



# *I Would if I Could, I Can't, So I Won't:*

*Navigating Customer Service with Procurement Ethics*

**Maria L. Roux**  
**Chief Procurement Officer**  
**GA. Dept. of Transportation**

## Maria L. Roux

- Chief Procurement Officer, GDOT
- Over 30 years of Instructional Design and Training Delivery
- 17 Years Procurement
- Aida's Daughter\*





# Good Ethics is Good Business

## Setting The Stage

- Fairness
- Integrity
- Responsible
- Responsiveness



# Customer Service Paradox

# EXPECTATION vs REALITY

Procurement continuously walks a fine line between customer service and compliance.



## Customer Service Expectations

- Fast responses
- Flexibility
- “Yes” culture



## Procurement Reality

- Compliance
- Fair competition
- Budget constraints

# What Procurement Ethics Demand

I Can't, So I Won't



# Core Procurement Ethics

- Transparency
- Accountability
- Fairness
- Avoiding conflicts of interest




## Just say NO

- Skipping competitive bids
- Favoritism
- Accepting gifts or pressure



# Case Study

What should you do?



A department requests a vendor they “always use”  
without going through proper channels.

# Customer Service View

## Expedite the process!



## Procurement Ethics View

Expedite the  
process!



# Educate Don't Alienate



# The Power of “NO”

Say It The Right Way!



## Tactics for Ethical Communication:



- “Here’s what we *can* do...”
- “Let’s explore compliant alternatives.”
- “I understand the urgency, and here’s how we can move forward ethically.”

## Reframe The Conversation

- “I would if I could...”
- “I can’t, so I won’t...”
- “But here’s how we can still succeed...”

# Ethical Partnerships



# Partnering

## Internal Stakeholder

- Set expectations early
- Offer training on procurement policies

## With Vendors

- Clear communication
- Fair treatment
- No favoritism

# Tools for Ethical- Decision Making



## Tools to Use

- Procurement Policy Framework
- Ethics Checklists
- Whistleblower Channels
- Training & Awareness Programs



# CONCLUSION

## Key Takeaways:

- Ethics and service are not mutually exclusive
- Saying “no” can be a form of high-integrity service
- Procurement is a strategic partner, not a roadblock



# Thank You

Maria L. Roux



404-631-1433



mroux@dot.ga.gov



GA Dept of Transportation

