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## Short Description and Benefits of ASG Services for Vendors

The Assessment Solutions Group (ASG) provides a suite of professional services to a variety of clients including vendors of assessment services. Over the past 12 years we have worked with a number of vendors to help them improve their competitive position in the assessment industry. Vendors have benefitted greatly from ASG's services and a brief description of the services offered is provided below.

**Competitive Cost Analysis** – ASG can assist vendors in determining their competitive cost position in the industry. The company uses its *Assessment Cost Model* that it has developed to evaluate the competitiveness of a vendor's costs. ASG works with the vendor to gather the appropriate financial and assessment unit volume information which is then input to the model. The model calculates how the vendor's costs stack up against industry averages.

The model generates competitive costs by functional area including departmental overhead, corporate overhead, and margin. Data is presented in a number of ways and recommendations for improvement are provided. Once the data is generated, the vendor can examine key areas of its operations for potential efficiency improvements. ASG can assist the customer in identifying and implementing operational improvements.

**Operational Improvement Consulting (Content Development Example)** – ASG's technical assessment consultants can help a vendor examine its operations and assess improvements required to make them more efficient and cost effective.

As an example, ASG has assisted clients in identifying improvements to their content development processes. In one study, ASG evaluated the client's competitive cost position, pointing out areas in the item development process where its costs were not competitive and recommended improvement actions that could be taken. In another study, the company assisted a client in developing an item development workflow and labor activity tracking system to gather and report its item development costs.

**RFP Proposal Language Review** – ASG's consultants will evaluate the effectiveness of a vendor's proposal language. The company will evaluate both boilerplate verbiage, as well as specific proposal responses to point out areas of strengths and weakness and make recommendations for improvement. Client proposals can be reviewed against the winning proposal or on a stand-alone basis. ASG's consultants have prepared and reviewed hundreds of RFPs and proposals during their careers in the assessment industry and are well positioned to assist vendors in this task.

In doing this work for vendors, ASG has developed proprietary rubrics it uses to rate proposal language in response to individual RFP requirements and groups of requirements comprising a functional area. The company uses the scores from the rubrics to perform statistical analyses of vendor proposal language. A summary report including charts and heat maps of the analyses and recommendations for improvement are presented to the client at the close of the engagement.

**Activity Based Costing and Time Tracking** – ASG's financial consultants have decades of experience in analyzing assessment costs, as well as the labor activities, and activity and unit based costs that comprise the costs of an assessment. The company has assisted vendors in designing labor tracking and reporting systems that highlight key assessment cost areas so they can be managed more effectively.

While actual dollar costs are important in managing the enterprise as a whole, unit and activity based costing are key in determining the how to effectively manage costs for maximum efficiency. ASG can assist vendors in developing unit based costs and costing analyses.

**Stakeholder Surveys** – ASG can work with clients desiring to survey stakeholders in a variety of topics. Working with its marketing survey consultant, the company can design surveys to gather information from customers, states and others on current trends in assessment and how states and districts are responding to them, customer satisfaction, industry perceptions of the client and other areas of interest.

ASG has been conducting an annual State Assessment Survey for the past 11 years and has developed excellent relationships with key assessment personnel in all 50 states. The company typically achieves a 90% response rate for its surveys.