

# 'The procurement conductor: Orchestrating success from intake to impact' — mastering the score of workflow harmony, stakeholder engagement and operational excellence

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## Abstract

*In today's dynamic business landscape, procurement leaders must evolve from transactional gatekeepers to strategic conductors of enterprise value. This paper explores how procurement can transform from a fragmented, reactive function into a harmonious, high-performing engine of operational excellence. By mastering workflow harmony, stakeholder engagement and process transparency, procurement leaders can drive agility, reduce friction and elevate supplier relationships. The paper positions the procurement intake process as the overture to a well-orchestrated symphony, where structure, trust and clarity set the tone for success. It emphasises the critical role of procurement leaders as conductors who align cross-functional teams, overcome silos and champion automation and collaboration. Through a strategic lens, it outlines the foundational pillars of effective orchestration, including end-user-centric design, benchmarking, risk management and documentation. Readers will gain insight into how to build a structured intake process, foster stakeholder alignment and leverage data to drive informed decisions. The paper also highlights the importance of setting clear expectations and creating a culture of accountability and transparency. Ultimately, it serves as a guide for procurement professionals seeking to elevate their function from backstage support to centre-stage leadership, where every intake request, approval and supplier engagement contributes to a seamless, impactful performance. The paper explores the essential elements of successful strategic procurement intake and orchestration, the leadership qualities required and the foundational pillars*

that drive efficiency and collaboration. The following key focus areas are discussed: 1) procurement intake and orchestration as a structured and trusted process; procurement leaders' function as conductors; 2) overcoming the challenges of siloed teams; 3) foundational pillars of successful procurement orchestration; 4) importance of an end-user-centric approach; 5) benchmarking and setting expectations; 6) utilising data and managing risks; 7) importance of documentation. This article is also included in **The Business & Management Collection** which can be accessed at <https://hstalks.com/business/>.

## Keywords

procurement transformation, intake process optimisation, workflow orchestration, stakeholder alignment, process transparency, strategic procurement leadership

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## INTRODUCTION

Is your procurement intake process a well-orchestrated symphony or a chaotic ensemble of misaligned teams, delays and inefficiencies? For many organisations, procurement orchestrations feel like herding cats, stakeholders operate in silos, approvals drag on and frustration builds. Fortunately, there is hope for improvement. The procurement intake and orchestration can become a streamlined, efficient and trusted process with the correct structure, thereby enhancing business agility and supplier relationships.

Let us start by viewing the procurement leader's role as the conductor of this complex workflow aligning internal teams, driving automation and ensuring transparency is key.

In today's volatile business environment, procurement leaders are no longer backstage performers, they are the conductors of enterprise value creation. The intake and orchestration process must evolve into a strategic function that enables speed, transparency and alignment across business units. As supply chains grow more complex and stakeholder expectations rise, the ability to conduct procurement like a well-rehearsed symphony is what separates

reactive organisations from agile, future-ready enterprises.

## PROCUREMENT INTAKE AND ORCHESTRATION SHOULD BE A STRUCTURED AND TRUSTED PROCESS

As a procurement leader, it is our role and goal to bring together people, processes and technology like instruments in an orchestra to deliver a seamless performance. Having a well-thought-out plan is beneficial for the seasoned and not-so-seasoned procurement leader.

Historically, the procurement role has been viewed as the gatekeeper, a term that can carry negative connotations and lead to resistance. After establishing the role as conductor, the focus should shift to becoming a strategic partner, someone who collaborates and not someone who is aiming to slow down the process. Building solid relationships does not happen overnight but can be established when efforts are intentional and consistent.

Research underscores a strategic imperative: procurement leaders must move beyond transactional execution and actively shape enterprise value

through deep stakeholder engagement, advanced analytics and clear alignment with business priorities. The following insights support this model.

### **Elevating procurement as a strategic business partner**

Top-performing procurement functions are viewed as strategic business partners, not just service providers. This distinction stems from proactive stakeholder engagement and foresight in supply risk management. Zycus's CPO Rising 2025 Report outlines the striking gap between average procurement teams and the top 20 per cent ('best-in-class').<sup>1</sup>

These teams distinguish themselves through:

- Collaborating with business units.
- Owning or co-owning strategic sourcing initiatives.
- Influencing supplier innovation.
- Playing a key role in environment, social and governance (ESG), compliance and risk governance.

