



THE NO-NONSENSE CPO PLAYBOOK

YOUR FIRST 100 DAYS



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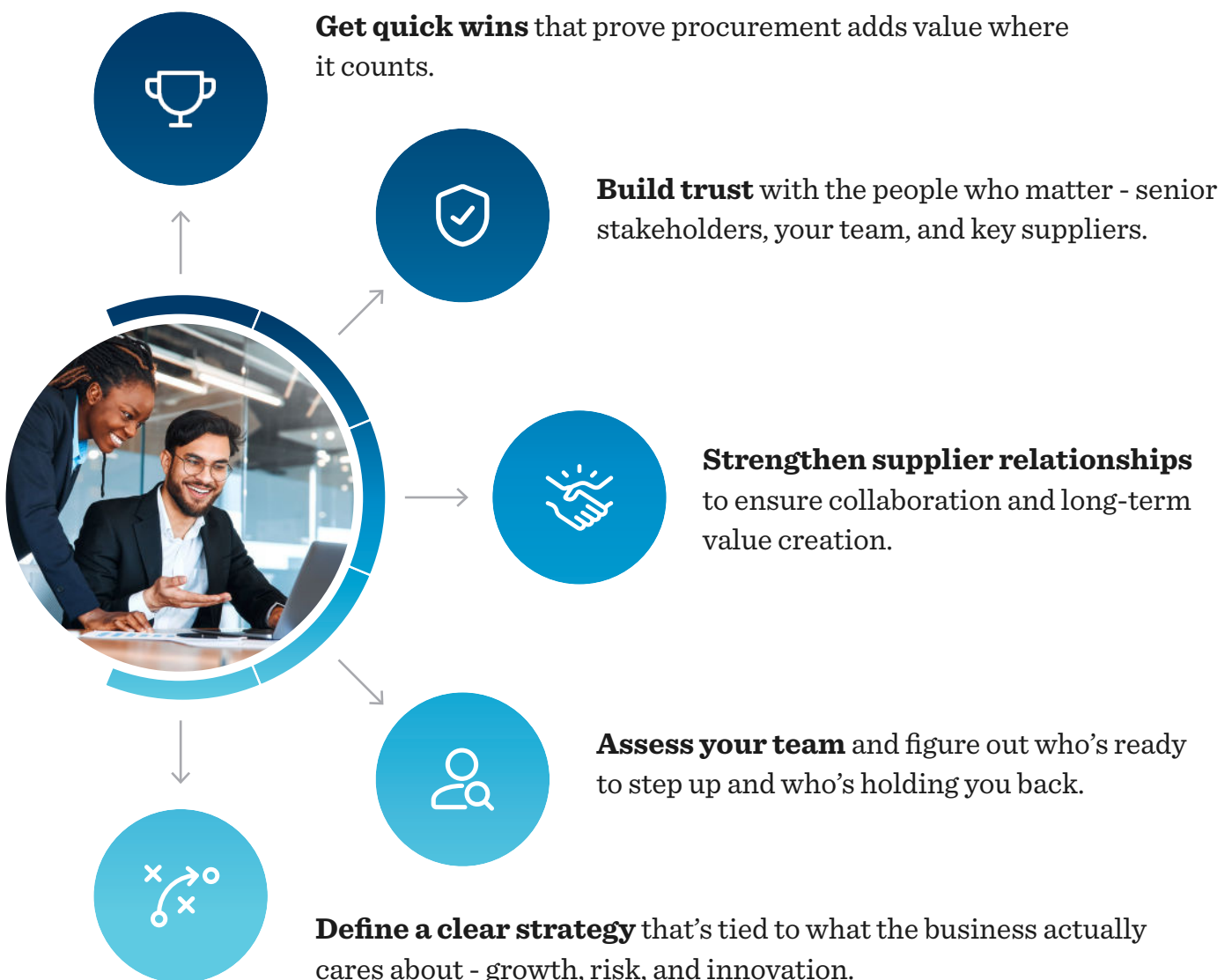


Welcome to the hot seat

Let's cut to the chase: Your first 100 days as CPO are critical. They'll define your leadership, shape how procurement is perceived, and determine whether it's viewed as a strategic powerhouse or just another back-office function.

