
RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING PROFESSIONALS

by

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What follows is a highly idiosyncratic and incomplete list of books that I recommend for contracting professionals in government and industry. I have included some obvious choices, such as the Cibinic and Nash books, and some that may seem peculiar. Some are timeless, but some have been forgotten. All are in print except as noted, but you won't find them all at Amazon.com and may have to go directly to the publisher. These are not the only books that I would recommend, but they are ones that I recommend highly because I consider them topically essential or especially useful or interesting. I have not included any Government publications, such as the *Contract Pricing Reference Guides*. Nor have I included any of the hundreds of short monographs (such as Thomson-West's BRIEFING PAPERS), articles, or periodicals that I could have listed, because there are too many of them.

Specialty books like these are very expensive, some of them more than \$200, so you may want to locate them in a library. Some of them will be found only in university or college libraries.

THE CLASSICS

It has been said that Professors John Cibinic, Jr. and Ralph C. Nash, Jr. of The George Washington University Law School invented Government contracting. They didn't, but their books are the classic legal texts about the subject and a good starting point. They are not how-to books, and they were not meant to be read through, cover to cover. They were meant to be studied, one topical section at a time.

Cibinic, Jr., John, Ralph C. Nash, Jr., and James F. Nagle. **ADMINISTRATION OF GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS, 4TH ED.** Chicago: CCH Incorporated, 2006.

Cibinic, Jr., John and Ralph C. Nash, Jr. **COST-REIMBURSEMENT CONTRACTING, 3RD ED.** Chicago: CCH Incorporated, 2004. [The bible of cost-reimbursement contracting.]

Cibinic, Jr., John., and Ralph C. Nash, Jr. **FORMATION OF GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS, 3RD ED.** Chicago: CCH Incorporated, 1998.

Recommended Books for Contracting Professionals

OTHER BOOKS ABOUT GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING

Aronie, Jonathan S., John W. Chierichella, et. al. **MULTIPLE AWARD SCHEDULE CONTRACTING**. Philadelphia, PA: Xlibris, 2006.

Cole, Peter S. **HOW TO WRITE A STATEMENT OF WORK, 5TH ED.** Vienna, VA: Management Concepts, Inc., 2003.

Edwards, Vernon J. **SOURCE SELECTION ANSWER BOOK, 2ND ED.** Vienna, VA: Management Concepts, Inc., 2006.

Nash, Jr., Ralph C., John Cibinic, Jr., and Karen R. O'Brien. **COMPETITIVE NEGOTIATION: THE SOURCE SELECTION PROCESS, 2ND ED.** Chicago: CCH Incorporated, 1999. [Although dated, this book is still a valuable and comprehensive explication of the case law about contracting by negotiation.]

Peacock, Robert T. and Peter D. Ting. **CONTRACT DISPUTES ACT: ANNOTATED.** Washington, DC: Federal Publications, Inc., 1998. [A comprehensive explication of the rules about claims, disputes, and appeals.]

CONTRACT PRICING

The supreme subject. Here are four very useful books about the cost-based pricing world of Government contracting.

Bodenheimer, David Z., Robert Theodore Ebert, and Kent R. Morrison. **DEFECTIVE PRICING IN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.** Washington, DC: Federal Publications Seminars, Inc. 2003. [This is an excellent introduction to an important and astonishingly complex topic: the Truth in Negotiations Act, as implemented by Federal Acquisition Regulation, Subpart 15.4, which requires contracting officers to obtain "cost or pricing data" from contractors under specified conditions. This is a seminar text and Fed Pubs does not sell it separately, but if you're any kind of negotiator, you might be able to talk them into sending it to you.]

Manos, Karen. **GOVERNMENT CONTRACT COSTS & PRICING (2 vols.).** Eagan, MN: Thomson West, 2004. [An explication of the cost principles and cost accounting standards.]

Stewart, Rodney D. **COST ESTIMATING, 2ND ED.** New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1991. [This is the best introductory text about cost estimating.]

Stewart, Rodney D., Richard M. Wyskida, and James D. Johannes. **COST ESTIMATOR'S REFERENCE MANUAL, 2ND ED.** New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1995. [This is a more comprehensive version of Stewart's *COST ESTIMATING*.]

Now that the Government is buying more commercial items, it is essential that contracting personnel learn how commercial sellers set the prices of their products and services. Price-setting is a lot more complicated than some people realize. Here are six good books about product and service pricing.