Their success is not driven by tools alone, but by a cohesive blend of talent, process discipline and executive engagement. This positions them as trusted advisers also known as strategic partners who deliver value across cost control, risk mitigation, compliance and innovation.

### **Operationalising data-driven decision making**

Data is no longer a luxury, it is a necessity. Ramp's 2025 State of Procurement report reveals that 75 per cent of procurement leaders still struggle with manual processes, while over 90 per cent are actively seeking automation and real-time insights.<sup>2</sup>

Procurement analytics now plays a pivotal role in:

- Identifying cost reduction opportunities.
- Enabling real-time risk assessment.
- Tracking supplier performance and compliance.

These capabilities empower procurement to shift from reactive to proactive, enabling faster, smarter decisions that align with broader business goals.

### **The digital world class advantage**

According to Hackett, 'digital world class' procurement organisations provide higher-value services at a 25 per cent lower operational cost and enjoy a 2.5x return on investment over peers.<sup>3</sup> This performance edge stems from enhanced stakeholder engagement, supplier relationship management and technology enablement.

- Understand and communicate return on investment (ROI) tailored to the executive audience.
- Use digital tools to simplify, accelerate and elevate procurement delivery.

Their success is not driven by tools alone, but by a cohesive blend of talent, process discipline and executive engagement. This positions them as trusted advisers who deliver value across cost control, risk mitigation, compliance and innovation.

### **PROCUREMENT AS AN ENTERPRISE CONDUCTOR**

Once procurement is positioned as a strategic partner, the procurement leader such as the chief procurement officer (CPO) becomes the conductor

of enterprise value, ensuring harmony across intake, execution and performance. This orchestration requires:

- Cross-functional collaboration to eliminate silos.
- Clear governance and process alignment.
- A culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

By aligning the right people, processes and technologies, procurement leaders can transform their function into a competitive advantage — one that not only supports but drives enterprise success.

The role of procurement is evolving rapidly. Senior leaders who embrace orchestration through strategic alignment, data-driven insights and digital enablement will be best positioned to lead their organisations into the future. Those who fail to adapt risk being left behind in a landscape where agility, intelligence and integration are the new standards of excellence.

### **Procurement leaders function as conductors**

In the orchestration of procurement workflows, the procurement leader assumes the role of conductor. The procurement leader is an individual of influence. We are effective in what we do. Depending on the organisation, various members of this orchestra will include stakeholders from legal, risk, information security, procurement, accounting/finance and others. Embracing these partnerships requires careful consideration. Lack of alignment can throw off the entire workflow. Be sure to review which members should be included in the process and what role they will

play. Once the procurement leader has identified these members, they need to communicate the steps and expectations they have for this process.

Establishing strategic partnerships is essential. Each partner in this process has a specific role to play. As the procurement leader, you will lead the ensemble, bringing the strategic plan to life. Despite the diversity of roles, the ultimate goal is to transform a fragmented system into one that functions seamlessly. The role of the conductor is to create harmony and unity while maintaining focus on the end result. Being identified as a strategic partner is essential. With time, the key players will begin to trust the process, and in turn, they will begin to trust you. Everyone is looking to you for guidance and instructions.

Procurement orchestration is about more than routing requests. It is about shaping demand, influencing spend and ensuring every intake request aligns with enterprise goals. Senior leaders must drive a unified intake strategy that:

- Enhances visibility and control.
- Standardises intake channels.
- Prioritises high-value opportunities.
- Supports early engagement in business planning.

### **Strategic focus**

Position intake orchestration as a platform for innovation, not just process compliance.

### **Key leadership qualities for procurement excellence**

In today's dynamic business environment, procurement leaders must act as conductors, bringing together diverse stakeholders, aligning processes and orchestrating seamless execution (see



**FIGURE 1** The role of the procurement leader

Figure 1). To lead effectively, several core leadership qualities are essential.

