



Procurement
People

‘BEHIND THE SUPPLY CHAIN CURTAIN’



‘Leadership within Procurement’



Volume 3

Join host **Will** as he sits down with **Christine Mack**, as they discuss Leadership within Procurement and the impact on both top-line growth and bottom-line optimization.



PRESENTED BY
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Q. Will: Can you give me a brief overview of your career journey and how you entered the field of procurement and supply chain?

A. Christine: My career journey has taken me across aerospace, retail, oil and gas, commercial, real estate and procurement consulting. I entered the field through a cooperative education placement at NASA while in college, which led to a full-time role after graduation. One of my early defining experiences was a rotational assignment in Moscow, transitioning from the Shuttle-Mir program to the International Space Station. That experience sparked my interest in global procurement. Throughout my career, I pursued lateral moves to deepen my procurement leadership and functional expertise, which positioned me for promotional opportunities to leadership roles and now as a Managing Director in the Supply Chain practice at Alvarez & Marsal in Houston, Texas.

Q. Will: What keeps you passionate about procurement?

A. Christine: Procurement's impact on both top-line growth and bottom-line optimization keeps me engaged. I enjoy working with stakeholders across business areas to help them achieve their goals. Sometimes, that means leveraging traditional procurement levers like strategic sourcing and contract negotiations; other times, it involves brainstorming business challenges and crafting innovative solutions. Procurement is a multi-dimensional profession rich in market intelligence, analytics, decision-making, and leadership—skills that are transferable across industries. Being an advisor to the business and contributing to revenue generation makes procurement exciting.

Q. Will: What has been the most significant milestone in your procurement career so far?

A. Christine: One of my most significant career milestones was my work during and after a national crisis. This crisis highlighted procurement's critical role in business decisions, from supplier delivery strategies to contract oversight. I worked with cross-functional teams, the government, and other key stakeholders while ensuring business continuity. Managing such a complex situation required careful supplier engagement, employee well-being considerations, and financial responsibility.

This experience also influenced how our organization recruited for key roles, shifting the focus towards critical thinking and problem-solving over company industry expertise. By emphasizing these skills, we opened multiple career paths for talented professionals. While this was an incredibly challenging time, it was also highly rewarding to see procurement drive meaningful change.



Q. Will: How do you align procurement strategies with overall business objectives?

A. Christine: Listening is the most important first step. Understanding what the business is trying to accomplish frames the procurement strategy. We then look at market trends, company-wide demand for similar products and services, and define the implementation—sourcing, negotiations, and other programmatic milestones—to achieve the desired business results.

Q. Will: How do you approach risk management, particularly with supplier relationships, and how do you future-proof the supply chain?

A. Christine: Risk management is a critical function of procurement. It starts with thorough supplier vetting to ensure they have the financial stability and credentials necessary to serve the business. We also continuously monitor the financial and operational health of key suppliers, especially those that are strategic, high-risk, or customer-facing. For critical suppliers, regular monitoring ensures we can anticipate and address issues before they become disruptions. When necessary, we establish contingency plans in collaboration with the business. I've leveraged both homegrown portals and third-party services to track supplier health. Effective risk management requires ongoing communication with stakeholders so they understand potential risks and mitigation strategies. Ultimately, the goal is to avoid reactive decision-making by proactively managing supplier relationships.



Q. Will: What key performance indicators (KPIs) and service level agreements (SLAs) do you consider essential for measuring procurement performance?

A. Christine: Procurement organizations typically track cost savings and avoidance, but that's not always the most relevant metric for business partners. Internally, we assess spend aggregation to drive competitive solutions and improve operational efficiencies. Preferred supplier compliance is also critical since these suppliers provide contractual protection, innovation, and regular performance reporting. Another key metric is diverse supplier spend improvement—understanding which suppliers have left or joined our ecosystem helps us drive targeted interventions to meet diversity spend goals. Additionally, we analyze the percentage of single-source versus competitive sourcing events to ensure we're continuously testing the market. Reverse auctions, while sometimes underutilized, can also be a powerful tool depending on organizational maturity. Finally, qualitative metrics like supplier performance scores help us manage supplier relationships effectively. KPIs should align with company and industry priorities, ensuring procurement delivers tangible value.

Q. Will: What technological advancements do you think are shaping the future of procurement?

A. Christine: Artificial intelligence is reshaping procurement, particularly in supplier searches, analytics, RFP crafting, contract redlining, and category planning. AI is enabling labor efficiencies and accelerating processes within e-sourcing tools.

In recent years, I've seen procurement technology suppliers integrate AI more deeply into their solutions. As AI continues to develop, it will shift the skill set required in procurement. Category managers, for example, will spend less time manually gathering industry information and more time interpreting insights and crafting strategies. AI will handle much of the fieldwork, allowing procurement professionals to focus on decision-making and execution.

Q. Will: What are the biggest challenges that procurement leaders face today, and how would you address them?

A. Christine: One of the biggest challenges we face is the ever-changing landscape of ESG and ensuring we have the right talent to support these demands. Companies have set environmental and social responsibility targets, requiring procurement to manage data collection, monitoring, and compliance.

With increased regulations, procurement must align with compliance functions to establish clear policies and expectations for suppliers. Managing supplier performance in ESG areas requires collaboration, problem-solving, and expertise in responsible sourcing. Additionally, securing investment for staffing and technology is critical to delivering sustainable procurement strategies.

Q. Will: How do you see the role of procurement and supply chain evolving over the next five to ten years?

A. Christine: Procurement professionals will need to enhance their change management skills alongside their core competencies. Too often, procurement value is not fully realized because change implementation is left to project teams or other functions.

In the future, procurement professionals must take a more active role in stakeholder engagement, communication planning, and execution. ESG will also become a more defined function within procurement, requiring specialized expertise. Additionally, procurement will play a key role in leveraging AI—not only for process automation but also to ensure supplier compliance and data security.



Q. Will: What advice would you give to the next generation of procurement professionals?

A. Christine: Stay curious and be ready to continuously learn and grow. Procurement is a dynamic field with opportunities in every business function, from operations to HR, legal, and business development. Developing transferable skills will open career paths, and education will be key to staying ahead. Gain exposure to different procurement areas and focus on where you can drive the biggest impact. Identify your unique strengths and cultivate them to remain adaptable and competitive in the evolving procurement landscape.

Q. Will: If you could change one thing about the procurement industry, what would it be?

A. Christine: More decision-making authority at the executive level with a closer review of procurement's return on investment. Procurement is integral to business strategy, supplier engagement, and risk management. However, organizations sometimes overlook the strategic value procurement brings. Elevating procurement's role in decision-making would enable businesses to maximize efficiency, compliance, and innovation.

Stay tuned for more insights from leaders like Hama Prado as we explore the ever-evolving world of supply chain and procurement.

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