

Procurement Trends 2026

Discover what's next for
procurement and how to stay
ahead in a changing world.

PT | Procurement
Tactics

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THE ROAD AHEAD: PROCUREMENT IN 2026

In 2026, procurement will face major digital shifts while also navigating global uncertainty and the changing needs of the workforce.

To help you prepare for 2026, the team of Procurement Tactics has identified 12 trends that will impact procurement. To help you easily navigate through these changes, we grouped them into three themes.

Let us first discuss the themes before we dive deep into the trends.

THEME 1

Ongoing AI Advancements and the Call for Responsible Use

Procurement is moving from being partly digital to fully digital, with AI driving the change.

New AI-powered procurement platforms are rapidly emerging. As a result, we will see AI tools supporting every stage of the procurement process. By 2026, agentic AI capable of acting and making decisions on its own will help procurement teams analyze data faster and automate more tasks.

While ongoing AI Advancements open new opportunities, they come hand in hand with new risks. How can we use these tools while staying in control as procurement? To answer this question, we will guide you through four key trends.

01 Explosive growth of AI-Powered Procurement Platforms

02 Procurement 5.0: AI across every step of the procurement process

03 From Generative AI to Agentic AI in Procurement

04 Growing importance of risk management in procurement

Continued on next page

THEME 2

Procurement's Emerging Role in a Shifting Global Landscape

In 2026, procurement will play a vital role in an increasingly shifting global landscape.

As geopolitical tensions escalate, the movement of essential materials and resources in the supply chain will continue to be a challenge, and tariffs continue to drive up the prices of many commodities.

Procurement professionals like us will be needed more than ever to mitigate disruptions and build resilience.

For Procurement professionals like us, it's essential to learn how to tackle challenges like these by applying the right tactics.

In theme two, we will explore exactly the needed tactics for responding to tariffs, ensuring a stable supply chain, leveraging our suppliers and staying compliant with evolving sustainability regulations as companies become more cautious about communicating their green initiatives.

05 Procurement takes charge in tackling tariffs and shortages

06 Focus shifts from globalization to regional resilience

07 Procurement advances from a support role to a growth engine

08 Suppliers as strategic innovation partners for procurement teams

09 Greenhushing persists despite new sustainability laws

Continued on next page

THEME 3

The Human Side of Procurement Transformation

Technology may evolve quickly, but people remain at the heart of procurement. As procurement professionals, we need to have the digital skills needed to drive change.

While internally, the demand for applied skills and visible savings is only growing, we will look at the human side of procurement through three important trends.

What skills will be required in procurement in 2026? How can we ensure the growth of procurement talents, and what can we expect from our leaders?

We will answer all these questions in theme three.

10 Digital literacy as the new talent benchmark

11 CPO leading teams in technology and organizational change

12 Results-focused upskilling will shape the next era of talent growth

Together, these three themes capture the shifts procurement professionals must be ready for in 2026. Let's dive into the 12 trends shaping the future of procurement, starting with theme one.

Theme 1:

Ongoing AI Advancements and the Call for Responsible Use

AI is no longer just an add-on in procurement; it is now driving the way teams work.

To explain what we see happening in 2026, we focus on four key procurement trends under this theme.

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Trend 1:

Explosive Growth of AI-Powered Procurement Platforms

Over the last couple of years, procurement professionals have been using generative AI mainly for personal productivity. However, as time has passed, we have started experimenting with how generative AI software can support our work in procurement, whether individually or across team functions. Now, we are seeing procurement platforms investing heavily to add AI to their existing software products, while also noticing the rapid rise of ProcureTech startups.

In 2026, we expect procurement platforms to grow exponentially compared to the previous years. These procurement platforms are no longer just convenient tools but are essential for procurement operations. As a result, companies will keep investing heavily in developing new and improved platforms.

In 2025, we see that the procurement software market had grown quickly, and is expected to climb to nearly \$9.8 billion by the end of the year, showing that more companies are ramping up their investments as they prepare for 2026. Market data shows that this growth is long-term.

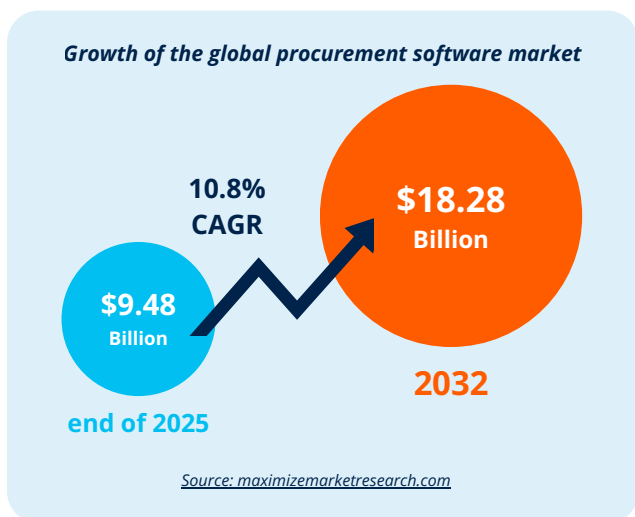
Fortune Business Insights expects it to rise to 18.28 billion dollars by 2032, while The Business Research Company forecasts a 12.9% annual growth rate through 2029.

Procurement platforms such as Coupa, SAP Ariba, Ivalua, Jaggaer, GEP SMART, Oracle Fusion Procurement, Basware, and Zycus have grown from niche solutions into vital systems for procurement teams of every size.

They are no longer just supporting software. These platforms now form the backbone of procurement operations, continuously improving through the use of AI to stay competitive and relevant.

Today's platforms cover almost every part of the procurement process. For example, Zycus is known as a world leader in GenAI-powered source-to-pay (S2P) solutions. Through its Merlin GenAI Suite, it empowers professionals by automating repetitive tasks, allowing them to focus on more strategic initiatives.

Another AI-powered procurement platform that covers the entire procurement process is GEP SMART. It is an AI-driven platform that streamlines sourcing, procurement, and supplier management through advanced analytics and automation.



Evolinq is transforming procurement automation with its AI-powered system that requires no complex setup or long onboarding. Its plug-and-play design enables organizations to unify procurement data from multiple sources.

Another one is Sudozi, which offers a strategic procurement platform that helps maximize profitability and minimize risk through smart workflows and real-time insights that streamline approvals and ensure compliance. Meanwhile, Omnea enhances procurement automation with AI-driven features that simplify purchase order creation, renewal management, and supplier risk assessment.

All signs point in the same direction. Procurement platforms are no longer just nice to have. They are now the backbone that helps organizations move faster, make smarter choices, and keep improving.

As more procurement platforms enter the market in 2026, procurement professionals like us should stay curious and learn which ones fit our organization best.

WHY THIS WILL SHAPE 2026

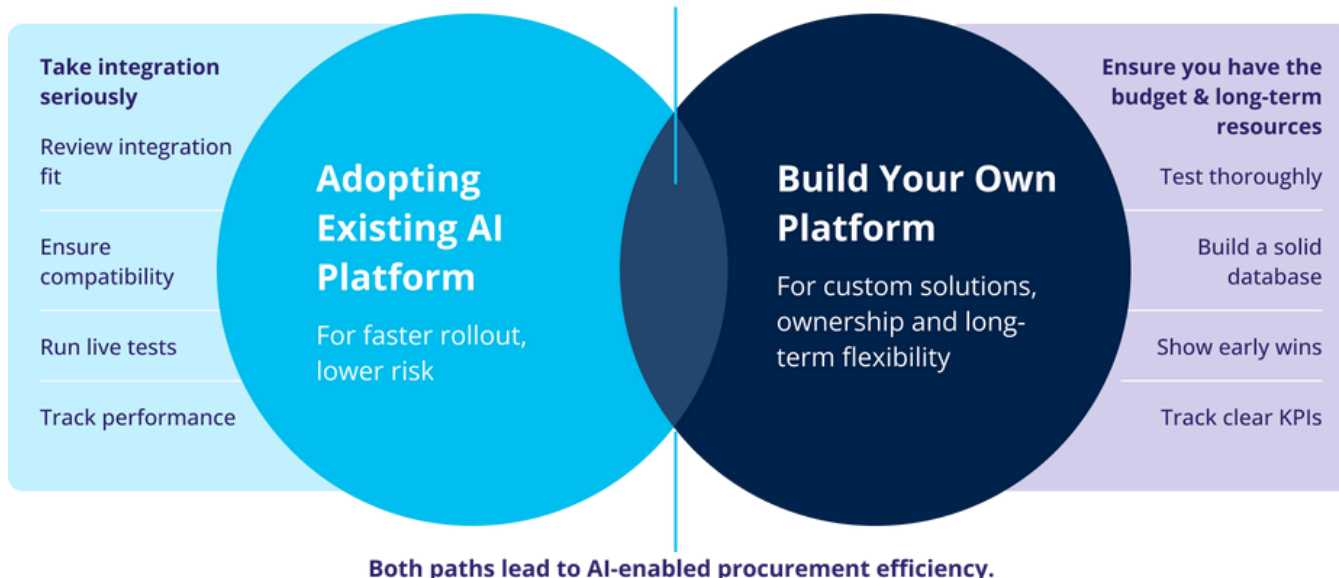
Procurement platforms are evolving faster than ever

So what does this mean for 2026? The way organizations that we work for adopt these tools is also changing. Instead of adding separate apps, many now use built-in platform features powered by GenAI, such as classification and copilots. Most procurement operations are also running in the cloud, allowing faster and safer rollouts across global teams.

Moreover, as more AI-powered procurement tools continue to emerge, procurement professionals must decide whether to buy an existing platform or build their own from scratch. It's important to determine which approach to take, as each will shape how these AI-powered platforms transform the way professionals like you work in procurement.

“All signs point in the same direction. Procurement platforms are no longer just nice to have.”

Leveraging AI in Procurement



ACTIONS YOU SHOULD TAKE

Deciding the right path for AI in Procurement

If your procurement teams want to shift to buying an AI-driven procurement software platform, it is important to take integration seriously. Then, check how well it fits with your current systems by reviewing its APIs, data contracts, access controls, and security standards. Make sure it connects smoothly with your tools and meets your data and compliance needs. Before a full rollout, test it in real situations like purchase order creation, invoice processing, and contract tracking. Measure how reliable it is and how fast it delivers value.

If you plan to build your own platform, ensure you have the budget and long-term resources to support it. Test it multiple times under different conditions before launching widely. A strong data foundation is key to credibility. Add AI where your data quality is strongest, but maintain solid governance. Keep humans involved for important decisions, keep audit trails unaltered, and prepare for issues. Think beyond the first use case and design for scale and resilience.

Trend 2:

Procurement 5.0: AI Across Every Step of The Procurement Process

Procurement 5.0 is where AI becomes a normal part of how procurement works.

It is no longer just about using digital tools, as artificial intelligence will soon be integrated into almost every process: from finding suppliers to managing contracts, AI supports nearly everything procurement teams do. This shift is no longer optional; it is the next natural step forward.

A [recent survey by The Hackett Group](#) found that 64% of procurement leaders expect AI and generative AI to reshape their roles in the next five years. The benefits are already clear. ProcureAbility, which is now part of the Jabil group, [reports](#) that 92% of procurement professionals are happy with the AI tools they use. Many apply AI to supplier discovery and selection, while others use it for spend analysis and categorization.

The advantages go beyond cutting costs since many also see progress in sustainability, better supplier management, and time savings.

In the 'actions you should take' part of this article, we will deep dive into tactics to implement to leverage AI in all the steps of your procurement process.

The adoption of AI in procurement is accelerating faster than expected. While negotiation and supplier relationship management (SRM) were traditionally human-led, ongoing AI advancements now mean these areas will increasingly be powered (not taken over fully yet!) by AI as well, driving a rapid transition toward Procurement 5.0.

40% Cost reduction brought by AI-powered negotiation techniques

64% Of procurement leaders expect AI and generative AI to reshape their roles in the next 5 years

92% of procurement professionals are happy with the AI tools they use

This new stage brings people and technology together. It combines human experience with AI, real-time data, and a stronger focus on sustainability. Modern platforms now give quick insights such as supplier risks, negotiation options, and compliance alerts right when they are needed.

All of this shows what Procurement 5.0 truly means: a future where AI powers every step of the procurement process. It helps teams move faster, expand supplier networks, and generate greater value for the business.

WHY THIS WILL SHAPE 2026

Procurement's full digital shift

By 2026, procurement is expected to be largely driven by AI. Digital assistants and advanced analytics will shape how sourcing, negotiations, and supplier management are done.

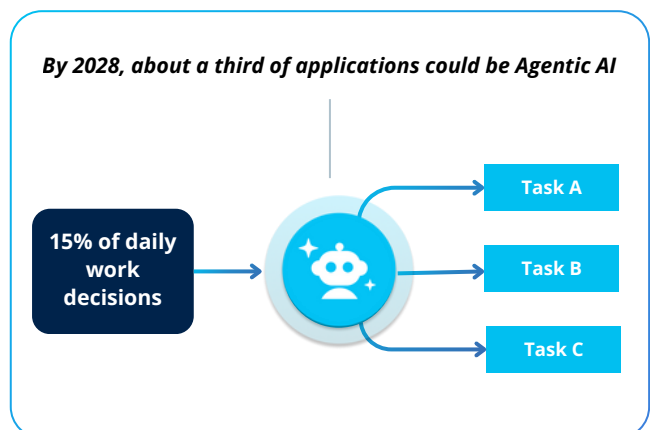
Traditional ways of working will no longer keep up with the pace of change. The **Hackett Group's 2025 Key Issues study** shows that executives believe AI will redefine both procurement roles and processes.

