

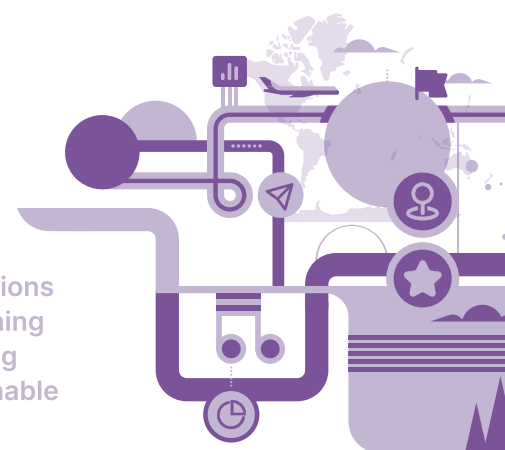


The Do's and Don'ts of Sustainable Procurement



By Seb Butt, General Manager for Craft
on behalf of the [Sustainable Procurement Pledge \(SPP\)](#)

Many business leaders, politicians, journalists, and civil society organizations agree that sustainability is vital for business performance and the right thing to do for the health of our planet. Despite significant research and ongoing international initiatives, including the UN's Brundtland Report and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), sustainability in various business operations remains a challenge.



The Role of Supply Chain Management

Supply Chain Management and the procurement function is one area where sustainability is gaining traction. Many businesses are evaluating their workflows and standard practices to determine what they can achieve through sustainable procurement. However, despite all this interest and excitement around sustainability, it is still an under-developed area of business operations.

Taking care of the planet is not a new concept in many cultures and societies around the world. However, companies have not traditionally accounted for environmental resources, leading to their degradation. Even as sustainability has seen growth in attention in recent years, it owes many principles and ideas to indigenous cultures that have fought to hold on to traditional ways of living in harmony with the planet.

That said, sustainability in the western business world is an area of research, policy and discussion with a distinctive history.

Sustainability in the Business World: A Brief History

Sustainability as we know it entered the international political agenda during the 1980s with the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, which issued the report 'Our Common Future! - also referred to as the 'Brundtland report' - in 1987. This publication defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs."



More recently, sustainability has been explored from new perspectives, including the 'systems perspective'. Under the systems perspective approach, sustainability is no longer seen simply in terms of individual resources, but rather on the global adverse impacts of human activities, and the extent to which activities that seem sustainable at a local level can in fact be unsustainable when analyzed from the perspective of global socio-economic and ecological systems.

In other words, under the systems perspective approach, sustainability is evaluated on a global scale rather a national or regional scale.

Such analysis led Stuart Moir and Kate Carter, researchers at the University of Edinburgh, to advise in 2012 that there is a "distinct risk that a sustainable future will not be realized unless the concept is expressed in a manner which allows its notional essence to be exposed." Given the importance of sustainability and the challenges to achieving a sustainable future, businesses and other organizations need to understand how they can achieve sustainability in specific parts of their activities.

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Let's attempt to adapt a universally accepted definition of sustainability and apply it to sustainable procurement. In his 1999 research 'Cannibals with forks', John Elkington argued that businesses had developed extensive systems and processes designed to optimize their financial bottom line. Still, this focus on the financial bottom line contributed to a lack of sustainability in their activities. As such, Elkington argued that rather than attempting to destroy and replace those systems and processes, they should be adapted to focus on a "triple bottom line" comprising of people, planet, and profit. Working on that premise, businesses would judge their activities based on their net impact in all of these areas, not allowing economic concerns to override social and environmental ones, and this would provide a basis for assessing corporate sustainability.

In 2019 at a gathering of 200 US-based CEOs, a statement on "the purpose of a corporation" was issued arguing that companies should no longer just focus on the interests of shareholders alone. Instead, they should also invest in their employees, protect the environment, and deal legally and ethically with their suppliers.

More recently following discussions at the World Economic Forum in Davos, the European Union (EU) Non-Financial Reporting Directive determined a need to establish standards for businesses to report their ESG (environment, social, governance) impact. Multinational organizations are internalizing the focus and explicitly relating it to the supply chain.



