



BSC Committee Report – April 20, 2022

The BSC Best Practices Committee conducts monthly conference calls for all BSC Operators to review program sales and employment, performance metrics, marketing activities and discuss issues affecting the success of the BSC program.

Sales/Employment: With regards to employment, there are currently 21 locations that do not have a blind or disabled employee. Six of these locations have not had an employee who is blind or disabled in nearly 3 years. The federal vaccine mandate caused the resignation of employees at two locations. More recently, an employee resigned at a location and two locations had employees that relocated.

Overall sales for the month of March were down 27.5%. The overall AbilityOne ratio for FY22 is 25.34%.

- AbilityOne sales were down 16.3% over FY21
- Commercial sales were down 32.1% over FY21
- HAZMAT sales were down 8.75% over FY21
- IEE sales were down 28.0% over FY21
- Total sales were down 27.5% over FY21, nearly the same amount as last month which was down 27.7%

The biggest drivers in sales decline are reduced deployments, much of the workforce having telework options, purchasing policy changes, lack of understanding that purchasing options include BSCs, and competing programs. This trend will continue unless the current environment changes or a new opportunity for the BSCs is found.

Personal Sales: The AbilityOne Commission asked NIB to propose rules that would potentially allow BSCs to do personal sales. One of the challenges was ensuring there is no conflict with the Randolph Sheppard Act as well as agreements made in the past with AAFES. The NIB team completed a proposed policy and submitted it to the Commission on 12/10 for their review and approval. The Commission is currently reviewing this proposal. NIB responded to questions from the Commissions legal counsel the week of 3/14. No final decision has been made as of this update.

GSA Advantage purchases by BSCs: GSA was working on a solution to allow BSC operators to purchase through GSA Advantage using their corporate cards. GSA thought they had a solution, but “hit a snag”. They indicated they would work with the newly created and staffed GSA Advantage PMO to find a solution. This is still the status as of 4/19/22. The BSC team has continued to reach out to GSA for updates and no response has been received. At this point, it is recommended that agencies work with vendors directly as GSA has not established a fix.

Enterprise Business Systems Convergence (GCSS-Army): The Army will transition GCSS-A and other systems into a total solution, the Business Enterprise Systems Convergence. This process



is expected to take 3-5 years until fully implemented, and the Army agreed to bringing BSCs into the discussion when appropriate. The Army determined they could not share the draft Capabilities Requirements Document (CRD) for the EBS-C with a non-government entity. NIB has requested Commission involvement in providing feedback on the requirements outlined in the CRD and the Army sent the 72-page document to the Commission. The Commission is currently reviewing the document to see how our goal of incorporating the BSCs into the system can be met. Unfortunately, they are required to keep that document within the government and cannot share it with us for input. NIB shared a summary document with the Commission which details the concept and current asks. In addition, we have remained available to answer any questions they may have regarding the proposal. The Commission has reached out to the Army regarding their requirements. However, the Army has not returned the Commissions recommendations.

GSA 4PL: In December, GSA issued a solicitation to a select group of vendors for 4PL services at various Air Force and Army Installations. Responses were due to GSA on 1/19. NIB reached out to GSA who indicated that they would honor existing 4PL BPAs they have with agencies. We still see this as an issue because there is no indication what happens when those BPAs expire. In addition, the optional locations include bases where there are BSCs and no current 4PL. Given these would compete directly with the on base BSC, we engaged the AbilityOne Commission and they committed to discuss and address the issue with GSA. NIB also engaged GSA directly and they committed to using the on base BSCs when those bases are activated. Talks between NIB and GSA continue.

DLA/Tailored Logistics Support Program (TLS): This project provides an opportunity for BSCs to accept MIPR and MILSTRIP payment while supplying products to customers on base. Sales over the micro-purchase are competed among the BSC operators, and DLA selects the winning bid from there. Through the end of the fiscal year, \$4 million in sales were processed. The bulk of these occurred during end of fiscal year and activity has since slowed down, although it is starting to pick up. BSC Operators participating in TLS have expressed some concerns. Those have been articulated to DLA, but they are reluctant to make changes. On 4/11, DLA sent an email to participating agencies indicating they will be conducting individual Interim Program Reviews (IPR) soon and discussion points are due to DLA by COB 4/19. NIB will attend each agency's IPR. Please remember that this is the appropriate time for agencies to provide feedback on the program.

