



Virginia Department of General Services/Division of Purchases and Supply “eVA Mobile Apps”



Executive Summary

Businesses today are inherently mobile and require immediate, real-time access to business opportunities to maximize their competitive position in the marketplace. All business owners, but small business owners in particular, are stretched to maintain the viability of current operations while simultaneously seeking opportunities to grow their businesses. Virginia is the first state to launch a mobile app - *eVA Mobile 4 Business* - that brings bid opportunities and solicitations literally to the fingertips of its suppliers and the general public, giving them immediate, real-time access to thousands of business opportunities published every year and providing increased visibility into how state government spends taxpayer dollars.

A companion app – *eVA Mobile 4 Approvers* – allows eVA approvers and watchers on the government side real-time access to requisitions, including all of the requisition details, from buyer information to attachments. It provides a fast, secure and easy way to conduct thorough reviews of requisitions and keep the purchase process moving, all from the convenience of a mobile device.

Developed in partnership with CGI Technologies and Solutions, Inc., the *eVA Mobile 4 Business* and *eVA Mobile 4 Approvers* apps can be downloaded free from the Apple and Android app stores or can be accessed from a mobile device browser at the eVA App Center <http://eva.virginia.gov/pages/eva-apps.htm>. Utilizing the powerful iOS platform from Apple Technologies and the Android application framework, *eVA Mobile 4 Business* and *eVA Mobile 4 Approvers* are rich and innovative apps that deliver an “application-like” experience to internet-enabled mobile devices (iPhone, iPad, Android, Blackberry, etc.).

Free access to information on what public agencies are buying and from whom they are buying it supports broader interest and participation in government by both suppliers and citizens. Mobile apps that are tailored to meet a specific need, provide personal value and are quick to respond present the greatest value to users. eVA Mobile Apps were designed with these objectives in mind and adoption figures indicate they are broadly accepted and used.

eVA Mobile Apps empower users via easy-to-use tools that fit today’s mobile life-style paradigm. Google reports that mobile search queries are growing at a rate of 30% monthly, a solid indication of how rapidly the mobile computing marketplace is expanding. eVA Mobile Apps are perfectly positioned to take advantage of this growth with robust, innovative and time-saving capabilities. Just as eVA is the recognized leader nationally and internationally for its highly successful eProcurement implementation, eVA Mobile Apps are poised to complement and expand on this success. Businesses, employees and citizens are empowered to do business with Virginia anytime, anywhere.

Commonwealth of Virginia - Department of General Services “eVA Mobile Apps”

Innovation

Government procurement requires agility in adapting mobile app functionality to meet ever-changing user demands for timely and actionable information. At the same time, the mobile computing environment, comprised of many devices and operating systems, is evolving so rapidly that mobile apps quickly can be rendered obsolete without appropriate maintenance.

To address this problem, Virginia, with its eProcurement system, eVA, broke from the traditional model of creating separate apps for different mobile devices and implemented a multi-faceted approach using a mobile web application complimented by a mobile app shell. The mobile web application supplies core business functionality while the mobile app shell leverages device-specific features such as calendars, contact lists and phone. The mobile web application, which serves as the foundation, can be launched using device-specific mobile app shells or any mobile device browser. The mobile web application lends simplicity to maintenance and development. Functional changes made once in the mobile web application are automatically available through mobile devices, something not easily attained if maintaining full mobile apps for every type of mobile device.

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eVA Mobile 4 Business allows anyone with an internet-enabled mobile device to have real-time access to Virginia government business opportunities – anytime, anywhere. Whether in the office or on the move, the *eVA Mobile 4 Business* app gives businesses immediate access to all bid opportunities and solicitations published on eVA’s public *Virginia Business Opportunities* web page. The app also includes personalized features allowing users to follow specific opportunities by adding them to a Watch List. With a variety of other exciting features this app brings real business value to the world of mobile computing.

eVA Mobile 4 Approvers allows eVA Approvers and Watchers with an internet-enabled mobile device to have real-time access to requisitions. It provides access to all of the requisition details, from buyer information to attachments – the same information available to desktop users. The app allows users to approve or deny requisitions; add comments; and supports other features for a fast, secure and easy way to conduct thorough reviews of requisitions. It keeps the purchase process moving, all from the convenience of a mobile device.

Mobile apps are becoming increasingly influential because of the extraordinarily broad potential audience. Whether the user is a potential supplier to the Commonwealth, a procurement officer reviewing requisitions, or a citizen interested in how Virginia is spending its resources, *eVa Mobile 4 Business* and *eVA Mobile 4 Approvers* provide free access and information anywhere at any time. eVA Mobile Apps empower users via easy-to-use tools that fit today’s mobile lifestyle paradigm.

Transferability

The concept of mobile apps for procurement is highly transferable. Recent survey data from AnyPresence suggests that nearly one-third of survey respondents indicated their organizations are considering or are actively engaged in implementing mobile apps in the supply chain.

Mobile apps for business and government differ considerably from mobile apps for consumers. For businesses and government entities, the front-end interface must be robust and more attention must be paid to practical functionality than to aesthetics. Priority must be given to controlling access to enterprise systems and IT departments must understand and adapt to enterprise mobility strategies, while ensuring they maintain security, testing and operational standards.

