



Winning with procurement

On 4 November Huthwaite International hosted a one-day conference headlined 'Winning with Procurement' at the Grand Connaught Rooms in central London. The event proved hugely popular, drawing 120 delegates from around the world.

The conference was a result of recent research conducted by Huthwaite that revealed some new, and intriguing, insights. Huthwaite CEO, Tony Hughes, explains "Huthwaite has a long history of ground-breaking research, and our recent work in the areas of procurement and negotiation are no exception. However we go beyond research, developing best practice models for how commercial professionals, both buyers and sellers, adapt to the changing world our research reveals. This seminar is our latest contribution to that process."

Tony began the event by outlining the research project that underpinned it. He picked out a number of key findings, most startling being those relating to the, now common, purchasing practice of restricting sellers' access to the decision makers during the bidding process. The research showed that when new sellers, with no existing relationship with the buying company, adhered to the 'no contact' policy their success rate was less than 0.5%. However when selling companies found ways of getting round the policy their hit rate rose to 56% and in only one case had a selling company been disqualified from bidding as a result.

These findings set the scene for the varied and entertaining presentations that followed. The speakers were practitioners from both buy and sell side and represented major corporations, consultancy and professional bodies. Yet, despite their diversity, some common themes emerged, including:

- How procurement will commoditise a sales proposition whenever they can – but are persuaded by unique selling propositions when properly communicated.
- The unique challenges surrounding the procurement of Professional Services and the need for clear objectives and good communication.
- Cost out, value in - It's not how little you pay, it's how much you get.
- The whole landscape of buyer/seller relationships is still in a state of flux.
- Adversarial, price dominated procurement is still around, and sellers must focus on value by understanding and meeting the customer's business objectives to overcome them.
- The final recurring theme, raised by several speakers was the idea of a sales organisation using its own procurement team as part of the sales effort.

Further reading

[Full conference overview](#)

[Video of Tony Hughes' summary](#)

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The day was wrapped up by Tony Hughes who drew parallels between the speakers' observations and Huthwaite's own findings. [Click here](#) to view the video of Tony's final session. (Please be aware that this is a large file and may take a few minutes to download).

For the full overview of the conference including outlines of each speaker slot, please [click here](#).

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