



Courage - the New World Order for Supply Chain Management Leadership

There's one qualification - and I would go so far as to say that it's the defining qualification for today's supply chain leaders - that separates the highest performers from the herd. And that's courage.

Today's supply chain executives must be brave and bold, and are expected to handle cataclysmic events and act with extreme agility

This isn't just my opinion; it's coming up again and again in discussions we're having with CPOs and supply chain executives. Indeed, courage was the recurring theme interwoven throughout the stories that thought leaders shared at Procurious's second annual Big Ideas Summit. At this global think-tank event, 50 procurement influencers shared their big ideas for the function, challenging online delegates from around the world with topics, including thinking the unthinkable, rethinking the possible, procurement's blind spots, and the "Conversational Century." Time and again, what these speakers from The Hackett Group, IBM, Coupa Software, the Institute for Supply Management, AstraZeneca and others pointed to is the "courage imperative."

The debate made it clear we need to make a seismic shift in our ability to spot, identify and handle unexpected events, from the conflict in Syria to the economic debacle in Greece. We must re-calibrate our thinking and skills for a new reality of continued uncertainty, and crises of global proportion.

With these unexpected events looming in the background, it certainly takes courage to rewrite the list of attributes needed to be successful in procurement/supply chain management, but it has to be done

A New Age of Darwinism

For example, "It's not the biggest or strongest," said Chris Sawchuk, Principal and Global Procurement Advisory Practice Leader, The Hackett Group, "but the most adaptable that survive." This Darwinism, in its purest form, applies to the business landscape. Sawchuk said agility is key, with supply chain leaders requiring the ability to make and implement decisions faster than ever before

Dapo Ajayi, CPO of AstraZeneca, also focused on leadership attributes. She noted that future leaders in procurement must be able to deal with ambiguity, glean insights from the masses of available data, and have the relationship-building skills to engage with business colleagues and with the supplier base to collaboratively develop new ideas, innovations, and value

We also must be brave on a number of other fronts.

Facing the Unthinkable with Bravery

Nik Gowing, Visiting Professor, King's College London, gave a presentation on his "Thinking the Unthinkable" research, which made it clear that the procurement/supply chain management profession will need to challenge current leadership paradigms and confront the possibility of cataclysmic events head on if it is to survive and thrive.

His research indicated that C-suite executives and high-ranking public officials can become overwhelmed by the rapidity and intensity of these “unthinkables.” In addition, they’re often hampered by a culture of denial, willful blindness and concern about the risk of career-limiting moves. They will need to make way for a new generation of non-conformist leaders who have the ability to think the unthinkable and the courage to adapt

Doing Well by Doing Good

On the more positive side, we will need to adopt sourcing strategies that are both good for the bottom line and good for the community. An example of this is the UK Buy Social Corporate Challenge, which will see a group of high profile businesses aim to spend £1bn with social enterprises by 2020. Peter Holbrook CBE, Chief Executive of Social Enterprise UK, which has spearheaded this program with the Cabinet Office and Business in the Community, Johnson & Johnson’s Timo Worrall and Lucy Siegle, co-founder of The Green Carpet Challenge, spoke passionately about the impact our purchasing decisions have on the world’s most vulnerable. The old value metrics are changing; companies now have financial, and not just moral reasons, to engage with social enterprises

Every speaker that touched on the subject of technology noted the en masse move to the cloud and encouraged everyone to have the courage to open their previously closed systems and networks.

New Technologies Spell Opportunity

The Innovation Editor of The Economist, Paul Markillie, flagged what he called the third Industrial Revolution and highlighted how much manufacturing footprints could change. Nanomaterials, robotics, drones, self-driving cars and, of course, 3D printing are causing many industries to pivot. His stories sent a clear message that supply chain leaders need to seize upon these technologies to turn them into a business advantage, rather than watching their organizations fall behind

The words “cognitive procurement” certainly sounded like a brave new world as Barry Ward, global procurement brand manager with IBM, discussed organizations restructuring to deal with external influences and unforeseen events, and evaluating legacy technology in light of these new challenges. He said that the profession will need to develop new skill sets to harness these futuristic technology models. This may involve the creation of new roles that reflect the future of the profession. For instance, IBM has announced the appointment of a Procurement Data Officer, reporting directly to the CPO

