS and DCAA audits and DCMA Instructions and DoDOIG audit reports and GAO reviews and a whole host of stuff that makes up this crazy world of Federal government contracting.

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Interspersed among the other, more mundane, articles are articles on project management and workforce management, and other topics—including a couple of articles about investing that really have no business being here. But in the main, we've focused on the world of our clients, the defense contractors and the AbilityOne contractors and the NFP grant recipients and the construction/engineering firms. We've tried to translate the arcane rules and regulations into actionable recommendations. Whether we've succeeded or not is up to you, our readers.

So here we are at 1,000 articles and about 1,000,000 words, and we will keep going for as long as we have the stamina and you have the interest. Maybe one day we'll organize some of the articles into a book and see if anybody wants to buy it; but until then, it's all free for reading and downloading and sharing (so long as we get proper attribution).

Actually we just removed one article. As you may recall, we [asserted](#) a while ago that we never removed articles. Instead, we offered to post any opposing point of view, unedited. Unsurprisingly, nobody ever took us up on that offer. (It turns out that writing is hard work. Who knew?)

Well, we recently received an email that was almost good enough to post as an opposing view article. We are going to edit it for reasons that should become apparent, but here it is—

Please remove your article that referenced a felony plea/conviction that was published on ...

I started a company in Baghdad, Iraq and I am a ... Air Force Veteran. I provided direct contract support to the U.S. Government for 2 ½ years overseas and then worked with two partners to open a business. ... We were only in business for a period of three [six?] months, three of which we actually worked on the government contract in which my felony conviction was attached. ... To try to support this contract, my partners and I made the decision to acquire the funds to complete the job in which they were asking us to do. To do so an invoice was submitted which was legal. The problem came into play when the Government Contracting Officer asked us to submit documentation to support the invoice stating we had paid out almost a million dollars within three days of award. We were in no position to do so as we needed the funds to complete the job. The Contracting Officer told us to submit 'something' (aka, false invoice) to represent the fact that it was spent or we would lose the contract. We decided to

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create the invoice for the large items that would be purchased. As the money was not spent at this time, this was considered a fraudulent action upon investigation. As I was the Contracting signature authority for our company, my signature was the only one listed on the contract. ... The work was performed on this contract and every dime was applied to the contract, but the way in which we received the funds to do the job was not appropriate. The Government attorneys stated that even though the work was done on the contract, the way in which the funds were acquired were illegal and anything thereafter was required to be repaid. I was solely charged, as my partners' names were not on the submitted invoice, and I am required to pay the entire amount back; even when valid invoices were provided for all products and services provided to the government.

After a 30-month sentencing, in which I spent 18 months in a federal minimum-security prison and a six-month halfway house stint, with four additional months on home confinement, and now three years of probation (I am over halfway done), I am working towards earning my good name back and securing future employment. ... I do my best to focus on the positive and worked through several years of therapy. ... As you can see, I am steadily working towards my next steps in life and trying to become the person I was before all of this took place, and I am asking for your help!

The information posted is limiting my chances of employment, as recruiters take one look and move on with merely seeing the negative search engine results. I have worked diligently to build a positive and professional Internet presence in the last year, but I would truly appreciate it if you would take a moment to assist me. This would mean so much to me and my potential future.

And so the article has been removed, which is a first for this site. We trust our readers will understand. Further, we think the email is a great example of how individuals can make mistakes in this complex world of government contracting, even if perhaps they had no intent of profiting from their poor decisions. We hope this individual is able to find gainful employment and have a second chance to succeed.

1,000 articles minus one. Doesn't quite have the same ring to it, does it? But that's where we are in the first month of 2017.

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