Whether you're inheriting a well-oiled machine or stepping into chaos, one thing is certain - expectations are high. Stakeholders want results, your team needs direction, and there's no time to waste. The pressure is on to deliver, and fast.

Over the next three months, you'll need to



This guide isn't filled with fluffy buzzwords or theoretical frameworks you'll never use. It's a practical, no-nonsense roadmap to help you hit the ground running, deliver real results, and position procurement as a driver of business success.

Because here's the reality: Procurement has evolved. It's no longer just about savings - it's about delivering value, managing risk, driving innovation, and embedding ESG into the heart of the business. That's the bar you need to clear.

And while this guide shows you how to win your first 90 days, we also look beyond them. Those first months are about proving procurement's value - what comes next is about scaling it. We'll help you lock in the rhythm you've built, sustain momentum, and set the agenda for the next quarter so procurement stays a driver of results, not just a one-off success.

So, are you ready to get started? Let's go.



Before you start

Success in this role starts before day one. The more preparation you do ahead of time, the faster you'll hit the ground running.

Understand the company's products, services, and market position. If it's a public company, check out the Investor Relations section on their website - this will give you a clear picture of growth areas, challenges, and strategic priorities.

Get to know as much about your new team as possible, try and meet your boss a couple of times (maybe over a beer or coffee) to understand how they perceive the state of play and priorities. This is also a great opportunity to understand how they think and operate before you even start.

If you're not on gardening leave, **get a confidentiality agreement in place (if required) and start gathering insights on current projects, major spend categories, and strategic priorities.** This not only helps you hit the ground running but also gives you a sense of individual team members' strengths and weaknesses.



THEME 1

Strategic Alignment

Why It's Important

Strategic alignment ensures procurement isn't just a back-office function but a driver of real business success. If you don't connect procurement to the company's bigger picture, you're just another cost-cutter waiting to be sidelined.

Without alignment, you become an afterthought. With it, procurement becomes indispensable.

What Happens When You Get it Right?

- ✔ Procurement is recognised as a **value-adding function**, not just a cost controller.
- ✔ Stakeholders trust procurement to **drive innovation, sustainability, and scalability** - not just negotiate savings.

- ✔ Business leaders actively seek procurement's input because they see it as a **strategic enabler**.
- ✔ Procurement becomes a key player in **enterprise-wide priorities** - from ESG initiatives to risk resilience.
- ✔ Your influence grows as you **demonstrate real business impact**, positioning yourself as a leader who delivers on big-picture goals.

What's At Stake?

- If procurement doesn't align with business priorities, it stays stuck in a **reactive, transactional role**.
- Executives will see you as an **overhead function** instead of a business driver.
- Without alignment, procurement **loses credibility and influence**.

Your Game Plan

Strategic alignment doesn't happen overnight. It requires a mix of deep listening, careful positioning, and smart execution. In your first 100 days, your goal is to embed procurement into the core of your business strategy by ensuring alignment with key corporate objectives such as growth, efficiency, risk mitigation, and ESG.

Remember that every company has its own way of getting things done - whether it's formal processes or behind-the-scenes politics. A good way to navigate this new ecosystem is to find a well-respected insider who understands how decisions actually happen and can help you navigate approvals, board buy-in, and cultural nuances. This can help you move much faster.

Key Corporate Objectives



**Listen
and Learn**



**Craft
a Vision**



**Build
Momentum**

STEP 01

STEP 02

STEP 03

STEP
01**Listen and Learn**

- In the first 30 days, meet with the C-suite and senior leaders to understand their pain points, priorities, and expectations. Don't just ask about procurement - ask what keeps them up at night and how you can help solve their challenges. This will help you shape a procurement vision that resonates with the business. Simultaneously, conduct a procurement maturity assessment to evaluate what's working, what's broken, and where there's potential for growth. Understand past missteps to avoid repeating them. By the end of the first month, you should know where procurement fits into the bigger picture and what needs to change.

STEP
02**Craft a Vision**

- By day 60, translate those insights into a concrete strategy. Draft a procurement vision that is closely tied to business priorities and clearly communicate how procurement can support innovation, ESG initiatives, and resilience in the supply chain. Present this vision to senior leadership, ensuring you gain buy-in early. Alignment isn't just about what procurement does - it's about how procurement is perceived. If the C-suite sees you as a strategic enabler, your influence and impact grow exponentially. This is also the time to refine your approach based on feedback and ensure that procurement is integrated into high-level business discussions.

