



THE
SOURCE

BRAVO ♀

Celebrating leadership success in procurement



Procurement is a great training ground for future CEOs and Directors. Managing external relationships, dealing with ambiguity in a global environment, navigating the fine-line between cost and brand management are all essential leadership skills that are fine-tuned within our profession.

We believe there are currently more than 25 female Chief Procurement Officers (CPOs) within Australia. This is a fantastic achievement which demonstrates that procurement is a profession within which females can flourish and demonstrate their leadership skills. Because we see procurement as a potential pathway to the CEO's office and the Boardroom, we hope the growing number of female CPOs will mean that our profession becomes a training ground for future female business leaders.

Helping develop women in business, and particularly within procurement, has long been a personal passion of mine. But this research is not just about women – it is about leadership. We believe this report will certainly help increase the profile of female CPOs. But more importantly, we hope these stories will provide insights to the career success factors within our profession and put a spotlight on the career development and other opportunities which exist within the procurement profession today.

I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to the executives who participated in this research paper. Each of these high profile women devoted time to share the wealth of knowledge they have gained through their career, in order to help those who are currently navigating their own career journey.

Tania Seary
Founding Chairman, The Source





The Source is an organisation specialising in the recruitment of procurement professionals. The Source not only believes in matching the brightest minds in procurement with the right career opportunity, but also in the development of the procurement profession in Australia. This leadership paper has been compiled to help aspiring CPOs and Managers gain greater insight into the types of skills and behaviours that are required to lead, nurture and develop top procurement teams.

As the profession continues to grow in both stature and representation, the demand for top tier procurement talent has never been more apparent. As an industry we need to step up, meet this demand and demonstrate to our customers the true value of procurement. The days of procurement being purely a buying function are over and procurement professionals are now becoming increasingly involved in business critical areas within their organisations.

The female leaders in this paper have all made tough decisions, all shown bravery and all subsequently contributed great value to their businesses. Study the enclosed comments, absorb the key messages but more importantly take action. By doing so, it will not only benefit your career but the Australian procurement profession as a whole.

Wishing you the best of success on your journey.

Andrew MacAskill
Managing Director, The Source

BRAVO ♀

Sharyn Scriven

Prudence Jacobson

Visna Lampasi

Karen Carmichael

Antoinette Brandi

Jane Falconer

Sandra Keller

Billie Gorman

Renae Sambrooks

Angela Cunningham

Deborah McWhirter

Thomai Veginis

Suzanne Young



Procurement is not for the faint hearted.

Most rewarding experience and greatest accomplishment to date?

This year, my procurement team received the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) accreditation and is now recognised as the first energy company outside of Europe to achieve this status. The process took six months and involved benchmarking our procurement processes, end-to-end supply chain, sustainability, contract management and tender documentation against other organisations worldwide. This accomplishment has raised the profile of procurement within the organisation and has enhanced the credibility of the function with internal stakeholders.

Give us an example of a tough decision you have made? What was the outcome?

Working with key business stakeholders to convince them of procurement's value and then bringing them along on the journey was difficult. The business covers five geographical areas and procurement partners with all of them to deliver results. At the outset, each manager had very different requirements for their area and it was challenging to keep everyone pleased. The reality was that the company needed to deliver value and consolidated and standardising requirements was a key strategy. Procurement worked closely with the business to create a central business representative that could be included in the scope, planning and negotiation. This took considerable time and trust between both parties. However, over the last few years the business has gained significant benefit from this decision and as a result, it has been a very rewarding experience.

How do you keep the momentum going?

In procurement you never seem finished, and this role continues to keep me very engaged. The procurement profession is evolving and there is always something new to try. In my current organisation, we aim to adopt different ways of thinking and strive to work smarter by implementing continuous improvement. Now that we have established a solid procurement platform, we will be looking for new ways to become increasingly efficient and deliver further value – this quest is what helps keep the momentum going.

Why is procurement a good career choice?

