



Modernizing Procurement:

Your Blueprint for Business
Success



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Harnessing Strategic Procurement for a Competitive Advantage

Chapter 01



Turn your company's procurement processes into a competitive advantage with the right planning, technology investments, and focus. Strategic procurement helps companies save money, speed up vital processes, and improve the partner and employee experience. Collaborative tools accelerate cross-departmental contract reviews and eliminate unnecessary delays.

Among other things, procurement processes can help reduce costs, develop new offerings, and manage risk. Oversight keeps costs contained and purchases within contractual agreements. Carefully managed vendor relationships are essential to rolling out new products and services at scale. Supplier qualification and ongoing contract oversight play a crucial role in managing and mitigating risk. Here is a closer look at how you can turn procurement into a differentiator.

In this whitepaper, we explore how you can:

- Improve supplier management, qualification, and relationships with responsive procurement and sourcing
- Leverage end-to-end support throughout the procurement process through integrated, cloud-based technology solutions
- Use advanced procurement features such as supplier portals, self-service procurement tools, analytics, and mobile enablement to elevate your procurement strategy

Strategic Cloud Sourcing: How to Save Money and Time

Chapter 02



Cloud-based technologies help strategically enhance sourcing efforts, save time and money, increase the chance of working with the best vendors, and create a rigorous process for internal reviews and vendor scoring, leading to an optimal request for quotes (RFQ) process. Cloud-based sourcing tools support:

Improve Supplier Negotiations

Cloud-based sourcing solutions enhance supplier negotiations and allow easy access to data and past sourcing events. This helps establish guidelines for pricing and determine where there may be an opportunity for better terms. With templates and pre-loaded guidance, it is easy to set up documents that comply with company policy and expedite them through the approvals process. Supplier analytics offer opportunities for additional cost savings or better collaboration in your ongoing negotiations.

Accelerate Awards Process

Cloud-based sourcing solutions help attract a range of prospective suppliers to your RFQ. Key features help facilitate RFQ distributions to your existing and prospective suppliers and monitor key interactions through the proposal process. Those include, but are not limited to managing deadlines, extensions, amendments, shortlisting, and response comparison. In addition, cloud-based sourcing solutions help evaluate bids received on multiple dimensions.

Identify and Reduce Supplier Risk

Vendors and suppliers provide critical products and services. Yet as compliance comes to the forefront, it is important to vet prospective suppliers – and existing partners – to control for and help mitigate risk.

Cloud-based sourcing solutions help you stay on top of the ever-important process of supplier qualification management. You can set minimum criteria for suppliers responding to bids and ask them to upload supporting documents such as certifications, budgets, insurance coverage, team resumes, or past project references. During the onboarding process, you will be able to gather all the details needed to thoroughly assess risk, and then improve monitoring by utilizing predictive analytics to identify any suppliers at risk of failing to deliver.

Enhance Supplier Management

Visibility into sourcing is critical. Whether you are monitoring where a new contract is in the process, drilling down into recent sourcing activity, or working to identify ways to save money, cloud-based sourcing solutions can help. Real-time data visibility supports smart decisions during the awards process and helps identify savings opportunities during a negotiation. With the right data and insights, sourcing and procurement become dramatically more effective and efficient processes.

Sourcing is an important and often overlooked area that can help gain a substantial competitive advantage. You can save money, identify the best suppliers, mitigate risk, and create efficient internal workflows. Move your procurement process forward while laying the foundation for efficient execution, cost savings, and a host of other benefits.

Supplier Contract Management: Why It Is So Important

Chapter 03



Supplier contract management is a cornerstone of procurement done right. Having the right processes and tools in place is critical to overcoming delays, managing ongoing contracts, and staying in compliance with company and industry guidelines.

Balancing the efficient administration of contracts with the legal requirements of compliance is a challenge, and the right technology solution can improve collaboration, eliminate delays, and manage the full lifecycle of supplier contract management.

Optimizing Supplier Contract Management

The right procurement system improves supplier contract management and internal collaboration in two ways:

- **Streamlined collaboration:** Three distinct departments are typically involved in procurement: legal, contracts, and purchasing. Keeping them all on the same page can be difficult, and information sharing or tracking documents under review can cause bottlenecks. Improved supplier contract management starts with a procurement technology solution that enables better collaboration.

For example, it is essential to make sure that all the information associated with a contract is held in a central place, so each department has access to the same information and can see where a contract under development is in the workflow.