#### Clear communication

At the heart of effective procurement leadership lies the ability to communicate with clarity and purpose. Leaders must translate complex procurement processes into actionable steps that resonate

with stakeholders across the organisation. Deloitte's 2023 Global Chief Procurement Officer Survey highlights that top-performing teams excel by clearly articulating procurement's strategic value and aligning their efforts with broader business objectives. This requires mastery of leadership, business partnering, change management, etc. — soft skills that are often underestimated

but critically important.<sup>4</sup> The survey shows how top-performing teams collaborate with stakeholders and suppliers to empower their teams to become 'orchestrators of value' to get everyone on the same page.

### Deep knowledge of procurement workflows

A strong grasp of procurement's who, what, when, why and how enables leaders to navigate challenges with confidence. While procurement roles are fluid and no two days are the same, establishing and maintaining consistent workflows, processes and procedures is vital. Staying current through certifications, continuing education, webinars, peer networking and industry publications ensures leaders remain informed and agile in the face of change.

### Preparation and organisation

A well-structured procurement strategy is the foundation for agility and efficiency. Disorganised or *ad hoc* processes can lead to bottlenecks and frustration. While speed is not the ultimate goal, having a functional, well-defined process ensures that procurement can respond effectively to business needs without sacrificing quality or compliance.

### Flexibility and humility

Adaptability is a hallmark of great leadership. Procurement leaders must be open to evolving business requirements and receptive to stakeholder feedback. Embracing new technologies and innovative approaches can significantly enhance process efficiency and effectiveness. Humility allows leaders to listen, learn and continuously improve.

Each of these qualities contributes to a cohesive and high-performing procurement function. When teams operate in silos, inefficiencies emerge that disrupt the intake process and hinder success. As the conductor, the procurement leader must align the right players in the right roles, fostering collaboration and shared purpose. This alignment is not just beneficial, it is essential for overcoming the challenges of a fragmented environment and driving long-term value.

Aligning the right players in the right role is needed to overcome the opportunities that come with having siloed teams.

## OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES OF SILOED TEAMS

### Driving alignment across enterprise

Effective orchestration requires procurement to align with stakeholders beyond its borders of executive leadership, finance, legal, risk, IT and business. This is an opportunity to:

- Co-create solutions that meet functional needs.
- Build enterprise-wide trust in procurement.
- Establish intake governance that streamlines approvals and eliminates redundancy.

### Strategy focus

Create a stakeholder map and communication cadence tailored to strategic business partners.

Managing various teams within the organisation, each operating in silos and viewing objectives through a different lens, is a common challenge

for procurement leaders. To address this challenge, it is crucial to consider the end-user's perspective. The intake process should be straightforward and user-friendly.

What opportunities have you identified within your organisation? Although silos are challenging, we can also view them as opportunities to address these gaps. Silos can affect the intake process and other business areas. Putting aside our differences and looking at the overall strategy of the company should be the main focus for all key players.

Often, the procurement leader or their team is not offered a seat at the table early enough, which is a disadvantage to both the procurement team and the organisation. Starting with sound relationships among the different departments is essential.

### **Case study: Johnson & Johnson – overcoming siloed procurement through centralisation and digital innovation<sup>5</sup>**

#### **Challenge**

As a large, multinational organisation, Johnson & Johnson historically operated with a highly decentralised procurement model. Each business unit and region maintained its own systems, tools and processes, leading to fragmented operations and limited visibility across the global supply chain. This structure created inefficiencies in supplier onboarding, inconsistent procurement practices and communication breakdowns between key internal teams such as legal, finance and supply chain.

#### **Approach**

To address these challenges, Johnson & Johnson launched a global procurement

transformation initiative aimed at unifying its sourcing strategy and improving cross-functional collaboration. A central component of this transformation was the move toward a centralised procurement model supported by advanced digital platforms.