The breadth of skills, accountability and level of impact you can have on an organisation makes it a rewarding career choice. Procurement offers a wealth of opportunity and allows you to develop cross-functional business skills. Above all, I love the challenge.

Sharyn Scriven

Five years ago, Sharyn Scriven was considering whether to keep building on her successful career in operations management, or to make the jump into a new profession. Luckily, her profile showed that she had the perfect skills and managerial qualities to lead a procurement team. In her words, procurement was 'an opportunity too good to pass up' and she subsequently took up her first procurement role as Group Manager Procurement in a large energy company.





Decision making is about having the courage of conviction.

Give us an example of a tough decision you have made? What was the outcome?

Decisions which involve people are always the most difficult to make. As a leader your role is to look at the function and determine what is right for the business. In situations such as redundancies or performance management, it is important to take the time to plan the situation and to ensure you show people the respect they deserve. Don't shy away from hard decisions and have the courage to stand by them.

Key behaviours you look for when attracting talent?

- Technically competent – having the right business, commercial and leadership skills are important.
- Commercial – need to be professional and think from a business perspective.
- Adaptable – people need to manage change and ambiguity.

3 attributes which make a great leader?

- Critical feedback – the only way to improve is to ensure that those around you provide open and honest feedback.
- Courage – it is important to back-up what you say. You should live by what you say and if you make a mistake, own up to it.
- People – leaders are only as good as the people they manage. Talented people are the key to success. If they are proud of what they do, they will contribute more to the business.

Issues currently impacting the procurement profession?

One of the biggest challenges facing the procurement profession is translating the value of procurement into different industries. The value will be different for each industry and procurement professionals need to articulate the value both in terms of financial benefits and the broader business value. Where procurement sits in an organisation's structure is an overarching issue, because it determines how the function is viewed and valued by corporate level executives.

Prudence Jacobson

A lawyer by trade, Prudence Jacobson, like many others, fell into the procurement profession. Describing herself as being 'emotionally attached to delivering great results' she embraces big challenges and enjoys being involved in large transformation projects.





Visna Lampasi

Visna Lampasi is recognised as the youngest female fellow for CIPS globally and has had her career focused in the procurement profession for 12 years. Holding a firm belief that a background in supply chain provides a better understanding of procurement, in Visna's experience 'not all backgrounds lend themselves to being an effective procurement professional and that operational style roles will give you an edge and a broader understanding of the end-to-end value chain'.

To be successful in procurement you need to be comfortable with change.

Most rewarding experience or greatest accomplishment to date?

From a procurement perspective, being involved in three green field set-ups and a major transformational change project have all been rewarding experiences. My responsibility within each role has been to develop and execute a procurement strategy and customer-driven service offering that is fit-for-business and supports the organisation with capabilities to deliver sustainable benefits across their spend portfolio. The great accomplishment as a leader was having the ability to step away from the function and to see that it is still capable of maintaining its operations independently.

Can you give us an example of a tough decision you have made? What was the outcome?

The most difficult decisions arise when a new procurement operating model is designed as part of a transformational project and requires implementation. On many occasions, scopes change, roles are resized, departments restructured and in some instances employees become displaced. The most important aspect is to ensure that the appropriate levels of communication are undertaken and that impacted employees are treated with respect and supported throughout the change process.



3 attributes which make a great leader?

- Focusing on the bottom line – successful leaders are driven and have always got their eye on the bottom line. Through perseverance, they ensure that the required outcomes are delivered with a sense of urgency and with the appropriate level of organisational change management.
- Accountability – in order to instill a high level of accountability, effective leaders provide a clear vision, supporting strategies and business plans which are communicated regularly within an organisation. Defining roles and responsibilities provides alignment, allows individuals to be held accountable for delivery of key outcomes and also provides them with an understanding of how their role contributes to the organisation's success.
- Acting with integrity – consistently maintaining a high level of ethics and ensuring that your beliefs match your actions i.e. 'walking the talk'. Safeguarding the core values of the company, making sure you are consistent and that the organisation's governance frameworks are appropriately maintained – a critical foundational leadership skill.

