

EPSA Industry Article

Procurement Resourcing.....

It's a candidates market

BY MATTHEW RAE JANUARY 17, 2022



Over the past 6 to 12 months it has become increasingly difficult to find and hire good quality procurement candidates...as recruiters would say it is indeed a candidates market. So what's driving this you may ask or has it always been there but has just been amplified of late given a renewed focus on driving operational efficiency through procurement led initiatives.

One of the biggest issues facing the supply chain sector, which threatens innovation, is lack of talent. According to recruitment firm Michael Page, the number of adverts targeting procurement and supply chain professionals is 219 per cent higher than the UK average, but these roles attract far fewer candidates. This is also apparent in the Australian market, something which is further compounded by an aging workforce, but perhaps the problem (the talent shortage) is at a far more grass roots level than we realise.

When I went to university, some 15 years ago, Supply Chain and Procurement was not part of the curriculum. In the modern syllabus not only can students study subjects in this field but can major in them and even achieve a Masters degree. Whilst this is a step in the right direction, as I alluded to above I don't believe this is at the root of the problem, with the lack of awareness of the profession among younger people at its core, something I saw first-hand at a recent university networking event in South Australia.

“School curriculums do not include anything around the supply chain at either GCSE level or A level,” says John Perry, managing director of supply chain and logistics consultancy SCALA. “The result of this is few school-leavers have ambitions to become supply chain professionals and only a limited number will move on to college or university to study the subject.”

Raising awareness of the profession also extend to our employer, who engage with those people at the start of their careers, offering internships, and other graduate opportunities to get ahead of other professions like finance and engineering who have long targeted your people, even whilst they are still at school.

Attracting the best talent extends to the value proposition offered by organisations, offering market competitive salaries, a clear and dynamic career path, and flexible working arrangements, the ability to be able to work from home and move away from the more conventional 9-5 office based expectation.

Once organisations have started to attract, and land, the right candidates, this then transfers to staff development and retention. Seeing your resource base as a work in progress that requires continuous investment is important that organisations invest in training opportunities for their personnel, whether it be a formal qualification such as a Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) diploma, attendance at a conference, seminar or hot topic ([insert link to EPSA Conferences](#)), other types of training and or secondment opportunities within our own businesses.

Procurement is as a viable career path as it has ever been, if not more so, with the advent of new technologies in the procurement space, global supply chain challenges and the application of leading edge, agile methodologies to complex procurement problems, it is indeed an exciting place to be, so let's do our bit as procurement professionals and create some more excitement around our sector in building our future stars and leaders of tomorrow.