2022 Federal IT (FIT) Buyer Journey

Why a Customer Journey?

- Marketing serves up the "what."

- Sales delivers the "how" and the "who."

- Product/solutions provides the "when" and "where."

Use the journey to align marketing, sales and solutions.

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Our Goal – To Identify:

Who the key stakeholders are during each stage of the journey

Where they are going for information during the journey

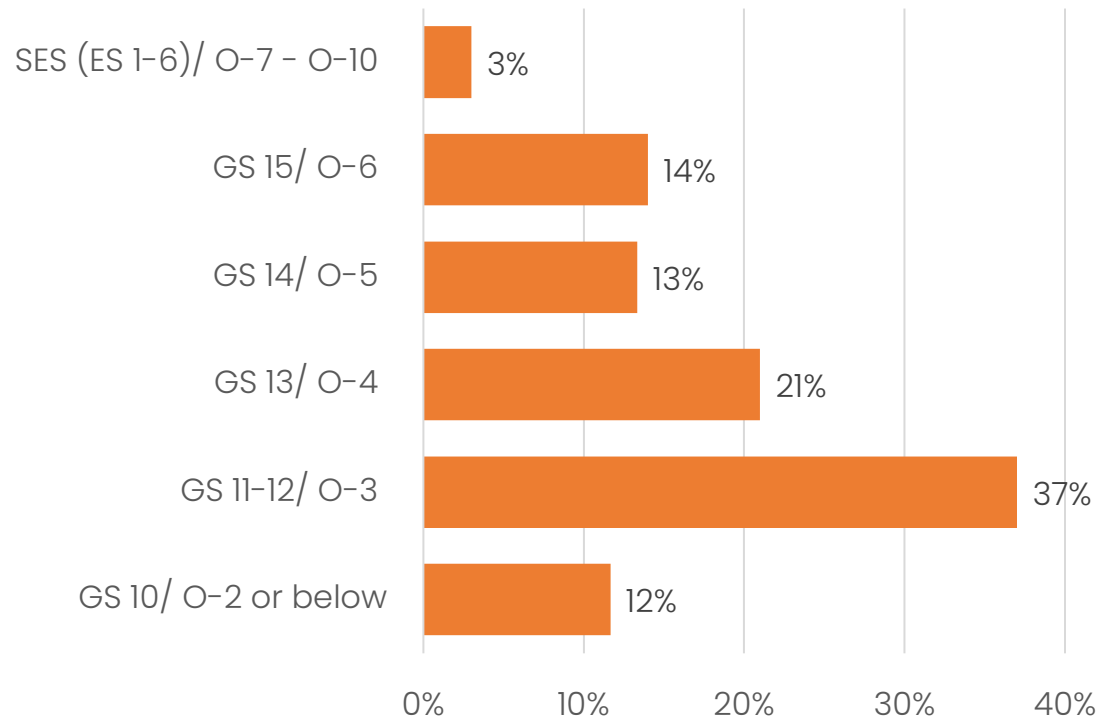The types of information they find most valuable throughout the journey

Your Goal – Put the right team members in place at the right time with the right information.
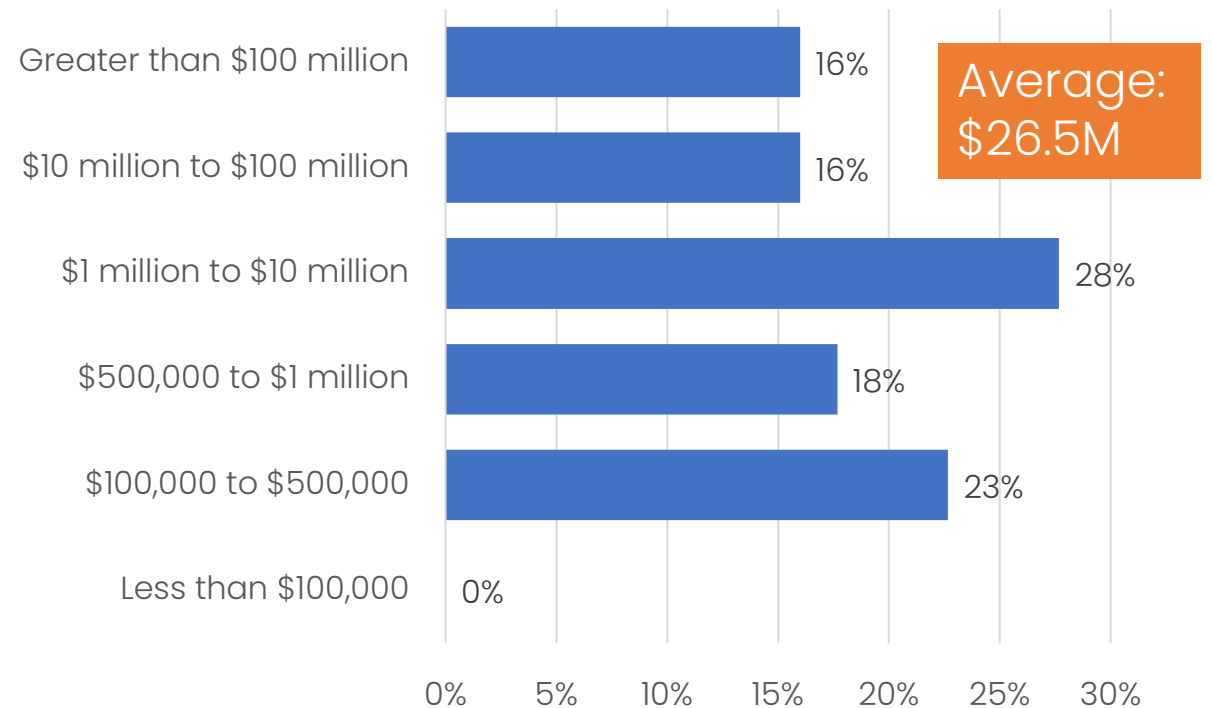
Who We Surveyed