First Look: NIB is in active discussions with the Air Force (and ABORs) on providing guidance to Contracting Officers and GPC holders on the AbilityOne Program and BSCs. NIB provided documents clarifying misconceptions that some had regarding the program. On 4/19, NIB preached out to the Air Force for an update on the release of purchasing guidance. The guidance distributed to GPC card holders and contracting offices should include all purchasing options, including BSCs. NIB expects to be invited to additional GPC card holder training opportunities. During the 4/27 BSC Operators meeting, Value Innovation Technologies (VIT) will present eLink, their cloud-based eCommerce portal. This could be a solution to the First Look exclusion of BSCs.



BSC Reporting Site Project: NIB is actively working with a vendor on the development of the revamped BSC reporting site and progress meetings are held weekly. Feedback from Operators will be requested soon. The ability to upload line-item sales data and automate upload and report extracts will be included in the site's requirements. Within the next month or so, agencies will be asked to test the new site's functionality.

BSC Director/Program Manager Visits: The BSC Team does not currently have store visits planned but expects to conduct some visits in 2022. The Team will attend the Semi-Annual Best Practices Meeting in May.

New BSC Locations: Beale AFB COCESS has been added to the PL effective February 27, 2022. The BSC package for Hanscom AFB is currently at the Commission and the Commission is preparing the Decision Document. The BSC package for Forbes Field Air National Guard is also at the Commission and the first FR posted 3/18/22. Requests for Impact Determination (RID) have cleared for Jefferson Barracks, MO, Tulsa Air National Guard Base, OK, and Hancock Field Air National Guard Base, NY, and addition packages are in process. The U.S. Naval Academy, MD is also in the pipeline. The BSC Team is submitting the RID for Sierra Army Depot COPARS that was assigned to South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind via RFP.

Compliance Audits: FY22 results through March 31 are below (excludes GSA Store Visits)

- 12 agencies, 29 store visits to date
- 6 BSCs had Best Practice scores lower than 95%
- 2 BSC was found to have ETS
- 4 BSC had no blind labor at the time of visit
- 11 BSCs with AbilityOne sales below 25%
- 3 with AO active items below 25%
- 19 with AO active items 50% or higher
- No pricing issues found



The National Association for the **Employment** of People who are Blind

NAEPB Marketing Committee Board Report

April 26, 2022, Board Meeting

The marketing committee, under the leadership of new committee chair Joshua Gould, and working with Laura Reimers and the NIB Communications team, identified three key strategic initiatives for FY2022. The priorities were informed by feedback from January's NAEPB board retreat and served as the agenda for the committee's March 18th meeting. Details for each initiative include:

Initiative #1: Great American Workforce Campaign

Background:

- The fourth year of the campaign will launch in April 2022 to complement the National Symposium and run through November/Veterans Day
- The campaign will be developed and executed by the NIB communications team with media placement support and strategic guidance from NIB's communications agency of record, The Clyde Group. NIB associated agency representatives on the marketing committee will provide employee profiles and other input in support of the campaign.
- Confirmed with NAEPB Public Policy Committee Chair alignment between the GAW Campaign and public policy objectives.

Audience: Members of Congress and their staffs, key federal agency leadership, and other policy influencers.

Goal: Educate policymakers about the value of NIB and the work of its associated agencies; emphasize local outreach to elected officials by NIB associated agencies representatives

Objectives: Increase the volume of positive, accurate conversations about NIB and our Associated Agencies; mitigate negative perceptions around the value of NIB and its associated agencies among key audiences.

Campaign Tactics:

- Updated Messaging and Themes
- New Employee-Focused Creative (Agency Provided)
- Updated Landing Page and Fact Sheet (Monthly)
- Updated Toolkit and Agency Fact Sheet
- Advertising on Social, Paid, and Google Platforms
- Monthly Email Outreach

Timeline: Late-April -- November

Initiative #2: SKILCRAFT Marketing

Background: Based on feedback from marketing committee members and critical need to drive program sales, the SKILCRAFT Rebrand launch activities will transition to SKILCRAFT marketing and promotion efforts.

