Procurement Team Talent Management

The following Knowledge output has been generated by Chris Emberton, Procurement Director at Clifford Chance and Chair of the professional services SKG.

Introduction

The success of a Procurement function is intrinsically linked to the capability and engagement of its team members. Procurement leaders need to invest appropriate time and effort in recruiting and retaining the right calibre of resources, to deliver in an increasingly competitive job market.

Procurement leaders will need to:

- Architect and promote an attractive employee proposition.
- Constantly review the skill set within their existing teams.
- Undertake skills gap analysis and structured development plans.
- Invest in training and development - upskilling or recruiting as required.

Within this knowledge document Chris Emberton highlights the steps he has taken to build a leading procurement team at Clifford Chance; one focussed on becoming the leading legal procurement team, through maximising the value the firm delivers from its suppliers.

At any given time each individual within a procurement team will be at various stages of their career development, they may also be at differing stages of their employment lifecycle.

The lifecycle stages of an employee can be defined as follows:

- **Attract** – Recruitment and selection stage, sourcing from the talent pool.
- **Development** – Learning, training and improvement plans.
- **Utilisation** – Utilising skills to support the procurement strategy.
- **Maintain** – Offering scope for development and career management.
- **Release** – Supporting employee exit into new career opportunities both intra organisation and externally.
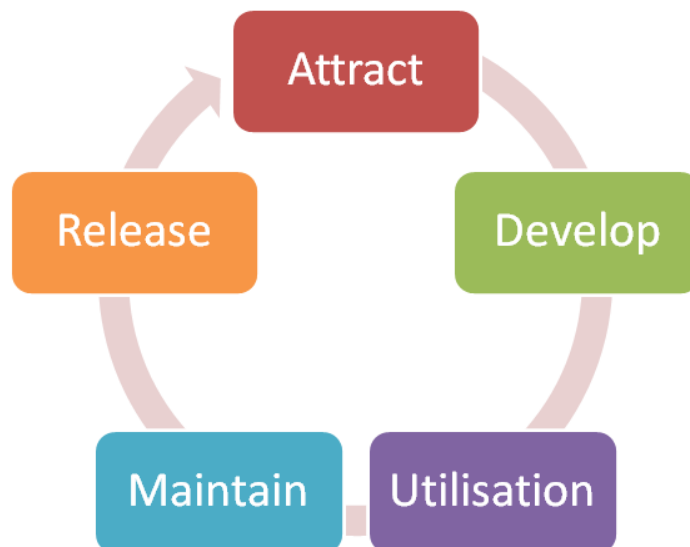
Attract

High performing Procurement professionals are becoming increasingly aware of the limited talent pool in which they operate, as such they have an increased awareness of their value to an organisation.

Clifford Chance is committed to delivering a world-class service – providing the highest quality support, as efficiently and effectively as possible every time. To support the firm in delivering this goal requires a forward thinking, agile and market leading Procurement function. Increasingly companies must look beyond financial compensation as a sole means to attract talent.

Prospective applicants will often research the organisation and these searches need to highlight the culture of the organisation, the Procurement department and the many benefits to them in working for that company.

The best candidates will often see a new role as an opportunity to progress their longer-term career and it needs to be clear to them how the organisation will support their career journey and development.

At Clifford Chance this has been undertaken through:

- Team members presenting at conferences and events on subjects that reflect the culture of the Procurement department
- Contributing to articles and thought pieces
- Developing a recruitment and new starter pack that highlights the opportunities of working for the organisation
- Promoting positive role models within the department and team success
- Submitting entries for Procurement awards as a way of evidencing success

Develop

Before seeking to develop new and existing procurement team members it is important to initially identify the existing skill set within a team. At Clifford Chance, Procurement team members complete an annual self-assessment based on a pre-defined skills set.

It is not expected that each team member carries 'all' skills, but profiling offers the assessment of areas of strength within the team and areas that the individual or team may require support with, through additional training and development.

An example of a step by step development process that could be undertaken with the Procurement team is outlined below:

Self Assessment Template

Each Procurement team member at Clifford Chance is provided with a self assessment form to populate and asked to identify where they feel that their core skills sit, and then to identify areas for development

An example scoring profile is shown below:

Technical skills	Procurement policy and process	1
	Procurement templates and tools	2
	GDPR	1
	Corporate Social Responsibility and Modern Slavery	5
	Supply Chain Risk	5
	Running Procurement projects	2
	Supplier relationship management	5
	Category management and strategy	5
	Working with Contracts	10
	Data analytics and reporting	5
	Procurement systems	8
Soft skills	Presentation and leading meeting skills	5
	Line management and coaching	7
	Senior stakeholder engagement	5
	Gravitas and influencing	5
	Negotiation	2
	Communication	6
	Understanding and adapting your style	5
	Time management	5

Following the completion of this self-assessment, each team member undertakes a 1:1 appraisal with their line manager to validate the results and to further reflect on areas of additional training; this should build on their identified areas for development and map to their career aspirations.