Custom development of procurement mobile apps is favored over third-party-developed apps by nearly 40 percent of AnyPresence survey respondents, a number that has been rising steadily in recent years. This is due primarily to the functional and security limitations seen in third-party developed apps. eVA Mobile Apps were custom developed to ensure they exactly meet the needs of the target user communities – suppliers and procurement professionals.

The average development time for an app is approximately three months with costs ranging from \$25,000 to \$500,000 for 78% of survey respondents. Return on Investment can become a concern with higher development costs and longer development timeframes but it generally is agreed among commentators writing on this subject that mobile apps bring considerable flexibility and efficiency to the procurement process.

eVA Mobile 4 Business was developed at a cost of \$150,000, which is in the lower third of the average cost range. In less than two years, nearly 90,000 unique visitors have used the app, currently yielding an amortized cost per visit of about \$1.65. The cost per visit will continue to decline as usage increases. Average monthly usage has increased about 15% over the prior year and if, as expected, the trend remains fairly constant, the per visit cost by the end of calendar year 2014 will be cut almost in half to \$0.84, and continue to decline thereafter.

Other states certainly could use eVA Mobile Apps as a benchmark for developing their own, local versions. It would require a relatively robust eProcurement system containing automated processes for sourcing and requisitioning backed up by a central information database. Virginia's experience demonstrates that mobile apps can be developed and implemented at reasonable cost in a reasonable timeframe and deliver excellent return on investment.

Service Improvement

The soft launch of *eVA Mobile 4 Business* took place in July 2012 with the placement of the app in the Apple and Android app stores. The Governor's Office held a press conference and issued a press release announcing the new app in August. Additional advertising was placed on the eVA website and in the fall quarterly online newsletter – *eVA Connections*.

Since its launch more than 5,200 users have downloaded the *eVA Mobile 4 Business* app and the app has logged almost 475,000 page views from nearly 90,000 unique visitors. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and users report they have fully integrated the app into their daily routine of checking and responding to solicitations.

Reinforcing its value to businesses and government agencies, *eVA Mobile 4 Business* was recognized in fall 2012 with a prestigious Governor's Technology Award at the annual Commonwealth of

Virginia Innovative Technology Symposium (COVITS). *eVA Mobile 4 Business* was cited in the “IT as Efficiency Driver – Government to Business” category for its strategy to improve businesses’ electronic interaction with government, promote availability and transparency of information, and increase business awareness and adoption of available services. Evidence of the eProcurement system’s extensive breadth is that in FY 2013, 90.2 percent of state purchases and 99.7 percent of the total value of state procurements were processed through eVA.

The *eVA Mobile 4 Approvers* app has been downloaded almost 500 times since its launch in 2013. Usage logs count over 94,000 page views from more than 14,500 unique visitors, a number that rises daily. Procurement officers report that the app makes their workday easier when they are out of the office. They no longer have to worry about returning to face a long list of requisitions awaiting review but, instead, can simply access the *eVA Mobile 4 Approvers* app on the go and keep the purchase process moving. It is quick, easy and efficient!

The *eVA Mobile 4 Business* and *eVA Mobile 4 Approvers* apps tap into the evolving need to support mobile real-time access to government. Google reports that mobile search queries are growing at a rate of 30% monthly, a solid indication of how rapidly the mobile computing marketplace is expanding. eVA Mobile Apps are perfectly positioned to take advantage of this growth with robust and innovative capabilities. Just as eVA is the recognized leader nationally and internationally for its highly successful eProcurement implementation, *eVA Mobile 4 Business* and *eVA Mobile 4 Approvers* apps are poised to complement and expand on this success. Businesses, employees and citizens are empowered to do business with Virginia anytime, anywhere.

Cost Reduction

Information timeliness is a critical factor in many purchasing decisions. Government agencies often have limited time to acquire goods or services; consequently, businesses are pressed for time to respond to agencies’ requests for quotation. The *eVA Mobile 4 Business* app allows suppliers to submit their quotations anywhere at any time, thus helping to ensure they do not miss out on business opportunities while away from the office. This could result in increased competition for government business and, potentially, lower prices.

Assembling quotations often is a collaborative effort but it can be difficult for businesses to have everyone in the same physical location when needed. *eVA Mobile 4 Business* facilitates collaboration by supporting team members with the information they need no matter where they may be located physically. They can easily check bid specifications while on the go, search for current or historical solicitation information and even place solicitation close dates on their personal mobile device calendar through clickable dates within the solicitations, saving time and money.

Because information is stored within the mobile application, it provides speedier access to information than a traditional internet session. In addition, internet speed can be slow in some parts of the country resulting in unsatisfactory response time and a diminished user experience. This potential problem is virtually eliminated with mobile apps and is helping to minimize the Digital Divide.

Free access to information on what public agencies are buying and from whom they are buying it supports broader interest and participation in government by both suppliers and citizens. Mobile apps that are tailored to meet a specific need, provide personal value and are quick to respond present the greatest value to users. eVA Mobile Apps were designed with these objectives in mind and adoption figures confirm that suppliers and procurement professionals understand the value and efficiencies eVA Mobile Apps bring to their respective workplaces.