

The Evolution of a Surplus Program

How the State of Washington revitalized its surplus services with the help of GovDeals

6 Yrs

Selling on GovDeals platform

31K

Assets sold

12.7M

Total visitors

\$50M

Returned to the state

Background

The State of Washington's Department of Enterprise Services Surplus Operations (DESSO) recycles, reuses, repurposes, and sells products and equipment on behalf of the state with the goal of extending the life of viable assets and keeping the state's materials out of landfills. In addition to operating its public retail store, DESSO has partnered with GovDeals over the last six years to offer its surplus to a much larger buying audience.

Challenge

Prior to the pandemic, DESSO's focus was on operating their public retail store and selling the state's surplus equipment online. However, in response to the pandemic, during most of 2020 and 2021 DESSO had to divert its attention to distributing personal protective equipment (PPE), which was desperately needed across the state. When surplus operations normalized, it became time to develop a "back-to-business" rollout of services that DESSO could safely offer to the public under the new pandemic guidelines. DESSO faced three main challenges:

A drop in inventory

Due to widespread telework and office closures throughout the state, the program saw a significant drop in its normal inventory.

Reopening protocols

State guidelines were not yet established so reopening the public retail store didn't seem feasible or safe to do during the height of the pandemic.

Surplus management

DESSO is responsible for the surplus management of multiple smaller agencies across the state. They needed a solution that would allow them to sell these items in place, in their original locations.

Solution

Needing a flexible option to sell the state's surplus DESSO chose to utilize the GovDeals surplus platform they were already using, but in an expanded capacity. GovDeals was able to provide the state with three separate selling accounts to properly address their specific needs. Each

State of Washington account has its own fees, features, terms, and conditions. One account even features a 'Buy Now' option, perfect for those items that were normally featured in the public store.

The flexibility to have so much control over their surplus assets has simplified DESSO's surplus process. They can now conduct sales without having to continuously make adjustments to their fees or terms and conditions.

To further accommodate new buying options, DESSO

implemented an appointment-based system for asset pick-ups. This new system saw a higher success rate for customer accountability when picking up the assets they purchased online. DESSO reports that while some customers do miss dropping by the store to browse, they have received a lot of positive feedback about the increased communication to guide buyers through the online sales process.

Results

The pandemic compelled the DESSO team to shift from old practices, redundant processes, and siloed operations to a holistic, cross-functional approach to its operations. In 2021, DESSO returned approximately **\$7.5 million** to the originating agencies, a 35% increase

in revenue compared to the year before, without the additional public store items. GovDeals is proud to partner with agencies like DESSO to sell usable products at a lower cost, reducing tax burdens and keeping unnecessary waste out of landfills.

"Optimizing our processes to get ahead of any of our customers' concerns allows us to resolve potential issues in a timely and consistent manner."

- Chris Evans, the auctioneer supervisor

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