Looking at the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there are nine related to the sustainability of different economic, social, and environmental outcomes.

Financial sustainability goals include:

- Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all
- Promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic and employment growth
- Decent work for all
- Building resilient infrastructure supporting sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation

Social sustainability goals include:

- Making human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable
- Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development

Finally, environmental sustainability involves:

- Ensuring sustainable water and sanitation
- Conserving and sustainably using marine resources for sustainable development
- Protecting and restoring terrestrial ecosystems, and halting biodiversity loss

It is straightforward to understand how many of these relate to sustainability within procurement

EcoVadis, which provides sustainability ratings about suppliers, defines Sustainable Procurement as the "adoption and integration of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) principles into your procurement processes and decisions while also ensuring they meet your company's requirements and stakeholders."

Artemis Petridi, Oral Care Global Sustainability Leader at Procter & Gamble outlines P&G's approach to sustainability in procurement, focusing on three core pillars;

"The first pillar is supplier citizenship. As a company, we have certain values, and this is translated into our policies. We expect that our vendors have similar values and similar policies. Our policies are shaped around ethics and corporate responsibility, environmental impact, community impact and equality and inclusion.

As a Purchasing organization we can make a significant impact on equality and inclusion. We see a lot of SDGs linked to gender equality and diversity. This links with our big efforts to increase our spending with minorities and women-owned companies, and to develop a more diverse supply base.

Another priority for us is sustainable materials and green manufacturing. This includes an increased effort from us to think about what materials we are choosing



- can they be independent of fossil fuel-based materials and plastics - how do we decrease the overall product footprint, and what can we do to increase circularity?

Again, just like we have green manufacturing targets, we want our suppliers, and especially contract manufacturers, to do the same. The last pillar for us is responsible sourcing, where we focus on plant, animal and mineral ingredients. This is where all the certifications fit in. In summary we have a holistic program focused on overall supplier citizenship, sourcing sustainable materials and producing with circularity principles, and developing responsible supply chains."

The Circular Economy: A Brief Overview

Petridi touches on the circular economy, a concept which refers to the arrangement of supply chains to support circular flows, including the traditional flow of goods to customers and the return of used goods to producers for reuse, repair, and recycling, therefore reducing the demand for additional materials and inputs.

Some essential concepts related to the circular economy include:

Blue economy

This involves developing production and procurement systems that maintain the local environment and use local renewable resources where possible, rather than changing the environment to meet economic needs.

Industrial ecology

The underlying process of considering the social and environmental impacts of industrial activity and the economic consequences, hence maintaining a balance between the economy and the natural and social systems.

Reverse logistics

Developing logistics systems that can flow both ways, pushing goods to consumers and efficiently recovering used products from fueling the circular economy.

Having gone over some of the history and theory, let's look at some insights from experts working in procurement, who have already influenced, executed, or are rolling out sustainable procurement practices.



DOs and DON'Ts by Our Experts

For this report, I spoke to some leading authorities in sustainability to get their viewpoints on the dos and don'ts of sustainable procurement. How can we create a sustainable, circular economy that's good for business and, more importantly, for the planet?

Our panel of procurement and supply chain experts:

[Artemis Petridi](#), Oral Care Global Sustainability Leader, P&G

[Sagar Mital](#), Strategic Sourcing Manager, United Airlines

[Kevin Dunckley](#), Chief Sustainability and Innovation Officer, HH Global

[Shazia Hussenbux](#), Global Sustainable Sourcing Specialist, Oatly

[Lowi Vervoorn](#), Senior Sourcing Manager, Royal Schiphol Group

[Erik Hoek](#), Head of Global Procurement Excellence, SGS

[Vince Michels](#), Ambassador, The Sustainable Procurement Pledge

[Alexis Ryan](#), Ambassador, The Sustainable Procurement Pledge

[Trey Maresca](#), Ambassador, Bayer

[Matthias Gutzmann](#), Founder, DPW

[Nico Bac](#), Founder, Digital Procurement Now

DO: Implement an integrated corporate strategy for sustainable procurement

Implementing an integrated corporate strategy for sustainable procurement is key for any business looking to leverage sustainable procurement. It encompasses the 'triple bottom line' approach by ensuring that an organization is not focused solely on profits and implements social and environmental sustainability at the top level. This 'triple bottom line' approach is widely supported by many of the contributors we interviewed.