Over half were grade 13 and above and responsible for recommending, buying, specifying or approving products/services of an average of $26.5M over a course of 12 months.

Pay Grade/Level

Pay Grade/Level	Percentage
SES (ES 1-6)/ O-7 – O-10	3%
GS 15/ O-6	14%
GS 14/ O-5	13%
GS 13/ O-4	21%
GS 11-12/ O-3	37%
GS 10/ O-2 or below	12%

Value of Products & Services

Value of Products & Services	Percentage
Greater than $100 million	16%
$10 million to $100 million	16%
$1 million to $10 million	28%
$500,000 to $1 million	18%
$100,000 to $500,000	23%
Less than $100,000	0%

Average: $26.5M

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Six Steps of an IT Solution Purchase in Three Phases

1

Needs and Solutions
- Need identification
- Solution determination: requirements, specifications, features

2

Internal Due Diligence
- Research and evaluation of vendors/providers
- Vendor/provider recommendation
- Review and negotiation: set SLAs, terms and conditions, final pricing

3

Final Provider Selection
- Approve, authorize, acceptance

Respondents were asked about others' involvement in the process, not just their own experiences.

Whose Opinions Matter

CTO/CISO

Legal Rep

Program Manager

IT Specialist

Admin and Operations

Senior Executive

Procurement Official
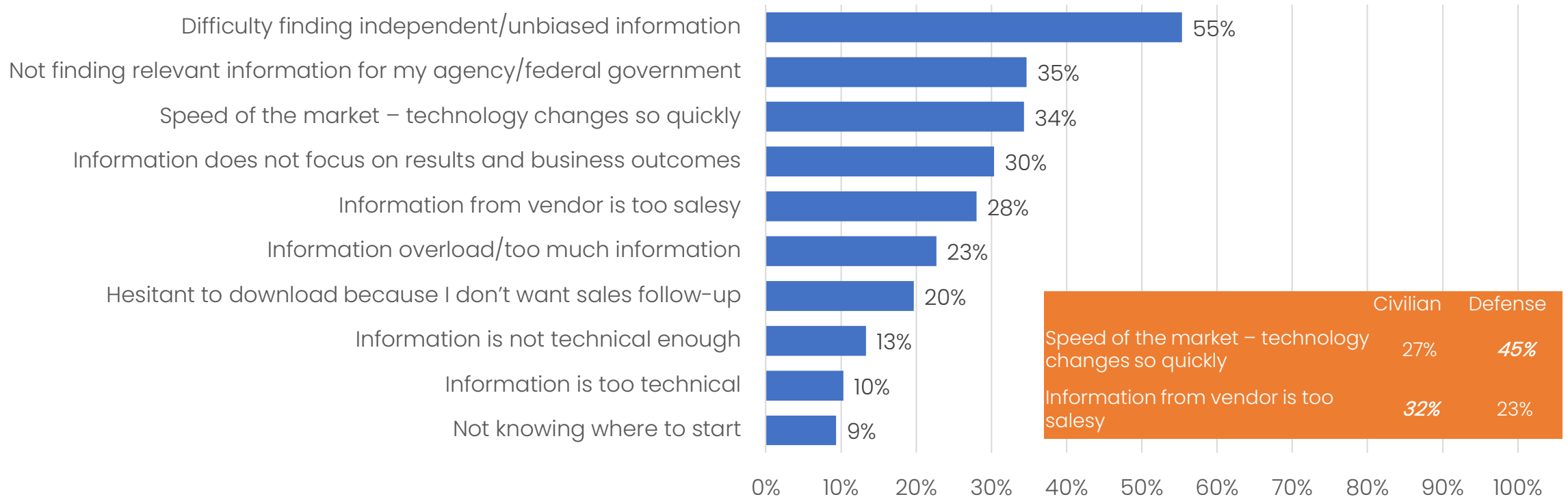
...and many others

Top Challenges in Sources of Information

These respondents are always wary of where the information is coming from – unbiased information from SMEs is viewed more favorably than from sales reps.
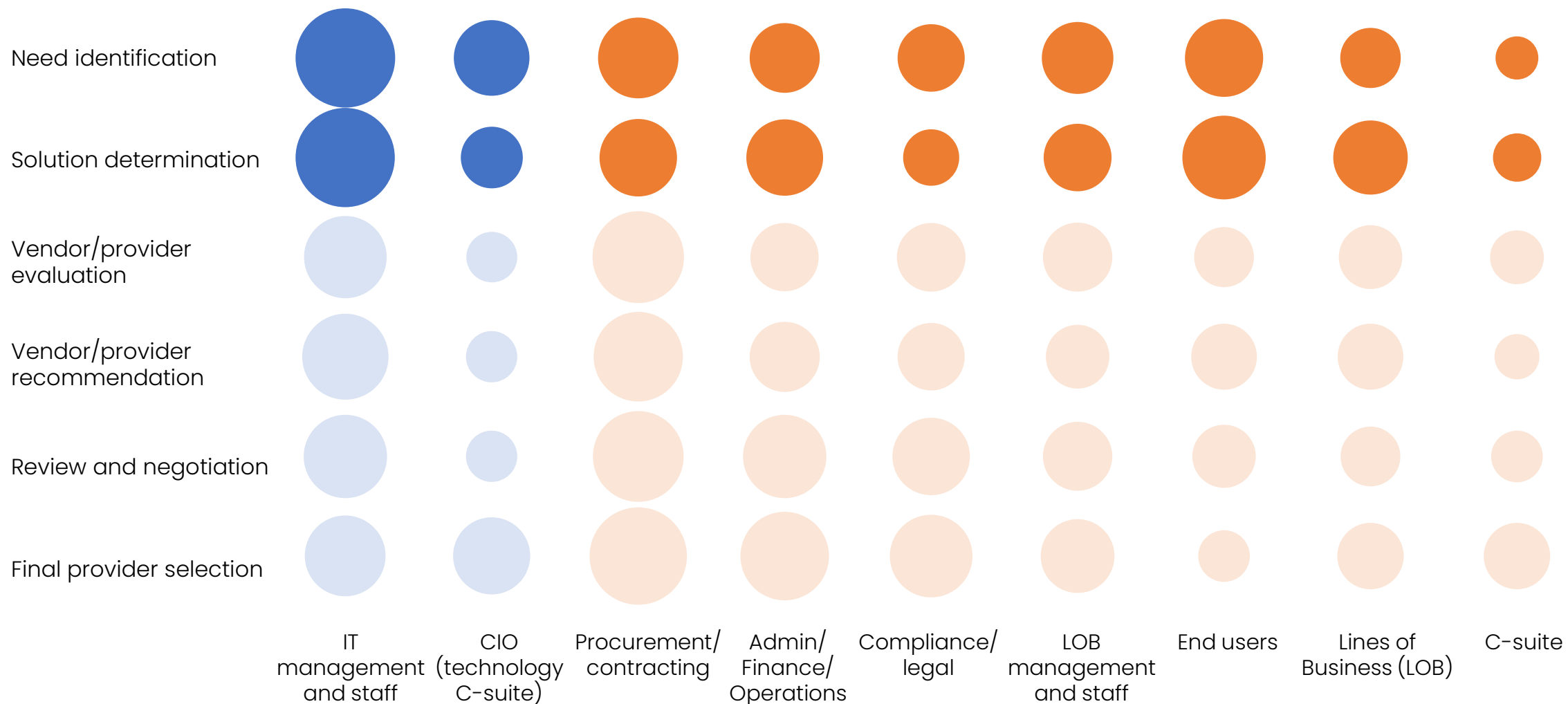
Challenge	%
Difficulty finding independent/unbiased information	55%
Not finding relevant information for my agency/federal government	35%
Speed of the market – technology changes so quickly	34%
Information does not focus on results and business outcomes	30%
Information from vendor is too salesy	28%
Information overload/too much information	23%
Hesitant to download because I don't want sales follow-up	20%
Information is not technical enough	13%
Information is too technical	10%
Not knowing where to start	9%

	Civilian	Defense
Speed of the market – technology changes so quickly	27%	*45%*
Information from vendor is too salesy	*32%*	23%

Types of Information Found Valuable

Product, service, and solution specifications are of key importance, followed by information that is relevant to the government and/or agency and an overview of the technology being considered.