STEP
03**Build Momentum**

- By the 90-day mark, it's time to switch gears. Finalise your strategy and start executing. Set up governance mechanisms and regular stakeholder check-ins to maintain alignment. Without ongoing alignment, procurement risks slipping back into a reactive role - your job is to make sure that doesn't happen. Most importantly, use this period to lay the groundwork for long-term transformation. Setting procurement up as a driver of innovation, sustainability, and strategic business growth means ensuring the right frameworks and relationships are in place to sustain success beyond the initial 100 days.

Summary of Key Actions

30 Days

- ✔ Meet with C-suite and senior leaders to understand their biggest pain points and expectations for procurement
- ✔ Conduct a procurement maturity assessment – what’s working, what’s broken?
- ✔ Get clear on business priorities (Growth? Efficiency? Risk? ESG?) and map procurement’s role in supporting them

60 Days

- ✔ Draft a strategic vision for procurement that clearly aligns with the company’s objectives
- ✔ Present findings and recommendations to senior leadership and secure buy-in
- ✔ Identify ESG and innovation opportunities - beyond just cost savings – to elevate procurement’s role

90 Days

- ✔ Finalise and start executing your strategy
- ✔ Set up regular check-ins with key stakeholders to maintain alignment
- ✔ Communicate progress - if you don’t share wins, they don’t exist
- ✔ Define long-term next steps to position procurement as a business enabler, not just as a cost-control function



Things to Watch Out For

Lack of clarity about your role

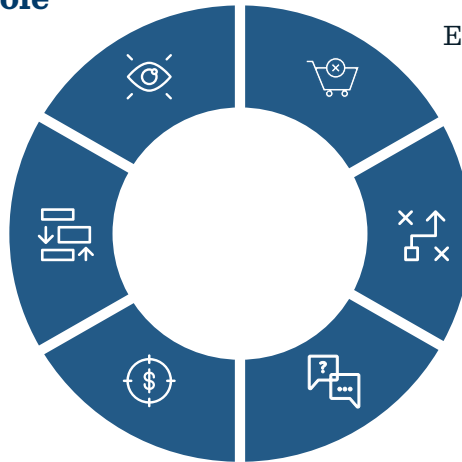
Without a clear understanding of expectations, it's harder to build alignment and trust.

Misaligned priorities

Ensure your vision addresses the real needs of the business, not just procurement's internal goals.

Focusing too narrowly on cost savings

Limiting procurement's scope undermines its strategic potential; aim to demonstrate broader value.



Lack of buy-in

Engage stakeholders early and often to avoid resistance down the road.

Staying tactical

Don't let procurement's strategic potential be overshadowed by day-to-day operations.

Ineffective communication

Be clear and business-focused when sharing procurement's impact.

Embedding ESG in Procurement: A Practical Playbook for CPOs

With rising regulations and increasing pressure from stakeholders, ESG in procurement requires clear, actionable strategies rather than broad commitments. For new CPOs, the challenge is to integrate ESG in a way that is measurable, commercially viable, and aligned with business priorities.

Here are three key ways to make ESG a core part of procurement strategy:

- ✔ **Prioritise Supplier Transparency** – Conduct ESG due diligence as part of supplier onboarding and contract renewals. Use structured scorecards or third-party verification to assess sustainability credentials and track improvement over time.
- ✔ **Embed ESG into Cost and Risk Decisions** – Move beyond upfront cost savings by considering lifecycle costs, long-term supply chain resilience, and carbon impact in procurement decisions. Total cost of ownership (TCO) models can help capture the financial impact of sustainable choices.
- ✔ **Leverage Data for Measurable Impact** – Set clear ESG KPIs that align with business objectives, such as reducing supply chain emissions, increasing ethical sourcing, or improving supplier diversity. Use procurement analytics tools to track and report progress, ensuring accountability and continuous improvement.

CPOs who proactively embed ESG into procurement avoid reactive compliance pressures and instead build more resilient, future-proof supply chains that create value beyond just meeting regulations.



THEME 2

Immediate Impact

Why It's Important

First impressions count, don't they? In your new role, proving procurement's value fast is non-negotiable. Stakeholders are watching, and your team is looking for direction. With most CPOs averaging a tenure of just three years, there's no time to waste.

