

# The Property Manager's Role:

## Dual Responsibilities Managing Corporate and Government Property

By Rick Shultz, CPPM

*In most organizations, the property manager has dual responsibilities of managing both corporate and government property. Even though corporate and government property regulations have unique requirements that ensure proper management, the basic philosophy for the safeguard and management for all property, regardless of ownership, is similar. The roles and responsibilities for a property manager in an organization that is involved with managing property associated with government contracts and corporate requirements are similar in some manners and differ in others. This article will discuss the similarities and differences of the roles and responsibilities for managing corporate and government owned property.*

The major responsibility of the property manager is to ensure written policies and procedures are in place to adequately protect and account for an item through its life-cycle. The basic stages associated with the life-cycle of property include planning, acquisition, deployment, maintenance, and disposal. The life-cycle can be applied to both government and corporate owned property. The property manager's roles for each of these phases are:

- **Planning:** The property manager must ensure the assets required to complete a task are available when needed. Another role is to ensure the proper authorizations are in place to acquire any property. The make or buy decision is also made during this phase.
- **Acquisition:** During this phase, the property manager must ensure that incoming property is properly received. It is usually in this phase that the record is created in the property database.
- **Deployment:** The role of the property manager includes ensuring property is in the right place at the right time. The property manager will also ensure the records are properly updated.
- **Maintenance:** The property manager should ensure all assets are maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications. Maintenance includes calibration and preventive maintenance. Equipment must be ready to use when needed.
- **Disposal:** The property manager should ensure the best possible return on investment is realized during

the disposal process. Disposal includes making the determination when to reuse, sell, donate, or scrap.

The property manager must ensure these phases are properly addressed in the written procedures. Property managers should work closely with a variety of organizations within their corporations to ensure policies and procedures are in place that address their concerns. To accomplish this, the property manager should include all stakeholders when developing the property plan. Also, having a firm understanding of the company's core business will assist the property manager with writing the policies and procedures. Regardless of whether the property manager's organization has fiduciary responsibilities or owns the property, it is essential to have the proper policies and procedures in place that address life-cycle management and the concerns of the organization.

When managing government owned property, the property manager, or if an organization, separates government property from corporate property, the "Government Property Manager" has specific roles and responsibilities. The property manager should be well versed in the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) and the FAR supplements associated with the various federal agencies (e.g., NASA, DoD, DOT, and FAA to list a few). The supplements address the unique requirements of the individual agency. The one difference between the agencies is the reporting period. Reporting periods can vary from monthly, to quarterly, to annually. In addition, the method for reporting disposition can differ greatly between the agencies. It is the property manager's responsibility to keep abreast of these requirements and to be aware of any changes.

The property manager should become familiar with Program and Project Managers as well as the organization's Contracts Department. By doing so, they can ensure the organization's concerns are addressed at the request for proposal stage and not at contract end. Another key individual the property manager needs to stay in touch with is the Government Property Administrator. If the organization has multiple contracts, with multiple agencies, the property manager will need to communicate with the various Government Property Administrators. At times, this can be a challenge. The property manager should have a solid understanding of the various rules and regulations associated with the FAR and the various agencies, as well as know whom they should work closely with to ensure the organization's best interest is maintained.

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"Enterprise Asset Manager" has specific roles and responsibilities. As a result of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, the property manager needs to ensure that financial information ties into the property records. This Act single-handedly catapulted the importance for properly managing corporate assets. Another important aspect when managing corporate assets is to ensure the various functions within the organization are working through one central repository. Often, individual databases or even spreadsheets are maintained to assist Administrators with managing property related information (e.g. maintenance agreement data). The information technology field has become a major function with managing property. There are innovative technologies such as radio frequency and auto-discovery that can assist with tracking property. Working closely with the various functional areas within an organization can assist the property manager with managing the corporate owned property.

The Government Property Manager, Enterprise Asset Manager, or property manager needs to be well trained in a variety of fields to ensure property issues are properly addressed. In many cases, the property manager does not have to be an expert in any one field; but must be willing to understand the requirements of the customers (internal and external) and react appropriately. Often, having a high-level understanding of how the various functional areas within an organization interact with each other is an excellent starting point for a property manager. Incorporating processes and establishing a centralized database are essential concepts for a state-of-the-art property system. Centralization aligns the entire organization to work from one system that allows for easier management of the processes and simplifies the capabilities for running reports. The National Property Management Association and the International Association of Information Technology Asset Managers are two organizations that provide excellent training in the field of property management.

There are certainly differences between managing corporate assets and government property; however, there are many similarities and the property manager should recognize these. The property manager should ensure policies and procedures are written to manage the similarities and address the differences. ■