

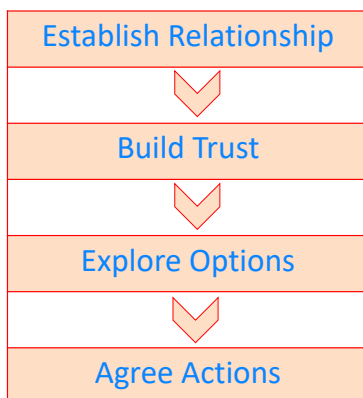
*Reflections on the journey towards excellence in Procurement and Supply Management*

## The Power of Listening

Procurement cannot operate successfully in isolation. A collaborative approach with stakeholders is essential to successfully meet the needs of an organisation. This short article reflects on how this can best be achieved.

### Personal Story

The first training course that I attended upon starting full-time work after university (over 40 years ago) was entitled “Influencing Skills”. Before the course, I had assumed that you needed to be assertive to influence effectively ... a somewhat daunting thought for an introvert! However, I was surprised and delighted to learn that “active listening” provided a much more successful way into an effective conversation. This means taking a genuine interest in what a stakeholder has to say and identifying “hooks” that enable building upon his/ her own priorities. By taking this approach, I learned that you could gain powerful “buy-in” and support for the mutually agreed way forward. This lesson stuck with me for the rest of my career ... more so than the learnings from any other training course!



### Effective Relationships

Another lesson that I learned over many years was to avoid the temptation to go straight into action. Taking such an approach is tactical versus strategic, and only results in incremental, rather than transformational, outcomes. Whilst it takes time to establish a good working relationship, the mutual trust that is then formed enables opportunities to be identified and strategic options to be explored that can bring about a step change in an organisation’s overall performance. Of course, short term pressures may mean that this is not always possible, but the default should always be to seek longer term optimisation.

### Stakeholder Roles

As well as identifying those stakeholders key to the success of a project or ongoing operations, being clear on the role that each of them plays is important to enable time effectiveness and positive outcomes. The “RACI” matrix is a sound approach to achieving this goal by clearly assigning responsibilities.

Role Distinction
R = Responsible
Those who do the work to complete the task
A = Accountable
The one ultimately answerable for the completion of the task
C = Consulted
Those whose opinions are sought, typically subject-matter experts
I = Informed
Those who are kept up-to-date on progress



Task	Stakeholder			
	Name 1	Name 2	Name 3	Name 4
	Role 1	Role 2	Role 3	Role 4
xxxxxx	A	R	C	I
yyyyyy	R	A	I	R
zzzzzz	I	I	R	A

Investing in building relationships with carefully prioritised stakeholders through an “active listening” approach is the key to powerfully unlocking value in any organisation.

If this article triggers an “aha moment” that you wish to discuss further, please contact:

Keith Crichton    Email: [keith.crichton@chainge.co.uk](mailto:keith.crichton@chainge.co.uk)    Tel: +44 (0) 20 7078 4120    Mobile: +44 (0) 7836 675589