

## **Identification of Prospective Contracted Experts**

Contractors for standards program support usually come to API either from established consulting firms, or as independent practitioners—often annuitants, retirees or individuals with past affiliations with the petroleum or petrochemical industry and service on API committees. Committees seeking contracted expert support should be mindful however, that it is important to maintain a strong base of volunteer support to work with the contractor. While a contracted expert can provide procedural and administrative guidance, the

Recent industry trends have resulted in the availability of a large group of technically qualified individuals who are no longer full time employees, but have the time, expertise and inclination to contract with API. These individuals often have current knowledge of the industry's practices and collegial relationships with committee members. They also tend to be more flexible in their work schedules and fees. Unfortunately, in some cases they lack the full understanding of the standards development process.

Consulting firms, on the other hands, tend to charge higher fees but provide various administrative services as well and the resulting work products may be much closer to final documents since these firms provide a high level of administrative support.

It is important to ensure that the contractor is up to date with state of the art technology—checking memberships and professional affiliations, along with regular attendance and participation in industry

The decision to use a private practitioner or a consulting firm should include careful consideration of the following:

- Contractor's ability to meet deadlines and work within budget
- Conflict-of-interest considerations
- Ownership of intellectual property
- Ability to balance personal expertise with the group's direction
- Previous experience of committee in developing standards