

# Digital Procurement Transformation

## Plan for Tiny Togs Sri Lanka

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## **Introduction to the Selected Organization**

Tiny Togs Sri Lanka is a locally incorporated retail company that deals in baby items, children's wear, toys, and other necessary care items for infants to young children. As time progressed, the company has gradually expanded its retail outlets to several locations in Sri Lanka. The nature of the baby to children retail industry requires a constant supply of items to instil customer loyalty. It is for this reason that suppliers must be reliable to ensure a constant supply of items to instil customer loyalty.

The nature of the business is such that it is a typical case of an owner-managed small business operating in the Sri Lankan context. The centralized nature of the business's strategy and operations is a characteristic of such a business. The procurement related matters such as the selection of the supplier, negotiations on the price, and the purchase are all managed and performed by the owner.

Currently, Tiny Togs does not possess an actual procurement team or structured procurement roles. This means that the company does not document procurement policies, procurement processes, or procurement evaluation criteria. This leads to procurement being done with a focus on operational requirements, past experiences with suppliers, and gut feel, which, although very dynamic and operational, could pose limitations regarding scale as the company continues to grow.

From the IT point of view, the activities related to procurement are being carried out at a very elementary level. The owner is using Excel sheets to store the information of suppliers, as well as the information related to purchases, payments, as well as simple inventory information. The information on the Excel sheets is being manually updated, and it is not being integrated with the inventory management, as well as the sales information.

Contrary to the common trends observed in the procurement processes of most modern retail businesses, where cloud-based procurement systems, ERP systems, supplier portal systems, and business analytics systems are common, the Tiny Togs business continues to operate with very little help from technology. Modern information technology procurement systems allow for automated purchase requests, automated approvals, automated inventory-driven

replenishments, business spend analyses, and organized management of business relations with suppliers. All these are not available at Tiny Togs.

As the business grows in terms of number of stores, products, and number of suppliers, it becomes increasingly apparent that a supplier-oriented procurement process based on Excel is not adequate. Problems like lack of standardization in supplier quotes, supplier performance tracking, delays in replenishment orders, and lack of spend visibility are part of the process. It is against this backdrop that a more organized procurement process is required, which should incorporate appropriate IT-enabled procurement solutions that match the size of the company.

## **Challenges in Procurement and Analysis**

Tiny Togs Sri Lanka has an unstructured procurement process that is prevalent in retail SMEs that are owner managed. Though the company is still in operation, the lack of structure in procurement is hiding several important challenges that have been impacting the efficiency and scalability of the company. Based on the assessment of retail operations and the unstructured procurement process that is currently used by Tiny Togs Sri Lanka, the following eight important procurement challenges have been identified.

### **Excessive Dependency on the Owner for Procurement Decisions**

All the decisions related to procurement in Tiny Togs are centralized with the owner. This poses a major single point of failure. In case the owner is not available for operational or personal or strategic reasons, the procurement process will slow down or stop. This will have an impact on the scalability of the business in the long run.

### **Lack of Procurement Governance and Standardized Processes**

Tiny Togs do not follow formal procurement procedures and structures in terms of quotations and purchase authorizations. There are no formal rules and procedures in terms of quotations to be compared and suppliers to be invited to buy from the business. It is likely to result in inconsistent quotations and suppliers being selected depending on urgency or personal choice.

### **Limited Spend Visibility and Cost Control**

The procurement expenditures are monitored through simple spreadsheets in Excel, which are updated by hand. Although this system allows for a simple tracking mechanism for expenditures, it does not give any real-time feedback on overall spending, spending on different categories, or spending with different suppliers. This makes it difficult for Tiny Togs to analyse areas for spending cuts, negotiate better deals for bulk purchases, or avoid wasteful purchases.

### **Reactive and Inefficient Inventory Replenishment**

Categorically, the procurement process is mainly driven by the observation of stock shortages at the stores instead of being driven by a rational replenishment process. Inability to have integration among the sales, inventory, and procurement processes results in stock shortages of high-demand items while there is overstocking of low-demand items.