Ingold, Anthony, Una McMahaon-Beattie and Ian Yeoman, eds. **YIELD MANAGEMENT: STRATEGIES FOR THE SERVICE INDUSTRIES, 2ND ED.** London: Thomson, 2000. [Explains the mysteries of pricing in the airline and hotel industries.]

Marn, Michael V., Eric V. Roegner, and Craig C. Zawada. **THE PRICE ADVANTAGE.** Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2004.

Mohammed, Rafi. **THE ART OF PRICING: HOW TO FIND THE HIDDEN PROFITS TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS.** New York: Crown Business, 2005.

Monroe, Kent B. **PRICING: MAKING PROFITABLE DECISIONS, 3RD ED.** New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002.

Recommended Books for Contracting Professionals

Nagle, T.T. and John E. Hogan. **THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF PRICING: A GUIDE TO GROWING MORE PROFITABLY, 4TH ED.** Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2006. [Very highly recommended.]

Phillips, Robert L. **PRICING AND REVENUE OPTIMIZATION.** Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005. [Technical in a few places. (That means *math*.)]

BOOKS ABOUT QUALITY ASSURANCE

A topic second only to pricing in importance, but much neglected by contracting personnel, who cannot afford to be ignorant about it.

Grant, Eugene L. and Richard S. Leavenworth. **STATISTICAL QUALITY CONTROL, 7TH ED.** Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1996. [If you use the terms *acceptable quality level (AQL)* and *random sampling* in a contract, make sure that you know what they mean and that you are using them properly.]

Juran, Joseph M. and A. Blanton Godfrey. **JURAN'S QUALITY HANDBOOK, 5TH ED.** Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1999.

Rust, Roland T. and Richard L. Oliver, eds. **SERVICE QUALITY: NEW DIRECTIONS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE.** Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994.

Schneider, Benjamin and Susan S. White. **SERVICE QUALITY: RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES.** Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004.

BOOKS ABOUT LAW

No contracting professional should try to be his or her own lawyer, but every contracting professional should understand how American law works, especially administrative and contract law.

Calamari, John D. and Joseph M. Perillo. **CALAMARI AND PERILLO ON CONTRACTS, 5TH ED.** St. Paul, MN: West Group, 2003. [This is a venerable textbook about the basics of Anglo-American contract law.]

Gellhorn, Ernest and Ronald M. Levin. **ADMINISTRATIVE LAW AND PROCESS.** St. Paul, MN: West Group Publishing, 1997. [One in the handy "nutshell" series.]

Funk, William, Jeffrey S. Lubbers, and Charles Pou, eds. **FEDERAL ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE SOURCEBOOK, 3RD ED.** Chicago: American Bar Association, 2000. [A compendium of documents about agency rule-making and decision-making. Includes the Contract Disputes Act.]

Lawrence, William H. and William H. Henning. **UNDERSTANDING SALES AND LEASES OF GOODS.** New York: Matthew Bender & Co., Inc., 1999.

Linzer, Peter, ed. **A CONTRACTS ANTHOLOGY, 2ND ED.** Dayton, OH: Anderson Publishing Co., 1995. [A wonderful anthology of articles about contract law, including many classics.]

Llewellyn, Karl N. **THE CASE LAW SYSTEM IN AMERICA.** Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1989. (out of print) [Federal Acquisition Regulation §§ 1.102(d) and 1.102-4(e) tell acquisition personnel to be aware of "case law." What is "case law"? Karl Llewellyn went to Leipzig in 1928 to explain that to German law students. This little book is an expanded version of his lectures.]

———. **THE COMMON LAW TRADITION: DECIDING APPEALS.** Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960. (out of print) [Although dated, it is nevertheless a good discussion of the workings of the American appellate courts, such as the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, which hears Government contract appeals.]

Recommended Books for Contracting Professionals

Macneil, Ian R. **THE NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT**. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980. (out of print) [A frequently cited work, and one of significance in the new world of service contracting. It summarizes Macneil's influential theory of relational contracting.]

Shenefield, John H. and Irwin M. Stelzer. **THE ANTITRUST LAWS: A PRIMER**. Washington, DC: The AEI Press, 1996.

BOOKS ABOUT BUSINESS HISTORY, PRACTICE, AND THEORY

Albrecht, Karl, et al. **Business: The Ultimate Resource**. Cambridge, MA: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002. [A massive (2,170 pages) one-volume encyclopedia of business. A great resource.]