Quick wins aren't just about savings - they're about building trust. Your first 100 days should include meaningful early wins, whether it's resolving a stalled contract, mitigating a risk, or securing something valuable for your team that signals a fresh approach. These don't have to be big, but they need to make an impact. A small but strategic policy change - like empowering category managers to approve contracts up to a certain value or unlocking long-requested insights software - can set the tone and demonstrate immediate value.

Nail these early steps, and you'll set the tone for leadership, build credibility, and

create the momentum needed for larger, transformational initiatives.

What Happens When You Get it Right?

When you deliver results quickly, the ripple effect is powerful:

- ✔ **Stakeholders start to trust you:** Early wins demonstrate you're here to deliver, not just strategise.
- ✔ **Your team feels energised:** Small successes build morale and confidence in your leadership.
- ✔ **Momentum snowballs:** One win leads to another, giving you the foundation to drive larger, long-term initiatives.
- ✔ **Credibility skyrockets:** Early impact solidifies your role as a business leader who understands priorities and gets things done.

What's At Stake?

Miss the opportunity, and recovery becomes an uphill battle.

- **Stakeholder scepticism**
if you can't deliver fast, trust erodes
- **Reactive firefighting**
Without quick wins, you'll spend more time putting out fires than driving change
- **Lost momentum**
Without early traction, larger initiatives get stuck in limbo
- **Reputation damage**
Fail to act decisively, and you risk being seen as another tactical manager instead of a strategic leader

Your Game Plan



**Map the
Landscape**

STEP 01



**Deliver
and Test**

STEP 02



Scale Up

STEP 03

**STEP
01****Map the Landscape**

→ In the first 30 days, conduct a spend analysis to uncover quick wins. Identify waste, renegotiation opportunities, and areas for cost consolidation. Focus on low-hanging fruit that delivers immediate results, like standardising payment terms across suppliers or consolidating fragmented categories. Prove your value with measurable savings early.

Simultaneously, triage operational risks. Set up a basic crisis management framework with weekly check-ins with your leadership team. Crises will arise - your role is to ensure the team handles them while you focus on strategy.

**STEP
02****Deliver and Test**

→ By Day 60, move from planning to execution. Roll out **a few pilot initiatives** aligned with business goals. For example:

- **Tail spend management:**
Capture savings by eliminating rogue spending.
- **Key supplier collaboration:**
Renegotiate terms or consolidate agreements with your largest partners.

Track results methodically and refine your approach based on what works. The goal is to deliver credible, measurable outcomes while ensuring stakeholders don't view you as overly tactical.

**STEP
03****Scale Up**

→ By Day 90, it's time to scale. Take the successes from your pilots and expand them across categories. Document savings clearly and share them with stakeholders – if you don't communicate your wins, they don't exist. Transition your crisis management framework into a sustainable risk management process that your team can own. Use this period to build a foundation for long-term procurement transformation.

Summary of Key Actions

30 Days

- ✓ Conduct a spend analysis to identify low-hanging fruit for quick savings.
- ✓ Renegotiate supplier contracts and align payment terms to unlock immediate value.
- ✓ Set up a basic crisis management framework to handle operational risks.

60 Days

- ✓ Test pilot initiatives, such as tail spend management or key supplier optimisation.
- ✓ Monitor and refine results, ensuring they are credible and measurable.

90 Days

- ✓ Scale successful pilots across the organisation.
- ✓ Document and share achieved savings with stakeholders.
- ✓ Transition crisis management into a sustainable risk management process.



Things to Watch Out For

- **Overemphasis on cost savings**
Early wins matter, but don't sacrifice relationships or strategic goals for short-term gains.
- **Lack of focus**
Don't spread yourself too thin—prioritize a few high-impact initiatives.
- **Poor communication**
If stakeholders don't hear about your wins, they'll assume there aren't any.
- **Being too tactical**
Ensure you balance quick wins with a longer-term, strategic vision.
- **Non-credible savings**
Double-check the numbers—stakeholder trust depends on real, measurable impact.
- **Be wary of diving into big system implementations**
like P2P right away. They rarely deliver on time or as promised and can consume all your bandwidth. Unless it's absolutely necessary, consider delaying system rollouts until you're established and have the influence to ensure success.



