

Master Strategic Procurement for Supervisors: 2-Week Course

18 – 29 October 2027
Vienna

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Overview

Strategic Procurement for Supervisors starts from a simple fact: a purchasing supervisor spends most of the week chasing late requisitions, signing off quotations and answering why a delivery slipped. This two-week programme is written for that person: the one who runs a desk of buyers and must still find time to think beyond the next purchase order. Across two weeks participants learn to organise the team's workload, decide which purchases deserve a full tender and which a quick three-quote, coach buyers through negotiations, keep suppliers honest with simple scorecards, and report savings that finance will accept. Every session ends with a desk-level task the supervisor can take back to their own team the following week. This course is delivered by Agile Leaders Training Center.

Who Should Attend

- Newly promoted purchasing supervisors who now lead two to ten buyers
- Senior buyers acting as deputy or covering the supervisor's desk
- Stores and materials section heads who also approve purchase requests
- Site procurement leads on projects, plants or hospitals who sign local purchase orders
- Contract administrators who supervise vendor follow-up and invoice queries

Departments and Industries

Relevant for any team where a supervisor signs off purchases every day.

- Plant and maintenance purchasing in energy and utilities
- Government purchasing sections working to delegated approval limits
- Factory buying offices handling spares, consumables and raw materials
- Site purchasing on building and civil projects
- Hospital and pharmacy buying units
- Fleet and transport workshops buying parts and services

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Map the desk's workload by value, urgency and risk, assign it fairly across buyers and coach each buyer through one-to-ones.
- Set a clear threshold rule for when to use a direct order, a three-quote comparison or a formal tender.
- Run a buyer's pre-negotiation brief and challenge the lines of a supplier's price breakdown that do not add up.
- Keep a one-page scorecard for the ten suppliers that cause most of the desk's problems.
- Write a monthly desk report from the e-purchasing system showing cycle time, open orders and verified savings.
- Spot conflict-of-interest and split-order warning signs before audit does.

Course Agenda

Day 1: The Supervisor's Desk

- What changes when a buyer becomes a supervisor
- Where the desk's time actually goes: a one-week time log
- The requisition-to-payment cycle and its common bottlenecks
- Working with requesters, stores, finance and audit
- Setting the desk's first three improvement targets

Day 2: Planning the Buying Year

- Reading last year's orders to predict this year's demand
- Building a simple annual buying calendar
- Framework agreements and call-off orders for repeat items
- Delegated approval limits and who signs what
- Agreeing service expectations with internal requesters

Day 3: Choosing the Right Buying Route

- Direct order, three quotes, request for proposal or open tender
- Positioning purchases by value and supply risk on a four-box grid
- Writing specifications that do not favour one supplier
- Comparing quotations on more than headline price
- Exercise: route twelve real requisitions correctly

Day 4: Keeping Suppliers on Track

- Choosing four or five measures that matter: on-time, quality, invoice accuracy, response
- The monthly supplier review meeting and its agenda
- Handling repeated late deliveries without damaging the relationship
- When to develop a weak supplier and when to replace one
- Exercise: build a scorecard for one of your own suppliers

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Day 5: Contracts and Negotiation on the Desk

- Purchase order terms versus a full contract: what each protects
- Key clauses supervisors must check: delivery, warranty, penalties, termination
- Coaching a buyer to plan a negotiation: targets, walk-away and concessions
- Role-play: renegotiating a price increase letter
- Recording variations and change orders properly

Day 6: Cost and Savings That Stand Up

- Price, cost and lifetime cost: explaining the difference to requesters
- Asking for and reading a supplier's cost breakdown
- Standardising items to cut variety and stock
- Savings types: cost reduction, cost avoidance and their evidence
- Agreeing a savings method with the finance team

Day 7: Reports and Desk Metrics

- Pulling spend by supplier and item from the purchasing system
- Cleaning messy item descriptions and supplier names
- Five desk measures: cycle time, backlog, maverick spend, savings, supplier score
- Designing a one-page monthly report for management
- Exercise: build the report from a sample data file

Day 8: Controls, Ethics and Audit Readiness

- Red flags: split orders, repeated single-source awards, rushed urgent requests
- Conflict-of-interest declarations and gift registers
- A desk-level risk list for critical items and single suppliers
- Preparing files so any purchase can be explained to audit
- Case study: an order that failed an internal audit

Day 9: Using the Purchasing System Well

- Catalogues, punch-out and approval workflows
- Reducing manual re-keying and email chasing
- Electronic invoicing and three-way matching exceptions
- Where automation helps a small desk and where it does not
- Exercise: redesign one approval workflow

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Day 10: Leading the Buying Team

- One-to-ones, feedback and delegation for supervisors
- Building each buyer's skills plan
- Introducing a new procedure without losing the team
- Presenting the desk's results to senior management
- Personal 90-day action plan for the participant's own desk

Practical Exercises

These suggested activities use the course's ready-made desk tools on the participant's own purchasing data.

- Suggested activity: apply the buying-route decision sheet and its threshold rules to a month of real requisitions.
- Suggested activity: build a supplier scorecard and a monthly review agenda for one troublesome supplier.
- Suggested activity: complete a negotiation planning sheet with a buyer and log the agreed savings evidence for finance.
- Suggested activity: fill in the monthly desk report template and check one purchase file against the audit-ready checklist.

FAQs

What experience do participants need?

At least a year in a buying, stores or contracts role. Supervisory experience helps but is not required; many participants are about to step up.

How long is each session and how many hours in total?

Each day runs about 4 to 5 hours, giving 40 to 50 hours across the two weeks.

Why two weeks rather than five?

The second week is used for practice: participants build their own scorecard, report and 90-day plan using the templates, with trainer feedback each day.

Conclusion

The content is built around the supervisor's actual week: approving orders, balancing buyers' workloads, handling a late supplier and explaining numbers to finance. Participants finish with ready-to-use desk tools rather than theory alone, and a 90-day plan to put strategic procurement to work on their own desk.