

Developing the *commercial* capability of your procurement team

Invest in team development

Keeping up with the changing procurement and supply chain landscape is essential and can be achieved by underpinning employee expertise with formal procurement and supply chain qualifications, such as those delivered by the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS). Whilst providing a framework for knowledge development and aligning theory with practice; further study will help to develop soft skills and instil further confidence when decision making.

Develop soft skills

Investing in soft skill development can bring a whole host of benefits! Spending time fine-tuning relationship management, negotiation and communication skills - in addition to improving emotional intelligence - will help you to maintain stakeholder relationships, resulting in improved business performance and better outcomes.

This approach will also enhance personal development; improve your tendering and contracting process and help your team to remain aware of changes within the external market place, leading to better use of legislation. It's also important to keep up to speed with any Brexit developments and how this could impact upon your business.

Build a strong leadership culture

A strong procurement strategy backed with support from leadership level will help your organisation to understand and buy into the value of procurement. Influence from the top down will also encourage colleagues to consider wider commercial decisions; building the confidence to take greater risks to achieve stronger commercial outcomes.

Create cross category support

Creating an internal system of cross category support will provide your category teams with a vehicle to assist and challenge each other. Sharing ideas; understanding where activities cross over into different areas and agreeing the right opportunities as a collective group can have a real impact when it comes to commercial decision making.

To constructively challenge and share best practice, arrange regular forums with different category representatives.

Review your recruitment strategy

To ensure your team is versatile and has a variety of skill sets and expertise review your recruitment strategy. Having a mix of public and private sector experience can be advantageous - presenting opportunities to improve upon normal working practice, consider different perspectives on the use of legislation, boost productivity and improve commercial packages.

Encourage innovation

Top down support to promote innovation is key and teams must be encouraged to take risks and consider a broad range of commercial models. Building this culture will help break down barriers to innovation and this can go a long way to achieving more significant commercial outcomes.