Companies that delay adoption

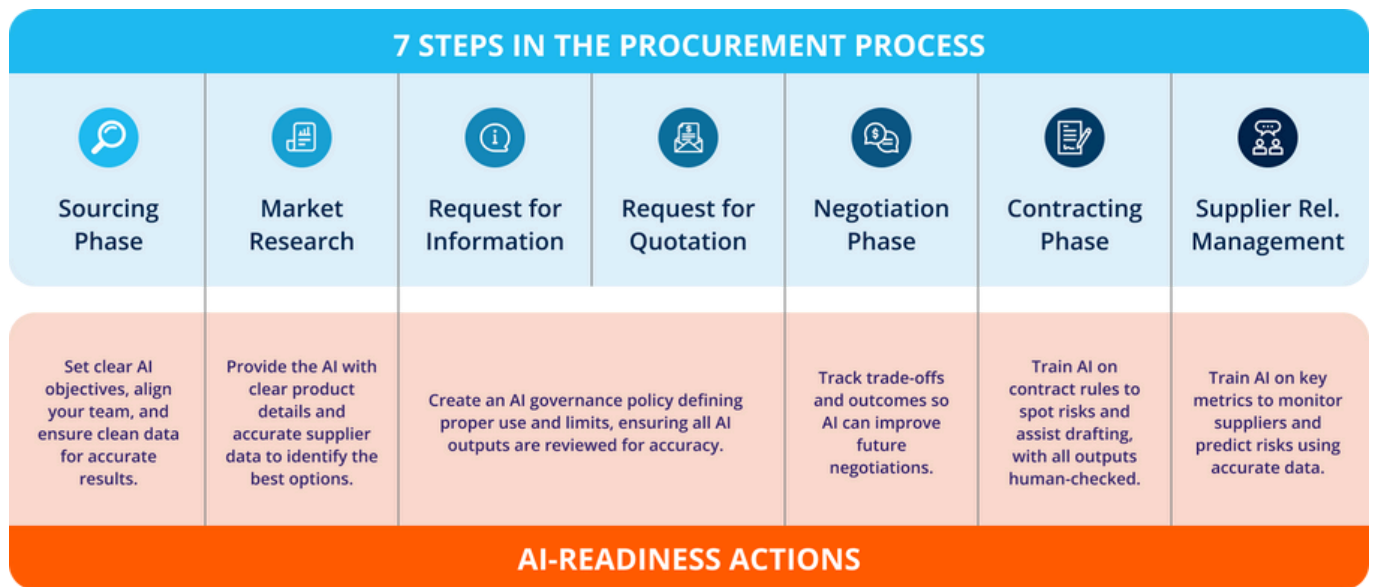
- risk falling behind competitors who use digital tools to speed up cycle times;
- gain better insights;
- and strengthen supplier relationships.

Gartner also notes that enterprise software is quickly moving toward what they call agentic AI. By 2028, they expect about a third of applications to include these intelligent features, which could allow around 15% of daily work decisions to happen automatically. For procurement, this means digital operating models are moving faster than ever.

A **recent case study** showed that AI-powered negotiation techniques helped cut costs by 40%. In the same case study, AI implementation not only saved costs but also brought remarkable improvements in how they work with suppliers. The technology reshaped basic supplier interactions into strategic partnerships. This created value for everyone throughout their procurement lifecycle.



All of these points point to one clear message. By 2026, most procurement activities will already have AI built into them. Procurement professionals who fail to adapt risk being left behind by those who are faster, more efficient, and more effective in using AI to improve their processes.



ACTIONS YOU SHOULD TAKE

Preparing Procurement for the AI-Driven Future

As a procurement professional, here are some tips to help you prepare your procurement process for the time when you'll start integrating AI into your operations.

STEP 1 : SOURCING PHASE

Let's start with the first step, which is the sourcing methodology. Since this serves as the foundation of the sourcing process, you'll need to set clear objectives for what you want to achieve with AI, supported by management. It's also important to make sure everyone on your team understands how AI will be used in your sourcing approach. Once everyone is aligned, make sure that all data used in every analysis, whether financial, market, or contract, is clean and accurate, because if it's not, the AI will produce incorrect insights.

STEP 2 : MARKET RESEARCH

For the next step, which is market research, you need to prepare by helping the AI understand what products you are sourcing. You should also provide it with accurate historical and current data about your past, existing, and potential suppliers. This information is essential to help the AI identify which suppliers are best to evaluate and screen.

STEP 3 : REQUEST FOR INFORMATION & STEP 4 : REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

To prepare both the RFI and RFQ phases for AI, you need to have an AI governance policy that outlines how AI can be used and what its limitations are during these stages. For example, in the RFI phase, AI can draft emails or purchase orders, but a procurement professional should review them before they are sent to ensure accuracy. In the RFQ phase, AI can assist in analyzing prices, but a procurement professional must first verify that the data being used for analysis is correct.

STEP 5 : NEGOTIATION PHASE

Now, for the negotiation phase, you can prepare AI by keeping detailed records of all trade-offs made and which arguments proved successful. This will allow AI to analyze past negotiation outcomes and develop strategies that can support you in future negotiations.

STEP 6 : CONTRACTING PHASE

Next, you can prepare your contract phase for AI by training it on your existing rules and standards so it can help identify potential risks, liability issues, non-standard terms, and compliance gaps that might be overlooked in manual reviews. You can also use AI to assist in drafting and reviewing contracts, but it's important to set clear guidelines for your team on its limitations. For example, after AI drafts a contract, your team should carefully review it to ensure all clauses and agreed terms with suppliers are accurately included.

STEP 7 : SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Lastly, to prepare the supplier relationship management phase for AI, you need to train it on your key metrics so it can quickly identify which suppliers are meeting contract requirements and which ones are underperforming. You can also use AI to analyze communication patterns and market conditions to predict changes in supplier capabilities, as well as to review sales records, market trends, and external factors. However, it's crucial that all data provided is accurate and aligned with your records, since even a small error in the numbers can lead to costly mistakes.

“Traditional ways of working will no longer keep up with the pace of change.”

Trend 3:

From Generative AI to Agentic AI in Procurement

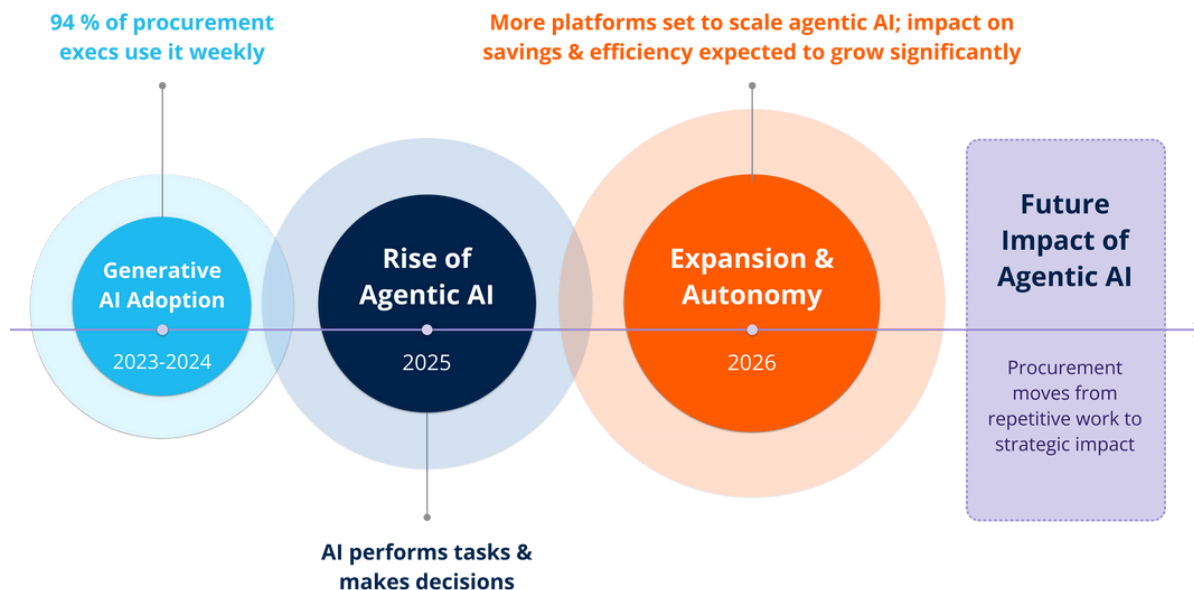
Generative AI remains a major force in procurement. Research from [AI at Wharton](#) shows that weekly use of generative AI in purchasing and procurement jumped by 44% between 2023 and 2024, with 94% of procurement executives now using it at least once a week. The same study revealed that 72% of companies plan to increase their generative AI budgets in 2025, confirming its continued dominance in the market.

Yet AI is evolving quickly. Generative AI continues to play a major role in procurement, but many platforms are now starting to test Agentic AI. Unlike generative AI, these systems are designed to operate with minimal human guidance, setting objectives and carrying them out through step-by-step reasoning that mimics how people solve problems. [Zycus founder and CEO Aatish Dedhia](#) described 2025 as the beginning of the agentic AI era, not only for procurement but across all industries. He envisions a future where procurement can run autonomously, completing in a single day what used to take an entire month.

By 2026, agentic AI is expected to expand even further. Industry leaders such as Zycus, Coupa, Zip, and Tonkean have already introduced solutions powered by agentic AI, and more platforms are set to follow.

This shift will enable procurement professionals to move away from repetitive work and focus on higher-value goals, becoming true strategic partners to the business and its suppliers.





WHY THIS WILL SHAPE 2026

Agentic AI : The Next Leap in Procurement

As leading procurement platforms continue experimenting with agentic AI, 2026 will be a year when the conversation around its impact grows even louder. **Research by HFS** shows that AI-driven sourcing already delivers 20% cost savings, making it one of the lowest-risk, highest-reward applications of AI for enterprises. Agentic AI, as a more advanced form, is expected to push these benefits even further.

According to **Zycus**, one enterprise unlocked \$25.5M in hidden savings through agentic AI, particularly from unmanaged tail spend. It also found that autonomous agents can reduce cycle times by up to 50% and increase savings capture by 12-15%. With numbers like these, the opportunities ahead are clear.

In 2026, procurement professionals must be ready to learn, test, and adapt to agentic AI, as its benefits will continue to dominate industry discussions.

ACTIONS YOU SHOULD TAKE

Preparing Your Team And Systems For Agentic AI

So, how can procurement professionals like you keep pace with the rise of agentic AI? And how can you ensure it becomes an integral part of your systems, your people, and your everyday processes?

- 1 Start small
- 2 Set clear operating rules
- 3 Prepare for shifting roles

Step 1: Start Small

The first step is to start small. Think of how generative AI adoption played out. A [Hackett report](#) found that nearly half of procurement teams piloted generative AI in 2024, but only 4% managed to scale it widely. The lesson here is that adoption takes patience and structure. Start by identifying one or two processes that could benefit from automation, such as supplier onboarding or invoice matching. Test them in small pilots, gather feedback from your team, and refine your workflows before expanding further. This steady approach helps you build confidence and avoid big mistakes early on.

As AI takes on routine work, people will move toward more strategic and analytical tasks.

Step 2: Set Clear Operating Rules

The second step is to set clear operating rules. Agentic AI can work independently, but it still needs guidance. Governance becomes even more important when systems start making decisions on their own. Define who is accountable when something goes wrong, what actions need human review, and how exceptions are handled. You can set up dashboards or trackers to keep an eye on audit trails so the team can spot and fix issues quickly. This is how you make sure the technology stays transparent and aligned with your standards.

Step 3: Prepare for Shifting Roles

The third step is to prepare for shifting roles. As AI takes on routine work, people will move toward more strategic and analytical tasks. Instead of manually checking supplier data, teams can focus on interpreting insights, improving supplier relationships, or ensuring compliance. To make this shift smooth, provide short training sessions that show how to read, question, and validate AI outputs. Encourage your team to share what works and what doesn't, so everyone learns together.

Some team members may even move into new roles focused on improving algorithms or linking AI results to business goals. These changes are easiest when people understand how their work fits into the bigger picture. Keep the communication open, redefine responsibilities gradually, and celebrate small wins along the way. This makes the transition feel like growth, not disruption.

Make the transition feel like growth, not a disruption. Make sure to:



Keep communication open



Redefine responsibilities gradually



Celebrate small wins along the way

Trend 4:

Growing Importance of Risk Management in AI Adoption

AI is transforming procurement as it reshapes the entire business landscape.

AI is reshaping procurement and the wider business landscape. But it also brings new risks such as bias, data leaks, model errors, and compliance gaps that organizations must address as they integrate AI-driven procurement platforms. Because of this, governance can no longer be treated as just another layer of protection. Procurement leaders now see it as essential to keeping AI reliable, ethical, and aligned with overall business goals.