### **Weak Supplier Performance and Relationship Management**

The relationships with the suppliers of Tiny Togs are relatively unstructured and based on long-term acquaintance. There are no set KPIs for evaluating the reliability of the suppliers, the quality of the goods, the lead times, and the responsiveness. This means that the suppliers who are performing below par may continue to supply, and the suppliers who are doing well may not be developed.

### **Inconsistent Pricing and Missed Negotiation Opportunities**

Because there is no direct comparison of quotes and spend analysis, there could be instances where Tiny Togs is paying different amounts for similar items from different suppliers or in different buying cycles. Opportunities for volume consolidation are also often lost because buying is done on a store-by-store basis.

### **High Risk of Errors and Data Inaccuracy**

Data entry of information into Excel sheets can lead to inaccuracies such as incorrect quantities, repeated entries, outdated supplier data, and missed payments. This can lead to disagreements with suppliers, late payment, and strained relations. With time, inaccurate information erodes management's trust in procurement data.

### **Limited Scalability and Strategic Growth Constraints**

With the expansion of the store chain and the offerings of Tiny Togs, the existing procurement system is not scalable. It becomes increasingly difficult for the owner and the staff to cope with the logistics of procurement from various vendors when the procurement process is manual. This makes the procurement system a hindrance to the growth of the company.

## **Digital Procurement Transformation Proposal**

The plan for a digital transformation of procurement at Tiny Togs Sri Lanka is divided into a well-structured and goal-oriented project with well-defined processes and step-by-step implementation. This proposal is made with a view to suit an owner-managed retail concern that is presently operating with an unstructured procurement system using basic Excel-based solutions. This proposal does not aim at providing an elaborate enterprise solution for their procurement needs.

### **Objectives of Digital Procurement Transformation**

The major aims of the proposed digitalization of procurement are as follows:

- **Minimize dependence on the owner**  
for daily procurement tasks while maintaining overall strategic control.
- **Establish standardized procurement procedures**  
to ensure consistency, control, and transparency in all stores.

- **Better cost management**  
through visibility of spending and organized sourcing.
- **Improving inventory visibility**  
by relating purchasing decisions to inventory levels and sales data.
- **Establish a procurement system**  
with accurate data for informed growth.
- **Establish the groundwork**  
for the progressive digital evolution without interfering with the current business.

## **The Proposed Digital Procurement Process Framework**

The future procurement process at TinyTogs will be as follows, which is a simple and organized digital process that follows common SME patterns of procurement

### **Step 1 - Digital Purchase Requisition**

Purchase requisition requests from store level personnel or operation personnel through a centralized computerized system based on minimum levels or demand for sales, as opposed to oral communication.

### **Step 2: System Based Approval Workflow**

The purchase requisition is processed based on predetermined approval criteria. In routine purchases, the system automatically approves purchases within predetermined limits. In the case of important purchases, the owner is sent the requisition for review.

### **Step 3: Supplier Selection and Quotation Comparison**

The approved requisition initiates the supplier selection process from an approved list of suppliers. The system supports basic quote comparison to ensure that prices are consistent and transparent.

### **Step 4: Digital Purchase Order Generation**

After selecting suppliers, digital purchase orders are automatically created and sent to suppliers. This avoids misunderstandings about price and delivery time.

**Step 5: Goods Receipt and Verification**

The delivered items are checked against purchase orders at a store or warehouse level, and all transactions are recorded electronically, resulting in a minimal number of discrepancies or disputes.

**Step 6: Invoice Matching and Payment Processing**

The supplier invoices are verified for matching, purchase orders and receipt of goods prior to approval for payment.

**Alignment with the Business Reality of Tiny Togs**

This proposal respects the operational realities faced by Tiny Togs, including the lack of procurement staff, cost concerns, and the need for owner engagement. The objectives and steps outlined in the proposal are very basic and scalable, reflecting the nature of the business.

