5 Social Media Challenges for Procurement Professionals
Tania Seary

CIPS and Procurious Social Media for Procurement Knowledge Partnership
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5 SOCIAL MEDIA CHALLENGES FOR PROCUREMENT PROFESSIONALS

Social media represents a great opportunity for any group to expand their influence, get noticed for their activities across the board, attract talent, expand their supplier markets and market intelligence gathering opportunities, and potentially work collaboratively across borders and certainly with other procurement professionals in the UK.

Prior to an event I attended in 2015, we assessed the social media influence of some of the major suppliers to UK Local Government. These suppliers had an average of 40,000 followers on LinkedIn and 16,000 followers on Twitter. Admittedly these suppliers exist on a national, and often international, scale, but their social media presence allows them to be part of the conversation and be instantly recognisable when people search for them.

The benefit for procurement here is that these suppliers’ social media accounts are often a valuable source of information about their businesses. From press releases to new products offerings and beyond, these accounts represent a great, public source of information for procurement to access.

It is an area where procurement is still catching up, but there is willingness in the profession to try new things and to embrace new technologies, which will ultimately enable procurement to attain the same level of audience as other professions such as Sales and Marketing.

Procurement Stepping Up

In order to do this, every procurement professional needs to play their part. To help to provide a pathway to success, as well as to get the ball rolling, I have issued five challenges to each professional I have spoken to. These challenges all relate to how we, as individuals, operate on social media.

If each person does this, it will help build your profile and the image of the procurement profession, showing how we can collectively work within networks and with associations such as CIPS in order to change our profession for the better.

1. Connect with Peers

Think about your LinkedIn or other social media accounts. Are you missing any important connections? Are you connected to everyone in your regional peer group? Take 5 minutes now to find out.
2. **Connect with Suppliers**

Are you connected to your key suppliers on social media? How could you be using social media to connect with other suppliers, or gather market intelligence or widen sourcing possibilities?

3. **Tracking the External Environment**

What tools are you using to keep track of the external environment and your extended supply chain? Consider what social media platforms you could use for this and what information you might be able to access.

4. **Personal and Organisational Brand**

What does your profile say about you as an individual? How about your organisation’s profile? Take the next 10-15 minutes you have free to have a critical look at your own profile. Make sure your information is up to date, you have a good profile picture and you are calling out interesting, shareable and compelling information and content for people to see.

5. **Share Your Best Practice**

Could you contribute to an ‘open-source’ project for procurement? Is there any good/best practice from your organisation that you think people would benefit from? Get on to social media and make this available – it will promote your organisation as a thought leader, but also raise your profile.

Good luck!