During April's committee meeting, the NIB team updated the committee on two key ongoing SKILCRAFT promotional initiatives.

(1) SKILCRAFT Advertising Campaign

Goal: Inform audiences of the SKILCRAFT brand and its connection to NIB and the AbilityOne Program; Messaging to focus on capabilities, products, and services

Audiences: Procurement/contracting officers and Government/military workforce

Objective: Increased awareness -- greater awareness leads to greater sales leads to increased employment

Tactics:

- Updated Creative
- Tailored Landing Page
- Advertising on Social, Paid and Google Platforms

Timeline: Mid-May -- November

(2) SKILCRAFT Product Marketing Activities

NIB provided the marketing committee with a high-level overview of the marketing activities conducted quarterly for new products launches. Tactics include:

- Quarterly e-mail blasts tailored to federal customers, wholesalers/ distributors, and BSCs
- Quarterly toolkit with key messaging, digital assets, and more
- Multiple Award Schedule file with product specs, images, etc.
- AbilityOneCatalog.com redesign – coming soon

The committee will collaborate on ways to further enhance product marketing activities to drive sales and employment.

Initiative #3: Social Media – Associated Agencies Engagement Campaign

Background: Leveraging positive stories from individual agencies is win-win opportunity. NIB will gain additional, strong content in support of our mission which will appeal to key stakeholders targeted in NIB's Great American Workforce campaign while expanding the reach of associated agencies social media efforts.

Support: NIB Communications Program Manager, Maria Egan is leading a newly created sub-committee of marketing committee members to define goals, objectives, and deliverables e.g., editorial guide, templates, hashtags, etc. for this effort.

- Sub-committee of 13 members representing nine associated agencies have begun work on this initiative, including to define goals, objectives, and deliverables e.g. editorial guide, templates, hashtags, etc.
- Welcome additional sub-committee participation and those agencies not represented but interested should contact Maria Egan at NIB to join

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The National Association for the Employment of People who are Blind

**Operations Committee Report
Submitted by Jon Katz
Board Meeting April 26, 2022**

NAEPB/NIB Operations Subcommittee Updates as of APRIL 11, 2022

Office Products: Dan Carson (IFB) and Amanda Alderson (NIB)

Major Issue(s) Requiring CEO/Exec-Level Attention, status (if any):

- Current supply chain shortages are affecting NPAs ability to deliver
- Increases in the price of raw materials and transportation are taking their toll on NPAs' margins.
- Low sales in light of pandemic rebound. NPAs are not back to pre-pandemic level of sales. Federal employees continue to work from home to a great degree, having an adverse effect on sales.
- Some NPAs are experiencing a decrease in sales on GSA contracted-items due to recent GSA contract transitions
- GSA and Commission are concerned with service level (being addressed by the Service Level Working Group)

OP Group Update

- The Office Product (OP) Subcommittee is in need of re-energizing, having not met in several months. The recent Joint Sub Committee meeting (OP, WIG and JanSan MRO) served as a catch up for all 3 subcommittees. But that meeting focused mainly on NPA service levels, given the high priority bestowed upon that issue by GSA and the Commission. Other issues are compounding our challenges.
- NIB is leading discussions with GSA on initiatives for increasing AbilityOne Program sales to address the "Work from Home" format
- Annual Pricing Change (APC) season for Region 2, which comprises OP items, is much more important this year given the increased costs for raw materials and transportation. APC for Region 2 is due on April 15, but the effective date for such price changes is not until January 1, 2023. NIB is driving the discussion regarding "out of cycle" price changes.

Action Items, Lead, Suspense:

- Action: Re-energize the OP Group. Lead a call among OP members to discuss the challenges, gather ideas, develop actions and priorities
Targeting a date in May 2022 for the call

JanSan/MRO: Stephanie Benedetti and Shawn Spengler

Major Issue(s) Requiring CEO/Exec-Level Attention, status (if any): N/A

Update(s):

- Supporting JanSan Working Group efforts
- Joint Commodities Efforts, specifically Service Level Working Group efforts
- Next Sub-Committee meeting TBD

Action Items, Lead, Suspense: N/A

JanSan Working Group: Blake Lohnes and Shelley Foust

Major Issue(s) Requiring CEO/Exec-Level Attention, status (if any): FAR 52.208-9 Language inserted in Service Contracts. Updating Smart Matrix to include FAR Clause in all Service contracts (currently only in Supply Contracts).

