



## How to Raise Procurement's Brand in Your Organisation [Hint: It Starts With You]

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Globalisation has changed business as we know it. The world is smaller, and technology and connectivity has given us the sense that sourcing anything from anywhere is imminently possible.

Despite this, procurement teams are often viewed as blockers to progress, slowing down customers in the name of process and compliance.

The modern procurement function demands a more strategic professional with a unique skillset required to deliver value. Yet demonstrating this value to the rest of the business remains a challenge.

Our research with Australian Procurement professionals revealed that building their brand within the business was a top challenge across the board. Download the full [Procurement Innovation Research Report](#) to read more on the state of innovation in procurement.

It's clear that Procurement must keep evolving and proving their value, and this all starts on the individual level, says **Chris Savage, a highly regarded brand and PR expert** and the former COO Australia's largest marketing and communications company.

Chris gave the Keynote address at [The Procurement Festival](#) in Sydney, where he inspired us raise the profile of procurement within our organisations by building our own personal brand. This article summarises his excellent presentation at the event – as he outlined 10 practical ways to elevate the status of procurement by building your own personal brand within your organisation.

### What Got You Here Won't Get You There

The simple fact is what got you to where you are in your career is a terrific platform, but it's not going to carry you for another 15-20 years until you're given a gold watch at your retirement party. We have to become brilliant at what I call change intelligence (CQ) the ability to adapt and change ourselves.

What is your change intelligence like? I personally hate change: I like to go to the same restaurant, at the same time, every Friday night, sitting in the same seat, ordering the same meals, because I like predictability. But don't be like me! If you're going to change the way procurement is viewed in your organisation, it needs to start with you and your personal brand.

So with that in mind, here are 10 simple ways you can work on your personal brand starting today:

#### 1. Begin with the End in Mind

One of the habits of highly successful people is that when they begin a project, they always visualise what it's going to be like at the end. They set a date and they write it down.

For example, if you said to yourself, "I want to get promoted by June," or "I really want to become an expert on blockchain," you need to begin with the end in mind. Document your outcome in a specific way e.g. "It's the 1st of December, I'm the acknowledged expert within my company on blockchain, and the CEO has just acknowledged it." Then make a long list of everything you need to do to get there, and do something every day to work towards this.

## **2. Become a Key Person of Influence**

What is it about you that makes you stand out? What perspective do you bring to the conversation?

Once you've answered those questions, develop some content around that. It could be a thought leadership piece within your organisation, or an article you can put in the company newsletter or website. Just think about how you can gently but firmly raise your profile.

I know that for some of you the idea of being a 'thought leader' doesn't sit easily and the majority won't do it. But if you get the opportunity to just gently raise your profile, I urge you to take it. LinkedIn is a wonderful distribution channel for this kind of content and a great way to create a little bit of buzz around what you are talking about.

## **3. The Nano Degree**

What I love about the idea of a nano degree is it's a small investment of time for a great payoff. Choose one thing that you need to know more about, to make you sharp and effective in your business right now e.g. an emerging technology or trend. Then all you have to do to get your nano degree is five hours of focus on that topic: read a blog, speak to an expert, go to a conference, read a magazine. Spend just five hours over the next four months to sharpen your expertise.

## **4. Networking**

I have always nurtured my network. Not for short-term gain. But because the most important thing to me in business has always been, and remains, relationships. Networking is not about going to cocktail parties and schmoozing, it's about giving people time, and then trying to assist them in some way.

I make time to keep connected with my main contacts: through coffees, hand-written notes, phone calls, my blog, or LinkedIn. I always give them time when they ask for it, and always try to 'pay it forward.' I try to build what I call 'goodwill equity', relationships where I have made an effort to contribute and make a difference somehow, in the hope that one day, should I or someone close to me ever need it, that this effort would be returned.

## **5. MICRophones (Most Important Client Referrers)**

Who are your MICRophones (Most Important Career Referrers), those mentors that look out for you and give you advice? There are probably only a couple, but keep talking to them about how you're doing and how you're trying to learn.

## **6. Keep Connected**

If you're working for a beer company, you need to understand the changing habits of beer consumption to keep yourself fresh and current. Step outside of your everyday and go to the Mardi Gras, or the Italian Film Festival, or even to the shops that you've never been to

before. Order something at a restaurant that you've never had before, read magazines on topics that you don't really have much interest in. Just keep connected to what's happening in the cultures that your companies are operating in.

## **7. Leverage Your Special Talents**

I love the work of Ken Robinson, if you haven't already watch his TED talk on [finding your element](#). Ken says all of us are in our jobs because we're good at certain things, some of those things we're good at we also LOVE doing! And when you do something that you're good at that you love doing, it energises you. And when you do something you're good at that you don't like doing, it depletes you. So his message is simple: focus on what it is you're good at that you love doing, and try and get better and better at that. You'll find that you'll get asked to do more and more of that, and your job will get filled up over time doing the stuff you love doing that you're good at, and then you'll be working in your element.

## **8. Know Your Tribe**

There are certain people that energise you, the ones that lift your spirits and make you feel that anything is possible. Who are those people for you? Make sure you see them often.

## **9. Be Optimistic**

Psychologist Martin Seligman's says that the happiest people in the world have three common characteristics:

1. They do what they love and what they're good at every day.
2. They do something for others without expecting anything back in return.
3. They have taught themselves to become what he calls "learned optimists".

This means when they get a setback, they are disappointed but they immediately shift their perspective to figure out "what can I do about it? What can I learn from it? And what can I do next to move forward?" Having this proactive but realistic spirit of optimism is the key to thriving in this marathon of careers we are currently living.

## **10. Take Deliberate Oxygen**

Just like the directive on aeroplanes to fit your own oxygen mask before others, it's important to take deliberate oxygen in your work life. If you're strong with oxygen, then you're going to have the strength and the clarity of mind to do the very best for the people around you that you want to serve. It's our responsibility to take care of ourselves.

## **A Final Thought**

I hope that you will embrace the opportunity you have in your role as procurement professionals to keep adding to your value proposition, pushing yourself to the front, innovating yourselves, and making your role as relevant and as powerful as you can so that it sees you through your career. You're in a great part of business, at the perfect time of transformation, to add huge value.

***Learn from the best of the best in procurement innovation at Procurement Innovation Festival. [Find out more here](#).***