



BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION AGENCY

Improving the Bottom Line. Supporting the Front Line.

SIMPLIFY the Department's overly complex business rules that unnecessarily complicate operations, lead to expensive and risk-filled solutions, and inhibit breakthrough business performance improvement.

Accomplishments

This is an area in which the Department has made very little progress. The DoD is quick to create new rules, but very rarely eliminates old ones. The result is a culture that fosters an increasingly complicated business environment that leads to operational challenges and increased costs.

Opportunities

The BTA has identified many areas for simplification that can benefit the DoD enterprise, including:

1. Military Pay Entitlements: Providing accurate pay for our warfighters, especially those engaged in conflict, is a long-standing problem. DoD currently requires extensive manual intervention to overcome the complexity associated with pay rules that need to be applied in real-time as entitlements are affected by duty location, responsibilities, family status, etc. Pay systems, which are not integrated with the numerous personnel systems in the Department, are simply not agile enough to keep up with these changes without manual input. Moreover, there are more than 10,000 combinations of business rules that must be factored in when calculating military pay – a huge challenge in providing a modern pay system. These rules also tend to change frequently, often because of congressional action. The opportunity exists to work with Congress to simplify the entitlement structure for military pay, and it can be done without forgoing ways to incentivize and reward soldiers. This simplification will not only reduce DoD business costs, but it can also fix a deficiency that should never be a distraction to our warfighters or a burden to their families.
2. Contracting Rules: The complexity associated with the DoD's contracting business rules has continued to grow over time. Although individual rules may have merit, the accumulation of rules creates an environment where compliance can take precedence over the entire process. This complexity drives increased cost, including training, legal support, and systems implementations that must meet these standards, contributing to escalating overhead costs to the Department. Much of the work must be performed manually because the rules are too complex and variable to automate. At times, the complexity dominates the process to the point where legal teams assume a dominant role in the acquisitions themselves, resulting in the focus on compliance exceeding that of fulfilling the core need upon which the acquisition was originally based. Acquisition reform is a common refrain, but results are often mixed. BTA recommends that simplification of contracting rules should be at the forefront of any contracting or acquisition reform effort. DoD leaders must first overcome the entrenched rationale behind some of these individual rules. Only then will simplification become possible, along with the process and operational benefits that will ensue.
3. Travel Regulations: DoD has been strongly criticized for its inability to provide an automated, self-service travel reservation and vouchering system that is intuitive and user friendly. BTA assumed responsibility for the Defense Travel System in 2006, and while one of its first releases was focused specifically on usability, the tool is still constrained by the extensive complexity of DoD's travel rules. As an example, while other federal entities have one or two types of temporary duty travel, DoD currently maintains separate business rules for 59 types of TDY travel. Automating these complex combinations of rules in a streamlined workflow is very challenging. In essence, if the rules were simplified, the application could be as well, thereby decreasing the Department's costs based on increased usage of the tool. For over a year, the BTA has been working with the Defense Travel Management Office on a travel policy and regulations review. Accelerating that review by overcoming the many objectives of individual policy proponents could yield a simplified structure and enhanced automation that increases rules understanding, compliance, and financial benefits.