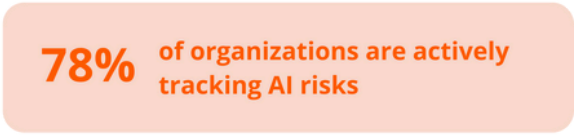
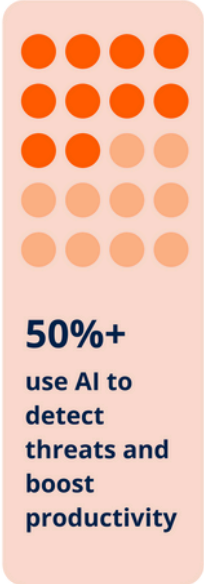
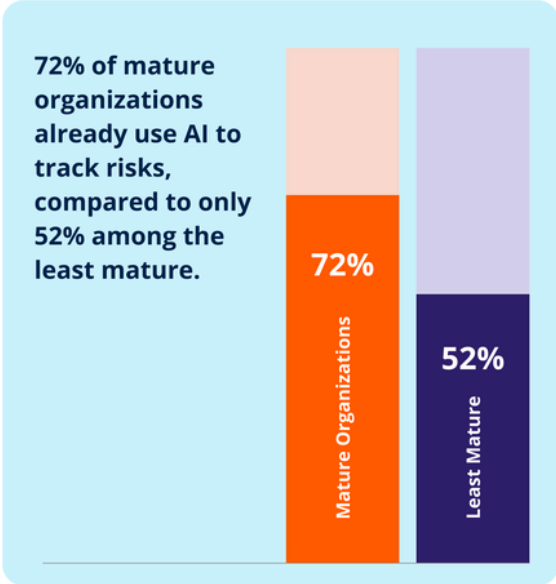
When organizations build AI programs with transparency, accountability, and human oversight, they gain real value while keeping risks under control. Without this structure, mistakes and reputational damage can follow quickly. An [AuditBoard survey](#) of over 400 GRC professionals shows that 72% of mature organizations already use AI to track risks, compared to only 52% among the least mature.

According to [OneTrust's 2025 AI-Ready Governance report](#), organizations are spending 37% more time managing AI risk than last year, while 73% say AI has revealed gaps in visibility, collaboration, and policy enforcement. This highlights how traditional oversight frameworks are struggling to keep up with AI's rapid growth.

The shift toward stronger governance is already underway. [Research from AuditBoard](#) shows that over half of organizations use AI to improve productivity and detect threats, while 78% are actively tracking AI risks. Most are integrating this oversight into existing risk teams and frameworks, showing that AI governance is becoming part of standard operations.

Additionally, a joint [IAPP and EY report](#) found that most organizations are now building AI governance structures, especially those already using AI. In procurement, this means setting clear rules for data use, model validation, vendor risk management, and decision-making authority when human judgment is required.

Governance can no longer be treated as just another layer of protection



These reports confirm that risk management in procurement platforms will be a top priority in 2026 for most companies.

They also show that the real advantage will not come from adopting AI the fastest, but from managing it the most effectively. Organizations that combine innovation with disciplined governance will lead the way, turning AI from a risk into a lasting competitive strength.

WHY THIS WILL SHAPE 2026

The Growing Need for Effective AI Governance in Procurement

As AI continues to be integrated across all areas of business, the risks associated with it are also increasing. Deborah Dull of the Circular Supply Chain Network noted that over 90% of procurement executives now use generative AI at least once a week. And that is just GenAI tools, not including the AI-powered procurement platforms that many leaders are integrating into their systems. Because of this, mitigating AI-related risks will become a top priority for procurement leaders in 2026 to prevent data breaches, leaks, and biases within their operations.

This focus on AI risk management will become even more important as the EU AI Act takes full effect. The Act enforces bans on prohibited uses starting February 2, 2025, introduces general-purpose AI (GPAI) obligations in August 2025, and activates the high-risk framework on August 2, 2026. The European Commission has confirmed that there will be no delay, turning AI risk management from optional to mandatory.

The **World Economic Forum** points to a clear shift in how organizations are being evaluated. Investors now place higher value on companies with strong and transparent AI governance, viewing them as more reliable and future-ready. In the public sector, procurement teams in government and critical industries are beginning to require compliance certifications before partnerships or contracts. This move goes beyond meeting regulatory requirements. It reflects a wider effort to ensure that AI systems protect human rights, promote ethical business practices, and support global sustainability goals. At the same time, certification helps governments align technical standards across borders, reduce fragmentation, and encourage smoother international AI trade.

These developments show that in 2026, capability rather than experimentation will separate the winners from the rest.

Companies with strong governance will be more resilient and trusted than those without. Success in the AI era will depend not only on how quickly organizations adopt AI but also on how effectively they manage and control it.

ACTIONS YOU SHOULD TAKE

Establishing Clear AI Governance for Procurement Teams

As AI becomes more integrated into procurement, governance needs to move from theory to practice. The goal you need to set as a procurement leader is not only to ensure compliance but to create systems that are transparent, reliable, and easy to explain. It starts with strong leadership. Form a cross-functional governance team that includes procurement, legal, risk, data, and IT. Clearly define who is responsible for approvals, documentation, and oversight so that every AI decision can be tracked and justified.

Goal of procurement leaders



Mapping AI Models, Agents and Vendor Tools in Use

Assign clear ownership for each and group them by risk level, using the EU AI Act as a guide where applicable. No tool should go live without a proper assessment and formal approval.

Data Quality and Protection

Data quality and protection come next. Standardize key data elements such as supplier IDs, taxonomies, and data lineage. Apply strict controls for access, privacy, and storage. Maintaining a centralized registry of suppliers and datasets helps prevent data leaks and makes risk reviews faster and more accurate.

Keep a Detailed Report

For AI systems already in operation, keep a detailed record that includes model cards, evaluation reports, and change logs. Require peer reviews before updates are released. Define when human intervention is necessary, such as during high-value contract awards or supplier exclusions, and make sure escalation paths are clear.

Monitoring

Monitoring is just as important as control. Track bias, performance consistency, and key metrics such as override rates or response accuracy. Keep auditable logs of prompts and outputs. Vendor contracts should also evolve to reflect new governance standards, with clauses on transparency, data handling, update frequency, incident response, and audit rights.

By adopting a governance-first approach, organizations in 2026 can stay compliant while building trust, accountability, and long-term confidence in the way AI supports procurement.

Theme 2:

Procurement's Emerging Role in a Shifting Global Landscape

Procurement is taking on a bigger role as global pressures continue to persist

In 2026, shortages, tariffs, and trade disputes will keep supply chains under strain, while suppliers are increasingly being recognized as true partners. At the same time, sustainability remains under pressure with the rise of greenhushing. These are the five trends we see shaping the role of the procurement function in today's global environment.

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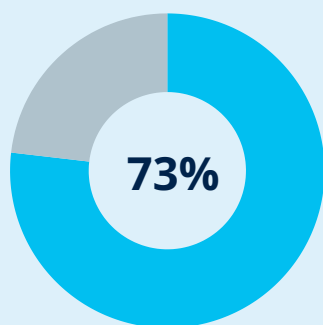
Trend 5:

Procurement Takes Charge in Tackling Tariffs and Shortages

In 2025, procurement professionals like us were dealing with both ongoing and newly emerging disruptions. Conflicts that began years ago, such as the war in Ukraine and the fighting in Gaza, remain unresolved and continue to create instability. At the same time, new challenges are unfolding, including renewed US tariffs under the Trump administration and growing military activity in critical shipping routes.

A recent [report by Ivalua](#) found that nearly three-quarters (73%) of UK businesses expect geopolitical risk to intensify over the next year. 62% said their supply chains are not prepared to handle the volatility. Confidence is being tested, with 77% of leaders citing the war in Ukraine as the most damaging, followed by US tariffs (75%), military disruptions in major trade corridors (73%), tensions between China and Taiwan (62%), and the conflict in Gaza (58%).

Geopolitical risks intensifies



Nearly three-quarters of UK businesses expect geopolitical risk to intensify over the next year according to a recent report by Ivalua.

62% Said their supply chains are not prepared to handle volatility

The impact is already visible. 26% of businesses report that geopolitical uncertainty is squeezing profitability, while 23% have passed higher costs on to customers. Commodity markets are also feeling the strain, with rising prices for essentials and reduced shipping volumes that are creating shortages across multiple sectors.

Procurement professionals now face the challenge of moving beyond short-term crisis management. Success in this environment requires foresight, adaptability, and stronger risk-mitigation strategies.

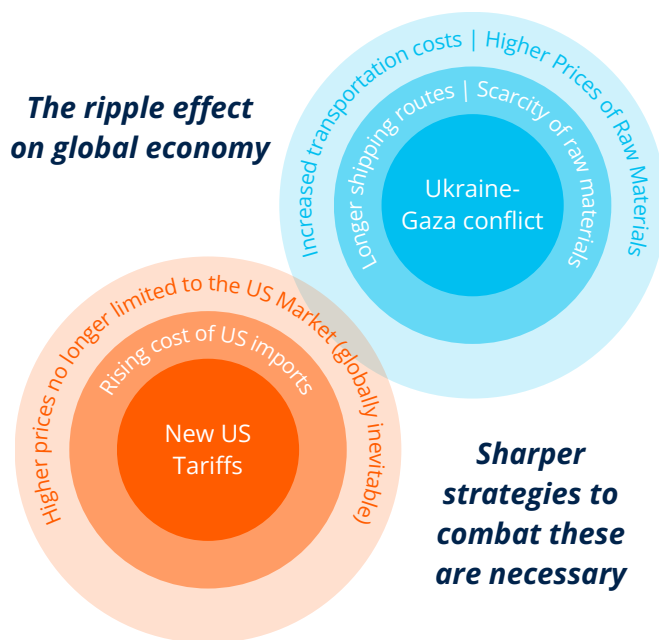
Diversifying supply bases, strengthening supplier relationships, and working closely with business leaders will be essential. Those who can anticipate disruptions and adapt quickly will not only protect their organizations but also reinforce procurement’s role as a strategic partner for long-term stability and growth.

WHY THIS WILL SHAPE 2026

The Unavoidable Ripple Effects in 2026

The conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza remain unresolved, forcing many companies to take longer shipping routes to move essential commodities. At the same time, critical raw materials from these regions are growing scarce, driving prices higher as the wars continue to damage local industries, livelihoods, and trade. These disruptions are not new. Businesses already felt their impact last year, and the effects are only intensifying.

Adding to the strain is the ongoing US-China trade war, compounded by new US tariffs on a wide range of countries. In July 2025, President Trump signed an executive order that reshaped reciprocal tariff rates. Effective from August 7, the policy introduced a baseline tariff of 10% on US imports and allowed rates to climb as high as 50% for countries with large trade deficits with the United States. This shift means that rising costs are no longer limited to the US market. Higher prices are now inevitable for many nations and industries worldwide.



The ripple effect on the global economy is already being measured. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, as tariffs ripple through supply chains and labor markets while reshaping consumer behavior, global growth is expected to slow to 2.9% in 2026.

For procurement professionals, this environment demands sharper strategies. They will need to anticipate cost pressures, manage supplier risks, and adapt sourcing plans to navigate a year marked by uncertainty and economic headwinds.

ACTIONS YOU SHOULD TAKE

Three Paths to Minimize Impact of Tariffs and Shortages

With wars dragging on and tariffs changing almost randomly, we can't afford to just wait and see what happens next. The Trump administration's tariff changes have shown how quickly costs can rise, forcing organizations to adapt in real time. Unless you are a massive corporation with the resources to build factories in the US and absorb higher labor costs, or you were fortunate enough to import large volumes of commodities before the tariffs took effect, you need to be more strategic in how you source, design, and negotiate.

OPTION 1: Diversify Your Supplier base

The first option you can take is to diversify your supplier base. Depending too heavily on one country exposes your organization to major risks when tariffs or conflicts erupt. Instead of following the traditional "China-plus-one" model, more companies are expanding into Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, or even sourcing closer to home.

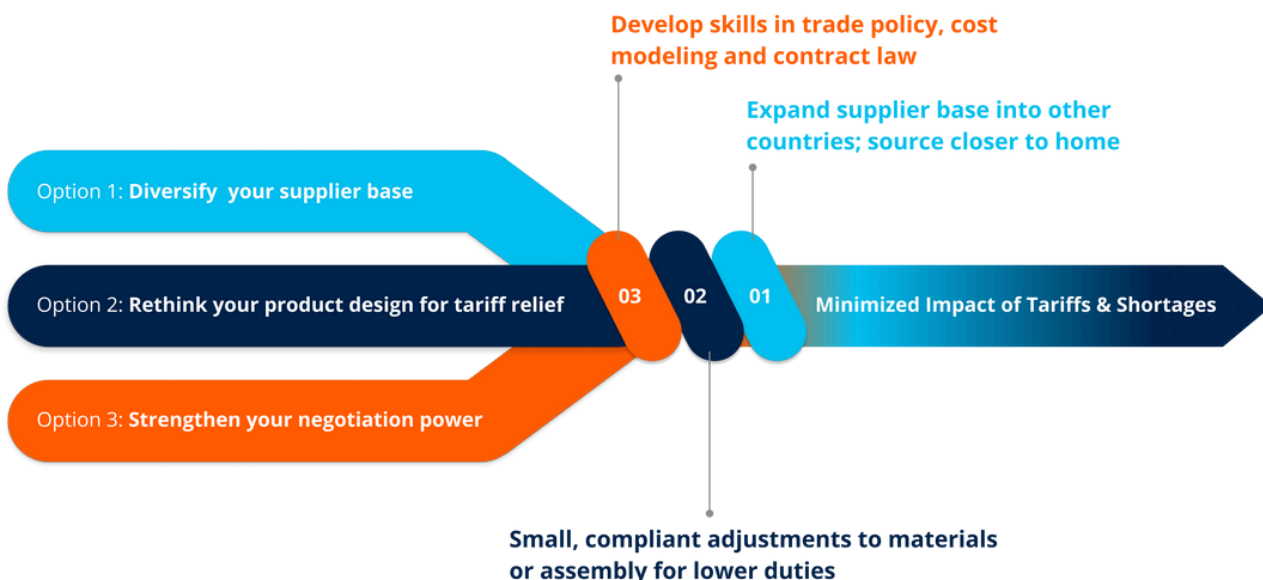
This creates flexibility, reduces political exposure, and helps you secure better tariff conditions across multiple regions.