	Need identification	Solution determination	Vendor/ provider evaluation	Vendor/ provider recommendation	Review and negotiation	Final provider selection	Manage or implement products
Product, service, and solution specifications	44%	54%					
Pricing	37%	38%					
Information that is relevant to the government and/or agency	50%	45%					
Overview of the technology being considered	38%	47%					
Supplier/provider/vendor information	24%	44%					
ROI/cost benefit analysis	37%	31%					
Information regarding agency/business challenges	28%	38%					

	1st Tier		2nd Tier		3rd Tier

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External Sources Information

- *Vendor technical/subject matter experts and vendor websites are used in both phases; research firms/industry analysts and general internet searches to a lesser extent.*

	Need identification	Solution determination	Vendor/provider evaluation	Vendor/provider recommendation	Review and negotiation	Final provider selection
Vendor technical/ subject matter experts	31%	39%				
Government focused publications/media	23%	22%				
Technology publications/media	27%	25%				
Vendors' customer references (past performance)	24%	16%				
Research firms/industry analysts	24%	27%				
Vendor websites	28%	30%				
General internet searches	29%	21%				
Consultants	17%	18%				
Vendor sales reps	10%	12%				
Social media	3%	4%				

	1st Tier		2nd Tier		3rd Tier

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Why a Customer Journey?

Stakeholders

- CIO
- IT management and staff
- End users

Where they are going

- Vendor technical/subject matter experts
- Vendor websites
- Research firms/industry analysts
- General internet searches

Types of Information

- Product, service, and solution specifications
- Information that is relevant to the government and/or agency
- Overview of the technology being considered

The CIO importance is heightened during needs and solutions, but IT management and staff are front and center looking for key bits of information from well informed sources. Provide just enough to get to the next meeting.

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Assigning Internal Roles

Marketing

- Leverage Informational pieces that highlight known problems or raise future issues
- Optimize website resources
- Differentiate message for CIOs vs on-the-ground staff

Sales

- Bring SMEs to the conversations with the client
- Provide feedback from clients to marketing and product teams
- Be versed in common pain points and discuss solutions in generic terms

Products/Solutions

- Provide general descriptions to solutions that are not aligned to specific proprietary products. Think bigger picture
- Be a SME/resource for sales and marketing teams

Collaborate on planning and strategy.

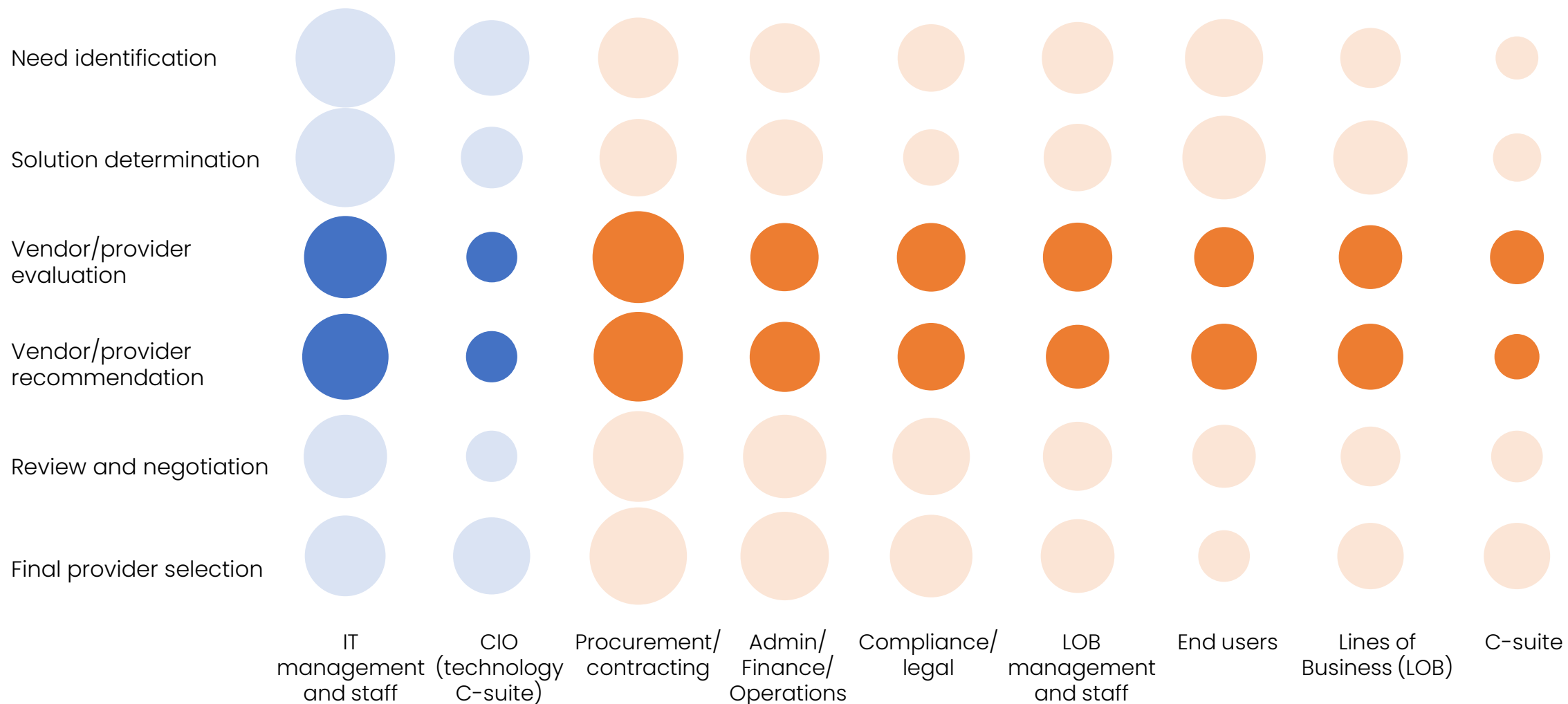Government Marketing UNIVERSITY | Washington Technology

