



Are procurement people the best procurement people?

(from the Procurement Talent Bulletin)

What do Europe's top Chief Procurement Officers think makes a great procurement professional?

That's what Tony Goldsby and I wanted to find out when ADR People hosted a round table at the ProcureCon CPO Roundtable conference.

But would 80 of the top CPO's agree on how to get the best from their procurement people?

No chance!

Unsurprisingly, there was a big difference in approach between organisations with large or small procurement teams.

Larger teams are using their organisation's existing structured talent management to manage leadership development, succession planning, 360-degree appraisal and skills training.

Smaller teams on the other hand simply depend on ad-hoc management to manage procurement talent.

More advanced larger teams are even able to integrate procurement specific assessments and capability development programs into their talent management.

Other larger teams simply overlay specific procurement skills development on top of existing general processes.

Internal or external? Specialist or generalist?

More surprising was the very varied approach to recruitment. Opinions were divided on where to source quality people.

Do you search for internal people who know the business and then develop their procurement skills?

Or do you recruit externally for good procurement people who have to get to grips with the business?



Opinions divided again, whether to recruit generalists versus specialists. We did detect a definite trend towards procurement all-rounders in the current economic climate. After all, who needs IT procurement specialists when the CFO just canned every one of the companies' IT projects?

Slow or fast rotation?

Opinions divided again on best practice for rotating category managers.

Some CPO's advocated deep specialisation as long as the buyer remains motivated. Others favoured a two or three year rotation policy to develop their people and keep suppliers on their toes - accepting some disruption to the business as a by product of the learning curve that accompanies that approach.

The X factor

However, perhaps the most interesting trend for us was that top CPOs prized factors other than procurement skills.

Commercial acumen, stakeholder management skills and communication expertise were all valued above procurement talent.

Procurement skills they believed can be taught to the right people, but it's harder to inject the right approach to the wrong procurement person.

To quote one CPO when asked what they looked for in a procurement professional, the answer was simply 'impact'.

Impact was something everyone was agreed on. There was no doubting that quality procurement people create superior impact.

The roundtable discussion certainly made an impact on us - lessons we'll happily share with you to help recruit, develop and manage the best procurement people.


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About ADR People



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ADR People provides clients with dedicated and specialised resourcing services focused on quality procurement people. With 23 year's experience working with over 350 clients in 50 countries, ADR are the specialists in procurement.

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