

Procurement Disruptors

Our Procurement Disruptors series highlights industry leaders that drive change in the way procurement is being done today. We interview champions to see what they believe are trends in the industry and common pain points.



For this edition of Procurement Disruptors, we had the chance to interview

Darren Tompkins

Purchasing Manager

In Darren's 30+ years in the public sector, he has demonstrated his hands-on leadership to raise the tide for all ships as his mission. Long before the pandemic, he believed in connecting with peers to elevate and build a strong foundation for procurement.

ETCH has had the pleasure of working with Darren through our managed procurement services.

Highlights of Darren's career

- Facilitated and streamlined processes to support better outcomes with the right strategy to achieve the best value
- Working to shift the purchasing dynamic in the public sector from reactive to proactive by highlighting the need for early involvement and cross-functioning teams
- Built strong relationships to drive forward strategic planning with internal and external stakeholders

Darren's Journey in Disrupting Procurement Norms

What are recurring challenges when leading procurement teams and how do you manage?

Lack of Time: Results in a trickle-down effect to all other mandates in the process, limiting the attention to detail and ability to plan ahead. Pursue efficiencies to ensure time is spent on biggest/multiple impact areas.

Visibility: The lack of a single source of 'truth', an ERP system, can cause poor contract management and visibility into the complete supply chain, limiting knowledge of the challenges and where to optimize

Knowledge Transfer: Ability to capture and pass on the knowledge during continual churn in the workforce



What are the best practices in purchasing?

Building trust relationships: If time can be spent cultivating becoming a 'trusted partner' the ability to influence purchasing outcomes improves dramatically like increased values, driving sustainability and other improved long-term outcomes

Solution Seeker: By educating business units about the procurement process and shifting the mind-set from a prescriptive 'how to deliver' to seeking an 'outcome', suppliers have the permission to be innovative

Encourage Innovation: Planning ahead enables time for collaboration and creative thinking to bring more options and tailored approaches



How do you attract and retain talent within the industry?

Servant-Leadership: Genuine interest in serving the public/client and getting involved to make an impact

Positive Environment: In a competitive market, it's crucial to cultivate supportive teams and establish a 'safe place' to learn and grow

Match Culture: Focus hiring strategies to align people with a cultural fit of the organization as it promotes engagement



What changes do you foresee in the industry?

Awareness: By initiating early and frequent conversations procurement teams bridge the gaps in fulfilling needs demonstrating that procurement elements can make a difference in their success in purchasing

Breaking Old Molds: Moving to a value base selection (avoid the fallacy of low price always producing good value/quality outcomes) and award high performers. Think sustainability, quality, contract type, delivery, installation, and everything you as a buying organization hold as important

Change in mindset: Lessen resistance to new opportunity strategies and be willing to change current processes, make it a 'pilot' if you want to try first



"We're not the subject matter experts, but we're the process experts"

-Darren Tompkins