Once signed off, the self-assessment tool is agreed between the individual and their line manager, the line manager is then able to generate a profile for each procurement team member, which offers an instant visual of core competencies and areas for future development and support:
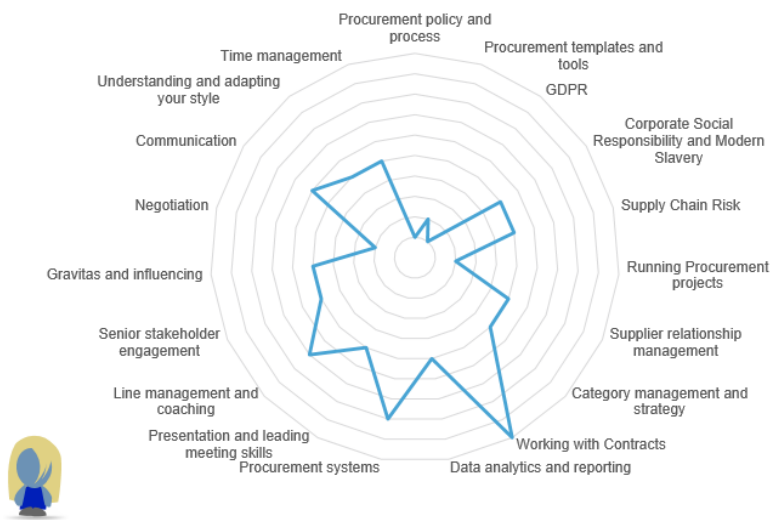
Team Mapping

To allow senior management to visually review the skill set with in the whole Procurement team, the individual profiles can be overlaid, this should instantly support with team training and areas of focus. Any potential areas of risk exposure within the procurement function can be identified.

Team mapping
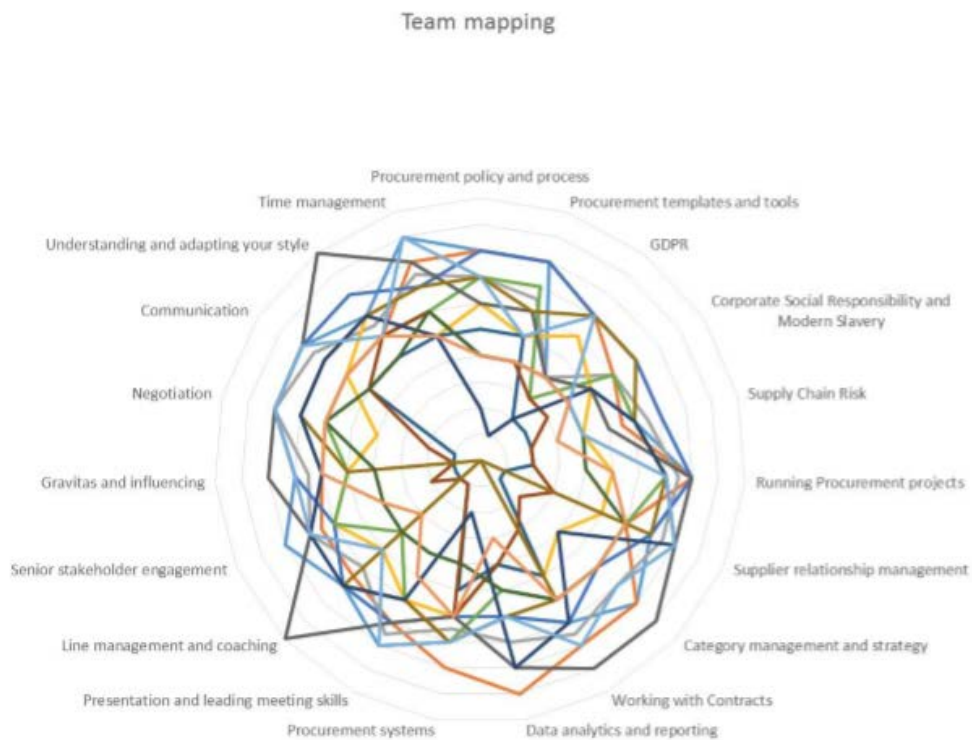
Building a Training Plan

Once each area of technical and soft skill development is assessed, line managers and directors can assess the training opportunities that are available.