OPTION 2: Rethink Your Product Design

The second option is to rethink your product design for tariff relief. Small, compliant adjustments to materials or assembly can move a product into a different Harmonized System (HS) code with lower duties. For instance, replacing a pure aluminum part with an aluminum-plastic blend could reduce import costs without a complete redesign. When applied strategically, this approach can unlock meaningful savings without disrupting the supply chain.

OPTION 3: Strengthen Your Negotiation Power

The third option is to strengthen your negotiation power. Tariffs often give suppliers a reason to raise prices, but that does not mean procurement must accept them. By developing skills in trade policy, cost modeling, and contract law, your team can challenge inflated increases, negotiate shared tariff responsibilities, and include tariff contingency clauses in contracts. Stronger negotiation capability ensures your organization carries less of the burden when costs rise.



Trend 6:

Focus Shifts From Globalization to Regional Resilience

Geopolitics, changing trade rules, and ongoing supply shocks are forcing procurement companies rethink how they operate. The old approach of long global supply chains that relied on a single source and focused only on efficiency is now shifting to flexible, regionally focused networks.

Companies are moving production closer to where demand is, through nearshoring, reshoring, and building regional hubs. This helps them manage disruptions locally instead of letting them spread across the world. With procurement systems that support modular sourcing, scenario planning, and region-specific risk visibility, even less-experienced teams can respond as quickly and accurately as top performers.

The shift is already happening. [McKinsey's 2024 Global Supply Chain Leader Survey](#) shows 60% of executives are actively regionalizing their supply chains. A follow-up study puts that number at 64%, up from 44% last year.

QIMA adds a concrete example: in the first quarter of 2024, 15% of European brands' and retailers' sourcing came from nearshoring, showing plans are turning into action.

Producing closer to customers helps companies avoid cross-border bottlenecks, shorten lead times, stabilize costs, and protect delivery schedules from port congestion. [Regional hubs](#) also make it easier to customize products and services for local needs. Instead of one-size-fits-all designs, companies can tailor offerings for each market without creating waste.

Many companies are spreading capacity across North America, Europe, and Southeast Asia



This creates alternative pathways when one region is disrupted.

Many companies are spreading capacity across North America, Europe, and Southeast Asia to create alternative pathways when one region is disrupted. Redesigned supplier networks give each hub enough autonomy to serve local demand end-to-end, boosting agility, ensuring on-time delivery, and protecting competitiveness in unpredictable markets.

By 2026, procurement leaders are expected to focus even more on regional resilience. They will invest in multi-hub networks, secure two or three sources in each region, and adjust procurement policies to support local fulfillment and faster recovery from disruptions.

WHY THIS WILL SHAPE 2026

How Companies Are Rethinking Supply Chains for 2026

Geopolitical tensions and frequent supply chain disruptions are pushing companies to find ways to reduce risk and get closer to their customers.

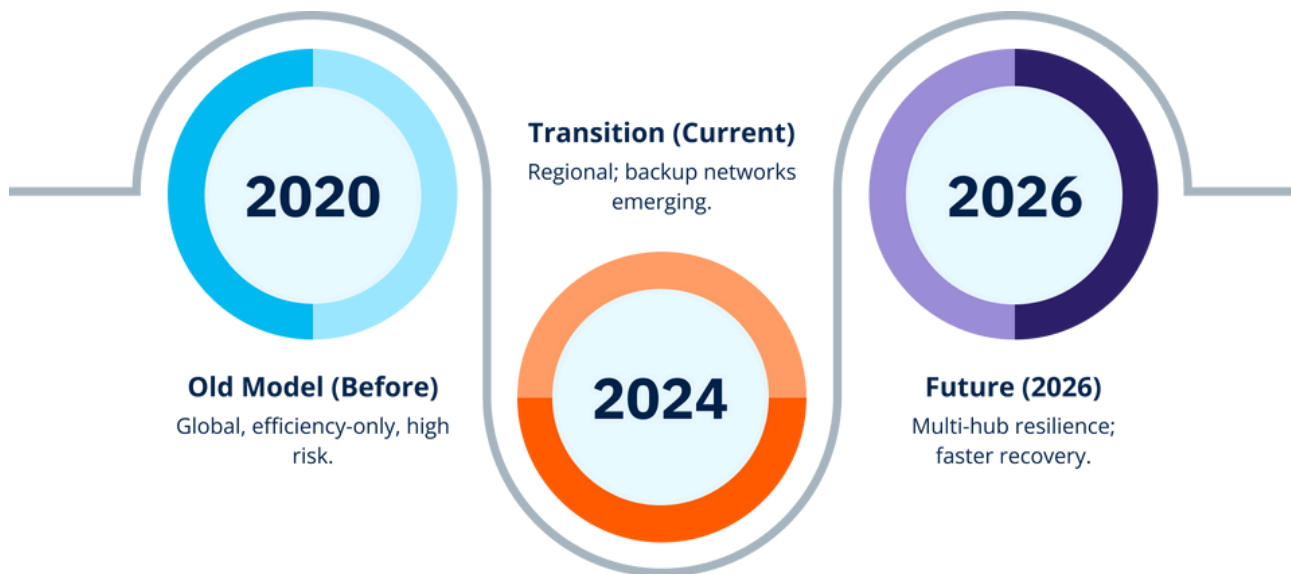
Strategies are shifting from chasing the lowest cost to focusing on regionalization and building “power-of-two” capacity, where most direct spend is covered by two separate regions. Insights from the [World Economic Forum and Kearney](#) show that over 90% of manufacturers are prioritizing regionalization, and nearly two thirds are adopting power-of-two sourcing. Plans set in 2024 and 2025 will start showing results in operations, budgets, and contracts by 2026.

[QIMA's Q3 2024 barometer](#) shows that nearshoring in Europe is growing faster than in the US, with inspections and audits in Turkey up 27% year-over-year and more activity around the Mediterranean. This gives European procurement teams more regional options, shorter supply routes, and a better ability to handle disruptions locally in 2026. At the same time, McKinsey highlights Southeast Asia as an emerging manufacturing hub with strong foreign investment and infrastructure support, while China remains a key player. The result is a more diversified supplier map across North America, Europe, and Southeast Asia, supporting multi-region sourcing and built-in redundancy.

[Bain research](#) finds that well-planned nearshoring can increase gross margins by up to 30%, while also cutting lead times and lowering transportation costs.

Yet only 2% of companies have fully implemented near- or on-shoring so far.

Thus, this makes 2026 the year to act. Companies that experiment now, test regional setups, and scale what works will not only reduce risk but also gain a clear competitive advantage over those still tied to long, single-source global chains.



ACTIONS YOU SHOULD TAKE

Getting Ahead with Regional Supply Networks

2026 is shaping up to be the year regionalized supply networks take center stage, with procurement professionals driving the change. The world is unpredictable, and being close to your customers and plants can make all the difference when disruptions hit. Think of it as building a safety net. You want your supply chain flexible enough to handle shocks while keeping costs under control.

MAP DEMAND AND SUPPLY BY REGION

The first step you can take is to map demand and supply by region. Identify a few priority products to nearshore or reshore and set clear targets for regional capacity, service levels, and total landed cost. Make sure these targets are included in your budget and sourcing plans. Redundancy is critical. Have two or more qualified suppliers for key items in each region, prequalify alternates, and keep technical files ready so you can switch quickly.

PILOT ON SELECT SKUs

Move a small set of SKUs to regional sites and track how lead times, costs, quality, and service change. Run disruption drills and test tariff scenarios to see if your setup can handle surprises, then update your playbooks and roll out in stages.

“The world is unpredictable and **being close to your customers** can make all the difference when disruptions hit.”

CREATE A CONTROL TOWER VIEW

To keep operations running smoothly, create a control tower view that tracks inventory, capacity, arrival times, and risks. Layer in tariffs, sanctions, and route constraints. Share regional scorecards with clear alerts and assign owners to take action. Move safety stock closer to demand and use postponement, light assembly, or kitting in regional hubs. Secure regional carriers and multimodal routes so delivery schedules are protected even when lanes are disrupted.

SHOW IMPACT WITH PROOF AND NUMBERS

Show the impact with proof and numbers. [Inditex](#) has demonstrated that sourcing closer to customers allows fast reactions to demand, supporting growth and margin resilience. That is the kind of result to aim for when relocating SKUs closer to end markets.

Businesses will be putting regionalization at the center of their strategy next year. That makes it important to start learning and experimenting now.

The goal is a supply chain that moves quickly, adapts to surprises, and keeps your business running smoothly. Done right, regionalization not only protects you from disruptions but also gives you a clear edge over competitors.

Trend 7:

Procurement Advances From A Support Role To A Growth Engine

According to Tipalti's 2025 review, strategic sourcing has moved beyond just transactional support. This change builds on the platform shift in procurement, where our function moves more and more from a support role into a strategic asset for companies.

This evolution also highlights the growing importance of category management in procurement, which is no longer seen as a tactical task but as a strategic approach. Starting in 2026, procurement teams will increasingly leverage category management skills to manage their portfolios of products and services effectively. Doing this correctly will enable procurement professionals to drive value in collaboration with suppliers.

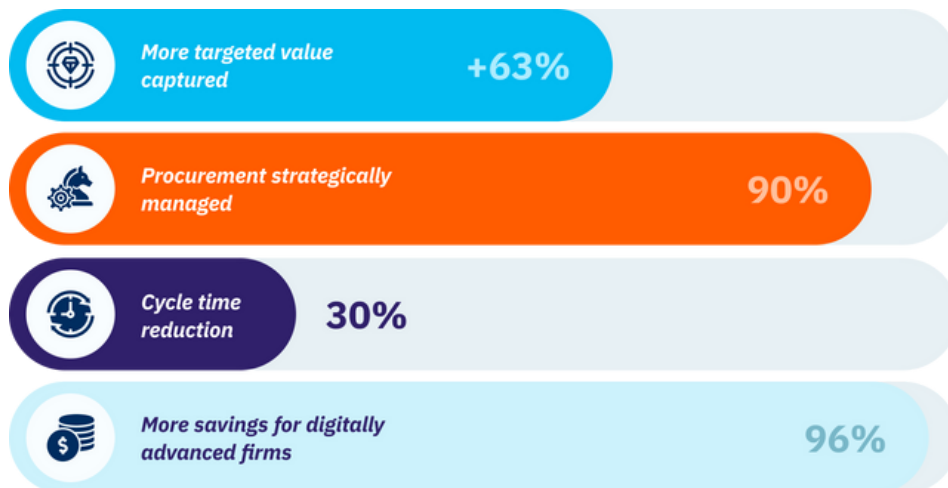
Leading companies are already showing the benefits. Research from Vantage Partners finds that they capture 63% more of targeted value through strategic sourcing than the average firm. This shows how disciplined processes, cross-functional teamwork, and analytics can really lift value. Public-sector benchmarks tell the same story.

A U.S. GAO review reports that leaders strategically manage around 90% of their procurement and achieve 10% or more in annual savings, proving that comprehensive oversight drives real results.

Digital tools are a big part of the advantage.

The Hackett Group reports that they cut strategic sourcing cycle time by about 30% and reduced data errors, allowing faster decisions and smoother execution from supplier evaluation to contracting. Another research by The Hackett Group also finds that digitally advanced organizations achieve 96% more savings than their peers.

By 2026, strategic sourcing won't be a side project or a special initiative. It will be the way top-performing procurement teams operate!



WHY THIS WILL SHAPE 2026

Strategic Sourcing as the Operating Standard

Hackett’s 2025 Key Issues research shows that “Digital Masters” deliver 2.03x higher savings as a share of spend and 2.6x higher ROI than the average. With workloads rising by about 9.8% and only modest increases in budgets and headcount, these benchmarks are no longer aspirational. They set the standard for how sourcing should operate and make 2026 the year when digitally driven, methodical sourcing becomes the norm.

Deloitte’s Global CPO Survey 2025 adds that leaders meet or exceed their savings plans 96% of the time, compared with 80% for followers. This shows how disciplined sourcing translates into consistent, measurable results.

With these, we can say that 2026 will be the year digitally driven, methodical sourcing becomes the standard.

Procurement teams will be expected to operate with data-driven strategies, platform-enabled workflows, and measurable outcomes tied to savings, risk, and supplier performance. Those who develop these capabilities now will not just meet expectations, they will set the pace and define who leads the field next year.

ACTIONS YOU SHOULD TAKE

Unlocking the Power of Data-Driven Sourcing



As more organizations compete on speed, resilience, and cost in 2026, procurement professionals can turn strategic sourcing into a real advantage.