Issues currently impacting the procurement profession?

Many organisations still view procurement as purely a cost saving function; however there is only so much cost that can be taken out. Procurement, therefore, needs to redefine itself and educate the business on the other values the function can deliver. These include risk management, business process redesign, sustainability, innovation and corporate governance – just to name a few.



Procurement has become much more than a back office function – it can be an organisation's competitive advantage.

3 attributes that make a great leader?

- Decision making – being able to make clear and responsive decisions that remove roadblocks so your people can get on with what they need to do.
- Problem solving – taking accountability for a problem and being diligent about driving the outcomes.
- Multi-tasking – managing multiple projects and decision making trees at once.

How has your experience in corporate social responsibility shaped your leadership style?

As a leader, I try to be clear about the outcomes that need to be achieved. Being involved in community projects has taught me the importance of empowerment. It is amazing what can be achieved when you trust that your team understands the problem and you allow them to arrive at the solution themselves. Through my involvement with Optus' corporate social responsibility initiatives, I was fortunate enough to be recognised as Volunteer of the Year for 2008. These experiences have really opened my eyes to the world and the ability to give back to the community has been very rewarding.

Issues currently impact the procurement profession?

The purpose of procurement is to provide a service to support the business in achieving their goals, therefore to be effective the function needs to understand its role from various perspectives. If the procurement industry is too inward facing and exclusive, it will never recognise and embrace the value in having diversity of talent and skills from other areas. Procurement has moved from just being a straight purchasing function to being a business partner; to be a business partner you need to understand the business and from there you can genuinely add value to the organisation.



Karen Carmichael

An advocate for bringing broader business experiences into procurement leadership, Karen Carmichael has reached the peak of the procurement profession through a wide variety of roles. For a very long time Karen had been a customer of procurement, and it was known that the function struggled to gain traction on a number of pressing business issues. With a vision in mind, she believed that the improvement of the procurement function was the single most critical area which needed to be addressed for Optus to move forward as an organisation.

Antoinette Brandi

Antoinette Brandi is highly regarded in the procurement profession for her passion towards procurement and supply chain. Recognised as the first female fellow of CIPS in Australia, Antoinette has been involved in procurement for 15 years. For Antoinette, the appeal in supply chain comes largely from identifying process improvement opportunities within front-end operations, and amending these issues to improve the performance of the business.



As leaders, it is critical to look for other opportunities in the organisation for our team members.

Give us an example of a tough decision you have made? What was the outcome?

Choosing to step away from a relationship with a long-standing supplier during a tendering process is particularly difficult. As a leader you are in a position of influence and to ensure the integrity of the tendering process, you need to be able to substantiate decisions based on a robust evaluation methodology. The situation can become increasingly difficult when you have to manage the outcomes associated with telling a supplier they have been unsuccessful in a tender. In one particular case, the supplier was extremely unhappy and claimed that the team member responsible for the tendering process had performed the process incorrectly. In situations such as these, it is important to trust your team members, knowing that the process has been followed properly and support their decision.

3 attributes that make a great leader?

- Trust – believing in the people you work with.
- Delivery – demonstrating that if a job has to be done, we will get in and do it.
- Mentoring – career progression is an extremely important part of leadership. Leaders need to dedicate time into nurturing other people because that is a key aspect of their role. Around 30% of my time is focused on mentoring and I am heavily involved in promoting my team into networking opportunities and actively mapping career paths. When team members attend networking or training events, it helps to infuse them with the energy they need to produce quality outcomes.



Key behaviours you look for when attracting talent to your organisation?

- Ethics – over and above everything else, team members need to operate in a manner that will not place them in compromising situations.
- Integrity – if you are going to do something you wouldn't tell your mum or boss about, you shouldn't be doing it. In supply you can't compromise yourself in any way.
- Tough skinned – you really cannot be precious and need to be strong willed.
- Customer focus – really understanding that procurement is a service to the whole organisation and that everyone within the organisation is your customer.
- Team – you want to work as part of a team and that is really important.
- Sense of urgency – you know how to prioritise and when to react accordingly upon business critical issues.