Working Group Update(s): JSWG works with contractors and federal contracting 9-12 months before contract renews to ensure applicable AbilityOne products are included in the product mix to support the service contract. 5% of the total contract dollar amount on a service contract is estimated to be what is spent on supplies.

Action Items, Lead, Suspense: Bi-weekly JSWG meetings to discuss pipeline and assigned task updates. On-going discussions with CNA CEOs and Kim Zeich.

TAG: Dan Kelley and Gary Colello

Major Issue(s) Requiring CEO/Exec-Level Attention, status (if any): Recent court ruling (SA NPA vs US Govt); Goodwill South Florida (GWSF) filed suit against DLA for disregarding the FPL in sourcing decisions. This particular case is regarding the Improved Hot Weather Combat Uniform (IHWCU). The Army partially introduced the IHWCU through M&D where it was added to the FPL for "the entire Army requirement". When the product transitioned to DLA for the balance of fielding and sustainment, DLA chose to ignore the FPL and source with existing commercial manufacturers.

Preliminary indications reflect favorable AB1 decision (GWSF attorney reporting judge ruled (not yet released) that DLA must honor the FPL, regardless of contracting activity and the AB1 Commission shall act on behalf of the CNAs and NPAs to enforce adherence and set pricing). Awaiting final ruling and opinion.

The final ruling potentially directs significant increased opportunities across (most/all NIB TAG) revenue and blind employment. Current supply chain issues could present hurdles beyond existing capabilities and capacity.

Working Group Update(s): TAG not held in person since pre-COVID. Virtual events conducted; while helpful, not as effective as in person.

Action Items, Lead, Suspense: Awaiting judge's complete report. Planning underway for full scale TAG event.

Military Resale: Julie Cooper and Anne-Marie Wallace

Major Issue(s) Requiring CEO/Exec-Level Attention, status (if any): N/A

Working Group Update(s):

- Military Resale (MR) store register sales year-over-year through December up 6.26% (DeCA down -3.26% February FY 22).
- Military Resale Consolidation – DOD (Department of Defense) issued a memorandum April 4th officially stopping consolidation efforts and changing future efforts on facilitating structured collaboration and cooperative initiatives among the resale entities to identify additional savings, synergies, and efficiencies.
- DeCA Focus:
 - Generating margins to cover the funding shortfall.
 - Offer savings on "core products" in high demand.
 - Filling the shelves with products
 - Increasing sales
 - Enterprise Business Solution
 - Converting vendor stocked sections to store stock sections.
- Navigating DeCA business system changes
- Educating military resale customers on the AB1 program.
- Category management
 - Refreshing product assortment
 - Adding items to current categories in keeping with retail trends
 - Evaluating product sales and removing items that are not selling well.
 - Shelf management – plan-o-grams
- Promotions
- Develop new categories for growth
- Store execution
- Distribution (Improving Fill rates currently 77% norm is high 90's)
 - Agency fill rates
 - Distributor Drayage, inventory, new items and promotional timing
 - Direct shipments by agency to stores serviced by Bloomington to offer items deleted due to space constraints.

Action Items, Lead, Suspense: N/A

MAG: Katie Eddy and Dexter Drayton

Major Issue(s) Requiring CEO/Exec-Level Attention, status (if any): N/A

Working Group Update(s): N/A

Action Items, Lead, Suspense: N/A

Pricing Subcommittee: Jim Kerlin and Jenn King

Major Issue(s) Requiring CEO/Exec-Level Attention, status (if any): The AbilityOne Program continues to come under scrutiny for a perception of higher than Fair Market Price (FMP) on some commodities. This negatively affects the AbilityOne program's brand equity. We and our customer stakeholders often disagree on how FMP is defined and determined.

An objective methodology for FPM determination is needed to make our price determination process, and all stakeholders, more efficient. We also need to modernize our pricing methodology to align with changes to distribution channels and commercial pricing methodologies. The AbilityOne Program brand equity will benefit leading to customer confidence and greater mission growth.