PHASE TWO: INTERNAL DUE DILIGENCE

HOW TO EVALUATE EVERYBODY...AND WHAT DO THEY NEED/WANT?

Types of Information Found Valuable

Product, service, and solution specifications are important for vendor evaluation and recommendation. During review and negotiation, ROI/cost benefit analysis and supplier/provider/vendor information are relied on most frequently.

	Need identification	Solution determination	Vendor/ provider evaluation	Vendor/ provider recommendation	Review and negotiation	Final provider selection	Manage or implement products
Product, service, and solution specifications			55%	44%			
Pricing			43%	48%			
Information that is relevant to the government and/or agency			41%	49%			
Overview of the technology being considered			43%	36%			
Supplier/provider/vendor information			46%	34%			
ROI/cost benefit analysis			31%	38%			
Information regarding agency/business challenges			34%	27%			

	1st Tier		2nd Tier		3rd Tier

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External Sources Information

Government focused publications/media and vendors' customer references (past performance) are important across the due diligence phase of the process.

	Need identification	Solution determination	Vendor/provider evaluation	Vendor/provider recommendation	Review and negotiation	Final provider selection
Vendor technical/ subject matter experts			39%	28%		
Government focused publications/media			32%	28%		
Technology publications/media			26%	19%		
Vendors' customer references (past performance)			28%	29%		
Research firms/industry analysts			22%	32%		
Vendor websites			24%	21%		
General internet searches			19%	17%		
Consultants			27%	20%		
Vendor sales reps			11%	9%		
Social media			6%	8%		

	1st Tier		2nd Tier		3rd Tier

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Story: Internal Due Diligence

Stakeholders

- Procurement/contracting
- IT management and staff
- Admin/finance/operations

Where they are going

- Government focused publications/media
- Vendors' customer references (past performance)
- Vendor technical/subject matter experts

Types of Information

- Product, service, and solution specifications
- Supplier/provider/vendor information
- ROI/cost benefit analysis
- Information that is relevant to the government and/or agency
- Pricing

CIO steps back, IT management and procurement carry the water. Legal, program staff, finance all have additional information needs.

Assigning Internal Roles

Marketing

- Match agency-specific challenges and needs with overall solution set
- Begin preparing cost/benefit documents and one-pagers
- Develop position as trusted source through earned media with company SMEs either through articles or events

Sales

- Keep company SMEs on a hotline for agency staff
- Work to keep pricing and ROI materials succinct, yet rich enough for procurement teams
- Be present at events and other outreach efforts that take place outside of the office