MAP YOUR CATEGORIES AGAINST VALUE, RISK, AND SAVINGS POTENTIAL

First, map your categories against value, risk, and savings potential. Then turn those insights into action for each category, for example, through consolidation, competitive tenders, long-term agreements, or price indexation. Build a 12-month calendar of sourcing events and make sure it is based on clean, reliable data.

Standardize supplier and item records, assign unique IDs, adopt a common category taxonomy, and create a single source of truth for spend analytics. Make performance visible with dashboards that track savings, on contract spend, cycle time, and maverick spend so decisions are fast and evidence-based.

FOCUS EXECUTION WHERE IT MATTERS MOST

The next thing you can do is focus on execution, where it will move the business most. Prioritize 5 to 10 high-impact events across materials, logistics, and indirects. Set clear success metrics and timelines, and create a practical risk plan for each event. Hold regular supplier QBRs with scorecards covering quality, delivery, cost, and innovation, then act on the outcomes. Expand competition through market scans and prequalification so you always have credible alternatives and the leverage to negotiate from strength.

SCALE SUCCESS AND MAKE IT REPEATABLE

Finally, scale what works and make success repeatable. Deploy electronic sourcing, e-auctions, advanced analytics, and contract lifecycle tools, and train your teams to use them consistently. Provide simple templates and checklists to reduce variability and speed up execution. Run monthly value reviews to measure outcomes, capture lessons, and spread winning approaches across categories so strategic sourcing becomes a reliable engine for savings, resilience, and supplier-led innovation.

With all of this in place, strategic procurement will no longer be a special initiative in 2026. It will be the standard way of working, and teams that embrace it will gain speed, resilience, and a clear competitive edge.

Trend 8:

Suppliers as Strategic Innovation Partners for Procurement Teams

Suppliers are no longer just providers of parts or materials. They are becoming sources of ideas, technology, and speed.

When collaboration flows both ways and is backed by clear data and meaningful performance insights, suppliers act like an extension of your internal R&D. This helps your organization bring innovations to market faster. [Industry reports](#) increasingly show that partnering with strategic suppliers drives shared value and innovation, not just operational efficiency.

Collaboration in name only won't cut it. Roles need to be clear, data should be shared, joint KPIs must be set, and co-innovation programs launched. [A survey highlighted by Supply Chain Digital](#) shows that most organizations already run or plan joint innovation initiatives with suppliers. This signals that procurement is maturing.

The financial impact is clear, too. [ISM analysis](#), citing The Hackett Group, finds that top-performing organizations get about 7.4% of their total revenue from innovations that come from or with suppliers. Partnerships are boosting the top line, not just cutting costs.

Supplier strategy is changing fast. [MH&L reports](#) that 91% of executives have already adjusted or plan to adjust sourcing strategies, and 71% plan to work more with small, local suppliers. Many leaders see smaller suppliers as a way to reduce risk and improve responsiveness across the supply chain.

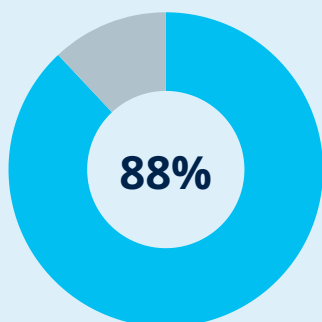
By 2026, suppliers will play a much more active role in product and process innovation and will be treated as true strategic partners.

Key suppliers will be part of roadmaps from the start, shared goals and metrics will be standard, co-innovation will be funded, and governance will be aligned so collaboration is measurable and repeatable. Organizations that adopt this model will reach the market faster and build stronger, more resilient supply chains, while those that don't may fall behind.

WHY THIS WILL SHAPE 2026

Turning Supplier Collaboration Into Measurable Results

The growing importance of supplier collaboration



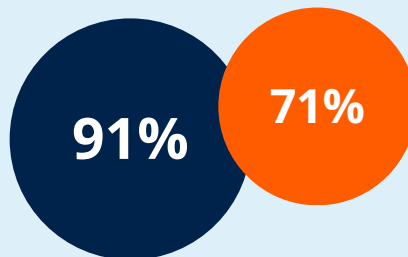
Procurement leaders saying supplier collaboration has grown in importance over the past two years.

10% Increase in earnings for companies that work with suppliers on innovation

Suppliers are becoming more than just providers of components. They are now key sources of ideas, technology, and speed. The shift is clear, with 88% of procurement leaders saying supplier collaboration has grown in importance over the past two years.

Companies that work with suppliers on innovation can see up to 10% higher earnings growth, according to industry coverage of McKinsey's research.

To add on, Recent data from the Supplier shows that 91% of leaders have adjusted or plan to adjust small-business sourcing due to disruptions and tariffs, with 71% increasing spend with U.S.-based small suppliers. Reported benefits include better quality, stronger resilience, and lower costs.



91% of leaders plan to adjust small-business sourcing, with 71% increasing spend with U.S.-based small suppliers

In 2026, suppliers will take a more active role in product and process innovation, starting at the roadmap and business-case stage. Organizations that fail to share data, set joint metrics, and fund co-innovation will struggle to improve performance. The approach is straightforward. Treat strategic suppliers as an extension of R&D, include joint KPIs in contracts, and align governance so collaboration is measurable, repeatable, and directly linked to growth.

ACTIONS YOU SHOULD TAKE

Making Supplier Collaboration Measurable and Profitable

As 2026 approaches, procurement professionals like us have a real opportunity to turn supplier-driven innovation into a powerful growth engine.

Turn supplier-driven innovation into a powerful growth engine.

- 01 Focus on Key Categories**
- 02 Align on Business Outcomes**
- 03 Test and Decide Fast**
- 04 Build a Steady Innovation Pipeline**

Focus on a few category themes where co-development with suppliers matters most, so collaboration becomes repeatable and measurable instead of ad hoc.

Next, you can align with suppliers on outcomes that matter to the business. Set targets for revenue from new products, faster time to market, and total cost of ownership improvement.

Test ideas quickly within sixty to ninety days through a proof of concept or pilot, track performance, cost, and risk, and decide fast whether to scale or stop. This makes partnerships tangible for both sides and turns co-innovation from a slogan into a steady pipeline of launches.

Trend 9:

Greenhushing Persists Despite New Sustainability Laws

What we observe in our conversations with procurement directors is that sustainability in procurement is becoming increasingly less of a priority. While some companies are shifting their internal focus, government institutions are strengthening sustainability laws, particularly in the European Union.

As new sustainability rules tighten across the EU, the room for vague or purely marketing claims is shrinking. [The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive](#) expands mandatory ESG disclosures starting with reports filed in 2025 and continuing through 2026, while the [Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation](#) introduces stricter product requirements and bans the destruction of certain unsold goods.

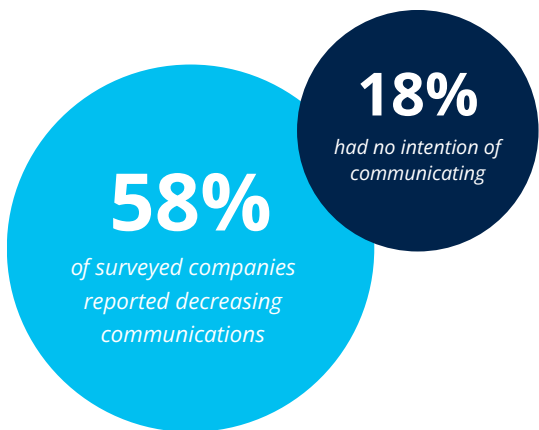
Advertising standards are also moving toward tougher verification of environmental claims. Together, these changes raise the bar for evidence, traceability, and auditability.

Within this environment, greenhushing is on the rise.

Greenhushing is the intentional downplaying or withholding information about sustainability goals and progress because teams fear accusations of greenwashing, regulatory scrutiny, or reputational backlash.

Instead of communicating credibly with data, some organizations delay or minimize reporting until every metric is perfect, which slows learning, stalls supplier engagement, and weakens Greenhushing is spreading fast. [South Pole's Net Zero Report](#) found that in 9 of 14 major sectors, companies are intentionally decreasing their climate communications, and among firms that find communicating harder, 58% plan to scale communications down.

In a [2025 OECD review](#), 58% of surveyed companies reported decreasing communications and 18% said they had no intention of communicating, underscoring how widespread greenhushing has become.



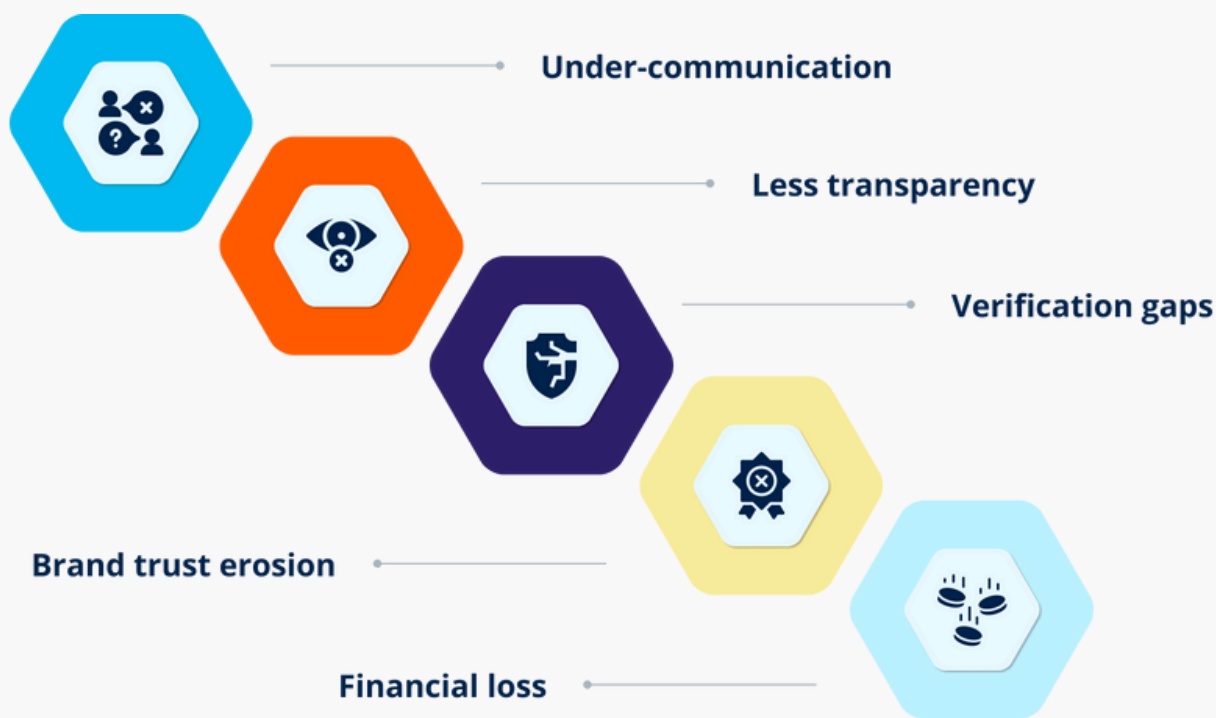
This approach carries real reputation risk. [The European Commission](#) notes that consumer trust in environmental claims is “extremely low,” and [OECD](#) evidence shows that greenhushing erodes trust and reduces willingness to choose greener products, especially when they cost more.

WHY THIS WILL SHAPE 2026

When Silence on ESG Becomes a Business Risk

Rolling back ESG oversight is not cost-free. [EcoVadis’ 2025 U.S. Business Sustainability Outlook](#) (via ESG Dive) reports that 47% of C-suite executives believe ESG rollbacks will increase supply chain disruptions, 35% say the rollbacks could backfire, and 28% view them as risky. Many firms are still maintaining or boosting sustainability investments, even if they communicate less about them, because supply chain sustainability remains a competitive advantage.

Greenhushing becomes expensive when companies have...



This is where greenhushing becomes expensive. When companies under-communicate goals and progress while rules loosen, they reduce transparency at the very moment counterparties and regulators still expect verifiable data. The result is higher exposure to disruptions, weaker verification across tiers, and erosion of brand trust. These costs show up in delayed audits, supplier failures, and customers' reluctance to pay a premium for greener options without credible proof.

ACTIONS YOU SHOULD TAKE

Build Credibility Through Transparent and Measurable Action

As procurement professionals, we should lead with transparency and adherence to recognized standards to ensure a lawful and credible approach to sustainability, and keep the tone consistent with clear expectations for 2026.

01

Align all claims and reports with recognized reporting and product standards

02

Make supplier compliance a non-negotiable condition.

03

Embed accountability in day-to-day work.

04

Communicate simply and consistently.

Align all claims and reports with recognized reporting and product standards

Align all claims and reports with recognized reporting and product standards. Require material traceability through product passports or equivalent records, maintain audit trails for recycled content, take-back programs, and emissions, and publish clear progress updates on a regular cadence so stakeholders receive evidence rather than slogans.

Make supplier compliance a non-negotiable condition.

Make supplier compliance a non-negotiable condition. Conduct screening and prequalification against sustainability and due-diligence criteria, embed measurable requirements for circularity and human rights in contracts, request third-party attestations where risk is higher, add clauses on data sharing, incident reporting, and corrective action plans, and hold quarterly reviews that verify both performance and proof.

Embed accountability in day-to-day work.