Lowi Vervoorn, a Senior Sourcing Manager at Royal Schiphol Group, explains; "Make sure sustainable procurement is connected to the sustainable ambitions of the organization, so it's clear to CxO and board level that sustainable procurement will contribute to the organization's ambitions."

Sagar Mital, a sourcing manager from United Airlines, believes that sustainable procurement should be driven from the top; "It should be driven from the top, and every procurement category lead should have the target for identifying sustainable solutions/suppliers in their portfolio."

DO NOT: Allow the sustainable procurement strategy to become too economically focused

It is important to ensure that sustainable procurement is seen to achieve outcomes in economic, social, and environmental sustainability - and for the focus not to be solely on the economic. It is vital that businesses make significant progress towards the social and environmental SDGs, such as

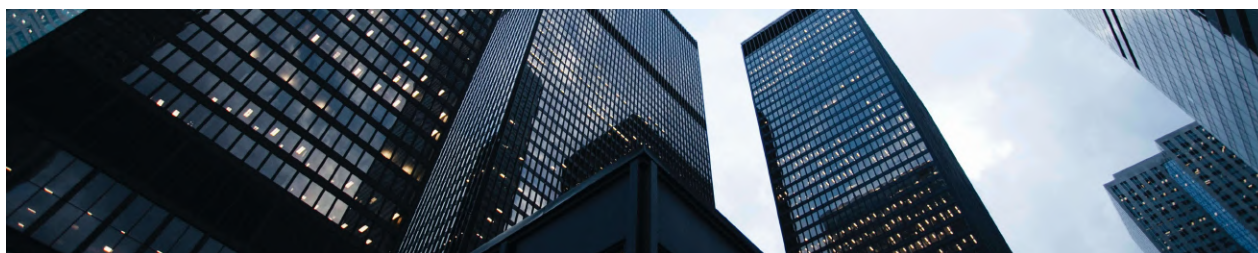


ensuring their procurement activities provide decent and sustainable employment; conserve nature and support sustainable consumption and production activities.

This recommendation also requires a broader focus on procurement policies supporting the arguments made by the researchers from University of Salford, Igho Ekiugbo and Christos Papanagnou.

In a 2017 study for the European Journal of Sustainable Development, Ekiugbo and Papanagnou explained that the most crucial sustainable procurement policies were those that enhanced transparency and ethical practices in procurement, rather than those that emphasized efficiency. The imperative also saw support from the interviewees, two of whom made this explicit argument when asked about what to avoid in sustainable procurement, stating common mistakes were.

Trey Maresca, who is part of the procurement function at Bayer, said it is a mistake to "focus solely on cost reductions". SGS's Eric Hoek adds, "...avoid the focus on prices and costs. This is only a short-term strategy" and it seems that the deployment and adoption of sustainable procurement practices is more of a marathon than a sprint.



DO: Consult and engage with a wide array of stakeholders

Sustainability is no longer seen simply in terms of individual resources, but rather on the global adverse impacts of human activities, and the extent to which activities that may be sustainable at a local level can be unsustainable when analyzed from the level of the global socio-economic and ecological systems. This, in turn, requires a consideration of the more comprehensive environmental and socio-economic systems in which sustainable procurement must occur and emphasizes the importance of all stakeholders, including suppliers, customers, and employees.

The importance of stakeholders has been highlighted by Lowi Vervoorn from Royal Schiphol Group who indicated it is essential to "align with your business stakeholders at a very early stage" in order to ensure buy-in along the way.

And it is also important that stakeholders are guided as pointed out by SGS's Hoek, who states "all employees should have to complete regular training and exams, including integrity, human rights, rules for life (safety) and procurement policy."