Through the implementation of this objective-oriented and process-oriented digital procurement proposal, Tiny Togs would be able to gradually shift from its current unorganized purchasing processes towards a structured purchasing process.

## **Strategic Sourcing Approach**

The sourcing approach of Tiny Togs Sri Lanka must change from an owner driven, experience driven buying approach to more of an owner driven, relationship focused buying approach. In the baby and kids' retailing category, where availability, safety, quality, and reliability are critical, the sourcing approach in strategic sourcing must focus on long term, reliable supplier relationships as opposed to transaction-driven buying.

A category-based approach is recommended: organize products around categories such as baby care essentials, kids apparel, toys, and accessories. This allows the company to identify key strategic suppliers. For essential items with high volumes of purchases, take on a preferred supplier method: identify a shortlist of suppliers for consistent supply on parameters of product quality, delivery, safety, and price.

As Tiny Togs expands in size from its current scale, the purchasing decisions made should increasingly take into consideration the capacities and scalability of suppliers. Long-term agreements with identified suppliers may provide access to improved prices and a steady flow of products. The application of simple demand forecasting based on past sales and inventory trends may also provide a basis for purchasing decisions rather than relying solely on intuition.

Even with a small-scale information technology infrastructure, the introduction of simple electronic purchasing solutions or cloud-based inventory management solutions would enhance strategic sourcing. Some level of automation will help to better track spending, suppliers, and inventory movements, and this will enable better sourcing decisions.

## **Contracting and SLA Considerations**

As more structure is brought into purchasing, contracts and service level agreements will become necessary to control operational risk and encourage supplier responsibility.

## **Contracting Considerations**

Tiny Togs' sourcing is based primarily on informal agreements and trust-based sourcing. Although typical for small businesses operated by their owners, such a sourcing practice may put Tiny Togs' sourcing at risk of market price fluctuations, quality, timeliness, and supplier non-performance. The inclusion of written contracts, albeit basic, would help.

The terms of the contract between suppliers and retailers should include the terms of supply specifications of the product, quality, packaging, and adherence to child safety regulations. The structure of pricing, discounts, bulk pricing, and how prices are revised should also be clear. This is important in the retail market in Sri Lanka because there are factors such as the cost of importing and exchange rates that affect pricing.

The terms of delivery, such as lead time, points of delivery, responsible parties for the means of transportation, and fines for frequent late deliveries, should be stated in contracts. Payment terms, including credit terms, means of payments, and fines for late payments, should also be clearly stated in order to keep finances disciplined and maintain good supplier relationships.

This is because decision-making in such a business organization is highly centralized. Contract management in such a business organization can be done by the owner through the use of templates.

## **SLA Considerations**

SLAs play an important part in maintaining constant supply and quality of services, which in turn impacts customer satisfaction in the baby and children's product market. Begin implementing SLAs on important and high-risk suppliers first and not on all at once.

The basic measures for the SLA should include on-time delivery, accuracy of orders, quality, and response to the need for immediate replenishment. For example, the vendors can be required to meet a certain standard for on-time delivery, and any faulty products can be replaced within a specific timeframe.

SLAs should also cover communication and issue resolution, such as times for responding to order confirmations, complaints, and stock shortages. This becomes particularly important in the absence of automated systems for procurement. Additionally, to encourage compliance, these SLAs can include reward schemes for high levels of performance, such as 'Preferred

Supplier Status' or 'Increased Volume of Orders,' while specific 'Corrective Actions' can be included in case of poor performance. Regular 'Supplier Reviews' will assist Tiny Togs in making informed decisions.

## **Supplier Relationship management (SRM) Development Plan**

### **Conceptual Definition and Strategic Intent**

The SRM Development Plan is not simply an administrative procedure; it is a strategic framework or guide to help facilitate the process of integrating two independent organizations. According to what was outlined in the core curriculum, SRM is an "explicit, systematic approach on both sides towards organizational integration in order to achieve greater value for money for the buyer and enhanced margins for the supplier."