- **Improved workflow management:** Often, the processing of developing contracts has certain dependencies. A specific step must be completed before another can occur. Each user can be given access to review, comment, and approve, depending on their role in the process. Alerts let the next person in the workflow know when a step is complete, so there is no risk of delays or emails being lost in transit. The full contract and any related documents are centrally available for stakeholders to reference and review.



4 Benefits of Streamlined Supplier Contract Management

Contract deadlines and renewals



One of the biggest headaches contracts departments wrestle with is staying on top of contract deadlines, renewals, and milestones. The right technology makes it easy to automate notifications as due dates approach. Wrapping up a contract or extending it also becomes more manageable, as the platform facilitates collaboration with both suppliers and internal stakeholders (such as the legal department). You can now manage dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of contracts.

Centralized contracts management



Another best practice to focus on is centralizing documentation. From contract deliverables to supporting documentation, you can take advantage of software tools that allow you to store everything in a central repository.

During a renewal or when there is a possible contract breach, it is critical that all supporting documentation – from terms and conditions to the scope of work – be available. Then, in the case of a performance question or legal issue, it is easy to evaluate the entire situation.

Managing projects to scope



Are your suppliers meeting deadlines, submitting deliverables, and staying within budget? Often, those transactional details are intertwined with the legal aspects of the contract. Within Oracle Procurement, all the information associated with a contract is centralized in one place. The system can help you answer important questions about whether your suppliers are trustworthy, accurate, and hitting performance agreements.

When there is a question, all legal components are available in the system, so anyone who needs to review the information and determine next steps can do so quickly and efficiently. Managing projects to scope becomes a streamlined, objective process so important details do not fall between the cracks.

Faster processing of signatures



Finally, when you are ready for suppliers to sign a contract or you need to countersign for the files, electronic signature capabilities speed up the final execution process.

Effective supplier contracts management is one of the most important aspects of the procurement lifecycle. The right solution centralizes documents, enables better collaboration, and streamlines contract management.

Supplier Contract Management: Must-Have Features

Chapter 04



Procurement solutions help manage contracts, and here are must-have features to look for:

High-Level Standardization Features

An essential role a cloud-based procurement solution plays is standardizing the contracting process. You may be moving away from an ad hoc contracting process or looking for better support and enforcement for standardization. No matter the motivation, standardization of the contracting process offers numerous benefits.

Consistency in contract creation helps cut costs, improve delivery, and eliminate some of the common challenges associated with procurement. The right procurement solution helps you outline your company's rules and policies. Each time a new contract is created, it will be developed with those business guidelines driving the process.

Language Clause Libraries

Consider the case of a frustrated procurement officer who feels challenged by lengthy legal reviews. After evaluating the internal procurement process, the officer determines the business has worked with a pool of vendors under very similar contracts. The scope or timelines might change, but the terms and conditions do not vary.

By leveraging a language clause library, it is possible for procurement officers to create drafts with pre-approved language and speed up the legal review process. If your company uses standard vocabulary in certain parts of every contract, that template can be pulled from the language clause library. From there, you can spend your time focusing on working with legal and other stakeholders to compose language that is being used for the first time or focus on places where the contract might deviate from the standard approach.

Approval Processes

Managing contract approvals often comes down to collaboration. Any single contract might need reviews from contract, procurement, legal, and other internal stakeholders. How can you be sure at any moment that you are looking at the latest document and that you have access to all the comments made so far in the process? With cloudbased procurement solutions, each step of the approval workflow is defined.

Centralized documents can be reviewed, modified, or approved by each stakeholder in a predefined order. Any additional documents can be attached, and notes, caveats, and concerns captured so that everyone involved in the approval process has the full context. By eliminating the need to track down documents or worry that an email goes missing due to an overflowing inbox, notifications keep approvals moving forward. It is easy to log in at any point and have full visibility into where a contract is in creation, review, or execution.

Contract Workflow Management

Effective, responsive procurement is only possible when you have the right tools to understand how your procurement process is operating. Cloud-based procurement contract solutions provide more in-depth insight into the overall workflow. Has every step been completed? Do you have a clear plan in place for different types of contracts? Are there bottlenecks or obstacles that can be addressed for better longterm performance?

Cloud-based procurement contract solutions simplify the contract creation process, speed up approvals, centralize management, and offer visibility and support from a contract's start to finish.

At the same time, these features let you overcome unnecessary delays. Approval workflows allow you to push contracts through review and signature steps efficiently. Centralizing documents makes it easy to see everything associated with a contract, or to create an audit trail of review, amendments, and other comments. Finally, it is easy to stay up to date and on top of the full contract lifecycle with alerts that let you know if a contract is expiring or needs attention.