United Airlines' Sagar Mital adds, "procurement leadership should include sustainability as a goal for every category manager during the planning stages at the beginning of each year." Mital continues; "providing training to each procurement professional on the need for sustainability and its benefits, and showing potential case studies and industry statistics to bring enthusiasm amongst the team."

Shazia Hussenbux, Global Sustainable Sourcing Specialist at Oatly, sums it up well; "Every employee is kind of a sustainability champion". The importance of senior stakeholders as champions is vital and something that Petridi pointed out: "without leaders that are champions as well, I think sustainability practices [in procurement] wouldn't move as fast."



DO NOT: Allow singular concerns and issues to influence the sustainability strategy

This is an essential issue in the modern procurement environment, where organizations can face extensive pressure from single sources and thus can lose sight of the importance of overall sustainability goals. An example can be seen in the case of the Federal Public Institution of Brazil. This organization needed to overcome pressure from specific lobbying, politicians, and particular influences to develop a more economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable procurement system

Vince Michels, who has been a leader in procurement and supply chain functions for more than 20 years, notes that if sustainable procurement becomes too focused on singular issues, such as labor practices or anti-bribery, then the process can lose sight of the overall sustainable procurement strategy.

Alexis Ryan, formerly of Pfizer, Novartis, and BioMarin, suggests that the road to deploying sustainable procurement practices is full of pitfalls and distractions, and that focus and consistency is very important.

DO: Take a holistic approach to the evaluation of suppliers

This is the first and most important operational-level sustainable procurement imperative. It requires organizations to ensure that the integrated and stakeholder-focused sustainable procurement strategies they execute are reflected in their suppliers' evaluation. Supplier evaluation is vital in sustainable procurement, to ensure that the suppliers with which an organization interacts will support the desired sustainability goals.

However, the evaluation process must incorporate all SDGs and other relevant economic, environmental, and social measures. This requires the development of holistic approaches, as Ryan advocates; "this big shift of thought around when you're working with suppliers needs to consider a deep understanding of cradle to grave processes and impact".

Petridi suggests that buyers need to communicate clearly the organizational sustainability goals to the suppliers and translate the goals in clear short-term requirements and innovation focus areas. The sustainability requirements need to be visibly an integral part of the total value equation, just like cost, payment terms, quality, agility, service level, etc. and not something on the side.

There are several no-miss opportunities to do that effectively:

1. Communicating business needs that integrate the sustainability aspect in a congruent way.
2. Adding product/ service sustainability requirements in the bids' success criteria (CSR scores, packaging footprint characteristics, certified feedstock, year-on-year environmental targets, etc.)
3. Highlighting sustainability aspects in the rationale of the business allocation announcement.
4. Expecting continuous progress on sustainability as part of the ongoing supplier performance management.



DO NOT: Allow tail spend to ignore sustainability protocols

According to SGS's Eric Hoek, "the biggest hurdle is still maverick buying. Without control of procurement, new vendors are added that do not comply with the code of conduct."

New vendors may improve competitive performance; however, if they harm sustainability credentials, then the business's ultimate impact will be negative. As such, this drift in focus should be avoided and controlled where possible.

DO: Implement circular economy concepts to drive sustainability in procurement

This is linked strongly to the evidence from academic studies that show the circular economy's importance is improving current sustainability performance and ensuring future proofing in the face of ongoing sustainability challenges.

In particular, a 2018 report by the United Nations Environment Programme indicated that "circular procurement advances the sustainability goals as it contributes to the enabling conditions of a system which creates value and social well-being while maintaining resources at their highest possible value in the whole lifecycle and ultimately creating an economy which is regenerative."

Mital from United Airlines supports this; "using the concept of 3R - Reduce, Reduce, Recycle in the organization; becoming more vigilant to the products and services that we buy, always on the lookout for suppliers offering sustainable solutions and continuing to work with existing suppliers and implement value analysis/value engineering with them."