Working Group Update(s): The subcommittee briefed the Commission in January on the initiative and provided a high-level overview to the GSA Federal Acquisition Service/ AbilityOne Commission Working Group in early March. Future discussion on the methodology and ongoing pilot results will occur.

Action Items, Lead, Suspense: NPA running through the current process and new methodology for next three cycles of the annual price change process for GSA Regions 3, 6 and then 2. Each region has a specific cycle and associated timeline. The subcommittee intends to analyze the pilot data and share with the Commission and GSA respective regions for review and analysis. Pending on the collaboration with the Commission and GSA, a time to implement the new methodology will be developed. If approved, all NPAs producing Procurement List commodity products will need to follow this FMP price determination process. Some NPAs will need to lower prices on (primarily legacy commodity products) to result in a competitive FMP.

Business Development Working Group (BDWG): Ken Fernald and Jenn King

Major Issue(s) Requiring CEO/Exec-Level Attention, status (if any): N/A

Working Group Update(s): NAEPB Business Development Working Group (BDWG) continues to establish strategies and identify program wide/ large scale opportunities (both products and services) focused on employment opportunities across multiple nonprofit agencies. Late 2021 and early 2022, the working group conducted numerous brainstorming sessions to identify key opportunities and down selected the opportunity to four main opportunities. They include Kitting, CyberSecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) audit and compliance services, Prime Vendor Services and Expanding State Use Program utilization. Smaller groups have been formed to further evaluate each opportunity for risk, liabilities, potential employment opportunities and target market.

Action Items, Lead, Suspense: The CMMC audit service smaller group developed a proposal briefing the opportunity to the Services Subcommittee in early March. A joint meeting among the Services Subcommittee and BDWG will occur at the April Symposium to discuss the next steps relative to CMMC audit services. Smaller groups are developing proposals for the other three focused opportunities for analysis by the larger Working Group. Prioritized opportunities will be briefed to the Services Subcommittee.

Writing Instrument Group (WIG): Rich Weigold and Amanda Alderson

Major Issue(s) Requiring CEO/Exec-Level Attention, status (if any):

- Supply Chain Delays: Some agencies are experiencing a six-month delay on raw material deliveries from domestic and overseas suppliers.
- Material/Labor/Freight Cost Increases: As an example, IBVI is currently faced with a 20% material increase on the USGP components. It has been reported by some NPA's that an inbound container delivery charge has gone up from \$5,000 to the \$20,000 range.
- Sales: Although agencies are reporting that 2022 sales are generally even with 2021. Most are still at a 20-30% drop-off from 2019 pre-pandemic level.
- Federal Market Acquisitions: It is estimated that 65% of the federal civilian workforce continues to work remotely. This raises the question of where they are purchasing their office supplies. The assumption is that ETS items are being purchased in commercial retail stores.
- AB1 Channel Account OS/WIG Support: We currently have one major commercial distributor (Office Depot) that supports AB1 products in the federal market. Although we do not have control over the industry consolidation of distributors. We don't have visibility and reporting on the flow down of marketing and sales from the wholesalers to dealers to federal customers.
- GSA FSSI OS4 Contract Holders: To provide the best pricing, service, and delivery for AB1 OS products. GSA/NIB should mandate that all FSSI OS4 Requisition contract holders stock the A-list items.

Working Group Update:

- The goal is to schedule a virtual meeting in the next 30 days.
- Tentative Agenda topics
 - Establishing quarterly group reporting and metrics.
 - Review and modify goals and objectives.
 - Establish strategy and action priorities.
 - NIB Channel

Update Action Items:

- GSA Region 2 APC submissions due by 4/15/22.
- Weigold has been working with the BSC Merchandising sub-committee with the goal to improve the process for SKILCRAFT new product launches. We need to improve the commitment time from BSC stores for initial orders.
- Alderson, Carson and Weigold have been participating in the pilot of the NAEPB/NIB Strategic Pricing sub-committee to test the new pricing tool and methodology. GSA Region 2 is due by 5/1/2022.