#### **Key actions**

- *Centralised governance:* The company restructured its procurement organisation to operate under a unified global framework. This allowed for consistent policies, streamlined operations and improved strategic alignment across business units.
- *Technology integration:* Johnson & Johnson adopted cloud-based procurement technologies such as systems applications and products (SAP), which enabled end-to-end visibility of spend, contracts and supplier data. These tools allowed for real-time collaboration among procurement, finance and legal teams.
- *Process automation:* The company introduced workflow automation and process orchestration to reduce manual tasks, accelerate approvals and ensure compliance. This allowed employees to spend more time on strategic initiatives rather than administrative work.
- *Talent development:* Recognising that technology alone was not enough, Johnson & Johnson invested in procurement training and leadership development programmes to equip teams with the skills needed to operate in a more integrated and digital environment.

#### **Outcome**

By breaking down functional silos and unifying procurement processes, Johnson

& Johnson significantly improved operational efficiency and risk management. Procurement became a more strategic function within the organisation, delivering greater value to the business. The transformation also enhanced agility and resilience, especially during supply chain disruptions.

A good foundation is the starting point for the pillars of successful procurement orchestration.

### FOUNDATIONAL PILLARS OF SUCCESSFUL PROCUREMENT ORCHESTRATION

The framework for any procurement programme is only as strong as its foundation. In today's dynamic business environment, leading organisations are shifting from reactive procurement models to proactive, standardised approaches. The goal is simple: work smarter, not harder.

As highlighted in the FactWise article, '6 Benefits of Standardizing the Procurement Process', implementing consistent workflows and procedures enhances data integrity, accuracy, and oversight across all teams. For senior procurement leaders, this translates into more reliable decision-making, reduced operational risk, and improved cross-functional alignment.<sup>6</sup>

#### Strategic benefits of procurement process standardisation

1. *Increased efficiency* through streamlined intake, approval, and sourcing procedures.
2. *Improved accuracy* by eliminating variability and ambiguity in task execution.
3. *Enhanced collaboration* across departments, fostering shared accountability and transparency.

4. *Increased savings* through consistent application of sourcing strategies and supplier engagement.
5. *Stronger supplier management* enabled by unified performance tracking and relationship governance.
6. *Improved transparency and compliance*, supporting audit readiness and ethical procurement practices.

Standardisation ensures that all stakeholders follow the same processes, reducing delays caused by miscommunication or misaligned expectations. For senior leaders, it provides a scalable foundation for digital transformation, risk mitigation and long-term value creation.

### INTERNAL COLLABORATION

#### Fostering cross-functional teamwork to align objectives

The article found in *World Commerce and Contracting* entitled 'STOP, LOOK, and LISTEN Before Signing that Contract!' gives easy and practical ways to define each area's roles and responsibilities.<sup>7</sup>

- Functional alignment is essential for procurement success. Organisations that establish clear governance frameworks between stakeholders, procurement, legal, IT, risk and finance achieve a clear understanding of each area's roles and responsibilities.
  - The stakeholder seeks to fulfil business needs, which might include doing one or more of the following: mitigating the risk, improving the process, reducing expenses, knowing the applicable regulatory requirement, enhancing revenue opportunities, being strategic and innovative throughout all activities,

and drilling down to identify all specific business needs.

- Procurement helps the business unit operate within the third party vendor selection process, negotiates the terms and conditions of the contract and provides any additional support to the business unit throughout the contract life cycle.
- The legal team reviews the contract from a legal perspective and ensures the appropriate clauses exist within it.
- The third party risk team seeks to identify and mitigate potential residual and inherent risks by performing initial and ongoing risk assessments and due diligence reviews.
- The information security team reviews the supporting documentation as well as the third party vendor's ability to protect the organisation's proprietary information and non-public personal information (NPPI) provided by customers or business partners.

### External collaboration

Engaging suppliers and external partners effectively.

Strong supplier partnerships drive better procurement outcomes. Companies that enhance collaboration with suppliers through integrated procurement platforms achieve higher cost reductions due to optimised contract negotiations and an increased supplier performance matrix.

Gaining stakeholder buy-in is critical to the success of your procurement orchestration efforts.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF AN END-USER-CENTRIC APPROACH

The procurement process should prioritise efficiency without sacrificing

consistency. While different stakeholders view the procurement intake and orchestrating process through varied lenses, the ultimate goal remains the same: a seamless, efficient and user-friendly procurement experience.