Products/Solutions

- Develop ROI and pricing modules that go deep into the specifics and align with agency needs. No one knows the ROI better than you
- Be available for questions and consultation
- Remain somewhat solution agnostic, demonstrating flexibility and building trust
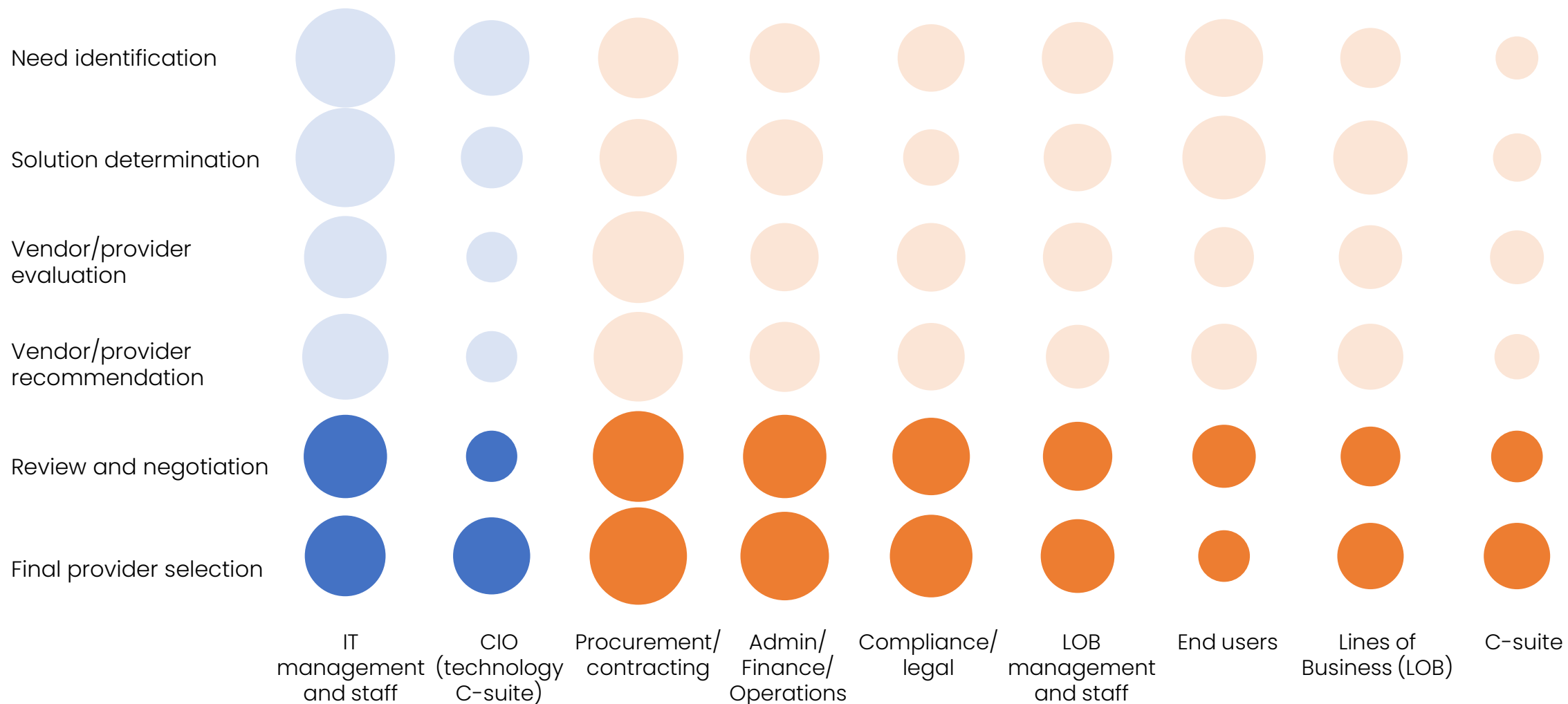
Trust building is essential.

Types of Information Found Valuable

Pricing and product, service, and solution specifications are used most often in the final provider selection phase, followed by ROI/cost benefit analysis and supplier information.

	Need identification	Solution determination	Vendor/ provider evaluation	Vendor/ provider recommendation	Review and negotiation	Final provider selection	Manage or implement products
Product, service, and solution specifications					34%	37%	
Pricing					34%	46%	
Information that is relevant to the government and/or agency					20%	28%	
Overview of the technology being considered					30%	29%	
Supplier/provider/vendor information					35%	35%	
ROI/cost benefit analysis					39%	35%	
Information regarding agency/business challenges					23%	21%	

	1st Tier		2nd Tier		3rd Tier

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External Sources Information

Technology publications/media, government focused publications/media and vendors' customer references (past performance) are consulted most often in the final selection phase.

	Need identification	Solution determination	Vendor/provider evaluation	Vendor/provider recommendation	Review and negotiation	Final provider selection
Vendor technical/ subject matter experts					21%	21%
Government focused publications/media					30%	24%
Technology publications/media					20%	32%
Vendors' customer references (past performance)					26%	24%
Research firms/industry analysts					23%	12%
Vendor websites					11%	16%
General internet searches					17%	22%
Consultants					24%	15%
Vendor sales reps					7%	7%
Social media					2%	4%

1st Tier   2nd Tier   3rd Tier

Story: Final Provider Selection

Stakeholders

- Procurement/contracting
- Admin/finance/operations
- CIO
- IT management and staff

Where they are going

- Technology publications/media
- Government focused publications/media
- Vendors' customer references (past performance)

Types of Information

- Product, service, and solution specifications
- Information that is relevant to the government and/or agency
- Pricing

Engaging in both technical and non-technical roles is critical during this phase; media and past performance are where stakeholders are going for information.