Why is procurement a good career choice?

Supply chain is the most incredible profession in which anyone can work. It is a hidden pocket of opportunity which offers a multiplicity of roles and provides the opportunity to specialise in an array of specialities.



Jane Falconer

Jane Falconer's procurement journey has been on an upward trajectory since joining the profession. Her involvement in a number of key supply chain transformation projects has kept her keenly passionate, particularly in the areas of strategy development and change management.



Behaviours build trust; trust leads to information and information allows you to act.

How do you demonstrate the value add of procurement within an organisation?

Understanding where your organisation is within the business cycle will help you determine and prioritise the type of value which needs to be delivered. But before you dive into value delivery, I think it's vitally important to ensure you establish strong relationships based on trust within the business and supply market. Once these relationships are created, you have a strong base from which you can effectively implement your procurement program. People will have faith that the procurement process changes being proposed will help generate positive outcomes for them.

Give us an example of a tough decision you have made? What was the outcome?

I think the most difficult decisions are those which involve managing team members who are incapable of performing on a technical or behavioural level. As leaders, we need to make these tough people decisions to ensure we have the right team in place to generate positive outcomes for all stakeholders. In one of my early leadership roles, I had a lot of autonomy over my team, yet the process of removing staff took a long time due to my inexperience. Once those people were removed, the uplift effect on the team was noticeable and there was an overall improvement in the team's dynamics. It was a valuable lesson to act quickly and get the right team in place.

3 attributes that make a great leader?

- Vision – leaders need to know where they are going and have the ability to share it with others.
- Decisiveness – it is important to be able to make decisions and implement them.
- Empowerment – trust that you have hired people who are smart and capable of performing their role. Leaders should ensure that team members have access to all the necessary information they need in order to make an informed decision.

Issues currently impacting the procurement profession?

Procurement needs to show the value add and help organisations understand what the function has to offer. We need to keep developing our identity and finding our natural home – which I believe should be at the top of an organisation directly reporting to the Chief Executive Officer or, at the very least, to the Chief Financial Officer.



I stand by my decisions.

What is your most rewarding career experience to date?

The ability to gain compliance from difficult stakeholders is always a rewarding experience. In a previous role, I was part of a procurement team which was introduced to help hospitals rationalise their spend portfolios. The procurement transformation met considerable resistance as each hospital had historically been independently managed. The procurement team made a concerted effort to include their stakeholders by involving them throughout the decision making process and taking them on the overall journey. After four years, we finally gained a high level of compliance and stakeholders were engaging us from the early stages of the sourcing process.

3 attributes that make a great leader?

- Bravery – be fearless in your actions and take accountability for decisions.
- Decisiveness – the ability to make the tough calls.
- Agility – the ability to change strategy mid-stream.

Tips for up-and-coming procurement professionals?

- Be decisive – it is important to take a stance.
- Be resilient – people respect those who believe in their decisions enough to whole-heartedly stand by them.
- Manage expectations – when liaising with suppliers, it is important to follow your words with action. If not, you risk damaging your personal reputation and procurement's reputation. Once lost, credibility is extremely difficult to regain.

What emerging trends do you see in procurement?

- Sustainable sourcing – this will become an increasingly important trend. If organisations don't become involved in sustainable procurement, it is likely that they will not only bear additional costs in the near future, but the supply of critical resources will become limited.
- Flexible contracting – organisations will resort to a non-exclusive framework which will give procurement a greater choice of suppliers. Organisations may start looking to smaller companies that are prepared to make what they want and be more flexible than large suppliers. Procurement will need to have the local knowledge but a global reach. Essentially, they will need to have a sound understanding of supplier markets across the world and act as a bridge between the business and supply base.
- Supply risk – as supply bases become more complex, it becomes essential that procurement has close collaborative relationships with suppliers in order to manage the potential risks that accompany this shift. The fact that we have begun to operate in geographies that are more susceptible to natural disasters will also impact procurement in the future.