Embed accountability in day-to-day work. Set procurement-owned KPIs for the share of circular inputs, repair and reuse rates, and verified waste reductions. Link manager goals and incentives to these outcomes, train category teams on claim substantiation and record keeping, and run internal checks before external audits. When exceptions occur, escalate quickly, document remediation, and update playbooks.

Communicate simply and consistently.

Replace broad promises with concrete targets, interim milestones, and dates. Explain the methodologies used for calculations and attribution, clearly state limitations, and enable independent verification. In doing so, you reduce regulatory and reputational risk, protect value in partnerships, and turn compliance into a visible competitive advantage for 2026 and beyond.

Theme 3:

The Human Side of Procurement Transformation

Even as digital tools and AI take center stage, people remain at the heart of procurement's success.

In 2026, being digitally skilled is becoming a must, CPOs are gaining more influence in shaping company decisions, and organizations are focusing on practical learning where teams show their skills through real results. These changes show the growing importance of people and leadership in procurement, which we will explore through the three trends under this theme.

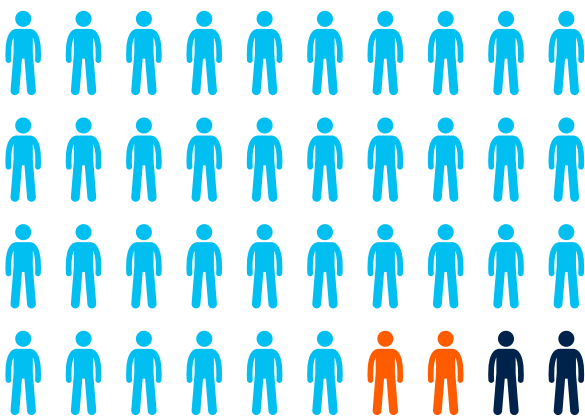
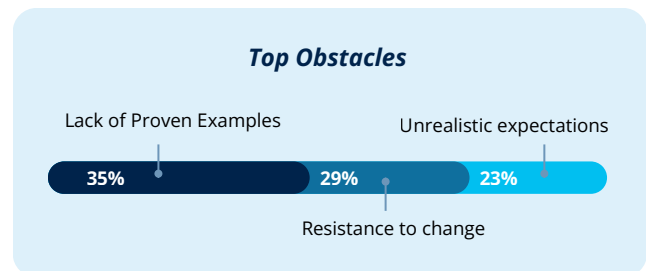
Trend 10: Digital Literacy as the New Talent Benchmark	<u>40</u>
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Trend 10: Digital Literacy as the New Talent Benchmark

Manufacturing can't afford to be slow on onboarding anymore. SOPH finds that human-focused, easy-to-use technologies help new hires get up to speed in weeks instead of months, speeding up learning and closing the gap between new and experienced employees. The same study shows AI adoption is growing fast: the number of companies using AI across more than 50% of their sites has tripled year over year.

ProcureAbility highlights a gap between adoption and real value.

ProcureAbility highlights a gap between adoption and real value. While 90% of respondents feel "somewhat confident" in estimating AI ROI, only 5% feel "very confident," and another 5% feel "not at all confident."



●	●	●
Somewhat confident	Very confident	Not at all confident
90%	5%	5%

Top obstacles include a lack of proven examples (35%), resistance to change (29%), and unrealistic expectations (23%). The takeaway is clear: without standard measurements and realistic goals, AI risks staying a promise instead of delivering results.

Meanwhile, the skills gap is widening. Randstad reports that 75% of companies are adopting AI, but only 35% of employees have had AI training in the past year. At the same time, the 2024 Work Trend Index shows 75% of global knowledge workers already use generative AI daily.

This gap means organizations need to invest in training, clear guidelines, and human-in-the-loop processes to turn AI usage into measurable productivity and quality gains.

Digital literacy and human-centered design are important to successfully scaling AI in procurement. Organizations that combine easy-to-use tools with clear ROI measures, structured training, and strong change management are the ones turning AI into a true competitive advantage. The takeaway is clear: procurement professionals need digital skills before applying for roles, and employers are now actively screening for them.

WHY THIS WILL SHAPE 2026

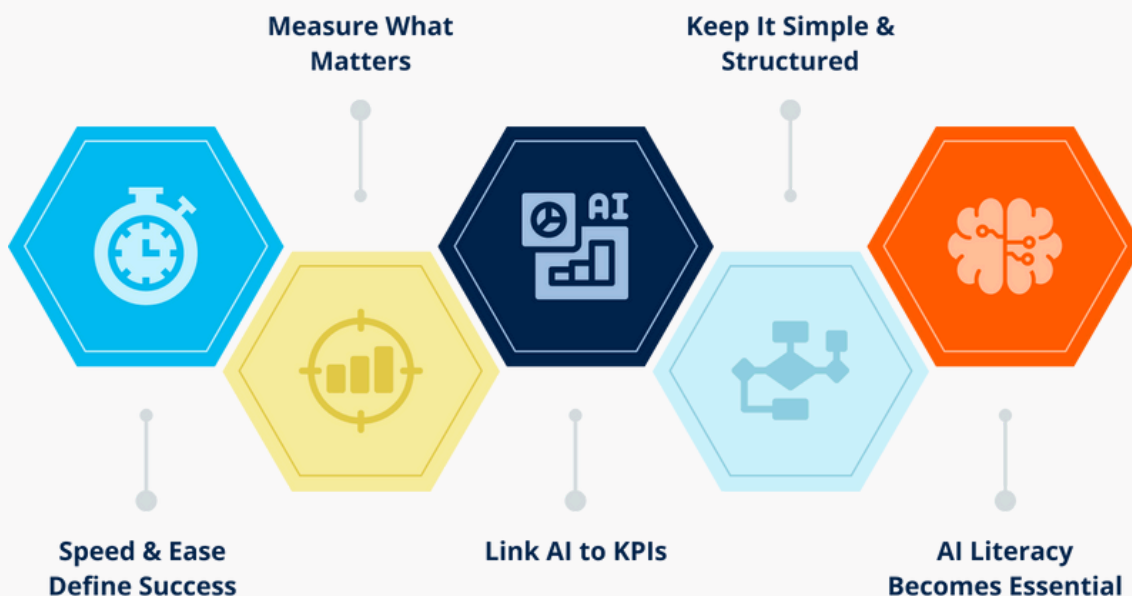
Why AI Literacy Will Be a Must-Have Skill for New Hires

SOPH finds that the number of companies using AI at more than 50% of their sites has tripled year over year.

In 2026, speed and ease of use will define success because new hires need to deliver results in weeks, not months.

The focus for 2026 will be clear goals and standardized measurement so that widespread AI use actually drives real results.

A Guide to AI in 2026



Systems must be intuitive, easy to access, and directly linked to business KPIs like time to competence, error reduction, and higher throughout.

Companies that combine simple tools, clear ROI metrics, systematic training, and structured change management will turn broad AI adoption into a lasting competitive edge. As these practices become standard, new procurement hires will need to show basic AI literacy and hands-on experience with AI-enabled tools. Learning these skills before applying will be essential.

ACTIONS YOU SHOULD TAKE

Build a Culture of AI-Supported Procurement

Procurement leaders must make AI fluency a top priority for their teams.

Start by treating AI literacy not just as a hiring requirement but also as a skill everyone on your team needs to develop. Build a human-centered onboarding program with role-specific courses and short micro-lessons that fit right into daily work. Pair learning with hands-on practice on real tasks so new hires can reach competence in weeks.

You can also launch a buddy system, assign coaches for the first month, and recognize mentors to make support part of your team's culture. Track progress through metrics like time to competence, tool adoption, error reduction,

and output per employee, then review and refine the program every quarter.

At the same time, making responsible AI use is part of the culture.

Be clear about when human review is required, how escalation works, and who is accountable for each type of decision. Share simple guides and before-and-after examples so people know what good looks like and trust AI-assisted workflows. For experienced team members, run focused training that ties AI to everyday sourcing, contracting, and supplier management tasks. Use practice labs that mirror real-life scenarios to build confidence with each repetition.

Finally, make learning and working with AI as frictionless as possible. Bring all your tools and learning resources into a single, easy-to-access portal, and include contextual help inside the applications. Test the setup with new users, watch where they slow down, and remove anything that doesn't add value. Reserve protected time on calendars for practice so new skills become habits.

When you make the experience simple and supportive, your team will use AI consistently, and you'll start seeing measurable gains in speed, quality, and savings.

Trend 11:

CPO Leading Teams in Technology and Organizational Change

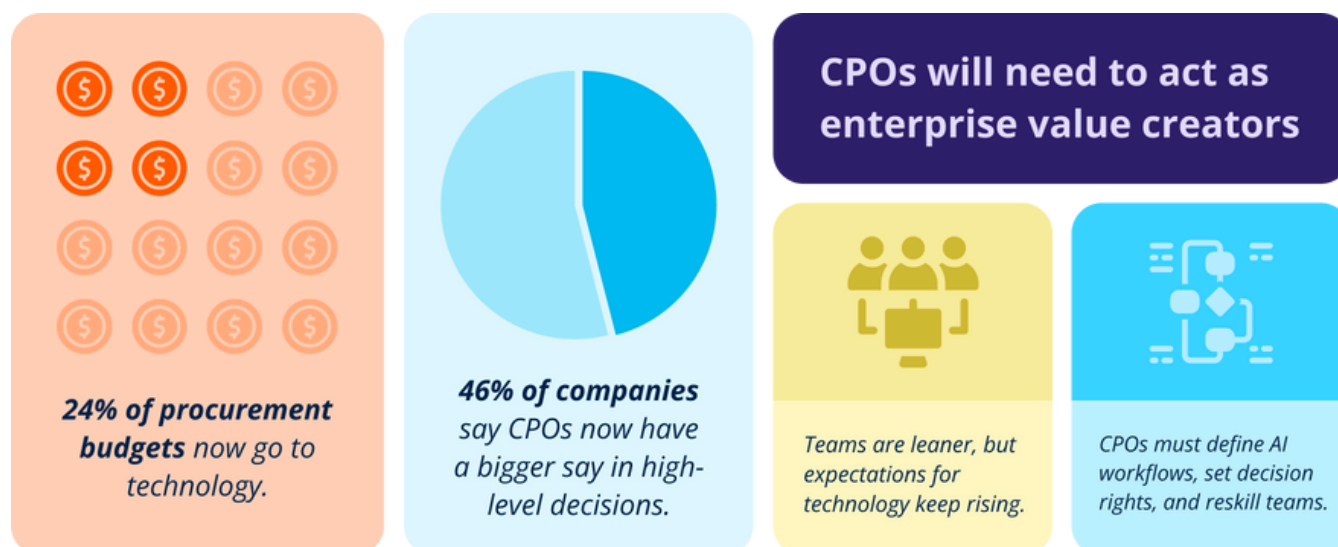
Deloitte's 2025 Global CPO Survey shows that top procurement organizations, the so-called Digital Masters, now spend up to 24% of their procurement budget on technology. This isn't just about having tools anymore. Platforms are becoming the backbone of procurement, driving speed to market, better risk visibility, and stronger supplier performance.

At the same time, the CPO role is gaining more influence. ProcureCon reports that 46% of companies say CPOs now have a bigger say in high-level decisions. Boards and executives are asking procurement to shape platform strategies, define data governance, and link sourcing decisions to product and market outcomes.

Procurement is moving from compliance to real enterprise value creation.

Hierarchies are shifting too. CNBC notes that Google cut about a third of managers overseeing small teams to boost efficiency. Across the market, fewer managerial roles mean laid-off managers are competing for a smaller number of jobs. As layers shrink, influence lands on leaders who can communicate a vision, build relationships, and lead with character.

All this puts extra pressure on CPOs. Teams are leaner as AI takes over routine tasks, but expectations for technology adoption and measurable results keep rising.



CPOs need to lead the charge, define how AI works from intake to contracting and P2P, set clear decision rights, and reskill teams for analytics and supplier-led innovation. Framing the change this way keeps procurement focused on creating value while guiding the organization through big structural shifts.

WHY THIS WILL SHAPE 2026

How CPOs Can Turn Procurement into a Growth Engine in 2026

As we move into 2026, procurement is changing fast.

Teams are using more technology and AI, and company hierarchies are shifting. This puts more pressure on CPOs to balance cost efficiency with strategic leadership. CPOs will need to act as enterprise value creators with authority over platform roadmaps, data governance, supplier innovation programs, and risk transparency. They will co-own sustainability results with operations and finance, set AI governance standards and ROI measures, align category strategies with product and market plans, and lead cross-functional teams to turn strategy into action.

Success will be measured with board-level metrics like revenue from supplier-driven innovation, on-contract spend, cycle time reduction, cost-to-serve reduction, and on-time launch rates.

Organizations that give CPOs the authority and budget to lead will turn digital and sustainability investments into speed, quality, and resilience. Those that keep procurement limited to cost control risk slower decisions, weaker execution, and missed growth opportunities in 2026.

Some board-level metrics to measure success



Revenue from supplier-driven innovation



On-contract spend



Cycle time reduction



Cost-to-serve reduction



On-time launch rates

“Procurement is **moving from compliance to real enterprise value creation**”

ACTIONS YOU SHOULD TAKE

A CPO Playbook for Technology, Teams, and Measurable Success

As a CPO or procurement leader, you should take charge of transforming procurement.

