



Sustainability and responsible sourcing professionals often face the challenge of engaging their procurement teams in sustainability initiatives. With procurement professionals managing a significant portion of company revenue, they play a crucial role in supply chain sustainability.

But do you understand **how to collaborate with procurement professionals** in your organization to implement sustainable supply chain practices?

Here are some engagement tips from our recently-published guide, “[Speaking Procurement’s Language](#).” These tips will help foster productive collaboration with procurement professionals and facilitate the seamless incorporation of sustainability initiatives into procurement operations.

- 1. Learn Procurement Terminology:** Familiarize yourself with procurement language to facilitate effective communication with procurement teams. The [CIPS Glossary of Terms](#) can be a helpful resource. Organize collaborative learning sessions between procurement and sustainability teams to foster mutual understanding and inspiration, sharing each team’s goals, processes, and terminology.
- 2. Listen and Understand:** [Actively listen](#) to procurement professionals, recognizing the restrictions on their time and aiming to understand their perspectives and priorities.
- 3. Recognize the Change Management Process:** Understand that implementing sustainability in supply chains is challenging and requires a well-planned [change management process](#).
- 4. Engage Procurement Early and Often:** Collaborate with procurement teams from the start, understanding their priorities and involving them in decision-making processes.
- 5. Align Priorities and Values:** Ensure alignment between company leadership, procurement, and sustainability objectives.
- 6. Begin with Risk:** Initiate the conversation by focusing on [supply chain risks](#) and the benefits of sustainable practices in mitigating those risks.
- 7. Establish Regular Communication:** Set up brief, frequent touch-base calls with procurement leaders to maintain open lines of communication and share updates on supply chain risk and sustainability value.
- 8. Find Overlapping Goals:** Identify areas where sustainability and procurement objectives align, and focus on those to begin your collaboration.
- 9. Build Sustainability Champions:** Encourage procurement team members to become sustainability advocates within the organization.

Remember, the goal here isn’t to make procurement professionals sustainability experts overnight. Instead, it’s about fostering a strong working relationship, based on mutual understanding and respect. In doing so, you can help your organization move towards its sustainability goals in a more coordinated and effective way.

For our full list of tips on connecting with procurement professionals, along with other valuable information to help you understand and improve your interactions with procurement, download our new “[Speaking Procurement’s Language](#)” guide.

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