A complex intake process leads to frustration, inefficiencies and bottlenecks. Organisations simplify intake workflows through automation, clear communication and role-based access. By prioritising simplicity and usability, procurement leaders can enhance stakeholder engagement, drive efficiency and ensure the orchestration process delivers real value to the business. Getting started is the first step to creating the ideal programme.

### Benchmarking and setting expectations

Benchmarking the current process is a good starting point. Acknowledging gaps and implementing tools with clear expectations is necessary.

Clearly defining expectations is essential. For example, a new employee in the marketing department who would like to onboard a preferred vendor from a previous organisation may not know the intake process. Without a clearly defined process, the end user may choose the easiest route, creating scenarios that best suit their needs and schedule. This is what we want to avoid: everyone doing their own thing because expectations have not been clearly defined. There are many moving parts within the organisation; therefore, procurement's role is not only to focus on cost control but also on streamlined and effective processes. The saying by Thomas Reid (see Figure 2) emphasises that a group or system is only as strong as its weakest part, and a failure in that part can cause the whole programme to fail.



**FIGURE 2** 'A chain is only as strong as its weakest link'

A weak procurement intake and orchestration framework can lead to chaos, frustration and turmoil.

### **Lack of transparency and consistency**

When the intake processes are opaque or applied inconsistently, this leads to confusion among stakeholders, reduces trust and increases the likelihood of errors or unethical practices. A McKinsey report highlights that procurement leaders are increasingly shifting toward digitisation and agile operating models to overcome inefficiencies. Figure 3 illustrates that strategy is in the centre. 'A successful procurement operating model coordinates multiple capabilities to enable, capture, and sustain value'.<sup>8</sup>

Lack of transparency and consistency can account for a significant portion of a company's total spend, leading to increased costs and compliance risks. Tail

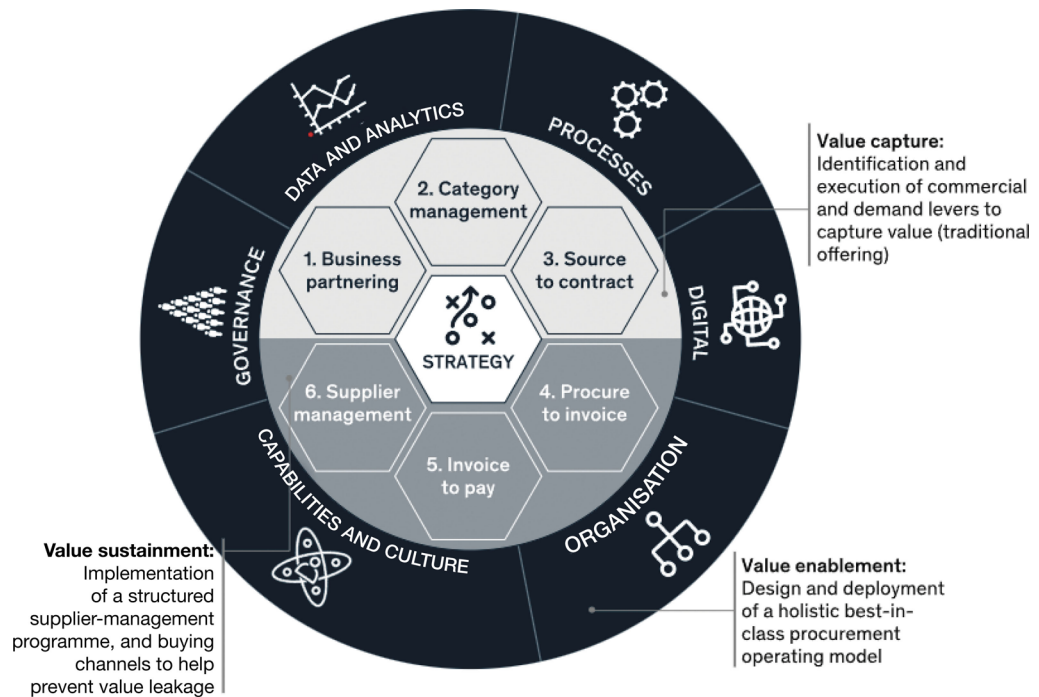
spend involves numerous low-value transactions that, collectively, can represent a substantial expenditure. Managing this spend effectively is crucial for overall cost control.

