

Results of the European Purchasing Skills Survey 2017

Purchasing & Supply Management (PSM) is changing. For this reason on behalf of project PERFECT PSM professionals were invited to participate in the survey. The goal of PERFECT is to align learning objectives in higher education with the PSM practice in organisations.

Survey facts

- Almost 600 PSM participants
- Total 250 question items
- What are you good at? Asking 88 skills items on 6 subjects:
 - Planning & Strategy
 - Organisational Structure
 - Process Organisation
 - Human Resources & Leadership
 - Controlling
 - Personal skills
- What is the focus of your success? Connecting skills to 7 PSM successes
 - Reducing costs
 - Improving quality
 - Improving delivery
 - Having access to suppliers' innovation
 - Obtaining long-term competitive advantage
 - Improving sustainable buying
 - Improving supplier satisfaction
- Professionals from three levels (junior, senior, executive)
- Professionals from three sectors (industry / service / public procurement)
- Equal spread over ages
- Overrepresentation of Netherlands: 68 % NL / 9% F / 7% D / 2% CH / 2% SF / 12 % rest

Survey results

	Skills that lead to purchasing success	DELIVERY	SUSTAINABILITY	SUPPL. SATISFACT.	LONGTERM COMP.	QUALITY	COSTS	INNOVATION	#
1	Technical knowledge of products and production systems	X			X	X	X	X	5
2	Cross-cultural Awareness Skills - The ability to become aware of cultural values		X			X		X	3
	Global Sourcing / Supplier Acquisition	X			X	X			3
	Innovation Implementation - Implementing suppliers innovations		X			X		X	3
	Solicit Offers (RfQ / RfP / RfI) Request for Quotation (RfQ) / Proposal (RfP)	X	X		X				3
3	Inventiveness - Being imaginativeness.					X		X	2
	Leadership - Managing employees in teams.			X			X		2
	Cost Reduction Techniques	X					X		2
	Negotiation the Specific Terms		X				X		2
	Project Management Skills	X	X						2
	Supplier Relationship Management	X		X					2
	Sustainable purchasing		X		X				2
	Working together with the department Research and Development	X				X			2
Working together with the Legal department		X			X			2	

Table 1 the top-14 PSM skills that lead to success

Disclaimer

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- Skills leading to purchasing success
 - In table 1 is shown the 14 skills are connected to the PSM success factors
 - 14 skills are connected to more than one PSM success factor
 - Another 30 skills are connected to one PSM success factor

- PSM professionals are ambivalent on the role of cost reductions and quality improvement.
 - The focus is first on 'quality' as the most important objective and second are costs reductions.
 - However, PSM professionals are better in reducing costs than in improving quality.

- Top-10 skills for juniors, seniors and executives
 - Soft-skills dominate the top-10 ranking of juniors and seniors PSM.
 - Executives mention experience and knowledge

What is your competence for this task?			
	junior cluster (n = 197)	senior cluster (n = 239)	executive cluster (n = 79)
1	Honesty	Honesty	Purchasing knowledge
2	Loyalty	Purchasing knowledge	Optimising of purchasing process
3	Learning motivation	Loyalty	Supplier relation management
4	Social manners	Conscientiousness	Request for Quotation
5	Conscientiousness	Proactive	Evaluate offers
6	Problem solving	Result driven	Negotiation
7	Proactive	Problem solving	Adding value with Purchasing
8	Customer orientation	Adding value with Purchasing	Position of purchasing in org
9	Purchasing knowledge	Customer orientation	Problem solving
10	Result driven	Advice skills	Supplier evaluation

Table 2 Top-10 skills for juniors, seniors and executives

- Six steps of project PERFECT
 1. Comparing PSM job ads with PSM literature and PSM learning objectives
 2. In-depth interviews with 46 PSM professionals on current and future skills
 3. Outcomes of the European Purchasing Skills Survey
 4. Delivery of learning objectives based upon what is needed in practice
 5. Launch: online skills tool for junior, seniors, executives in industry, service and public
 6. Starting an online introductory PSM course

Conclusions

- Results of this survey are not in line with PSM literature and PSM learning objectives
- Universities offer excellent book knowledge (know-what) and theory (know-why)
- Graduates need also know-how; a combination of experience and personal skills
- PSM curricula need to be updated in terms of content and teaching methods

Further information

- On www.project-perfect.eu the full report is available as a 'white paper'
- The first two white papers are available at www.project-perfect.eu
- To be updated in the future or for more information: info@project-perfect.eu