NAEPB Services Committee report – April 2022

Recruitment

A number of the Service Committee subcommittees represented NPA's struggle with finding and/or keeping legally blind qualified candidates. They are all encouraged to utilize the NSITE Placement Service to gain access to a host of talented blind individuals who are looking for employment to fill vacancies and flip sighted jobs into blind jobs. There is a nominal fee for job postings and yearly packages.

Proposal to establish a government wide AbilityOne Services Contract vehicle

Current GSA MAS information

- SourceAmerica/NIB are:
 - GSA Schedule contract holders
 - Considered "other than small business"
 - Not an AbilityOne solution within this contract vehicle
- SourceAmerica/NIB competes for orders
 - Competition is required among MAS contractors, in accordance with FAR 8.4
 - May or may not win award
- Federal agencies cannot:
 - Conduct sole-source award to SourceAmerica/NIB under MAS
 - Use the authority of AbilityOne to issue an order
- Federal Supply Schedule nor SourceAmerica/NIB schedules are on the Procurement List

Future State

- Overarching contract vehicle is added to the Procurement List and goes through the rule making process speeding up time to meet the government customer's timelines.
- Encompasses multiple lines of business (products and services).
- SourceAmerica/NIB are Prime on their respective vehicle.
- Orders are added to the Procurement List by administrative addition process.
- Work starts within 90 days for most procurements (complex could be longer)
- Possible opportunity to establish BPA as BIC
- Sales Opportunity - AbilityOne has identified \$5B in potential opportunities FY23 – FY26

Benefits

- Meets the recommendations of the 898 panel while providing for new ways to do business with the AbilityOne Program
- Provides a more streamlined avenue to the Procurement List
- Provides Commission oversight thru administrative additions, but significantly reduces administrative burden on Commission staff and Commission members
- Meets Government needs with time-to-market
- Creates contracting vehicle to increase employment opportunities

Next Steps

- GSA Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) supports the concept and is recommending a MAS BPA as the contract vehicle
 - Approve single-award BPA (>\$100M requires SPE approval)
 - Commission Members need to review and approve BPA addition to the Procurement List
 - GSA contracting office will further refine and validate project through acquisition planning and determine BPA structure and scope areas.

The reason for a MAS BPA includes:

- Reduces contract duplication vs. establishing an IDIQ
- Any federal agency may place orders against the vehicle
- Ease-of-use (FAR 8.4 procedures)
- Spend Under Management support (MAS BPA=Tier 2)
 - opportunity to achieve BIC status at BPA level
- Task orders will not go through Procurement List process (saves 9-12 months)
- Easy exit if “proof of concept” is not successful
 - If government demand dictates, the requirement stays in the program and creates long term employment for people who are blind or have significant disabilities
- Establishes terms applicable to future orders
- Terms and conditions for the BPA, including contract type and clauses, must comply with the underlying MAS contract
- MAS BPAs are based on prices already subjected to competition and determined to be fair and reasonable by GSA
- Quicker turn around on orders
- Decreases procurement costs, acquisition lead time, and administrative efforts
-

CMS Subcommittee

- Meeting was held on March 3.
- Reach letter campaign to possible commercial and non-traditional customers is still underway
- Top employers for each NPA region have been identified and provided to use as a working list of possible vendors to engage
- Identified NPA’s vacancies and a recruitment need – vacancies will be highlighted on the next (March 16) VisionCorps recruitment webinar
- An invitation will be extended to each NPA’s Business Development personnel to schedule a brain storming session to identify how we all can assist in Business development for the program
- Development of a consolidated written strategic plan in the following format:
 - 1.Executive Summary
 - 2.Elevator Pitch
 - 3.Program Mission Statement
 - 4.SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)
 - 5.Goals

6.KPI's (Key Performance Indicator's)

7.Target Customers

8.Industry analysis

9.Competitive analysis

10.Marketing Plan

11.Operations Plan

12.Recruitment & Retention Plan

13.Financial Projections (3 years)

- Concern of the elimination of DAU courses – Any alternative to accessing these courses elsewhere – Will DAU replace these courses and will we have access
- NIB has identified provider of Agreements training and will be providing information (dates, cost etc.)
- Nominations for future Chairperson of subcommittee are being requested

The Committee will be holding a joint meeting with the Business Development Committee at the National Symposium on Wednesday, April 27 at 1pm.