This development plan's premier intention is to move away from a transactional "adversarial" mindset to one of mutual benefit. This will come about through a shift from simple outsourcing or sole-sourcing agreements toward a model where aspects of both organizations-integrated R&D, supply chain logistics, and quality control-are combined in such a manner as to meet the long-term strategic objectives of both entities

## **The Applications of Power Dynamics**

An elaborate development plan should be cognizant of the underlying power relations which affect inter-business relations. To handle these issues, an elaborate development plan uses five power sources cited by French & Raven in an IT Procurement module, which include:

- **Informational and Expert Power:**

The plan emphasizes leveraging data and technical expertise to influence supplier behaviour. By providing suppliers with better forecasts and technical requirements, the buyer gains "Expert Power," encouraging the supplier to align their production with the buyer's needs.

- **Referent and Reward Power:**

"Referent Power" is integrated into this development plan by running common business values, including sustainability and stability. "Reward Power" will be exercised by giving exclusive or improved opportunities to suppliers, including "Customer of Choice," for being unique or innovative.

- **Legitimate and Coercive Power:**

Although the model emphasizes a partnership, it recognizes "Legitimate Power" (contract power) and "Coercive Power" (switching threats) as forces necessary to gain compliance with SLAs and quality levels.

## **Strategic Segmentation and Competency Assessment**

The development plan will follow a tiered approach to managing suppliers, concentrating resources on those suppliers presenting either high supply risk or high profit impact.

- **Operational Proficiency:** It creates baselines for IT service delivery, like uptimes, cybersecurity protocols, and hardware reliability.

- **Relationship Competency:** Suppliers are also rated on their "soft skills"-their ability to communicate openly, share information, and engage in collaborative problem-solving
- **Innovative Competency:** For the strategic partners, there is "Early Supplier Involvement" or ESI, meaning that suppliers must take part in the design phase of IT projects to leverage their unique technological insights.

## Governance and Performance Management

To make sure that the benefits are "real and tangible," a strong framework of governance has been set up in the plan. The following are included in the framework:

- **Scorecard System:** A tool for evaluating cost, quality, delivery, and innovation.
- **The Meeting Cadence:** Defined levels of interaction, such as executive steering committees that happen once a year to operational check-ins on a weekly basis
- **Risk Management:** Specific risks to be managed from this partnership are revealed by the plan, such as issues related to quality, material shortages, currency risks, and disruptive events such as global chip shortages.

## Technology Recommendations

To address the procurement challenges faced by TINY TOGS and facilitate its transition into a more effective, transparent, and scalable procurement department, it is essential to incorporate the right digital procurement solutions. In the context that TINY TOGS is a small and medium retail company, the recommendations for the technology implementation should be cost-effective, easy to implement, and able to integrate with the existing business model, including the sales conducted through social media sites.

The first technology that may be suggested is a procurement management system that relies on cloud technology. This technology enables there to be a central management of information regarding suppliers, purchase orders and payments. Cloud technology is especially appropriate for a company like TINY TOGS because such technology does not

require a high amount of initial spending and reduces any requirements there would be for an IT system at such a company.

Furthermore, it is highly recommended to integrate an inventory management system with procurement. It ensures real time tracking of levels and, through initiative, automatically sends notifications when the levels reach below set limits. Inventory integrated with procurement ensures that buying decisions are informed by data, rather than being reactive, hence minimizing stockouts and surplus inventory. A company like itself, which advertises products on Facebook, must be able to meet customer demand as soon as possible.

Another important recommendation is the establishment of a supplier management module. It would manage one unified supplier database, track supplier performance indicators such as punctuality in delivering supplies and the standard of products and maintain contractual information of the same. Digital records of suppliers enhance transparency and enable better decisions regarding the selection and negotiation processes with suppliers.