### **Turning challenges into opportunities**

The procurement team has an opportunity to address these challenges by implementing robust procurement strategies, leveraging technology for process automation, and fostering a culture of transparency and collaboration within the organisation. Utilise your existing resources as a foundational element.

### **Leveraging technology to amplify impact**

Modern orchestration is powered by intelligent workflows, automation and analytics. Senior leaders must champion the integration of platforms that:



**FIGURE 3** Successful procurement model  
Source: McKinsey & Co.

- Enable intake triage and categorisation.
- Automate repeatable tasks.
- Visualise workflow bottlenecks and value capture.
- Embed compliance by design.

### Key insight

Technology should be a conductor's baton, not a crutch. Use it to harmonise, not to replace human judgment.

### UTILISING DATA AND MANAGING RISKS

FasterCapital's blog shares how to use data to create a compelling story and narrative. Data plays a crucial role in demonstrating the effectiveness, or inefficiencies, of procurement intake and orchestration. To gain meaningful

insights and drive improvements, organisations should:<sup>9</sup>

- Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure success.
- Define and track service level agreements (SLAs) for accountability.
- Engage with internal stakeholders to gather feedback and align expectations.

By leveraging reports and dashboards, procurement teams can monitor these metrics in real time, providing transparency and measurable value across the organisation. Addressing concerns such as 'Where am I in this process?' and dispelling the perception of procurement as the 'Department of No' fosters trust, reduces frustration and enhances collaboration.

The procurement leader should work closely with the third party risk management team to review the various dimensions of risk that could potentially arise when engaging with various vendors. While ensuring there is a smooth intake process, we must also not overlook the risk component to these vendor relationships. The risk tolerance for your organisation will define how to track and monitor these areas.

### MANAGING RISK AND ENABLING COMPLIANCE

Every intake request is a potential risk exposure to third party, financial, reputational, operational, etc. Orchestration must integrate risk screening at the front end:

- Include automated due diligence for vendor requests.

- Route sensitive categories through enhanced risk review.
- Ensure alignment with ESG, diversity and sustainability goals.

### Strategic lens for the procurement leader

Use orchestration to surface risks early and embed controls that scale across the organisation (see Figure 4). These different dimensions of risk factors can be found within the World Commerce and Contracting article 'STOP, LOOK, and LISTEN Before Signing that Contract!'<sup>10</sup>

### Regulatory/compliance risk

- Regulatory requirements vary among industries. There may be instances where a potential third party vendor is not regulated by the same regulatory



FIGURE 4 Risks

agency, or not even regulated at all. To ensure your organisation is protected, include the appropriate legal terms and conditions within the contract to ensure that the third party vendor will comply with the regulatory requirements of your organisation.

### **Contractual risk**

- The procurement team should be engaged sooner rather than later. Executing an agreement without undertaking the proper intake process is ill advised. Pricing is important, but it is not the only factor to consider when negotiating a contract. You must determine the amounts and quantities.
- Request shorter or longer terms, inquire about upgrades, make sure the payment terms are feasible and determine any incentives available.

### **Financial risk**

- A thorough review and monitoring of the third party vendor's financial stability is highly recommended before you execute the contract, and a subject matter expert should perform this review during the ongoing monitoring process. The solvency of a vendor partnership can change at any time. This information is especially important for any mission-critical third party vendor relationships. If the third party becomes insolvent, what impact will it have on your organisation?

### **Operational risk**

- Consider what risks may result due to failed or inadequate performance caused by the third party vendor's employees, subcontractors or system

errors or breaches resulting from internal or external events. Consider the impact of technology, people, and the demands of regulatory requirements. Request a review of the business continuity plan and disaster recovery plan from the third party vendor.

- Based on the type of product or service, verify that a contract section exists that includes contract language regarding pandemics.

### **Transactional risk**

- Include SLAs and KPIs within the contract. Stakeholders should review the SLAs and KPIs to evaluate the performance of the third party vendor throughout the life cycle of the relationship.