Cavinato, Joseph L., Anna E. Flynn, and Ralph G. Kauffman. **THE SUPPLY MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK, 7TH ED.** New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006. [Formerly, *The Purchasing Handbook*.]

Clifton, Rita, John Simmons, et al. **BRANDS AND BRANDING**. New York: Bloomberg Press (2004). [Okay, we're not supposed to specify brand names. But what is a brand, and what is its function? We should know more about this all-important business practice.]

Leenders, Michiel, P. Fraser Johnson, Anna Flynn, and Harold E. Fearon. **PURCHASING AND SUPPLY MANAGEMENT**. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005. [Leenders and Fearon have authored several books about commercial purchasing and supply operations. This is their latest.]

Micklethwait, John and Adrian Wooldridge. **THE COMPANY: A SHORT HISTORY OF A RADICAL IDEA**. New York: Modern Library, 2003. [What is the history of the idea of the "company"? This little book tells the story.]

Williamson, Oliver E. and Sidney G. Winter, eds. **THE NATURE OF THE FIRM: ORIGINS, EVOLUTION, AND DEVELOPMENT**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. [If market exchange is so effective, why do companies exist? Here are some theories.]

BOOKS ABOUT THINKING, DECIDING, AND NEGOTIATING

Contracting officers must reason well, make sound judgments and decisions, and argue persuasively. Here are four books that will help you learn how to do those things well, but they require study and some hard thinking. *The journey to enlightenment is not easy, Grasshopper.*

Goodwin, Paul, and George Wright. **DECISION ANALYSIS FOR MANAGEMENT JUDGMENT, 3D ED.** New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2004. [A good introduction to an important topic and a very useful book.]

Raiffa, Howard, John Richardson and David Metcalfe. **NEGOTIATION ANALYSIS: THE SCIENCE AND ART OF COLLABORATIVE DECISION MAKING**. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2002.

von Winterfeldt, Detlof and Ward Edwards. **DECISION ANALYSIS AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986. [An advanced text, based on research funded by the U.S. Navy.]

Walton, Douglas. **INFORMAL LOGIC: A HANDBOOK FOR CRITICAL ARGUMENTATION**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. [Buy it. Read it. Put its precepts into practice.]

BOOKS ABOUT WRITING

There is no getting around it, contracting personnel must write — analyses, clauses, determinations, decisions, and instructions — and they should be able to write well, which means clearly, succinctly, and persuasively. But good writing is hard to find in contract files. These books can help you to improve your writing. (You will find that improving your writing improves your thinking.)

Recommended Books for Contracting Professionals

Strunk, Jr., William and E. B. White. **THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE, 4TH ED.** New York: Longman Publishers, 2000. [The pocket bible of good writing.]

Orwell, George. **ESSAYS.** New York: Everyman's Library, 2002. [“[The English language] becomes ugly and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish, but the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts.” The best way to learn how to write good prose is to read and imitate good prose. Read the essays once for pleasure, read them again to study Orwell's style, then imitate him. If you don't read anything else, read “Politics and the English Language.”]

Wydick, Richard C. **PLAIN ENGLISH FOR LAWYERS.** Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 1998. [This little book is full of tips about how to write more clearly and succinctly.]

GENERAL REFERENCE WORKS

Berring, Robert C. and Elizabeth A. Edinger, **FINDING THE LAW, 11TH ED.** St. Paul, MN: West Group, 1999. [Not just about finding the law, but also about how the law is organized.]

Friedman, Jack P. **DICTIONARY OF BUSINESS TERMS, 3RD ED.** Hauppauge, NY: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 2000. [A handy briefcase reference.]

Garner, Bryan A., ed. **BLACK'S LAW DICTIONARY, 8TH ED.** St. Paul, MN: West, 2004. [Own it. Use it.]

Garner, Bryan A. **A DICTIONARY OF MODERN LEGAL USAGE, 2ND ED.** Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995. [Very handy and interesting. Read the entry about *words of authority* for a fascinating discussion of *shall, will, may, and must.*]

Nash, Jr. Ralph C., Steven L. Schooner, and Karen O'Brien. **THE GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS REFERENCE BOOK, 2ND ED.** Chicago: CCH Incorporated, 1998. [Should be given to every intern and trainee. The only work of its kind. The third edition is due in late 2007.]