Second, TINY TOGS would also benefit from the digitization of the payment and invoicing process. Integrating purchasing with accounting software allows for faster invoice processing, reduces manual errors, and offers better visibility of cash flow. Automated workflows for invoice matching and approval improve financial control and compliance.

Finally, the incorporation of basic analytics and reporting capabilities within the procurement system should be recommended. This will provide management with the capability to analyse procurement expenses, determine the costliest suppliers, assess procurement trends, and provide inputs for effective strategic sourcing. Even basic dashboards provide immense value within the procurement domain.

### Recommended Procurement Technologies for TINY TOGS

Technology	Purpose	Key Benefits
Cloud-based Procurement System	Centralize purchasing processes	Improved visibility and control

Inventory Management System	Track stock levels in real time	Reduced stockouts and overstocking
Supplier Management Module	Manage supplier data and performance	Better supplier governance
Digital Payment & Invoicing	Automate financial transactions	Faster processing and fewer errors
Analytics & Reporting Tools	Analyse procurement data	Data-driven decision-making

These technology recommendations provide a practical and scalable digital procurement foundation for TINY TOGS, enabling operational efficiency while remaining aligned with the organization's size and budget constraints.

## Benefits, ROI, and Value Outcomes

It is expected that the digital transformation of procurement at TINY TOGS will lead to significant operational, financial, and strategic benefits: with fully integrated solutions for digitalization from manual procurement processes, an organization can achieve massive efficiency gains in terms of better cost management and supplier performance, thereby creating value on investment returns.

One of the major benefits is a reduction in cost, driven by better visibility and management of spend. The digital procurement platforms provide deep insights into buying behaviors, vendor pricing, and cost at a product level. These enable TINY TOGS to rationalize purchases, negotiate better pricing, and eliminate wasteful or duplicate spending. Even slight cost improvements can have considerable impacts on the profitability of a small retail business operation.

Another key value outcome is operational effectiveness. Smooth procurement workflows reduce the time spent on manual tasks such as raising orders, record-keeping, and invoice processing. Staff are free to serve customers, undertake marketing, and other business development activities. Faster procurement cycles ensure better product availability, critical

in a demand-driven retail environment. From an inventory standpoint, integrated procurement and inventory systems reduce stockouts and excess inventory. Better demand forecasting and timely reordering reduce lost sales opportunities and decrease capital invested in slow-moving inventory. This enhances working capital management and enables sustainable business growth.

The benefits that are related to suppliers are also considerable. Digital supplier management permits structured performance assessments, as well as better communication and teamwork. Defined expectations, improved data exchange, and open performance metrics strengthen supplier partnerships and reduce procurement risks, such as lateness or variable quality, for example.

The ROI for digital procurement comes via a combination of cost reduction, efficiency gain, and revenue topping up revenue. While upfront costs may be related to software subscription and basic training costs, these are offset by long-term operational gains and better decision-making.

## **Benefits and Value Outcomes of Digital Procurement at TINY TOGS**

The proposed digital procurement transformation offers TINY TOGS a strong value proposition. By achieving tangible cost savings, operational improvements, and enhanced supplier relationships, the organization can realize a positive ROI while building a resilient and scalable procurement function aligned with long-term business objectives.

<b>Benefit Category</b>	<b>Value Outcome</b>	<b>Business Impact</b>
Cost Management	Reduced procurement costs	Improved profitability
Operational Efficiency	Faster procurement cycles	Higher productivity
Inventory Optimization	Lower stockholding costs	Better cash flow
Supplier Performance	Reliable and timely deliveries	Reduced operational risk

Decision-Making	Data-driven procurement planning	Strategic growth support
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## Implementation Roadmap and Timeline

Application of the SRM framework is a change or transition process or journey of the organization, which advances along an improvement or maturity curve from "No SRM to World-class SRM" within this 12-month plan to address the difficulties of SRM implementation, such as the absence of top-level support and SRM's emphasis on cost, not on value.