### **Reputational risk**

- The third party risk team should conduct enhanced due diligence searches to identify if concerns exist regarding the third party vendor, such as negative news, alerts, branding, lawsuits, breaches, etc. Tools are available that can assist with automating real-time searches during the onboarding process and continuous monitoring.

### **Other risk factors to consider include**

- ESG risk.
- Four-party risk and Nth party risk.
- Geopolitical risk.

There will always be some form of risk that comes with third party vendor relationships, which is why organisations are strongly discouraged from treating each risk level equally. Executive management should clearly

define an organisation's tolerance for risk so the next steps can be determined. Policies and procedures will need to be developed to ensure compliance and accountability. Support is needed from the top down.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF DOCUMENTATION

Documentation of the procurement intake process is essential. Creating a one-stop landing place for stakeholders is beneficial. Implementing procurement orchestration tools such as Zip, ORO Labs, ServiceNow or Focal Point can assist. Fortunately, there are several excellent options available. Start with a sourcing project to identify which tool is best for your organisation. Many experts recommend that a procurement orchestration tool should incorporate an intake-to-pay feature for managing spending, approving contracts and making vendor payments. Furthermore, consider if the onboarding process includes a risk management piece and the ability to identify cost-saving opportunities.

Small, medium and large organisations all require procurement intake and orchestration. While there is no universally applicable solution, a range of solutions is available to meet the specific needs of your organisation.

### CASE STUDY: Enhancing procurement efficiency at Semrush

Semrush, a prominent software-as-a-service (SaaS) company, faced challenges with inefficient procurement intake processes. To address these issues, Semrush implemented an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered intake orchestration solution. This case study by

Tonkean offers a relatable example for procurement leaders on how to turn a challenge into an opportunity.<sup>11</sup>

#### Opportunity

Semrush identified and acknowledged where they were being challenged with prolonged cycle times and fragmented workflows.

#### Solution

Semrush realised they needed help in facilitating a better workflow process for all of their moving parts, so they collaborated with Tonkean.

#### Key results

This integration streamlined their procurement workflows, resulting in more efficient operations and improved stakeholder satisfaction. Semrush were able to make significant improvements in their cycle time, reducing it from 19 to ten days.

### Technology, when used correctly, enables higher-value work by streamlining processes

In enterprise functions such as procurement, AI and intake orchestration can reduce complexity and inefficiency. Many organisations fail to use technology effectively, however, especially in back-office operations.

Tonkean addresses this gap as an AI-powered intake orchestration platform, helping internal service teams such as procurement and legal to improve how they work. Rather than adding to tech overload, Tonkean enhances the use of existing tools and systems by coordinating processes and adapting to different workflows and preferences.

This process orchestration breaks down silos, eliminates the need for constant logins to legacy platforms and puts teams in control of their tech tools, allowing people to work smarter, not harder.

Semrush is a strong example: its procurement team struggled with disconnected systems and manual intake processes. Using Tonkean enabled the company to leverage seamless employee interaction through familiar tools such as Slack and e-mail while automating workflows across platforms such as Oracle and Ironclad. This led to smoother, more efficient procurement operations.

As a strategic partner, Semrush's procurement team became empowered by spending more time delivering more value as well as enhancing the overall experience for the internal stakeholders by making the process less complicated.

### MEASURING SUCCESS: KPIS THAT MATTER TO THE C-SUITE

Orchestration's true value is in the outcomes it enables. Beyond operational metrics, procurement leaders should report on:

- Cycle time reduction (percentage improvement in intake-to-contract time).
- Stakeholder satisfaction (net promoter score [NPS] or engagement survey results).
- Risk prevention (issues averted or escalated).
- Strategic sourcing impact (cost avoidance and value creation).

### Boardroom-ready KPI

'Procurement Cycle Efficiency Index' — a composite metric combining speed, compliance and impact.

### LEAD WITH VISION, NOT JUST PROCESS!

The information shared within this paper provides a strong foundation to build the framework for a successful procurement intake and orchestration workflow. The famous quote from Benjamin Franklin, 'If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail', serves as a good reminder that proper planning is essential in this process.