There are many opportunities available to support the team members with skill development which may include a mix of:
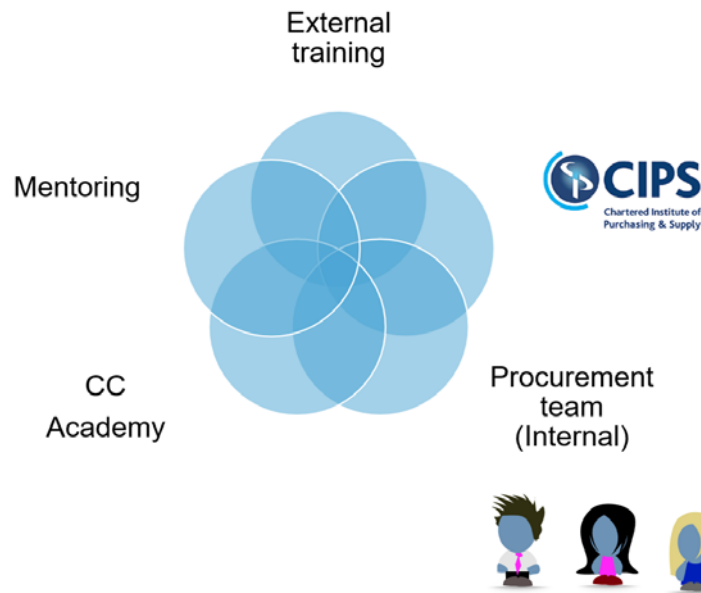
- Internal team led training for the wider Procurement function.
- Partnering two members of staff on a project where one has a particular core strength.
- External training courses.
- Internal firm wide training on areas such as negotiation, presentation and management skills.
- CIPS or degree equivalents.
- Mentoring.

Some skills can only be developed through external training, this also provides networking opportunities and supports study programmes. Best practice can also be leveraged external senior level mentors who may be able to support one of your team members for 6-12 months.

Technical skills				
	Procurement policy and process	• Business procurement training (Internal)	• Introduction to Procurement and Category management (CIPS) • An in depth overview of the 6 stage procurement process	MCIPS
	Procurement templates and tools	• Procurement tools and templates overview (Internal)	• Applying Procurement tools and templates (internal)	MCIPS
	GDPR	• Beginners guide to GDPR (Internal)	• GDPR SME training (Internal)	
	Corporate Social Responsibility and Modern Slavery	• Beginners guide to CSR (Internal)	• Sustainable procurement (CIPS)	
	Supply Chain Risk	• Beginners guide to supply chain risk (Internal)	• Assessing, managing and mitigating risk (CIPS)	
	Running Procurement projects	• Beginners guide to projects (Internal)	• Running procurement projects (External)	• Prince 2 practitioner (external)
	Supplier relationship management	• Beginners guide to SRM (Internal)	• Introduction to contract management (CIPS)	
	Category management and strategy	• Beginners guide to category strategies (Internal)	• Advanced overview of Category management (internal) • Category management (CIPS)	
	Working with Contracts	• Guide to NDA's (Internal) • Guide to key contract terms and conditions (internal)	• Introduction to contracts (CIPS) • Working with documents (Internal)	
	Data analytics and reporting	• Analysing supplier pricing (Internal) • Introduction to Excel 2007 (Academy)	• Advanced Excel (2007) Formulas and Functions (Academy)	
	Procurement systems	• Overview of Procure to Pay (Internal) • Spend Analytics and contracts training (Internal)	-	

Skill development

A standard training framework mapped to the self-assessment skills allows for easy creation of a structured development plan for each team member, with timelines for delivery. To support development of a leading procurement team, training should be factored into each team members schedule and investment should be made in regular in offsite events.