Gabe Perez, Vice President of Strategy and Market development with Coupa, challenged the audience to “re-think the possible” and discussed why “on-demand” should be applied to procurement (just as it is in our consumer life by organizations like Uber). He encouraged procurement leaders to adopt a model of supplier engagement that is open, inclusive and value-based. Specifically, he urged them to discard their legacy RFP process for as-a-service vendors, and replace it with a Request for Value Process to focus on the outcome

Entering the 'Conversational Century'

Elizabeth Linder, a Facebook veteran of eight years and now Founder and CEO of The Conversational Century, invited procurement/supply chain professionals to take another kind of risk and use social media to create personal digital conversations with their audience

Linder believes conversation is now a core leadership competency. She is encouraging executives around the world, even those who have traditionally been “buttoned up,” to change their communication channels and dialogue in order to remain relevant

She noted that social media rewards the human need for conversation and deeper connection. Supply chain professionals can use this to their advantage. Embracing social media can help us drive change management, collaborate online to break down silos, open up opportunities to influence, and show other leaders the value of sharing ideas online

One of the biggest benefits of procurement engaging with social media is the potential to attract and retain Millennial talent to keep the profession strong and vital. Tom Derry, Chief Executive Officer of ISM, emphasized that today's Millennials want to work for companies that are committed to investing in their professional development. This leads directly to higher career satisfaction and employee retention. In response, ISM is offering a host of programs that facilitate the growth opportunities and flexibility that this generation values. These include the Mastery Model and a recently-launched eISM online learning platform

Have the Courage to Work Out Loud

Using social media, procurement professionals will need to find the courage to drive global change through online two-way conversations with their teams and stakeholders

They'll need to take small steps at first – slowly building their presence online, making connections, and sharing their stories about the value procurement and supply chain management delivers

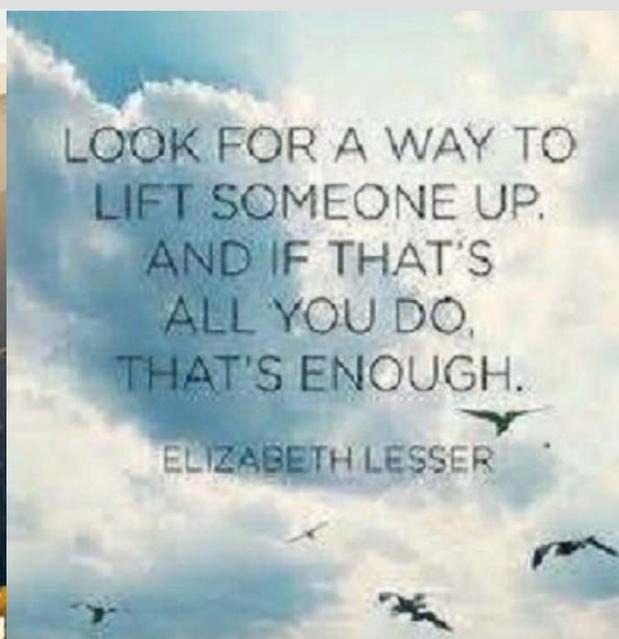
As a profession, we're getting better at educating people on what procurement and supply chain management are all about, but we've got a long way to go. We need to continue to build upon "brand procurement" by having the courage to work out loud and tell the stories about what we can do for our organizations and even the economy as a whole

To thrive in this new world, procurement professionals need to develop an attitude, more than any particular new skill set

And that new attitude is one of courage

Article extracted from <http://www.supplychainbrain.com/content/single-article-page/article/courage-the-new-world-order-for-supply-chain-management-leadership/>

July 18th, Mandela Day "Make every day a Mandela Day"





Orange Recruiting (Pty) Ltd
Company Registration Number: 2005/041787/07
Tel: +27 11 807 8102 | +27 82550 0959
www.orangerecruiting.co.za
P O Box 5322, Rivonia, 2128,
357 Rivonia Boulevard, Rivonia