Transforming your procurement team

- 01 Decide how AI and technology will be applied across the entire process
- 02 Restructure your teams so they can scale with ambition.
- 03 Make suppliers part of your value creation engine

Decide how AI and technology will be applied across the entire process

First, decide how AI and technology will be applied across the entire process, from intake to contracting and P2P, and make this plan visible to the board. Align your strategy with finance, operations, and technology, and set clear OKRs and KPIs such as impact on EBIT, realized savings, risk reduction, and revenue from supplier-driven innovation. Build a three-year investment plan for platforms and data with a detailed roadmap for the next 12 to 18 months. Focus on use cases with measurable ROI like spend analytics, contract lifecycle management, e-sourcing,

and AI tools with human oversight, so early wins fund the next wave.

Restructure your teams so they can scale with ambition.

Set up a standing council with the CFO, COO, CTO, and ESG leaders to review initiatives each quarter and remove blockers. Align category strategies with product and sales plans, and use consistent stage gate criteria from business case to value delivery. Launch skills programs covering analytics, total cost of ownership, negotiation, and working with AI copilots. Introduce roles such as product owner for procurement technology and data analyst, with certification paths and outcome-linked rewards to ensure new capabilities stick.



Make suppliers part of your value creation engine, not just a cost lever

Finally, make suppliers part of your value creation engine, not just a cost lever. Set joint KPIs with strategic partners for time to market, innovation outcomes, and sustainability targets. Include gainsharing mechanisms, intellectual property rules, and regular business reviews in contracts to speed commercialization and maintain transparency. When CPOs actively define technology integration, reshape teams, and align supplier incentives, procurement stops being a cost center and becomes a compounding engine of enterprise value.

Trend 12:

Results-Focused Upskilling Will Shape The Next Era Of Talent Growth

Companies are shifting from tracking training by attendance or hours to focusing on learning that drives real business results. Modern programs are built with clear success metrics, embedded in daily work, and tied to strategic goals so that employees' skills translate directly into performance, retention, innovation, and revenue.

The numbers back this up. Organizations with structured training programs can see up to 218% higher revenue per employee, and employees who get the right training are about 17% more productive. [Intellum reports](#) that 43% of companies notice revenue growth after rolling out structured education programs.

Our own client data supports this trend. In one recent case, a client shared that their program immediately drove results in five key areas, including negotiation tactics and AI prompt engineering. This outcome shows that competency development works best when learning paths are customized, templates are practical, and certification programs are included.

The client also confirmed that using templates saved time and prevented them from recreating work.

Despite this progress, most of the skill gaps we identify today are still related to technology. Many teams struggle to make full use of procurement platforms, especially those powered by AI, and to apply AI effectively in daily work.

Gaps also remain in risk management, negotiation, and stakeholder engagement, which continue to be top priorities for our clients. These insights show that organizations need targeted and integrated learning programs that close both the digital and strategic skill gaps shaping the future of procurement.

Learning as a product is becoming the new norm. Programs that tie directly to business metrics,

integrate into daily work, and continuously measure and improve results outperform those that don't. Our clients confirm that organizations adopting these principles and connecting them to budgets and operating goals turn skill development into faster revenue growth and lasting productivity.

WHY THIS WILL SHAPE 2026

Why 2026 Is All About Measurable Outcomes

The 2025 LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report shows a clear shift toward business impact. Companies are now focusing on engagement, retention, and promotions, and using playbooks to measure ROI. This signals that in 2026, training programs will be judged on real outcomes, not just completions.

McKinsey's 2025 perspective also highlights that learning designed to happen in the flow of work is key to adaptability and resilience. Real-time feedback and skill building tied to KPIs are becoming baseline expectations for next year.



Real-time feedback and skill building tied to KPIs are becoming baseline expectations for next year.

Our experience shows the same pattern, especially the need for learning to fit seamlessly into daily work. In one client case, 100% of their team said the training felt like “added stress” because they saw it as “something else they had to do” on top of their full-time strategic work. This shows that training must be embedded into everyday workflows to be effective, making 2026 the year businesses shift their investments toward programs that deliver measurable outcomes and proven results.

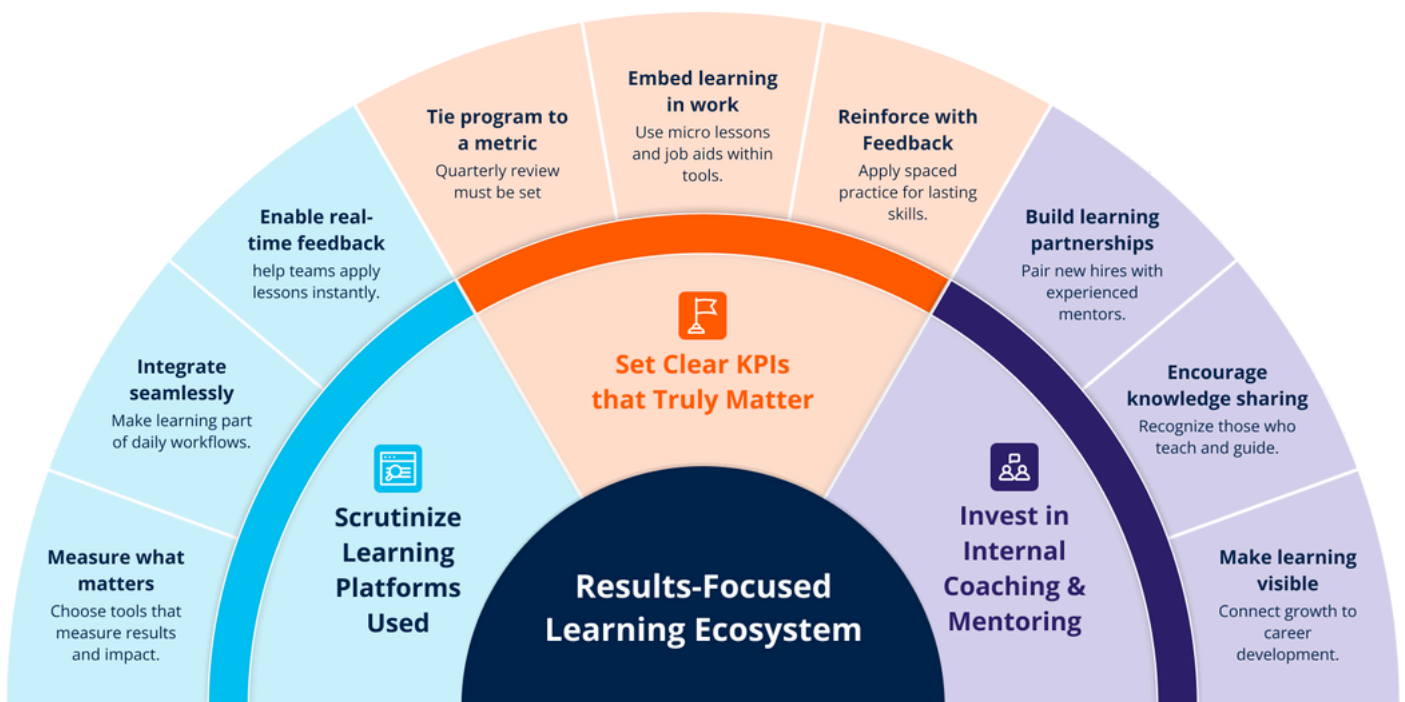
ACTIONS YOU SHOULD TAKE

Start by scrutinizing the learning platforms used

Procurement leaders and procurement professionals like us should start by scrutinizing the learning platforms they use. Make sure the tools support measurable results, deliver relevant content, and integrate seamlessly with employees' daily workflows. Look for platforms that track progress, provide real-time feedback, and offer analytics tied to business outcomes. A strong platform is not just a library of courses, it's a system that helps your team actually apply what they learn.

Set clear KPIs that truly matter

Next, set clear KPIs that truly matter so you can see whether your procurement teams are achieving their learning goals. Every program should tie directly to at least one metric, and results should be reviewed each quarter. Make learning practical by embedding micro lessons, checklists, and job aids inside the tools



employees already use. Include real-time feedback and spaced practice so skills stick and productivity improves immediately.

Invest in internal coaches and mentoring programs

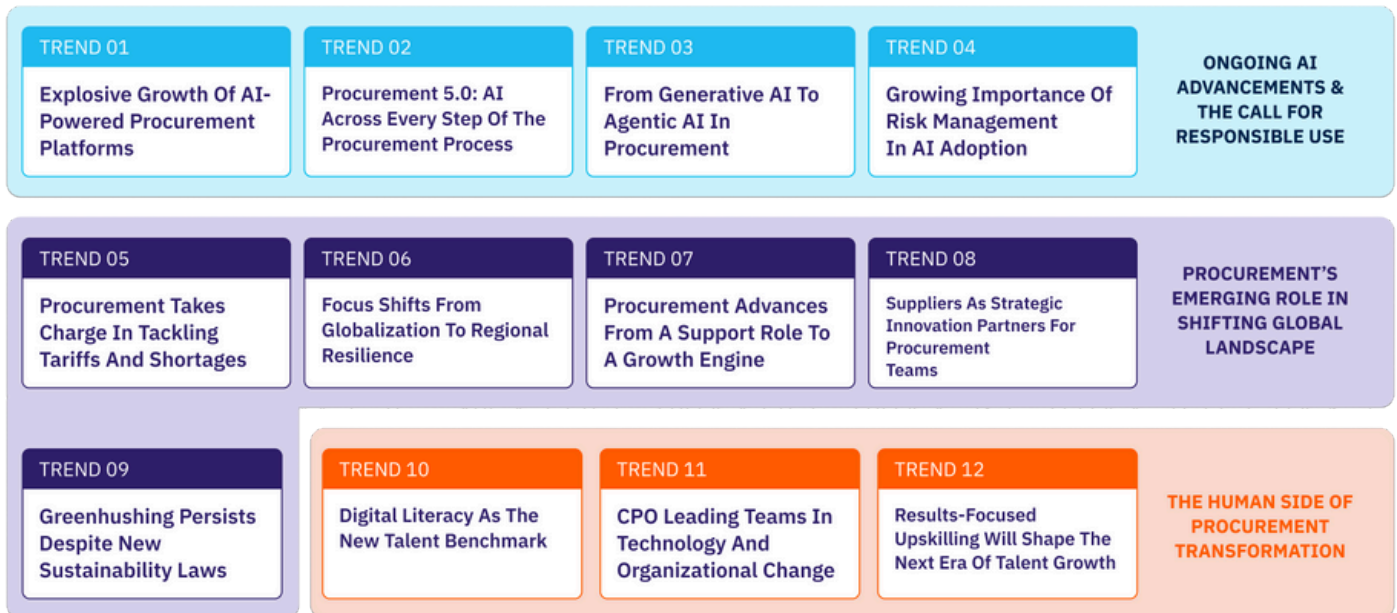
Finally, invest in internal coaches and mentoring programs. Pair new hires with experienced colleagues, recognize mentors, and protect time for hands-on practice. Encourage knowledge sharing and make learning a visible part of career growth.

Procurement leaders should turn these learning platforms from a checkbox exercise into a strategic engine for performance, innovation, and measurable business results. Teams that learn smarter, faster, and more practically will not only achieve their KPIs, they will drive the organization forward and set a new standard for what procurement can deliver.

“...training must be embedded into everyday workflows to be effective, making 2026 the year businesses shift their investments toward programs that deliver measurable outcomes and proven results”

THE FUTURE OF PROCUREMENT STARTS NOW

As 2026 approaches, procurement is stepping into a new era shaped by AI, stronger governance, regional resilience, and a renewed focus on people and partners.



OPERATIONALIZING AI FOR REAL PROCUREMENT OUTCOMES

AI is now being integrated into every part of the procurement process, which means teams need to learn how to use it effectively and regulate it to manage risks. Moving AI from pilots to daily use requires clean data, clear oversight, and simple tools that people actually trust. New agent capabilities are raising expectations for control and measurable outcomes.

AGILE SUPPLY CHAINS FOR A SHIFTING WORLD

Supply chains are getting closer to customers, circular requirements are becoming real, and supplier collaboration is evolving from good intentions to a repeatable growth engine. At the same time, tariffs and geopolitical tensions

continue to disrupt procurement, making it essential for leaders to scale up and stay agile. Organizations that pilot initiatives on a small scale and grow the successful ones gain shorter lead times, steadier costs, and better service, giving them a competitive edge in an unpredictable market.

EXPANDING THE CPO'S IMPACT BEYOND COST

The CPO role is growing beyond cost control toward creating enterprise value. Decisions are increasingly tied to revenue impact, risk visibility, sustainability progress, and speed to market. Balancing AI, procurement teams, and sustainability adds pressure, putting the CPO at the center of strategy and transformation.

Digital literacy is the new norm.

LEARNING IS MEASURED BY RESULTS, NOT JUST ATTENDANCE.

Businesses are looking for platforms that deliver actionable outcomes instead of purely theory-based programs. Role-specific learning and proven ability in real processes are becoming the baseline for high performance, while investments go to programs that clearly show returns.

While these changes and disruptions affect many functions, procurement is in a strong position to turn them into an advantage. Organizations that invest in people, data, and governance, and execute with focus and discipline, can navigate uncertainty and adapt faster than their competitors. The future will favor those who combine smart strategy with capable teams to turn disruption into opportunity and make strategic procurement a reality.