THEME 3

Talent Management

Why It's Important

A high-performing team is the backbone of any procurement success story. Without the right people in the right roles, even the most ambitious strategies will fall flat. Talent management isn't just about filling gaps; it's about building a team that's motivated, culturally aligned, and equipped with the skills to deliver real results.

Here's the hard truth: if you ignore your team's capability gaps, performance will stagnate. Misaligned values and disengagement can erode morale and cohesion. But get it right, and you'll have a motivated, capable team that drives transformation, builds trust, and delivers business value – all while keeping you ahead of the curve.

What Happens When You Get it Right?

When you build a strong team, you unlock potential across the board:

- ✔ Capable people, aligned with **business priorities**, meet challenges **head-on** and deliver results without constant intervention.
- ✔ Strong cultural alignment creates a **collaborative, innovative environment** where your team thrives and consistently exceeds expectations.
- ✔ Your team becomes a **strategic partner to the business**, not a reactive support function.
- ✔ Stakeholders trust procurement more when they see a skilled, engaged team delivering results.
- ✔ High morale and recognition for achievements foster loyalty, accountability, and resilience within your team.

This is about **building a talent pipeline** that doesn't just work in the short term but sets procurement up for long-term success.

What's At Stake?

Failing to prioritise talent management can seriously undermine your leadership and your team's effectiveness:

- **Skill gaps** leave your team unprepared to adopt digital tools, tackle strategic sourcing, or drive value beyond savings.
- **Resistance to change** emerges when the team isn't equipped or motivated to embrace new tools, approaches, or priorities.
- **Low morale and disengagement** from misaligned values and unclear expectations will fragment your team and hinder collaboration.
- **Ineffective collaboration with HR:** Without their early buy-in, you'll lack the budget and support for hiring the right people or creating meaningful training programs.
- **Legacy underperformers** will drain resources and block progress if you avoid making tough calls to address performance issues.

If you don't take control early, you'll spend more time firefighting and less time driving procurement forward. Tough decisions in the first 90 days can set the stage for long-term success.

Your Game Plan

Talent management is a mix of **assessment, action, and alignment**. Here's how to tackle it step-by-step in your first 100 days:



**Assess
and Align**

STEP 01



**Build
Capacity**

STEP 02



**Cement
Your Culture
and Metrics**

STEP 03

**STEP
01**

Assess and Align



→ Start by getting a clear picture of your team's current capabilities. Use tools like competency matrices to assess skill gaps and identify your team's strengths and weaknesses. Look beyond individual performance to gauge cultural alignment. Ask yourself, "Do these people reflect the organisation's values?"

Early conversations with HR are critical. Discuss the skills and roles you need and begin building a case for budget approval to either hire fresh talent or invest in targeted training. Alignment with HR here will give you the support you need to act decisively.

**STEP
02**

Build Capacity



→ Once you've identified gaps, start addressing them. This could mean:

- Creating targeted training programs to upskill your team where there's potential.
- Collaborating with HR to hire fresh talent that meets your team's strategic needs.
- Establishing performance metrics aligned with organisational goals. Be specific – your team needs clarity on expectations and accountability.

This is also the time to set the tone culturally. Lead by example and clearly communicate the values and behaviours you expect within the team.

**STEP
03**

Cement Your Culture and Metrics



→ By 90 days, focus on embedding your cultural values and refining your performance metrics based on initial feedback. Recognise and celebrate early wins – both individual and team achievements. This builds morale and reinforces the behaviours you want to see.

If tough decisions are needed, make them. Whether that means addressing underperformers or restructuring roles, these actions ensure you're building a team equipped to drive procurement forward.

Summary of Key Actions

30 Days

- ✓ Assess team capabilities using competency matrices to identify gaps.
- ✓ Initiate discussions with HR about budget and talent requirements.
- ✓ Evaluate cultural alignment to ensure your team reflects the organisation's values.

60 Days

- ✓ Develop a capacity-building plan, including training programs and targeted hiring to address skill gaps.
- ✓ Collaborate with HR to secure budget approval for necessary investments.
- ✓ Introduce performance metrics tied to business priorities for clarity and accountability.

90 Days

- ✓ Embed cultural values into your team through regular communication and team-building activities.
- ✓ Refine performance metrics based on team feedback and ensure they drive the desired outcomes.
- ✓ Celebrate team and individual wins to foster morale and cohesion.
- ✓ Address underperformance to free up space for high-calibre talent.

