

## The Ten Commandments of Sustainable Procurement

In 2017 Sustainable Procurement came of age with ISO 20400, a global standard to codify best practice. But do you want to pay for the standard and trawl through 50 pages to understand what it means? As leader of the UK delegation developing the standard, here is my personal perspective.

- **Sustainable procurement is good procurement.** In order to do sustainable procurement well you need to do procurement well. If your organisation's procurement practices are rubbish, your sustainable procurement will be rubbish too.
- **Call it what you like.** The ISO committee comprising 50+ nations decided on the term Sustainable Procurement. There are lots of other terms such as; Responsible Sourcing, Ethical Procurement, Responsible Supply Chain Management, Green Buying, CSR in Procurement, Social Procurement and many, many more. It all adds up to the same thing. Call it whatever suits your organisation's culture.
- **Engage a wide range of people.** This is not just something your purchasing department do on Wednesdays. Your strategy needs to apply to anybody in your organisation who participates in procurement decisions or works with suppliers.
- **Have a policy.** You will need a policy but don't sit in a darkened room and write one, or nick somebody else's from the internet. It takes time to bring your colleagues and your suppliers along with you. There are many examples of good policies, you can find one [here](#).
- **Follow the Golden Thread.** A good policy is a translation of your organisation's policy in language your supply chain can respond to. There should be a Golden Thread between the two.
- **Sustainable supply not sustainable supplier.** Your strategy should aim to encourage *your* suppliers to contribute to *your* objectives, not necessarily to reward your suppliers for having great internal strategies.
- **Prioritise, prioritise, prioritise.** Not all of your categories of supply will contribute to all of your sustainability goals. Develop a priority Heat Map to focus your category managers on the issues that are meaningful to their suppliers. How far down the supply chain you look will depend on where the impact is most significant.
- **Support your people.** Procurement professionals are integrators of other professions. A good sourcing exercise will engage a wide range of experts. Sustainability is no different, expert advice needs to be on tap for the procurement team, in addition to awareness and training.
- **Develop your supply chain.** You must keep your supply chain competitive to explode the myth that sustainable procurement costs more. Invest in developing your suppliers' competence. Just selecting the most sustainable will shrink your market and the price will go up.
- **Do it for real.** Your prioritisation exercise will throw up Red impacts across your range of supply categories. Your team should be addressing these impacts every time they buy. Adopt the mantra "every Red, for every purchase, every time" and you won't go far wrong.

Good luck with all that!

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