About Procurement Tactics

Helping Procurement Professionals Close Better Deals and Lead with Confidence

At Procurement Tactics, we are committed to transforming procurement from a traditional cost-cutting function into a strategic, value-driven discipline. It is our mission to empower procurement professionals to excel in their careers by providing comprehensive online education. We accomplish this through our comprehensive courses in our all-in-one learning experience platform and engaging workshops, equipping individuals and teams with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in the dynamic world of procurement. We train small and large companies from all over the world.

We're here to help Procurement Professionals succeed in the ever-changing world of procurement, no matter how much experience you have. We will ensure that you gain all the knowledge and skills you need to future-proof your career.

PT | Procurement
Tactics

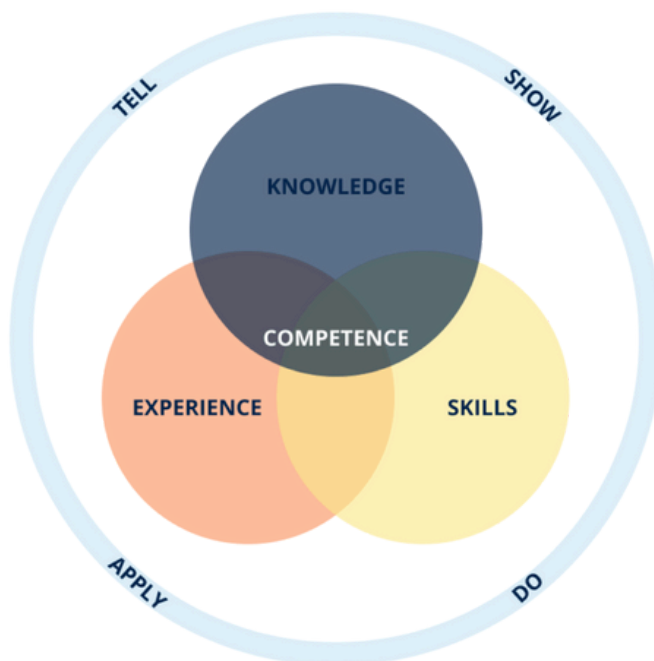
OUR APPROACH: Tell-Show-Do-Apply

If new information isn't applied, we'll forget about 75% of it after just six days (forgetting curve).

With the Tell-Show-Do-Apply methodology at the core of our procurement training courses, learning experiences are designed to retain knowledge and maximum learning impact.

Our Method

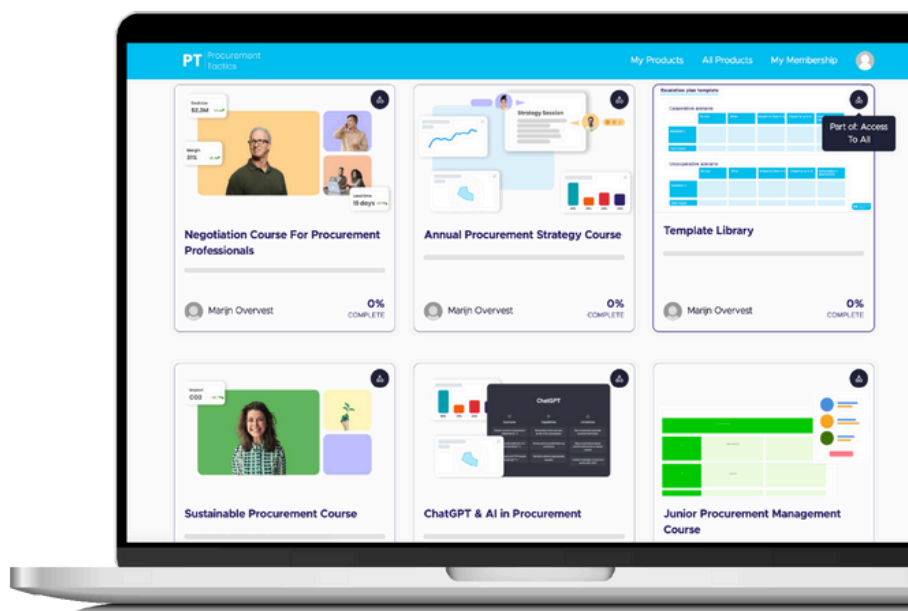
- **Tell:** Facts, concepts, processes, and learn best practices.
- **Show:** Examples to bring the concepts to life.
- **Do:** Practice skills through hands-on activities and case studies.
- **Apply:** Guides and templates to put what has been learned into practice



OUR PLATFORM

Procurement Tactics empowers procurement by providing an all-in-one learning experience platform aligned to our core methodology.

Access to the platform grants users access to our courses, resource libraries, assessments and impact measurements, all designed with the tell-show-do apply methodology in mind.



COURSES WE OFFER

20 WORLD-CLASS CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS


Our comprehensive online training covers all aspects of procurement, helping teams tackle real-world challenges together.



Negotiation Course for Procurement

Learn from industry experts who negotiated billion \$ deals


The graphic features a central image of two men shaking hands. Surrounding it are several data visualization elements: a 'Deal size \$2.3M' with an upward arrow, 'Margin 31%' with a downward arrow, and 'Lead time 19 days' with a rightward arrow.



Procurement Strategy Course

Take the lead with our proven 5-step procurement strategy

The graphic shows a woman pointing at a large digital screen displaying a line chart. Overlaid on the image are a 'Complete task 75%' indicator and a 'BANK 235.127' value with a line graph.



Sustainable Procurement Course

Maintain profitability while moving toward sustainability


The graphic depicts a woman holding a green recycling bin. The background includes a green wall and a line graph. Data elements include '107' in a box, '250' in a circular gauge, and 'Supplier Performance' with a green checkmark.



Artificial Intelligence in Procurement Course

Unleash the power of AI within procurement


The graphic features a man in a white lab coat looking at a laptop. An AI logo (OpenAI) is on the left. Data elements include a 'New plan started' notification and a '+56%' increase in a line graph.



Junior Procurement Management Course

Learn how to execute the perfect procurement process

The graphic shows two women sitting at a table with a laptop. A 'New plan started' notification is at the top left. A '+56%' increase is shown in a line graph at the bottom left.



Mini-MBA for Procurement Managers

Enhance your expertise to make valuable strategic contributions

The graphic features a woman in a business suit holding a folder. A 'New course completed successfully' notification is at the top right. A '55% Time Plan' and 'Improve business administration' are also visible.



Strategic Procurement Leadership Program

Future-Proof Your Procurement Leadership Skills


The graphic shows a woman smiling. A 'Leadership Skills 76%' indicator is at the bottom. A '2h 20m' duration is shown at the top right.



Soft Skills for Procurement

Boost interpersonal skills for impactful procurement roles

The graphic depicts a man and a woman in business attire talking. A 'Soft Skills' indicator is at the bottom left.



Supplier Relationship Management Course

Establish strong supplier collaborations

The graphic shows two men shaking hands. A 'Supplier Relationship' indicator is at the bottom left.

Continued on next page

COURSES WE OFFER

20 WORLD-CLASS CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Our comprehensive online training covers all aspects of procurement, helping teams tackle real-world challenges together.




Category Management in Procurement
Advanced category management in procurement




Cultural Impact on Negotiations
Global Negotiation Skills: Cultures explored




Risk Management in Procurement
Transform risks into opportunities




Value Chain Analysis
Strategic Value Chain optimization



Spend Analysis Course
In-depth Analysis: Uncover potential savings



Gen Z & Generational Management in Procurement
Navigate the complexities of a multigenerational workforce



AI Course for Procurement Leaders
Lead and integrate seamless AI adoption within your procurement team



Contract Management Course
Learn the essentials of contract management



Innovation Course for Procurement Teams
Unlock creative solutions to enhance strategies

Continued on next page

COURSES WE OFFER

20 WORLD-CLASS CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Our comprehensive online training covers all aspects of procurement, helping teams tackle real-world challenges together.



Supply Chain for Procurement Professionals

Master supply chain optimization for seamless procurement.

The graphic features a man in a warehouse setting with various data overlays: 'Supply Chain Efficiency 76%', 'Optimize Supply Chain Strategies', and 'Logistics Cost +10%'.



Internal Stakeholder Management Course

Build strong stakeholder relationships for procurement success.

The graphic shows a group of people in a meeting with an 'Internal Stakeholder Engagement Plan' overlay and a circular diagram representing stakeholder relationships.

CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS LAUNCHING SOON

Our next certificate programs are designed to meet the evolving demands of modern procurement—packed with fresh content, hands-on tools, and credentials that move your career forward.



E-auction for Procurement Course

Harness e-auctions to secure the best procurement deals.

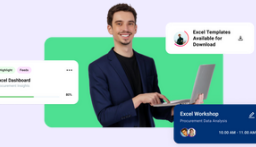
The graphic shows a man in a suit with a laptop and various data charts, including 'E-auction for Procurement' and '80%'.



Financial Skills for Procurement Professionals

Strengthen financial decision-making in procurement.

The graphic shows two men in a meeting with a laptop and data charts, including 'Budget Optimization Plan' and '+56%'.



Excel for Procurement Professionals

Use Excel to simplify and optimize procurement processes.

The graphic shows a man in a suit with a laptop and data charts, including 'Excel Dashboard' and 'Excel Workshop'.



Digital Procurement Course

Explore digital tools to transform procurement operations.

The graphic shows a man in a suit with a tablet and data charts, including 'Supplier Network 5,463', '24hrs', and '95%'.

PROVEN ONLINE LEARNING - TESTIMONIALS

Our testimonials showcase the real experiences and success stories of procurement professionals who have completed our courses. Hear how Procurement Tactics has transformed their skills, careers, and approach to procurement, helping them achieve outstanding results in the field.

Equipping Vuteq's Procurement Team to Tackle Risk with Strategy and Structure

Vuteq's procurement team lacked a structured approach to supplier risk, leaving them exposed and underconfident. Procurement Tactics introduced risk-management frameworks, tools, and simulations through blended learning. The team now prepares thoroughly, mitigates risks effectively, and achieves stronger, risk-adjusted outcomes while reinforcing long-term supplier relationships.

Juliana de Carvalho
Senior Procurement Manager, Vuteq



Transforming Procurement into a Strategic Powerhouse at Meira GTX

Meira GTX's procurement team was decentralized and reactive, often firefighting instead of planning strategically. Procurement Tactics delivered personalized assessments, e-learning, and coaching to shift the team's mindset and capabilities. Today, procurement leads with strategy and value creation, proactively anticipating business needs and driving stronger organizational impact.

Maritza Filmer-Sankey
Director of Global Procurement & Sourcing, Meira GTX



How Travel + Leisure Repositioned Procurement as a Strategic Business Enabler

Travel + Leisure's procurement team was primarily reactive, creating a gap between organizational demands and strategic capability. Procurement Tactics provided personalized assessments, e-learning, and coaching to shift the team's mindset and skills. Today, procurement is positioned as a true business enabler—driving strategy, creating value, and proactively anticipating organizational needs.

Jeff Lentsch
Strategic Sourcing & Transformational Indirect Procurement, Travel + Leisure



WHY YOUR EMPLOYER WILL CARE

A study conducted by Accenture found that for every dollar invested in training, companies received \$4.53 in return. That's a 353% ROI!

DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START?

Ask your team to take our Skill Assessment and based on their answers we will create a tailored Learning Journey for each team member.

[SKILLS ASSESSMENT](#)

GET A SNEAK PEEK OF LESSONS AND COURSE MATERIALS

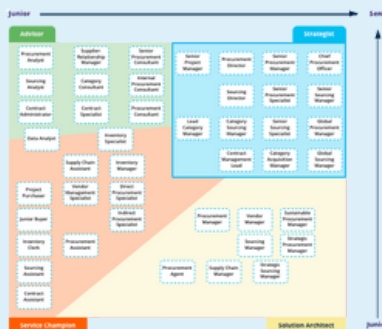
These snippets offer a quick look at the valuable insights and practical skills you'll gain, helping you decide which course is the perfect fit for advancing your procurement expertise.



Engaging Video Lessons

Learn at your own pace with bite-sized, pre-recorded lessons by leading Procurement experts

[WATCH PREVIEW](#)



Interactive Career Path

Craft your own journey and see what your career path will look like

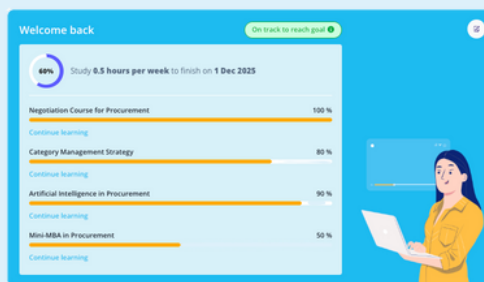
[CRAFT YOUR OWN PATH](#)



Practical Guides & Templates

Save time and effort with a library of grab-and-go templates, guides, checklists, and more.

[TOUR THE LIBRARY](#)



Demo Dashboard

See what it's like to learn inside our platform. Experience the platform like a real learner

[SEE DASHBOARD](#)

PROCUREMENT TRENDS 2026

Thank you!

At Procurement Tactics, we believe that procurement teams thrive when equipped with the right skills and knowledge.

If you would like to learn more about our programs, explore our platform, or discuss how we can help you prepare for the trends highlighted in this report, we'd love to stay in touch.

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You may also book a call
by scanning the QR Code

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