Example Training schedule

Training schedule	Date	Type	Audience	Lead
Think on your Feet	19/02/2018	Offsite	Business	Academy
Insight discovery personality awareness	13/03/2018	Offsite	Procurement	Academy
How To Be Resilient	14/03/2018	Offsite	Business	Academy
How To Develop Your Personal Brand	14/03/2018	Offsite	Business	Academy
Strategic Leadership Programme	16/03/2018	Offsite	Business	Academy
CILIP Training: GDPR – Understand your responsibilities and what you need to do next	22/03/2018	Offsite	K&I	External
CC Intranet Editing and Adding Pages	29/03/2018	Offsite	Business	Academy
Dealing with difficult people and challenging situations	06/04/2018	Bite-size Learning	Business	Academy
Digital Awareness	09/04/2018	Offsite	Business	Academy
Think on your Feet	11/04/2018	Offsite	Business	Academy
Beginners guide to SRM (Internal)	26/04/2018	Lunch and Learn	Procurement	Aman
CLIG seminar - Companies, Officers and Individuals Information – What you need to know	02/05/2018	Offsite	K&I	External
GDPR in law libraries	14/05/2018	Offsite	K&I	External
Procurement Policy and process training - Newcastle office	17/05/2018	Ad hoc	Procurement sponsors	Chris
Beginners guide to category strategies (Internal)	24/05/2018	Lunch and Learn	Procurement	Danielle
Data Privacy & Information Security	05/06/2018	Elearning	Business	Academy
Masterclass Leadership Skills for Business Services	08/06/2018	Offsite	Business	Academy
Positive Leadership (Part One)	13/06/2018	Offsite	Business	Academy
GDPR process review training	18/06/2018	Lunch and Learn	Procurement	Matt
BBBA BAME Talent Accelerator Programme	19/06/2018	Offsite	BAME Professionals	Danielle
Working in a Global Environment – The Cultural Perspective	22/06/2018	Onsite	Business	Academy
Procurement 4.0 and embracing new technology	25/06/2018	Offsite	Procurement	Chris
Legal market changes and technology (TR)	25/06/2018	Offsite	Procurement	External
Positive Leadership (Part Two)	26/06/2018	Offsite	Business	Academy
Analysing supplier pricing (Internal)	28/06/2018	Lunch and Learn	Procurement	Chris
5 Conversations	10/07/2018	Offsite	Business	Academy
Beginners guide to supply chain risk (Internal)	26/07/2018	Lunch and Learn	Procurement	Aman
Negotiation workshop	02/08/2018	Offsite	Procurement	Chris
Beginners guide to GDPR (Internal)	23/08/2018	Lunch and Learn	Procurement	Matt
Leadership Skills	10/09/2018	Offsite	Business	Academy
Guide to key contract terms and conditions (internal)	27/09/2018	Lunch and Learn	Procurement	Tina
Running Procurement projects (Internal)	25/10/2018	Lunch and Learn	Procurement	Jack
Making Strategy Happen	29-31/10/2018	Offsite	Business	Academy
Beginners guide to time management (Internal)	22/11/2018	Lunch and Learn	Procurement	Chrissy
Beginners guide to CSR (Internal)	13/12/2018	Lunch and Learn	Procurement	Aman
Introduction to building stakeholder engagement (Internal)	24/01/2019	Lunch and Learn	Procurement	Angela
Procurement tools and templates overview (Internal)	28/02/2019	Lunch and Learn	Procurement	Jack
Introduction to PowerPoint (Internal)	28/03/2019	Lunch and Learn	Procurement	Chris

Utilisation

Identified areas of strength within the team can be leveraged to support tasks that will ultimately allow you to achieve the overall procurement strategy.

Training should be designed to achieve the following goals:

- Allow individuals to become subject matter experts that mirror their strengths
- Ensure appropriate skill coverage across the team and minimise any single points of failure

Within your procurement team there will be individuals that have areas of strength; assigning these individuals to a specific task will give them a sense of ownership to deliver against the overall team objectives. Enabling team members to use their core skills should improve engagement and increase job satisfaction.

Enabling a team member who is less skilled in the technical area to partner up with a more experienced team member enables cross training and should increase an element of skill stretch and development.

Communication around the direction and clarity of key objectives and how these will meet the procurement strategy should remain a discussion point and focus for the team at all times.

Regularly celebrating the success of the team will increase not only morale but also improve stakeholder awareness of the value being generated by the procurement function.

Maintain

Create a career path

To retain and develop your procurement team, ongoing emphasis could be placed on individuals career progression. Having an open conversation with them about their career aspirations both before joining the organisation and during their time working there should maximise their engagement. Aligning the individuals aspirations and needs with the companies is the key to ensuring that their technical and soft skills develop and grow which will be to the benefit of both the organisation and the individual themselves.

Release

As Procurement continues to develop and evolve there may come a point where a team member is no longer a good fit for your department or who's career aspirations cannot be met within your organisation. This presents an interesting challenge for proactive discussion between line managers and individual team members. If the individual is capable but in the wrong role then there is a potential opportunity to support the transition of that team member to more suited opportunities within the organisation where they can excel. It is incumbent on the line manager and department head to be honest about available

opportunities rather than to retain talent at all costs to the detriment of the individual. This short-term approach may undermine the goodwill and engagement of the wider department.

High performing individuals may progress at a pace faster than a function is able to accommodate, there are after all only so many roles and opportunities available within one organisation or department. It may therefore be that the next career opportunity for a team member sits outside of the organisation.

Again, it is better to be honest and open with the individual regarding their options; if they are ready to take a step up and this can't be accommodated then support them in finding the right role elsewhere. This is a much easier conversation if this open approach has been embedded at the earlier stages of the process. It is preferable to have a team member deliver excellent performance for two years and leave for a new role elsewhere than have a team member perform poorly and stay for several years.

Ultimately it is preferable that departing team members leave with a positive experience of working within the organisation; we never know what future opportunities may present themselves should the individual wish to return later in their career.

Author

Chris Emberton
LinkedIn

Templates available

- Procurement Maturity review Template
- Procurement Self Assessment Template