DO: Tell your suppliers about positive and negative findings

Suppliers will often look to their key customers for guidance and advice. This is true of all relevant topics, including sustainability. The buyer needs to advise the sellers about their expectations, giving them advance warning and sharing any data or supporting material with them, which demonstrates to the seller that the decision is based on research and evidence.

If the supplier values the relationship, they will make the relevant changes or install a roadmap of modifications to reach the required compliance level. Therefore, global organizations with large spend have an essential role and responsibility to influence supply chains to adopt environmentally friendly and socially conscious practices because they can create the right incentives for the implementation of sustainable procurement.



DO NOT: Assume this is entirely new

Alexis Ryan suggests that this is not necessarily a new discipline. It may be called sustainable procurement, but instead of framing it as something brand new, it should be viewed as an evolution of practices that have been used for many years to ensure alignment between buyer's and seller's needs. Historically some of the factors may have been breaches in human rights, anti-money laundering, and fair wages for those working for suppliers in the n-tier.

When thinking about championing ideas to the C-suite, Michels suggests that you need answers to questions they will already know; "You're not completely hitting them cold, you might be pleasantly surprised. They have the same questions you do. How do we make this work? And so, it may not be the uphill battle that you think it is, in terms of pushback, however you still have the heavy lifting of, how do we do this? What does it look like, ultimately?"

DO: An audit! Don't ignore what's already been done in the past, build on it

Before driving sustainable procurement strategies forward, it is essential to understand that the organization has already got in place to develop a conscientious lay of the land.

This is important for two reasons:

1. To avoid replication of efforts, if something has already been started, then it does not need to be done all over again - learn from colleagues and, if required, expand their vision to include yours.
2. To avoid alienating other champions; it may be that someone else in your organization has already started the process of building a case to senior executives to encourage more sustainable procurement practices - join forces with them, two voices will be louder than one, and it will also attract others who think the same.

DO NOT: Pay lip service to sustainability goals

Another key temptation for businesses in the modern world is to see sustainability as a target to insulate themselves against the constant tide of public pressure. However, this creates the temptation to meet targets and standards without making the necessary changes to achieve sustainable procurement genuinely.

This can be seen in a case study of the Indian steel industry, which analyzed Tata Steel, SAIL, Essar, and Jindal's sustainability performance. This study showed that two of the top priorities for these organizations were to achieve ISO 14001 certification and OHSAS 18001 certification. However, without broader commitments to sustainability transformations, these organizations' performance to achieve sustainability goals was negatively affected.



Ryan also added that it could be easy for organizations to have the best intentions but these processes needed to be fully thought through and then executed; "it's a management measure to make sure that what we have in the contracts regarding bribery and fair labor practices, for example, is there. Compliance is one thing, but then if activities are not being carried out, often there is no regular checking to ensure standards are being met."

While compliance is important, it should not substitute for commitment if organizations wish to remain ahead with sustainability policies.

DO: Share key terminologies, frameworks and ideas

Individuals within the organization will be at different stages in their understanding of sustainability and specifically within procurement, so champions and leaders should not assume that everyone understands the key drivers, motivations, and options.

Oatly's Hussenbux remarks: "There are so many terminologies, nomenclatures, frameworks, etc. and some days I struggle with understanding some myself. Whenever you open an article or blog on LinkedIn for example and you find new sustainability related terminologies. Some days, I have to sit myself down and try to figure out, what do they mean in theory and in practice? and what do they mean for procurement? I think it would be great to develop some kind of glossary or training material while engaging stakeholders."

It is imperative to enable the widest audience to understand the problem and challenges to ensure that a broad group of stakeholders can all be involved in architecting the path forward.



DO: Tell a good story and engage marketing to help you share it

Kevin Dunckley, the Chief Sustainability and Innovation officer at HH Global, described how it was all-important for success stories to be shared so that you end up with more organizational support but also consumer level support for the brand; "I think the storytelling is key. When you're working in your own domain within your larger business, and you have some success in whatever project you're in, then telling that story and communicating that out and telling people is key, whether it's at your level or up a couple of levels. So even if it's just one slide that says, here's what we did before, and here's what we changed. And here's the impact and here's the commercial benefit. This is true for most functions, and that includes sustainable procurement. Even more so perhaps, because you have people that still need to be convinced this is a good business strategy."

