Session: 2
Room: Ellen Pinsent Room

Session title : Getting suppliers into the conversations and procurement

Session leader : Glen & David

Volunteer to continue conversation after :

Notes taken by : Rebekah Broughton

Notes

Glen's kick-off: Decade in public sector and decade selling into public sector. MHCLG is looking at market intelligence. Misunderstanding about data vs intelligence? 3rd parties have tooling that is highly customisable. Suppliers don't know what they are supplying. Councils don't know what we've got?

Framing check: Local government framing?

Opinion: 10000 times more difficult with a Local Gov lens.

Example: Multiple products. 1200 different systems for 6000 residents?

David's kick-off: Everyone gets excited. Good/bad. Procurement basically is: Having a chat / getting a deal together.

The main thing is magic before the procurement. We need to deliver this market. How might we deliver this?

Procurement is simply a set of rules. It goes wrong when people focus on the wrong things.

Response: Being on a bid team. How do we bring people and teams together? Market engagement is fairly new. Observation: The current supplier ends up being retained.

Opinion: It feels like a tick box exercise. For good procurement this isn't the primary focus.

Experience: First question you get asked: Where have you done this before?
What if it's innovative and new? Does it predefine a solution?

Supplier opinion: Big players stay the big players and dominate the market. Is this good?

Experience: Being on both sides of procurement. Pre-market engagement is a good concept but how it's played out in reality isn't ideal. Not always the case. There have been some better ones.

Collective view of the outcome is important.

Example in local gov: procurement decisions are driven by service areas and it might be how it should be but then they don't know how to navigate procurement. A project might get framed as a solution but they need to give it a name. You also might find that the timeframes are too short to actually act on the procurement.

Example: "We're bringing planning into the 21st century" but that didn't give enough context. Tension between private sector market needs and public sector procurement. Public sector ask might be niche and at odds with the private sector ask.

Need to have a good idea about what is available, what is being used, what needs to be supported.

Things not procured until it's urgent. That makes it harder for buyers to take a risk on SMEs. It's a "perceived risk"

Resounding view that it's difficult for SMEs to work with Gov.

Contracts are so huge are they legally binding? It's hard to know what is being asked for either way.

Libraries of standard terms would be incredibly useful for local government. Retrofitting accessibility is a nightmare. Security challenges about a consistent ask. It makes it incredibly hard for suppliers and internally.

Suppliers are going to do what's in their contract. Shared belief that there is a business model to make change requests that makes suppliers more money.

How do we have contractual levers in place to hold suppliers to account?

It's not just how you standardise forms.

Contract scope tends to be smaller with SMEs. Often business cases are written around reprocuring around feature sets.

Opinion: The nature of business cases needs to work. Problem of dis-agregation. Overlapping requirements. If you don't dis-aggregate you trust the supplier to do it. Outcome disaggregation. Commercial dis-aggregation.

Organisational self-harm: What needs to change to make a difference? If you go to a big supplier they'll tell you they can customise it for you. Then after procurement the supplier has the advantage to charge a lot for customisation. If you go with a small supplier it's like you're trained not to work with them.

It is important to manage contracts too. Leave 10% to manage the contract. No budget to support that.

Invitation to speak to David about good procurement. Content and experience he is keen to share.

He's created the first CPV for digital and AI. He also runs innovation workshops with Welsh Gov.

Point about digital not being commoditised. Lack of language for AI and digital so there is not way for the Gov to track it.

How do we buy quality? It was very hard to build into the quality scoring to prove that they had the deep expertise.

[David Kershaw](), Pragmatic Procurement Professional mentioned the following and happy to share or tell you more: [david.kershaw@posterity.global]() / 07932 279944.

Digital Commercial Lifecycle approach – how this works throughout: Plan and prepare, Procure and contract, Mobilise, deliver, learn and exit.

Digital CPV – he has created the world's first Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV) taxonomy for: Digital, Data, Cloud, AI, Apps and Wearables.

[AI Procurement Community of Interest]() – we run this and the AI Procurement Community of Practice.

Platform – Project Dawn a new platform addresses a critical, modern-day challenge: the fragmented, opaque, and unmanaged nature of digital spend which is poorly tracked across both public and private sector organisations.