Supplier Qualification Management: Why It Is Essential and What Can Go Wrong

Chapter 05



Effective supplier qualification management is not just about finding the best provider for the job. It is a critical step in protecting your business against compliance violations and other risks. If a step is missed in the supplier qualification process, it can be devastating. Even if it was a mistake or an oversight, lapsed insurance, an expired certification, or a supplier on a watch list can cost a company thousands of dollars. That responsibility falls back onto the buying organization. It is their responsibility to track, manage, and challenge vendors to ensure they are being ethical, thorough, and compliant. With the right technology, it is easy to make sure that you are compliant, up to date, and doing business with the right suppliers.

Challenges for Contract Qualification

Supplier qualification vetting begins with verifying a vendor's status by industry certification, insurance coverage, and more. Increasingly, companies are also having to check companies or independent contractors against government lists to cover issues including conflict minerals, terrorist watch lists, or sanctions. Often, you are required to retain records of these searches for a specific timeframe in case a violation does occur. One look at the headlines shows how costly a single misstep in this area can be.

Quickly performing this process manually is less than ideal. It becomes difficult to track, and it is subject to human error risks. Instead, you can turn to technology for additional due diligence during the process to onboard vendors and register them in the system.

Improving Supplier Qualification Workflows

The supplier qualification workflow itself can be intensive. It typically involves a significant number of questions, documents, and verifications. With a supplier qualification solution like Oracle Supplier Qualification Management within Oracle Procurement, you can engage with suppliers directly through a portal. You can log in, see what information is needed, and upload files directly to your system.

Using a supplier portal – and making it a success – requires an upfront investment in establishing the portal, training suppliers, and moving workflows there. Once you take those steps, having a successful supplier portal can become a core competitive differentiator. Here are a few tips to increase adoption:

3 Tips for Supplier Portal Success

1. Invest in training. Do not overlook the importance of supplier training. Make it a high priority and bring your suppliers into the process early for better engagement. Supplier training helps with understanding and can highlight benefits such as faster processing of invoices and other projected process improvements.

2. Consider a pilot. If you are considering implementing a supplier portal but are not ready to roll it out across the entire organization, a supplier pilot might be the right way to go. You could select a few preferred vendors or selected suppliers you are most comfortable with. Make them part of implementation and testing. Gather critical data, allowing you to customize the portal experience to meet your suppliers' needs, and get early adopters invested, making it easier to roll the system out across the wider supplier base.

3. Invest in communications. Introducing a supplier portal will be much more successful with a communications plan. Start early, giving suppliers plenty of notice that the supplier portal is coming and offering a view of your timeline. Once you are ready to begin onboarding, you can provide insights on training, logging into the portal, and who to call with questions or support. The more self-service resources you can provide, such as user guides, the more effective suppliers will be using the portal.

Supplier Portal: Competitive Differentiator or Must-Have Offering?

Chapter 06



Supplier management can be a challenge: Just consider what goes into onboarding a prospective supplier. The process requires submitting dozens of documents, filling out questionnaires, going through background screening, and more. If you manage this process manually, it is challenging to deliver an excellent supplier experience. Technology can streamline the entire process by implementing supplier portals.

What Should a Supplier Portal Do?

Suppliers benefit from a portal by having a central website where they can submit invoices, download documents related to their contract, upload items needed for supplier qualification, or check policy details in your FAQ. That is how solutions like Oracle Supplier Portal within Oracle Procurement work. Supplier portals help manage procurement by offering:

- Real-time flexibility of self-service solutions to complete tasks, access documents, and locate needed information
- Streamlined supplier workflow, whether you are reviewing compliance with vendor qualification guidelines or following a process for invoicing
- Reduced administrative burden on your procurement team around supplier management, allowing the team to focus on strategic processes and relationship building

Streamline Transactions

One of the crucial benefits of supplier portals is streamlining the transactional core. For example, if a supplier can log in, see their purchase orders, acknowledge them, and submit invoices, that eliminates a tremendous administrative burden. Looking for ways to automate core processes offers better visibility and faster turnaround, and it frees your team to focus on strategic workflows.