In the World Economic Forum's report 'Beyond sustainable procurement, research suggests a 15-30% measurable brand value increase which suggests a strong case for promoting efforts, so the business driver is pretty clear.

The behavior of companies and organizations can be scrutinized if their goals and intentions are not communicated clearly. The communication of sustainable procurement is vital to ensure a healthy return and positive momentum.



Dunckley explains: "Four years ago, we started measuring cardboard and paper-based products. Looking back, one of the things we got right was we centered the whole program on the UN SDGs. So, everything was centered around that in our reporting of vendor questionnaires, our code of conduct, the way we report back to clients, everything ends up back aligned around the UN SDG goals. We picked four specific SDGs that we felt were relevant. And then we measured what we did. So, the first time we did it, it was with one of the big banks that use a lot of paper, e.g., in direct mail, direct marketing.

"We started measuring the core paper types, and we would show savings, KPIs. We created an extra view that said, we've aligned to the goals, let's explain what the goals were. We then said we're measuring the four key metrics - water, energy, carbon, and paper and board. And then we just showed it graphically in a really simplistic way to make it real.

"We had a nice dashboard, one view, all the data was behind it, and it was accessible for them if they wanted it. And ultimately, it helped us illustrate that in the Q1 campaign we used x number of trees. And we would make it real using equivalencies, for example, x trees would be represented by a forest the size of this many football pitches, and we used this much water by showing the users it was the equivalent of x number of Olympic swimming pools."

Dunckley believes that telling a story from end to end, using real examples, making it digestible in bite-sized pieces and using simple dashboards to relay the information has worked very well for them to demonstrate impact to their customers.



DO: Approach sustainability as an investment

Building on Dunckley's point about marketing being a powerful business driver for sustainable procurement, Artemis Petridi suggests that sustainability is not a cost, it is an investment. Furthermore, both regulations and consumers are and will be demanding more and more sustainable products and practices.

It is therefore imperative to invest now and bridge the gap to be relevant for the future. Just like 20 years ago when the digital world started to kick-in, all companies had to get digitally savvy to survive, the same way today companies need to adapt their products and practices for sustainable growth.

DO: Provide specific sustainability training to procurement professionals

Providing training to each Procurement professional on the need for sustainability and its benefits is important. This will help procurement professionals as they can review case studies and best practices which they can apply in their own organizations.



There is a lot of information available online, many interesting videos and podcasts, and a growing number of courses and training providers, including CIPs who run a Sustainable Procurement programme as well as the ISO 20400 Sustainable Procurement Training Course.

DO NOT: Ignore needs of different stakeholders

Vince Michels suggests that those promoting sustainable procurement need to carefully consider who they are talking to when they are attempting to influence; "Yes, you want to be a champion, you want to be the advocate but on the other hand, you don't want to be the broken record within the organization. And so be flexible in the pitch and your ask. If the first pitch isn't working, get a different tune, Michels says.

"You may often see changes in the C-suite, just within this year, you know, companies started off the year going in this direction and quickly learned and moving in another direction - the world is constantly changing. So, it would be best if you had that agility because ultimately, this has to make sense for the company and whatever the company is doing. It's constantly evolving as well, and so will your ask."

DO: Find out about industry level initiatives

Depending on which industry an organization is, there will be category level initiatives that are offering thought leadership with specific problems.

Trey Maresca shares the example of "Together for Sustainability (TFS)", which is designed to aid chemical companies in assessing, auditing, and improving the sustainability practices within their global supply chains.

DO: Make it clear who is responsible for sustainable procurement initiatives

Royal Schiphol Group's Lovi Vervoorn suggests that it is important to know who is responsible but also enable teams to tackle specific problems; "make someone or a team responsible for the general sustainable procurement framework, but organize in a decentralized way as well."