Sandra Keller

When pursuing her career, Sandra Keller never felt that she was limited by the 'glass ceiling'. In one of her earliest roles, the organisation she was working for indicated that 'they weren't big enough to hold someone of her calibre'.

Aspiring CPOs please note...

We asked all our participants to provide us with a few statistics – how much spend they managed, the size of their team, who they reported to and how many years they've been in the profession. Their answers provided us with some great insights into what aspiring CPOs need to do to make it to the top.

Clock up 10,000 hours of practice

There's a theory currently running that dispels the myth of 'natural talent'. It proposes that every professional (sporting, business, musical) needs to undertake at least 10,000 hours of practice before they reach superstar status.

Our research study supports that theory, with ten of the CPOs interviewed having worked in procurement for ten years or longer. So if you're aiming for the top job, don't expect to get the role too far short of your 10,000 hours of procurement practice!

Perfect your people management skills

Two of our CPOs managed teams of 100 people – that's a lot of career mapping and professional development for you to be thinking about if you're a great leader.

But even the day-to-day responsibilities of balancing workloads, managing change and keeping the team motivated will require a great deal of skill when you are responsible for a large procurement team. Make sure you are learning today how to be a great people leader for tomorrow.

Know your numbers

Financial and analytical skills have always been base-line requirements for the procurement professional. Almost half of our CPOs managed spends greater than \$1 billion. This means they are responsible for the large majority of their company's costs and managing a great deal of risk.

As you progress through your career, ensure you learn about your company and suppliers' P&Ls, how to work with your financial and audit teams, as well as how to interpret what's happening in the financial markets and how it can impact your company.

Learn how to deal with senior management

Almost a third of our CPOs reported into the CEO, four reported into the CFO, with the rest reporting into Operations and Supply Chain. Working effectively with senior management means you really need to understand where your industry is in the business cycle and what strategy your company is adopting to gain competitive advantage.

Tailoring your procurement strategy and team's activities to meet these objectives, ensuring senior management understands your strategy and then bringing them along on the journey with their full support are critical skills once you become a CPO.

cost savings ↓



Billie Gorman

Billie Gorman is a highly motivated professional who strives to push herself beyond her comfort zone by seeking new challenges. On occasion she believes that stretching herself helps to ensure that she doesn't become complacent about her career. However, Billie acknowledges that at times challenging yourself career-wise may not always be possible when trying to achieve a work-life balance.

You can have it all, you just can't have it all at once.

Give us an example of a tough decision you have made?

Deciding to support an executive decision and knowing my endorsement may not resonate well with others in the organisation was a tough call to make. However, once on board, my role as a leader was to ensure that the team had the right information and guidance to ensure their participation in the project was not impacted by any unwarranted doubt or negativity. At the end of the day they had to know that I would take full responsibility for the decision.

3 attributes that make a great leader?

- Making tough decisions – recognising that a decision needs to be made and following through with it.
- Charisma – showing passion in what you do because it can help to invigorate others.
- Approachability – building an environment which allows your team to come to you.

Issues currently impacting the procurement profession?

Procurement can be an overtly process-orientated function. Process is good for about 50% of what we do, but procurement professionals also need the scope to push the boundaries moving forward. They need to be more innovative in how they approach procurement challenges in order to support their internal customers and develop sound options and solutions for them and the organisation.

Clear communication about the role of procurement is also a priority. I now incorporate a strapline promoting the team in all our email signatures stating:

“Group Strategic Sourcing is a centre-led support function that enables the Group, or individual, source and contract for third party solutions that best meet the organisational requirements in terms of quality, value, service and risk”.

This gives my team a great customer focus and helps the business to better understand the value of procurement.

Talent is another issue within the procurement profession. In Australia we are all competing for the same people. The resource sector has deep pockets, which makes it particularly difficult to compete for talent so we need to be more creative with how we can attract and retain good people.