Newman, Peter D., ed. **THE NEW PALGRAVE DICTIONARY OF ECONOMICS AND THE LAW** (3 vols.). Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. [For the *really* serious and the intellectually curious. A great research reference and a wonderful browsing experience. Read the entries for *bureaucracy, contracts, contracts and relationships, incomplete contracts, just price, precedent, relational contract, risk assessment, and rule-guided behavior.* Enjoy.]

Siegel, Joel G. and Jae K. Shinn. **DICTIONARY OF ACCOUNTING TERMS, 4TH ED.** Hauppauge, NY: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 2005. [Another handy briefcase reference.]

BOOKS OF CURRENT INTEREST

If you sometimes think that Government acquisition policy is driven by fad and fashion, you're right. Think: incentives, teams, TQM, performance-based acquisition, and earned value management, to name just a few. Here are some books to give to your local policymaker.

Best, Joel. **FLAVOR OF THE MONTH: WHY SMART PEOPLE FALL FOR FADS.** Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

Pfeffer, Jeffrey and Robert I. Sutton. **HARD FACTS, DANGEROUS HALF-TRUTHS & TOTAL NONSENSE: PROFITING FROM EVIDENCE-BASED MANAGEMENT.** Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2006. [A remedy for acquisition policy “success stories.”]

Radin, Beryl A. **CHALLENGING THE PERFORMANCE MOVEMENT: ACCOUNTABILITY, COMPLEXITY, AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES.** Washington, DC: The Georgetown University Press, 2006.

Sclar, Elliott. **YOU DON'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR: THE ECONOMICS OF PRIVATIZATION.** Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2000. [Just how good an idea is contracting-out?]

Recommended Books for Contracting Professionals

A MISCELLANY

Here are some books readings that bear on contracting and that you might enjoy.

Garvey, Gerald, **FACING THE BUREAUCRACY: LIVING AND DYING IN A PUBLIC AGENCY**. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993. (out of print) [A Princeton professor tells the story of an ill-fated Government IT project.]

Gause, Donald C. and Gerald M. Weinberg. **EXPLORING REQUIREMENTS: QUALITY BEFORE DESIGN**. New York: Dorset House Publishing, 1989. [A very good book about product and system requirements analysis. For all who are working in a development program.]

Glass, Robert L. **SOFTWARE RUNAWAYS: LESSONS LEARNED FROM MASSIVE SOFTWARE PROJECT FAILURES**. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall PTR, 1998. [You are not alone.]

Lambright, W. Henry. **POWERING APOLLO: JAMES E. WEBB OF NASA**. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. [The late James E. Webb created the NASA that took us to the moon and back. He was one of the greatest American public administrators of the 20th Century. Every civil servant should study his achievement. Where is he, now that our need for him is greatest?]

Peck, Merton J. and Frederic M. Scherer. **THE WEAPONS ACQUISITION PROCESS: AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS**. Boston: Harvard University, 1962. (out of print) [The greatest study of acquisition ever done, and still relevant.]

Radin, Beryl A. **CHALLENGING THE PERFORMANCE MOVEMENT: ACCOUNTABILITY, COMPLEXITY, AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES**. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2006. [For those of you who question the emphasis on measurable performance standards.]

Sapolsky, Harvey M. **THE POLARIS SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT: BUREAUCRATIC AND PROGRAMMATIC SUCCESS IN GOVERNMENT**. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972. (out of print) [One of the best books ever written about the politics of large programs. The Polaris program invented PERT and other project management devices. It was completed on time and within budget and all technical goals were met. How did they do it? Was it PERT? If you work in a program environment, you must read this.]

Scherer, Frederic M. **THE WEAPONS ACQUISITION PROCESS: ECONOMIC INCENTIVES**. Boston: Harvard University, 1964. (out of print) [Chapters 6 through 10 contain a landmark analysis of contract incentives.]

Tufte, Edward R. **THE COGNITIVE STYLE OF POWERPOINT: PITCHING OUT CORRUPTS WITHIN, 2ND ED.** Cheshire, CN: Graphics Press LLC, 2006. [“PowerPoint allows speakers to pretend that they are giving a real talk, and audiences to pretend that they are listening.”]

———. **THE VISUAL DISPLAY OF QUANTITATIVE INFORMATION, 2ND ED.** Cheshire, CN: The Graphics Press LLC, 2001. [A very great book, by a very great teacher and a very interesting man. This book and its three companion volumes are must reads for anyone who must present data to someone else in order to persuade them. Visit the author’s website: www.edwardtufte.com. His one-day seminar is one of the best bargains you will ever find and great fun.]

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