Improve Document Sharing

Document sharing is another area where you can develop critical efficiencies. For example, consider the supplier qualification process. By using the supplier portal as a collaborative home base, suppliers can input their contact information, W-9s, insurance certifications, and other supporting documentation. At the same time, you can push documents to suppliers, via a central shared repository. Using a supplier portal increases efficiency by moving away from emailing individuals. Ultimately, the portal can also be used to review contracts, manage renewals, or deal with an audit process.

Self-Service Procurement: Control Spend and Improve the Employee Experience

Chapter 07



In many organizations, getting a deal approved can be a long process and procurement impacts the employee experience. Today's teams want fast, efficient, and consumer-like requisition experiences when they need to make a purchase. Here is how you can use self-service procurement features to control spend, speed up business, and delight employees.

Provide an Organic, User-Friendly Shopping Experience

E-commerce has changed the way that we shop, and major retail brands have worked hard to create digital experiences that remove the friction from shopping online. Those experiences have shaped the way people expect to buy, even in the workplace. Self-service procurement solutions make it easy to offer and scale a smooth, consumer-like buying experience. Users do not have to sit through extensive training.

Instead, they can use an intuitive search interface, create shopping lists, and buy the items they need from pre-approved purchase lists. Employees are more satisfied, and procurement teams can reduce support costs and speed up the buying process.

Customize a Catalog for Preferred Vendors

While the ease of online shopping sounds great, the reality is that business procurement can be more complicated.

The right self-service procurement solution lets you customize the back end to control costs and keep employee buying activities compliant. It becomes easy to manage compliance simply by populating the procurement site with approved suppliers. For example, if an employee is looking for a laptop, and your organization has three approved vendors, they are directed to those vendors and automatically see what options are available.



Add Features for Unusual Workflow Steps

It is also possible to create workflows that support unusual circumstances. What if a purchase needs to be split between two project accounts. Or a buyer needs to arrange a one-time delivery to a specific location. It is possible to configure a selfservice procurement solution to support these needs while making sure to request the necessary approvals for exceptions.

Take Advantage of Negotiated Prices with Catalog Management

One of the best ways to control costs is to negotiate better pricing from preferred vendors. However, it can be a challenge to communicate that information to employees and their managers or direct employees to the right place when they need to buy an item. Sometimes it seems easier to go to the nearest office supply store. Cloud-based procurement solutions help solve that problem by giving companies access to the best catalog-management tools. By having control at a deep catalogmanagement level, you can take advantage of your best-negotiated pricing.

Accelerate the Approval Process

One of the most effective tools you have to control costs is purchase approvals. For example, depending on an employee's role, they may have the discretion to make certain kinds of purchases or buy items up to a preset dollar amount without approval. In other cases, every buy may need a manager's sign-off.

Rules-based management makes it easy to set up these rules and then enforce them across your organization, without taking up management or procurement team time.

With a multi-level user approval process, each purchase gets routed to the right person for sign off. Whether you are dealing with a standardized process or need to customize sign offs for a unique purchase, it is easy to do. Approvers can log in and approve a purchase, reject it, or send it back for revision. They can also share notes, attach documents, or request more information.

Investing in a self-service procurement solution offers a world-class buying experience for employees while keeping oversight and compliance at the heart of the process.

Mobile Procurement: Is Your Business Ready?

Chapter 08



Today's growing companies need a mobile-friendly procurement process. A service representative may be in the field working with customers and need fast access to parts for a repair. Or a professional services firm may require a mobile procurement solution for consultants who are always on the go. No matter what business you are in, your team may be trying to launch a requisition, buy a product, or approve a purchase on the go. Here is how mobile procurement can help your company deliver.

Mobile Self-Service Procurement

Your employees are likely working on mobile devices, whether checking messages or ticking items off their to-do lists between meetings. When the systems they rely on are available via mobile devices, it is easier to keep things moving forward. Selfservice procurement solutions are easy to access on mobile devices. For example, users can easily log in to the procurement catalog, search for what they need, and place the order. They will have the same streamlined shopping experience that directs them to all the approved products, preferred vendors, and negotiated prices to ensure cost savings and compliance.

Mobile Procurement Approvals

Cost control and contract compliance are essential parts of the procurement process. The latest tools make it easier for you to offer mobile-friendly approval support. Managers are often running between meetings, traveling to client sites, and fitting in work around heavily scheduled days. Mobile procurement approvals make it easier for them to identify priority requests and stay on top of their workflow. Notifications let them know when a purchase needs their attention. Approvals and reviews are simple to log into from any connected device.