It is important for procurement professionals to be creative.

Most rewarding experience and greatest accomplishment to date?

Being involved in the Future Focus Group has really been an amazing experience. In a bid to make Melbourne a more livable city and to be known as the leading green roof capital city in Australia, the project involved designing and building a green roof on an existing building. The greatest accomplishment within this experience was winning the award for best commercial design at the 2010 Melbourne Design Awards. The experience has helped me develop transferable skills in relationship management, stakeholder management, negotiation and influence, whilst also teaching the importance of resilience.

3 attributes that make a great leader?

- Relationship building – the ability to build relationships with stakeholders and suppliers is essential to ensure they become involved in the procurement journey.
- Empowerment – a leader should be able to create an environment whereby people in the team have the skills and ability to source the relevant information in order to make an informed decision.
- Approachability – building an environment where team members feel comfortable enough to raise their concerns with you.

Key behaviours you look for when attracting talent?

- Strong relationship management – understanding how they build relationships and questioning them on what they have done to improve a relationship when faced with a challenging client.
- Self-evaluation – it is important to look for people who take the time to reflect on why it didn't work and how they can improve the situation next time.
- Critical thinking – understanding your client and finding creative ways of solving their problems.

Tips for up-and-coming procurement professionals?

It is important for procurement professionals to impart their knowledge with their clients. Not only will this educate the client, but it will also help them feel involved in the process. This is particularly important if you have a centre-led approach, because it helps ensure procurement is not viewed as a roadblock.



Renae Sambrooks

Renae Sambrooks enjoys working in procurement because every day is different. The opportunity to work across the business and be involved in strategy creation is what she finds most appealing about her role.

Angela Cunningham

Angela Cunningham understands the importance of differentiating yourself in each role throughout your career. Her accounting background coupled with her operational experience in the resources sector, has helped her develop a varied set of skills which allow her to succeed in a procurement leadership role. As a result, Angela is able to effectively highlight to senior management the financial benefits that procurement has achieved, whilst her operational background provides her with a solid understanding of the end-to-end procurement process.

ONE COMPANY
ONE DIRECTION



If you want something badly enough, you will get there.

Where does your role sit within the organisation?

I am a member of the executive team reporting to the CEO and also have heavy involvement in the global procurement team which spans across 80 countries. I think my international colleagues are surprised by how much Australian procurement professionals have to offer, particularly in the areas of procurement innovation, supplier management and low leverage negotiations.

Most rewarding experience and greatest accomplishment to date?

Working at a leading mining organisation to develop a centralised supply chain function was a memorable experience. Recruiting new talent, some of which had never been to a remote site before, and developing them to a point where they were delivering great results was definitely a milestone. Most of those people are now in senior leadership roles, particularly in Melbourne.

3 attributes that make a great leader?

- Integrity – keeping everything above board so that nothing is hidden.
- Transparency – being open and honest, and listening to people for their thoughts.
- Vision – sharing the vision and bringing others along for the journey.

Tips for up-and-coming procurement professionals?

- Differentiate yourself in the market – don't just have a normal supply chain or procurement background. Get the basics right and then focus on a few areas that you are passionate about. This will give you an edge in the marketplace. Carbon footprint, ethical sourcing and corporate social responsibility are great examples of this.
- Get a really good mentor – maybe in an operations role and brainstorm ideas with them.
- Engage effectively with stakeholders – really listen to their issues and develop a solid understanding of what they want.



Australia
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Deborah McWhirter

The opportunity to work on diverse business issues is what keeps Deborah McWhirter passionate about procurement. Having managed procurement teams in China and America, the exposure she has gained to different cultures has helped broaden her ability to understand people. She believes ‘the better you are at reading and understanding people, the more successful you will be as a leader’.



Every person will require a different approach.

3 attributes that make a great leader?