### Phase I: Internal Foundations and Readiness (Months 1–3)

The first quarter is inward facing. History shows that SRM implementation often fails due to a lack of internal alignment between business units and procurement.

- **Securing Sponsorship:** High-level engagement is sought from the C-suite to ensure that SRM is viewed as a business-wide priority rather than a procurement initiative.
- **Setting the Ambition Level:** The organization evaluates its current "SRM Maturity." Are we currently "Ad-hoc" (reacting to crises) or "Established" (having standard processes)?
- **Business Case Definition:** We identify the "Value for Money" objectives, predict how much money the organization will save through enhanced processes, reduced inventory, and access to technological innovations.
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### Phase II: The Pilot and Relationship "Exploration" (Months 4–6)

The organization selects a small group of strategic IT suppliers to test the framework in the second quarter.

- **Building Trust:** In this stage, "referent power" is built where common business ideals are shared. We go from "fighting" over price to "collaborating" on shared objectives.
- **SLA and KPI Baseline:** We establish the "Standard Control and Compliance" metrics. In an IT supplier example, this could include only a certain benchmark of technical support response times or software patch cycles.
- **Information Sharing Protocols:** We establish secure channels for open communication, negating the academic challenge that "open communication and information sharing is hard" in the early stages of a partnership.

### **Phase III: Full Operationalization and Value Capture (Months 7–9)**

During the third quarter, SRM processes are standardized for all strategic and leverage categories that have been identified.

- **Joint Value Creation:** We undertook "Value Engineering" initiatives. For instance, collaborating with a cloud service company to minimize server utilization costs for the purchasing party and maximize the profit margin for the supplying company.
- **Handling Soft Skills:** There is training offered to the procurement team to deal with the "soft skills" involved in the relationship. This shifts the paradigm from "adversarial" to "integrative" thinking.
- **Benefit Tracking:** Here, the process begins with the measurement of actual benefits such as enhanced on-time performance, responsiveness, or access to new technological markets.

### **Phase IV: Optimization and "World-Class" Integration (Months 10–12)**

The final quarter is all about embedding the SRM process into the organization's DNA and achieving a state of 'World-class' performance.

- **Annual Relationship Audit:** We do a 360-degree analysis. The supplier evaluates the performance of the buyer as the buyer evaluates the supplier. This helps us live up to our claim to be a "Customer of Choice."

- **Reducing "Disruptive Events":** By Month 12, the company and its strategic supply chain partners have developed a "Joint Risk Register" to appropriately manage any type of disruptive supply chain event or reputation issue.
- **Continuous Improvement Cycle:** The roadmap concludes with the establishment of a "permanent SRM Office" or centre of excellence that will ensure the mindset change has been achieved and that the capabilities are being fully utilized.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the design and implementation of a planned Supplier Relationship Management strategy signify an important shift in thinking from purchasing to a results-oriented integrated partnership. In this report, we have shown that SRM is more than just an administrative process. By aligning the buyer's strategy with the strengths of the supply base, we can secure a position defined as 'Customer of Choice,' which will provide our firm with favoured access to innovation, minimize supply volatility, and maximize efficiency.

The challenge in executing this plan is based on executing power dynamics well, including shifting from coercive power with prices to either referent or expert power in terms of commonalities in the world of business through shared knowledge. Also, having a 12-month roadmap in implementing the SRM helps in disciplining the journey through the SRM maturity model and aligning internal aspects before extending the initiative to the whole supply base.

Finally, the ultimate desire in relation to this SRM Development Plan is to build "real and tangible" value that goes past general relationship metrics. With value in mind as opposed to unit price and embracing a philosophy of clear communication, the company can proactively reduce potential risks associated with unpredictable events in the supply chain and quality derailments. With a continually growing complex supply chain environment in most industries, including the information technology industry, collaborating with a strategic partner is the most viable course to achieve a competitive edge.

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