

---

**From:** The LAB @ DOC  
**Subject:** MMCB Vol. 6 - Written Discussions Process for Oral Presentations, Sept. 2019



Welcome to MMCB Volume 6 – a holiday special. This Monday involves a very brief synopsis, with the request for you to read the whole case.

**Matter of:** CSRA LLC  
**File:** [B-417635.2.3](#)  
**Link:** <https://www.gao.gov/products/b-417635%2Cb-417635.2%2Cb-417635.3>  
**Date:** Sep 11, 2019

**Summary:** “CSRA LLC, of Falls Church, Virginia, protests the issuance of a task order to American Technology Solutions International Corporation (ATSI), of Fredericksburg, Virginia, under request for quotations (RFQ) No. 05GAOA19Q0014, issued by the Government Accountability Office for information technology (IT) operations, engineering, and enhancement support services (OEES). CSRA contends the agency's evaluation of vendors' quotations and resulting award decision were improper. We dismiss the protest in part and deny it in part.”

What caught my attention was that it was for GAO’s IT requirement, so that is always interesting 😊. The biggest lesson to me is how the agency handled discussions related to oral presentations and the demo of its dashboard. The protestor couldn’t get its demo to work during oral presentations, which was a critical element of its factor rating. The agency gave assigned them a significant weakness for this failure. Formal discussions (this was a fair opportunity under FAR 16.505(b) but they decided to reference and follow FAR 15.3 procedures for discussions) state that significant weaknesses must be a part of the discussions process. Since a significant weakness was assigned under the oral presentation, which included the demo, then is the agency required to conduct another oral presentation/demo to hold discussions for this significant weakness? Here the agency decided in its discussion letter that everything was included in the discussions process EXCEPT the oral presentations, which included the demo.

Here is the significant weakness in full text:

*“Vendor did not successfully demonstrate or discuss the GD Raptor [dashboard] that it indicated would be used for all of its tool integration. (Project, Cost, Personnel, Program data sets). A vendor dashboard is envisioned as a major component of the OEES contract, and when the demonstration failed, the vendor discontinued any discussion of it. Given the core nature of this requirement to the new contract, [the agency]’s inability to see and understand its capabilities limited [the agency]’s ability to assess suitability and fit. For example, concerns*

*include use of the tool, ease of use, ability to get at all data and to either summarize it, drill down into it, and ability to use tool in a real-time manner to make adjustment or support decision making. It was not possible to understand or visualize how the system would operation, which introduces risk to [the agency].”*

The upset vendor protested and was dismissed as untimely, as the letter was “crystal clear” that the oral presentation was not included in the discussions process. The letter stated that it was “*exclusive of the content of the oral presentations.*” Not sure if I ever heard GAO refer to an agency’s process as “crystal clear,” but it was their own requirement after all 😊. The agency argued that the protester would not have been able to remedy the failed dashboard demo even had it been included as part of written discussions. This was a smart move by the agency that we should include whenever we have oral presentations and discussions in a project. There is more here, including this quote: “*There is no requirement, however, that an SSA restate each of a vendor’s strengths or weaknesses when comparing quotations and making an award determination.*” This standalone concept is something that I see many teams feel the need to do, regurgitate the findings from the evaluation reports when making the award determination.

**This volume was originally authored in September 2019 and refreshed in March 2025.**

\*Disclaimer: The information contained in this MMCB is merely an opinion of the author and does not constitute formal legal or policy guidance of any kind.