- Being a quick study of people – you need to be respectful of the past, listen to what people have to say and take the time to understand them. By doing so, you can get a read of the best way to work with that person and what sort of style you need to employ with them.
- Be a good negotiator – having the ability to internally and externally work out what people want or need from a situation and find a mutually beneficial solution.
- Courage – courage is a value and core competency for managers at Schweppes. It is something we expect from our team, therefore I work on trying to demonstrate it.

Key behaviours you look for when attracting talent?

- Cultural fit – individuals who blend in with the organisation and are aligned with the core values of the team and business.
- Level of maturity – people who understand their role and don’t have to be closely managed.
- Ambition – people who are willing to stretch their abilities and work on a broad spectrum of projects.

Tips for up-and-coming procurement professionals?

- Understand your stakeholders – show respect to your stakeholders and take the time to truly understand their business needs.
- Continue to develop your technical skills – be informed of the marketplace and focus on developing key skills.
- Work on managing up – understand how to get the best out of your relationship with your managers.



I've never made a decision that I don't believe in.

3 attributes that make a great leader?

- Clarity – be specific about what you want to achieve.
- Compassion – always try to put people first. When making decisions, continually try to make choices which are right for the majority of the people within the organisation.
- Collaboration – working with the team towards the vision. At times, asking for feedback about the long-term and ensuring that the team is still happy pursuing the current strategy can enhance team performance.

Why is procurement a good career choice?

- Remuneration – good quality procurement people are in high demand and attract competitive salaries.
- True career path – procurement is recognised internationally and you have the opportunity to work globally. There is a large variety of roles which you can undertake within the profession.
- Exposure – the opportunity to quickly develop a deep level of commercial skills is incredible. Unlike many other professions, procurement places team members in front of key senior stakeholders and suppliers of the business from day one.

Issues currently impacting the procurement profession?

Giving Chief Procurement Officer roles to General Managers who don't have a procurement background hinders the development of the profession. Where non-procurement professionals have been placed in CPO roles – how do they create a vision for a function if fundamentally they have never performed the role themselves? CPOs need to have the ability to create a vision for the procurement function and define the value that it can add to an organisation.



Thomai Veginis

Thomai Veginis always thought procurement would be 'an interesting place to go'. Beginning her career as a graduate at IBM, she moved into a procurement role in 1997. She believes that her generalist background provides her with a better understanding of the business' point of view. Thomai believes organisations need to have the right Chief Procurement Officers in place in order for procurement to create as many opportunities in the profession as possible.



*Be aware of political games,
but don't play them.*

Most rewarding experience and greatest accomplishment to date?

Changing the view of what procurement is and does, both within and outside the team.

For the procurement team, it has been about showing them that their role is about a lot more than just sourcing. There are opportunities for them to broaden their skill sets and be involved in strategy formation. The procurement team can now see how their efforts are aligned with the business. For the customers, it has been about showing them that procurement actually works and that they should be part of the journey. The greatest accomplishment has been getting procurement a seat at the table with the senior leadership team. There is now a heightened awareness of a cost consciousness within the organisation.

3 attributes that make a great leader?

- Strong ethics – taking a broader view of the situation and being transparent through decisions. Being aware of politics, but not playing politics.
- Be clear of the boundaries of required behaviour – in procurement, these boundaries are well defined.
- Be genuine – it is important to be an authentic leader and to be real.

Tips for up-and-coming procurement professionals?

- Be an active listener – by solving your customer's issues you remain relevant. You need to listen to your customer, understand the key issues that your customer is facing and ask the right questions.
- Be curious about the world – find out which organisations or industries are considered best practice and see how you can apply those lessons to yield a better result for your customer.
- Understand different cultures – for instance, understanding that not every Asian country is the same and that there are different values and behaviours you need to learn about to be effective in procurement. Understanding these differences allows you to better estimate and minimise risk.

Suzanne Young

One of the most important questions that Suzanne Young asks when recruiting new talent or getting to know her team is “what do you read?”. She believes this question helps identify whether someone is inherently interested in the company or industry in which they work. Suzanne seeks out people who are committed to continuously growing, developing their skills and are genuinely passionate about what they do.





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