Assigning Internal Roles

Marketing

- Continue to maintain presence at industry events and government focused publications. Leverage your SMEs
- Ensure top of mind awareness remains high
- Target last minute outreach to more senior staff

Sales

- Work with other agency customers to brief them on other opportunities in the pipeline
- Be ready to answer detailed questions on pricing, specifications and others points of background on the company
- Work to reassure "new business" agencies that you have a proven track record, are reliable and have support ready to go

Products/Solutions

- Start preparation of introduction documents that go beyond decision makers (i.e., end users)
- Maintain some presence at events where senior staff may attend and/or in publications they read

Start the final push by maintaining visibility and providing reassurance.
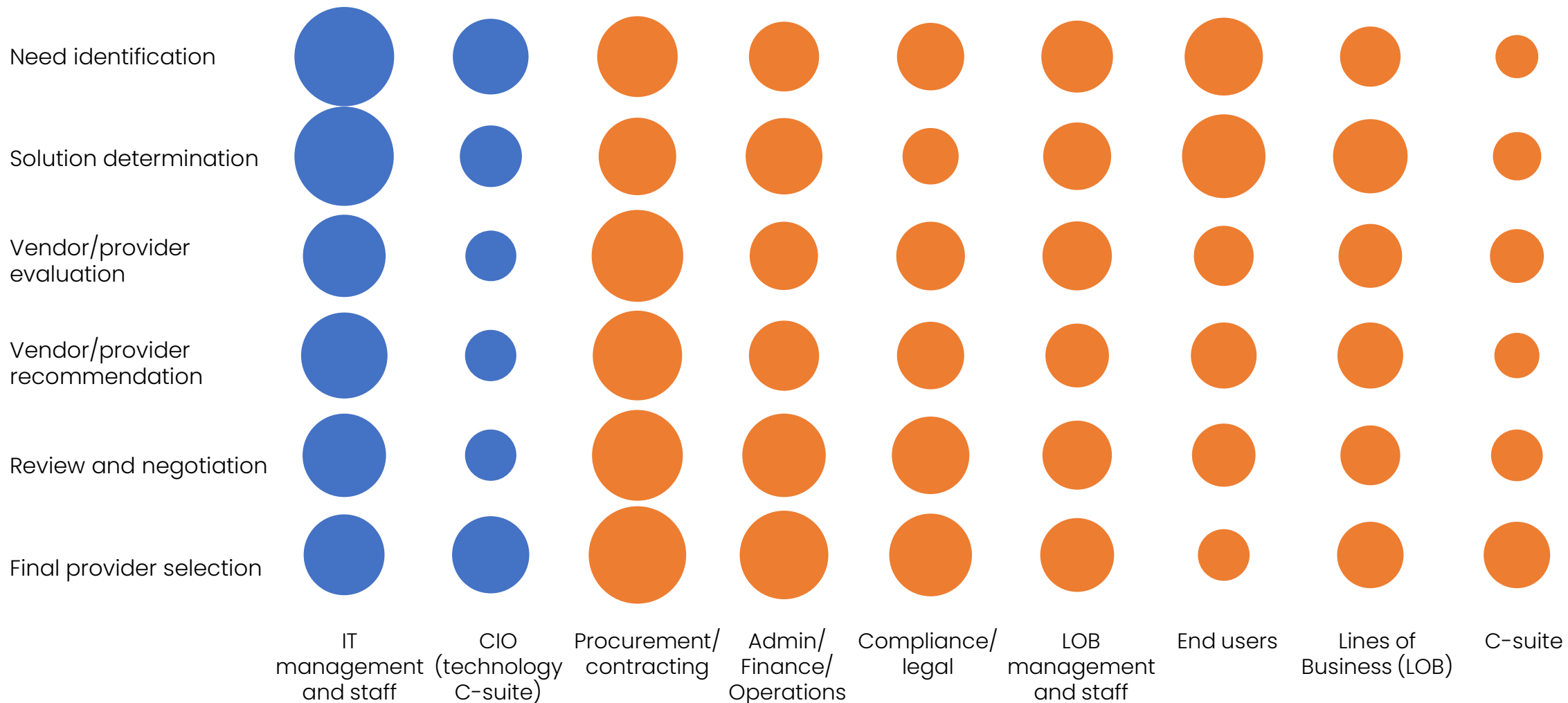
Types of Information Found Valuable

After a sale, the job is not done – implementers and end-users still need product, service and solutions specifications, and information that's relevant to their agency

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Information that is relevant to the government and/or agency	50%	45%	41%	49%	20%	28%	40%
Overview of the technology being considered	38%	47%	43%	36%	30%	29%	31%
Supplier/provider/vendor information	24%	44%	46%	34%	35%	35%	35%
ROI/cost benefit analysis	37%	31%	31%	38%	39%	35%	30%
Information regarding agency/business challenges	28%	38%	34%	27%	23%	21%	37%

1st Tier 2nd Tier 3rd Tier

External Sources Information

Information sources vary by the stage of the buyer journey. Resource allocation is essential when dealing with limited marketing budgets.

