Who Gives a Tweet? Social Media for Executives
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WHO GIVES A TWEET? (PART 2)

How can you ever get on top of social media? That’s one of the questions our team is asked frequently when speaking to procurement and supply chain professionals around the world.

For the uninitiated (and probably the offline) there are many excuses offered for avoiding being online.

Not having enough time, not knowing where to start and not knowing what to say are probably the most common reasons why professionals are not more involved on social media.

So, here is a new theory, the “Seary Theory”, that it is the “Two T’s” – that is, Time and inTimidation (OK, not quite a second T) – that are stopping more procurement professionals for being on-line. But more on that later...

First, let’s all agree that social media is not going away.

There’s no explanation required for how social media is “disrupting” and “enabling” just about every type of business on the planet – retail, banking, communications and entertainment, and soon we’ll be finding out what it means for supply chain and procurement...

Social media is something we need to take VERY seriously.

The procurement profession is hosting conferences focussing on digital disruption and talking about the speed of change in today’s world. But are we walking the walk? Yes, social media could be a fad, but then again, it could be the new way of doing business and therefore we need to embrace it.

A lot of procurement professionals think that social media is something that other people do. It’s all selfies on Facebook, cat videos on YouTube and a plethora of Kardashians on Twitter. All true. But the reality is that it goes a long way beyond this.

So why should procurement professionals be on Social Media?

Your professional development

By creating a strong network around yourself, you will be stronger for it.

It’s how you can stay informed and get ahead: Be it via LinkedIn, Procurious, Twitter or even Facebook, access the news as it’s posted, discover the world around you, keep abreast of industry gossip.

You need to have your finger on the pulse of the profession; anticipate things before they’ve happened, know who has changed jobs (and where they’ve gone to), identify issues others are experiencing, hone-in on the issues and questions.

You can also use social media to actively seek out information - identify experts in your specific category or industry and follow their updates. Reach out directly to your network for answers.
Your personal brand
Be noticed for being clever and insightful. Don’t let people forget about you. Maintain a consistent and persistent presence on social media.

Social media gives you a voice. It has the potential to transform you into an authority figure. When you share something on social media (or in real life) AND PEOPLE RESPOND, it demonstrates influence.

Not everyone wants to post their holiday snaps or selfies online and you don’t have to - sharing online need not be so different to sharing offline.

If you’re feeling a bit hesitant, why not join forums and websites to discuss the things that interest you?

This shows your professional nous, and keeps you front of mind with clients and lifts your profile personally. It also demonstrates that you’re plugged into the industry and will have the required knowledge to talk candidly about breaking issues affecting the profession.

What are the topics that only you can talk about? Every procurement professional has a unique vantage point from which they are gathering really interesting information that is unique to the industry, communities and businesses they work in – recognise your unique position and share some of the amazing learning’s and insights that come your way.

Your daily habit
The easiest way to get social is to incorporate a little bit of social “exercise” every day. It shouldn’t be a chore and it doesn’t need to take more than 10 – 15 minutes. To prove that’s no exaggeration, here is what you can do in 15 minutes:

- **News Scan** - Check the latest news and happenings through news sources or RSS feeds – these sift through all the major business and procurement publications, so you don’t have to. Keep your eyes peeled for “water cooler moments”, mentions of your competitors or suppliers in the headlines and be ready to dazzle colleagues and clients with factoids you’ve found on the commute to work.
- **Share** - What did you find that was interesting? An article? A comment? A quote? Well, post it and get people talking.
- **Be an expert** - Start a discussion topic or contribute to a burning issue. Got a question? Take the initiative!
- **Grow your network** - If procurement is going to be world’s best, then professionals need to be the most connected. Connect with people on LinkedIn or Procurious. You can scan LinkedIn and review the suggested connections often. It is very exciting to see the wide range of procurement professionals present in these forums.

And once you’re in the swing of that maybe consider some of the real pro-moves, for example:

*Register for any events* you are thinking of attending. Send the invite around your network as others might want to join in. When you’re at the event, post your thoughts to your social media platforms and keep the conversation going even when the party’s ended! On Twitter? Tweet about it.

*Want to write something and see your name in lights?* Become a published writer by posting blogs or content to social media. All this helps to grow your profile too.
Conclusion – *givers gain*
Recognize your unique position and share some of the amazing learnings and insights that come your way.

You are all in very fortunate positions but you’re not sharing these insights, so how will people (outside) know the amazing things we’ve all been doing? Feel free to blow your own trumpet, and together we can all be heard!

You are all ambassadors for the procurement profession; you should be using these new tools to help tell our story. By using professional networks like CIPS and Procurious, you can stay current and remain connected to your fellow procurement professionals.