

Enhancing ethical awareness in the APS



Australian Government
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Commission

VODCAST 1: A TENDER TRAP

Arthur Brown, EL1 Manager, Office Services Team

My area looks after a number of contracts—for photocopiers, printers, copiers, stationery, that sort of thing. Most of these are quite straightforward. Some of our providers have been with us now for quite a long period of time, but occasionally they pose some management challenges—performance issues, maintenance, quality, that sort of thing.

Tina McKenzie, APS 6, Office Services Team

I was actually never very happy working for Negahatchi, the photocopying company I used to work for before I actually joined the department. They are certainly not up to the standards of the department's provider, Gynoma. They're just in a different league of their own and they certainly know how to build relationships with their clients and obviously that's one of the major things you have to look out for.

And they're just a great employer. Recently my brother-in-law got a job working for them and he's got a disability, so it's been quite hard for him looking for work and him getting anything has been fantastic and he loves working for them too.

Arthur

Take the photocopier one for example—that's with the Gynoma company—and Tina's been helping me with that recently. A few months ago there was some maintenance issues, things were not quite up to scratch. I don't really know quite what the problem was. They said it was some sort of short term staffing issue. Anyway, we worked through the issues and I guess it's largely sorted now. I hope so, but it did create a little bit of bad feeling around the department with things just not being fixed properly.

Tina

I was actually very pleased to get into the public service. My boss Arthur has been fantastic, giving me heaps of different opportunities, empowering me, letting me work on different projects, you know, that sort of stuff. It's been fantastic. Anyway, a few months ago he had to go around to our different state offices, so I had to look after things here while he was away.

Arthur

Tina's very good. She joined us recently from the Negahatchi company where she had worked for some time. So because of that she knows the industry very well. She has an excellent understanding of the industry, of the products and of the department's needs.

Tina

We do have regular meetings with Gynoma, our provider. A couple of months ago we went to Tarragon restaurant down by the lake and it was fantastic. I don't actually think Arthur's been there before so I felt really lucky to actually go. They even invited me to their corporate box at the rugby and I went that night as well and we just had a ball and it was fantastic. It was great.

Anyway, so at that meeting we discussed a few of the maintenance issues we'd been having and they assured me that everything was fixed.

Arthur

In the last month or so we've just actually completed a fresh tender process to establish who will be our future provider for photocopiers and this should have taken in account the maintenance issues that I have referred to. I noticed though that the assessment panel concluded that Gynoma was well ahead of the competition. I was a little bit surprised by that but I am sure its fine and given her experience in the industry—and to give her a development opportunity—I asked Tina to take a significant role in that tender process.

Tina

Anyway, another way Arthur's been great was to let me recently work on the tender process for buying our new photocopiers for the department. It was an absolutely huge process and it was great and basically we decided to go with Gynoma. As I said before they're just in a different league.