	Need identification	Solution determination	Vendor/provider evaluation	Vendor/provider recommendation	Review and negotiation	Final provider selection
Vendor technical/ subject matter experts	31%	39%	39%	28%	21%	21%
Government focused publications/media	23%	22%	32%	28%	30%	24%
Technology publications/media	27%	25%	26%	19%	20%	32%
Vendors' customer references (past performance)	24%	16%	28%	29%	26%	24%
Research firms/industry analysts	24%	27%	22%	32%	23%	12%
Vendor websites	28%	30%	24%	21%	11%	16%
General internet searches	29%	21%	19%	17%	17%	22%
Consultants	17%	18%	27%	20%	24%	15%
Vendor sales reps	10%	12%	11%	9%	7%	7%
Social media	3%	4%	6%	8%	2%	4%

	1st Tier		2nd Tier		3rd Tier

Story: Final Provider Selection
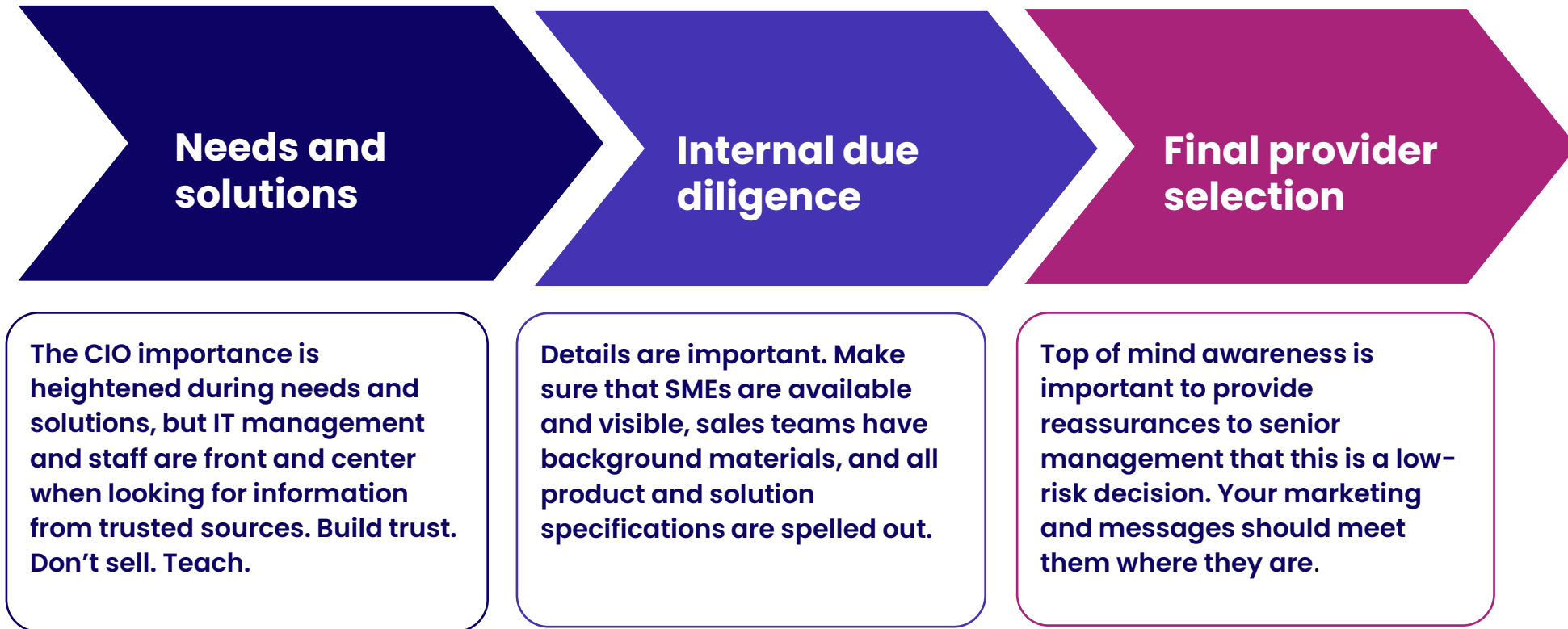
Stakeholders

Where they are going

Types of Information

IT staff and procurement is always present.
CIOs/CTOs enter and exit (and reenter).

Every step of the process should be about building trust. Every message should focus on what's best for the agency/public.

The Journey

Needs and solutions

Internal due diligence

Final provider selection

The CIO importance is heightened during needs and solutions, but IT management and staff are front and center when looking for information from trusted sources. Build trust. Don't sell. Teach.

Details are important. Make sure that SMEs are available and visible, sales teams have background materials, and all product and solution specifications are spelled out.

Top of mind awareness is important to provide reassurances to senior management that this is a low-risk decision. Your marketing and messages should meet them where they are.

Start with information, provide more information, and finish with information.

Complimentary Resources

2021 Federal Media & Marketing Study
www.marketconnectionsinc.com/federal-media-and-marketing-study/

2021 Content Marketing Review
www.marketconnectionsinc.com/cmr2021study/

2020 Federal IT (FIT) Persona Study
www.marketconnectionsinc.com/fit-federal-it-persona-study-2020-a-deeper-look-into-your-government-customer/

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