DO NOT: Overreach and try to fix everything at once

Due to the size and scale of some globally distributed supply chains, prioritization will always be a challenge, especially because there will be large scale and embedded legacy procurement activity, where improvements take time to make. It is crucial to ensure that a large business with a vast supply chain moves slowly and produces consistent, sustainable gains, rather than addressing everything at once and increasing the risk of failure.

Alexis Ryan supports this view; "I think it's a case of pick your battles, win some, get some traction and then move forward as opposed to a 'let's fix everything tomorrow' approach."

DO: Use technology

Procurement technology is a fast-growing space. DPW has released one of the first holistic views of the procurement technology landscape.



There is an entire section that is focused on sustainability solutions for procurement organizations should investigate what can add value to their operations. However, support for sustainable practices can also be found in other technology areas; examples include using a contract management solution which can include eco-friendly clauses, adopting the use of a sourcing platform which will help to identify green suppliers, continuously monitoring suppliers for unethical operations or scoring the suppliers at onboarding to understand if the buyer and seller are aligned in values - the right technology will support all of this and much more.

Matthias Gutzmann, founder of DPW adds: "The time is right to adopt and scale the right technologies and innovations to drive corporate sustainability and for CPOs to seize the opportunity to increasingly become the solution for corporations to make themselves truly future proof and sustainable."



DO: Influence the sustainability objectives of the business strategy

Petridi suggests that companies like Procter & Gamble have two big challenges, and comments: "First, we were born way before sustainability became a challenge. Second, we are very large. We have to adjust our course and influence the course of the large supplier ecosystem that surrounds us. In order to overcome these difficulties, we have established a holistic sustainability strategy, which is true to the company's values, Ambition 2030. It is cascaded down to each brand in the form of concrete goals, like all other organizational performance factors. The Procurement discipline has a big role to play in helping shape this strategy. We are responsible for taking into account supply chain risks, opportunities to make a positive impact through our procurement choices, sustainable innovation alternatives."

DO NOT: Be prescriptive

Change management is important when it comes to adopting sustainable procurement practices, and this is built on a bedrock of preparation, gathering support, and supporting individuals and teams. What is perhaps less effective is to demand change or be entirely prescriptive without addressing crucial 'whys' along the way.



Oatly's Hussenbux has found that this approach doesn't lead to very positive results;

"I think we, sustainability professionals, shouldn't be prescriptive and dictate how we want sustainability to be embedded in an organization. I think that's the way to fail or end up with more resistance. Sustainability is change and change should be managed effectively. And most importantly, I believe in the power of collaboration and engagement. Sustainability is not a one man or woman job."

Conclusion

Sustainability has long been established as a vital element of corporate performance, and its importance has only become clearer with the economic, social, and environmental challenges facing the world. Procurement, due to the nature of the function, acts as a gatekeeper, scout, innovation hub, and owner of relationships with external parties - it is uniquely positioned to play a central role in driving sustainability in the entire organization.

Guidelines for those keen to progress sustainable procurement goals in their organization can be summarized as requiring businesses to adopt a strategic and transformative approach to their operations to achieve sustainability in procurement. At the same time, organizations must avoid the temptation to be drawn into using sustainability only as a tool to achieve lower costs or better customer outcomes.

Whilst this may be of benefit in the short term, as the sustainability challenges facing the world increase, organizations that fail to heed the call to achieve genuine sustainability performance will face more significant long-term problems. Thus, the core imperative for businesses is to act now to prepare for a future in which genuinely sustainable procurement will be vital to their survival and success.

With many thanks to our procurement and supply chain experts who generously shared thoughts and ideas.

About SPP: The Sustainable Procurement Pledge (SPP) is a pro-bono community of those committed to embedding sustainability in to their procurement practices - and sharing knowledge and tools of how to do so.

Website: spp.earth Get in touch: ambassador@spp.earth

About Craft: Craft is an enterprise intelligence company helping organizations make data-informed business decisions and track millions of companies in their supply chain. Clients, which include government agencies and Fortune 500 companies, use Craft's technology and data to build in-house analytics systems for supply chain intelligence and to monitor any company they are working with in real-time on the Craft intelligence portal.

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