Procurement intake and orchestration should not be a bottleneck, it should be a strategic enabler for your organisation. Now is the time to assess your current processes, break down silos and implement a framework that fosters efficiency, collaboration and transparency (see Table 1).

The future of procurement is one of innovation, integration and strategic leadership. Will your organisation rise to the challenge? Start today by conducting a procurement orchestration assessment and leading the transformation toward a smarter, more agile procurement function (see Table 2).

Vision-driven procurement means:

- Aligning with business goals.
- Leading change and digital transformation.
- Using data for predictive, not just descriptive, insights.
- Building trust across stakeholders.
- Elevating procurement as a force for innovation.

### CONCLUSION

Procurement intake and orchestration need not be chaotic or overwhelming. When structured thoughtfully, these processes foster efficiency, reduce frustration and align stakeholders around shared goals. A trusted intake framework

**TABLE 1** Transform your procurement function today

<b>Step</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Key outcome</b>
<b>Evaluate</b>	Review your current procurement intake process	Identify inefficiencies, redundancies and gaps	Establish a baseline for improvement
<b>Engage</b>	Involve cross-functional stakeholders	Break down silos and improve alignment	Build a seamless, collaborative workflow
<b>Automate and analyse</b>	Implement automation and use data analytics	Streamline approvals, reduce cycle times and surface insights	Drive efficiency and cost savings
<b>Elevate</b>	Position procurement as a strategic enabler	Shift perception from gatekeeper to value partner	Enhance influence and business impact
<b>Lead the transformation</b>	Conduct a procurement orchestration assessment	Prioritise the next steps and roadmap future state	Build an agile, transparent and future-ready function

**TABLE 2** Mindset shift: tactical to strategic

<b>Old mindset</b>	<b>Strategic leader mindset</b>
Check-the-box compliance	Value-driven decision making
Reactive intake management	Proactive orchestration
Siloed communication	Cross-functional collaboration
Manual workflows	Automated, insight-led solutions
Gatekeeping	Business enabling

enhances visibility, consistency and compliance, laying the groundwork for strategic impact.

Procurement leaders today must embrace the role of conductor by collaborating across legal, risk, IT, finance and business units to bring strategic plans to life. Their success hinges on leadership qualities such as clear communication, deep operational insight and the ability to adapt with humility and precision. These attributes ensure that procurement not only functions smoothly but also drives enterprise-wide alignment.

A successful orchestration framework is built on five foundational pillars:

- integrated systems that streamline workflows;
- internal collaboration that breaks down silos;
- automation that accelerates execution;

- transparency that empowers end-users;
- external collaboration that strengthens supplier relationships.

Together, these elements create a resilient and responsive procurement ecosystem.

Equally important is the end-user-centric approach. When procurement processes are intuitive and accessible, engagement and compliance rise and frustration diminishes. Real-world examples and data underscore the value of these best practices, revealing measurable improvements in supplier onboarding, risk mitigation and stakeholder satisfaction.

This paper has shown that procurement, when conducted with intention and strategic foresight, becomes a transformative force. By reimagining intake and orchestration, leaders can elevate procurement from a support function to

a driver of enterprise agility, innovation and success.

As procurement leaders, our role is undergoing a profound transformation. We are no longer confined to managing transactions and enforcing compliance; we are emerging as strategic conductors, orchestrating enterprise-wide value and enabling business transformation. This paper has examined the critical components that underpin successful procurement intake and orchestration, from establishing structured, trusted processes to fostering cross-functional alignment and embracing data-driven decision making.

Effective orchestration demands more than operational efficiency, it requires leadership marked by clarity, agility and a deep understanding of stakeholder needs. When procurement functions as a strategic enabler, it not only accelerates execution but also strengthens compliance, mitigates risk and enhances business alignment. The integration of systems, the cultivation of stakeholder trust and the prioritisation of end-user experience are no longer optional, they are foundational to a mature, future-ready procurement function.

Now is the time for procurement leaders to challenge the status quo. By reimagining intake and orchestration as a strategic capability, we can shift perceptions, elevate our impact and guide our organisations toward greater agility and resilience. When procurement is conducted with purpose and precision, it becomes more than a business function — it becomes a catalyst for harmony, innovation and enterprise success.

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