Things to Watch Out For

- **Ignoring cultural alignment early**
Misaligned values will erode team cohesion and performance over time.
- **Overloading the team with metrics**
Keep KPIs focused on what matters most. Too many metrics dilute focus and effectiveness.
- **Failing to collaborate with HR**
Without HR's support, you'll struggle to secure the resources needed for strategic hiring or training.
- **Avoiding tough decisions about underperformers**
Team members who can't meet expectations will drag the entire team down.
- **Underestimating morale**
Recognition matters. Celebrate wins to keep your team engaged and motivated.



THEME 4

Engagement & Relationships

Why It's Important

Procurement thrives – or fails – based on relationships. Without direct authority over other departments, your success as CPO depends on your ability to influence, align, and collaborate across the organisation. Stakeholders and suppliers are your partners in driving results, and their trust is non-negotiable.

Neglect these relationships, and you'll face resistance from internal stakeholders, missed opportunities for supplier-driven innovation, and an uphill battle to position procurement as strategic. But get it right, and you'll unlock the full potential of procurement: alignment, collaboration, and impact that amplifies organisational goals.

What Happens When You Get it Right?

When relationships are strong, procurement becomes indispensable. Stakeholders support your initiatives, championing procurement's role in achieving shared objectives. Suppliers, too, evolve into true strategic partners, bringing innovation, cost efficiencies, and insights that drive value far beyond basic transactions.

With trust as a foundation, your credibility as a business leader grows. Alignment improves, collaboration flows naturally, and procurement's strategic value becomes clear to everyone in the organisation. The result? A function exceeds expectations – elevating the entire business.

What's At Stake?

Weak relationships can derail your plans before they even begin:

- Stakeholder resistance**
 Without their buy-in, your initiatives risk stalling or failing outright.
- Misaligned supplier relationships**
 These lead to lost opportunities for innovation and value creation.
- Isolation from finance**
 Procurement's ability to secure resources and influence decision-making depends on a strong partnership with finance. Without it, you risk being sidelined.
- Underestimating supplier expertise**
 Overlooking what suppliers can bring to the table – whether it's market intelligence, innovation, or operational improvements – limits procurement's impact.

Remember, procurement doesn't operate in a vacuum. Relationships are everything.

Your Game Plan



**Build
Trust Fast**

STEP 01



**Collaborate
and Act**

STEP 02



**Build
Sustainable
Processes**

STEP 03

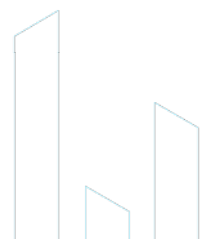
STEP
01**Build Trust Fast**

→ In your first 30 days, focus on relationship-building with key stakeholders and suppliers. Meet with high-impact stakeholders. Specifically, those connected to the top 20% of spending. Go into stakeholder meetings prepared. Know what you need to learn, what success looks like to them, and how procurement can support their priorities, and ask the right questions: What are their priorities? What's their biggest frustration with procurement? What does success look like to them? But don't forget, this is also a chance to get to know them on a personal level and to start building relationships. Take the opportunity to find out about their interests, how long they have been at the company, what their experience is, etc.

Establish a partnership with the CFO early on; alignment with finance is essential for securing resources and integrating procurement into broader financial goals.

Whenever possible, meet senior stakeholders in person, even if it means travelling. An in-person first meeting can be the difference between being seen as a business partner versus just another function. And if you're meeting outside the office, a dinner or informal setting can go a long way in building trust early.

Simultaneously, audit your top supplier relationships to identify gaps, strengths, and opportunities for improvement.



STEP

02

Collaborate and Act



- By 60 days, shift from listening to action. Develop tailored engagement plans based on the insights you've gathered. For stakeholders, demonstrate quick wins that directly address their priorities – whether it's aligning with a marketing campaign's timeline or delivering cost savings for a critical initiative. For suppliers, implement collaboration initiatives that extract more value, such as co-development opportunities or better alignment on ESG goals. Use data to back up your decisions and show tangible benefits.

