



Bradford Grammar School Chooses The IT Index for Smarter IT Procurement

Save Time, Save Money, Improve IT Procurement Efficiency

With Gordon Brown's demand for huge procurement savings in the public sector on the back of the Gershon report, allied private sector organisations are also finding their processes are in need of efficiencies. E-procurement has been put at the top of the corporate agenda.

As a result of this new focus for savings, departments are striving to be ever more entrepreneurial in their approach towards adopting a solution that delivers a best practice approach to procurement and increased operating efficiency.

One private sector organisation that is allied to public sector work is Bradford Grammar School, and as a business, has had to ensure man hours are maximised and budgets stretch as far as they can reach. As a result, and considering the organisation's ethos to offer nothing but the best, the IT department has embraced e-procurement as part of a more efficient purchasing strategy.

Some two and a half years ago, the IT department implemented The IT Index, a sophisticated e-procurement platform that lists 75,000 products from over 500 vendors by best price and availability within a secure online purchasing environment.

The department's IT Network Manager and technical team are using the solution to purchase peripherals, consumables, hardware and software from toner cartridges to servers.

IT Network Manager Simon Marriott believes the solution is saving nearly two working weeks a month in man hours as a result of massive increases in operating efficiency and purchasing processes.

His team is now able to focus on keeping users online and fulfil their roles as IT technical and maintenance managers as opposed to IT purchasing managers.

The team has been empowered with the purchasing power of a procurement professional in one simple application.

The Client

Bradford Grammar School (BGS) is a selective co-educational school which seeks to retain the best of the traditional grammar school ethos with a modern, forward-thinking approach whilst delivering excellence across the piste.

As one of the highest achieving schools in the UK, the organisation prides itself on creating a learning environment in which pupils are happy and can flourish.

Like all educational facilities, IT forms a crucial element of this environment and as a result the School employs a team of three to manage and maintain an innovative and robust network.

This network employs the very latest technologies in accordance with the organisation's ethos and includes over 500 PC's, 107 printers, 12 file servers, fibre channel hard disk storage facilities and a 10GB backbone.

The Challenge

As part of the Grammar School's IT function, the team is tasked with purchasing IT in order to maintain the efficient functioning of its infrastructure. To that end the team employed a lengthy and complicated process to purchase its IT.

With no formalised purchasing structure in place, the team adopted a simple yet time consuming process that ensured no supplier provided the same order more than twice. Additionally, every purchase would require at least three quotes from separate suppliers. This system was adopted to ensure the School never found itself in the situation where suppliers were increasing their costs unwittingly.

Adhering to that rule, the team would spend up to half of every working day searching for suppliers on the internet before then ringing round each supplier and requesting a quotation. The team would then analyse each quote based on cost and availability.

However, the team's purchasing decision would then be influenced further by the size of the organisation and, as a result, its perceived trust to deliver on time.

This process was exceptionally time consuming and would often deliver product that was not always the best priced or readily available, but was from a trusted source.

With a proactive and innovative ethos behind its IT network management, the team changed its outlook on IT procurement following a demonstration of The IT Index.

The Solution

The IT Index is a web based procurement solution which features more than 75,000 products from over 500 different vendors in a secure on-line environment.

The solution runs daily price comparisons through its powerful Product Information Management System (PIMS) based on information supplied by the IT industry's leading distributors. It then populates this data onto the web-based hub listing the most competitive prices in the industry by best availability.

The IT Index is made available at no cost to organisations with an IT budget of more than £50,000.

The software that drives the IT Index is the first e-procurement solution ever to have been accredited by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England & Wales (ICAEW) and this accreditation represents a major endorsement of its credibility.

The solution enables users to secure best possible prices and the quickest possible delivery of any given product from a server to a printer toner cartridge. It enables buyers to get the best priced product fast.

It eliminates the need for procurement personnel to ring round a number of suppliers for price and stock information, thereby streamlining the business process and improving efficiency.

The solution also saves time wastage and duplication of effort associated with multiple personnel ringing the same supplier for different products as the solution acts as a central user-friendly desktop application.

The IT Index operates on an open book (cost plus agreed margin) basis and takes feeds from 21 mainline UK distributors for pricing details and compares this information to find the best deal. This means users can be confident they are getting the best price in the industry and the best availability on product within the UK distribution network.

Because the IT Index is a web based solution, set up and deployment costs are zero and the lead time associated with deployment is very short. Additionally, as it is a secure solution, fraudulent and unauthorised purchases can be reduced.

The Benefits

Since its adoption in January 2003, IT Network Manager, Simon Marriott, and his team have revolutionised the way they conduct IT sourcing and purchasing as a result of adopting The IT Index.

Simon Marriott, explains: "On average the solution is saving us in excess of two days a week in time we used to spend on researching, sourcing and comparing prices from multiple suppliers. That equates to eight days a month we now use to help users with issues and generally maintain the system to an even higher level.

'The solution has reduced our procurement process from nearly 50% of a working day down to less than half an hour.'

"Furthermore, since its implementation in 2003, The IT Index has saved us in the region of 30% on our IT budget. This means we can now get more from our budget.

"The solution consistently provides product by best price and availability as well as giving us confidence that the product will be delivered on time. We trust that the solution is delivering best value at all times thanks to its feeds that cover product across the UK distribution network.

“Much of this benefit has been due to the solution’s easy to use, three click capabilities. The team required no training and we were able to buy within 24 hours of registering.

“With the re-order pad functionality, we now have the tools of a procurement professional at our finger tips. This means we can tailor and populate an area of what is our Private Procurement Hub for IT, with the most commonly ordered items. Again, this saves even more time.

“The solution has enabled us as a department to do a better job for Bradford Grammar School and its users. We can now get the best priced product for the fastest possible time in the UK, enabling us to stretch our IT budget and deliver a better service to our user base.

“Separately, the strong relationship we now enjoy with The IT Index means that if we do need to discuss the right product specification for a particular job we have easy telephone access to a professional, knowledgeable and responsive account team.”

Contact Details

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