Analytics on the Go

Procurement and sourcing are central to the operations and financial health of your company. A procurement system captures a wealth of data, and mobility features provide complete visibility from any device, anywhere. You might need to check for the latest updates on a critical contract in review. Or, during a meeting, maybe an executive wants to know what percentage of spend is on contracts. With mobile access, it is easy to pull up the data needed to keep workflows moving forward, provide updates to stakeholders, and follow up as needed.

Mobile Supplier Features

Vendors and suppliers are also requesting mobile features from the customers they serve. Increasingly, procurement solutions are making it easier for vendors to shift a lot of the workload away from procurement teams. They may want to upload a document to qualify a new supplier, or to invoice for completed work. By making it easy for vendors to interact with systems from any device, they can comply more quickly with requests for information. The less time they spend navigating complex administrative processes, the more focused they are on delivering the products, services, and cost savings.

Mobile issuing of Purchase Orders

Mobile features can also help internal teams work with suppliers more efficiently. For example, do you ever have to issue a purchase order when away from your computer, or amend the terms of an existing P.O. quickly so that work can be completed?

With Oracle Procurement, you can issue, update, and review paperwork from anywhere – so there are no delays in critical communication when working from a mobile device. With mobile access to your procurement system, you can review supplier qualification documents, contracts, agreements, and execution analytics. Let's say you are in a meeting with a supplier and a question comes up about a contract's end date. Simply log in on your mobile device and get the information you need.

There is no need to invest in specialized software – mobile features are embedded throughout today's leading cloudbased procurement solutions.

Analytics: Why They are Critical to Procurement

Chapter 09



Procurement teams face significant workloads handling transactions and communicating with suppliers. Access to better data and automated systems can shift some of that workload away from the buyer and, in the process, provide insights for cost savings, process optimization, and more. Analytics help teams make the shift from transactional approaches to procurement – focusing on individual contracts or transactions – to identifying opportunities, efficiencies, and risks. Here are some ways you can use procurement analytics:

Enable Stronger Contract Management

Contract management can provide you with immediate payoff. All too often, companies go out and buy things ad hoc, when they need them. They have no strategy. Organizations may be buying items off contract or entering purchase orders without any backing requisitions. The result can be unapproved purchases, spending over budget, and lost opportunities to streamline and manage the process. Analytics can identify what is (and is not) within contract, quickly identify opportunities to streamline spending, determine which categories are priorities for getting on contract, and establish which existing suppliers would make effective large-scale partners.

Create an Agile Buying Organization

Analytics and reporting are a cornerstone of a responsive, quick procurement that supports business agility. If every purchase needs to be manually reviewed and approved, workloads and delay times quickly become untenable. Procurement technology lets anyone in the field request an item, determine if an item is within contract, and complete the process. It enables higher productivity with fewer keystrokes, time, and attention – while making sure that purchasing activity adheres to company guidelines.



Support Monitoring and Decisions with Real-Time Alerts

Analytics and real-time alerts support a more timely contract management process. For example, you might want to be notified 90 days before a contract ends. That way you can review the budget (and make sure it is on track), look at options for renewal, and have a plan in place to verify that all deliverables have been met. The same notifications can be sent to suppliers, so they remain in adherence with whatever contracts deliverables they have agreed to along the way.

With deeper visibility into your data and procurement processes, your team can make smart, strategic decisions and provide the necessary insights and support.

Focus on Critical Sourcing Analytics

The bar has been raised: Today's managers want access to real-time data. It is important that they have visibility into what is happening in the business, at their fingertips, in a dashboard or readily available report. Increasingly, managers want to stay out of the nuts and bolts of their procurement systems. They want their personalized dashboard view that can help them make quick decisions on products, resources and bottom-line impacts. Solutions like Oracle Procurement simplify reporting and make it easier to communicate with all stakeholders by integrating key data points onto a single page.

Transforming Procurement with Argano as Your Strategic Partner

As your business grows, so do the complexities of your procurement requirements. By enabling partners, purchasing teams, and decisionmakers with a cloud-based solution like Oracle Procurement, you can streamline your procurement processes to better control costs and minimize risk. With Argano as your strategic partner we can help you optimize your high-performance business operations to achieve better, faster outcomes.



Find out how Argano can help you optimize your procurement processes. Contact us today at oracle@argano.com or visit argano.com to learn more.

About Argano

Argano is the first of its kind: a digital consultancy totally immersed in high-performance operations. We steward enterprises through ever-evolving markets, empowering them with transformative strategies and technologies to exceed customer expectations, unlock commercial innovation, and drive optimal efficiency and growth. Learn more at argano.com.