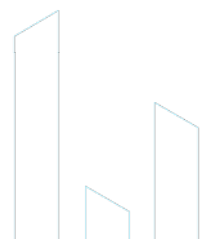
STEP

03

Build Sustainable Processes



- By the 90-day mark, it's about sustaining momentum. Solidify your partnerships with regular updates and communication. For stakeholders, share how procurement has directly supported their objectives and provide transparency around results. For suppliers, establish quarterly reviews to ensure alignment, track performance, and encourage continuous improvement. This is also the time to embed relationship-building into your team's DNA – making it a standard practice, not just a one-time effort.



Summary of Key Actions

30 Days

- ✓ Meet with high-impact stakeholders to understand their priorities, frustrations, and expectations.
- ✓ Establish a strong partnership with the CFO and finance team to align procurement's role with financial goals.
- ✓ Audit strategic supplier relationships to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement.

60 Days

- ✓ Develop tailored action plans for stakeholders, addressing their specific needs and priorities.
- ✓ Implement collaborative initiatives with top suppliers, such as co-development projects or process improvements.

90 Days

- ✓ Share progress and results with stakeholders, reinforcing procurement's contributions to their objectives.
- ✓ Establish quarterly reviews with strategic suppliers to maintain alignment and drive continuous improvement.
- ✓ Embed relationship-building practices into your team's processes for long-term success.

Things to Watch Out For

- **Neglecting key relationships:** Stakeholders and suppliers connected to major spend categories must be your top priority. Ignoring them undermines your ability to make an impact.
- **Weak alignment with finance:** Without finance as a partner, you'll struggle to secure resources or influence strategic decisions.
- **Overlooking supplier expertise:** Suppliers bring valuable insights – dismiss them, and you miss out on opportunities for innovation and cost efficiencies.
- **Failing to communicate value:** If stakeholders and suppliers don't see the impact of your work, trust and collaboration will erode over time.
- **Too much too soon:** Avoid overwhelming your team or suppliers with changes. Focus on a few high-impact initiatives first to build momentum.

RACI Stakeholder Map

The RACI framework is a well-known tool for clarifying roles, but in procurement, standard models don't always capture the complexity of stakeholder relationships. That's why we've tailored this version as a procurement-specific stakeholder map, helping you define who is responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed at each stage of category management. With procurement teams working across multiple functions, clear engagement is critical. This framework ensures alignment, speeds up decision-making, and strengthens procurement's role as a strategic partner.

R	Responsible	Working on the activity – Individual who executes a task, responsible for execution and implementation.	“The do-er”	Global Category Manager – Leads strategy, executes sourcing initiatives, manages supplier negotiations.
A	Accountable	“Go-No Go” authority – Individual who is ultimately accountable. Can veto and authorize decisions.	“Buck stops here”	Head of Category Management / CPO – Approves strategies, ensures alignment with business objectives.
C	Consulted	Key information detainer – Individual to be consulted prior to making a decision or key action.	“What do you think?”	Local Buyers, Category Stakeholders – Provide market insights, operational requirements, and feedback.
I	Informed	Needs to be kept informed – Individual who needs to be informed after decisions or key actions are made.	“Kept in the loop”	Finance, Procurement Leadership, Key Business Units – Need visibility on budget impact and strategic direction.



THEME 5

Strategic Sourcing

Why It's Important

Strategic sourcing isn't just about cutting costs – it's about building a resilient, optimised procurement function that delivers measurable value. As CPO, your role is to transform procurement into a proactive, data-driven powerhouse that aligns with business priorities. This means leveraging advanced tools, anticipating market trends, and fostering innovation with suppliers.

When sourcing lacks a strategy, inefficiencies pile up, opportunities are missed, and procurement risks becoming a reactive cost centre. But when done right, strategic sourcing drives profitability, strengthens supplier relationships, and builds a foundation for long-term success.

What Happens When You Get it Right?

- ✔ Procurement becomes a **strategic enabler**, delivering cost savings without sacrificing quality or innovation.
- ✔ Enhanced **data visibility** leads to smarter decisions and improved category management.
- ✔ Suppliers transition from vendors to **strategic partners**, driving innovation and value beyond price.
- ✔ Clear alignment with business goals demonstrates procurement's role in supporting **growth, resilience, and operational excellence**.
- ✔ You **solidify your position** as a leader driving measurable, enterprise-wide impact.

What's At Stake?

- Misalignment with business goals**
 If sourcing strategies don't align with broader objectives like growth, ESG, or risk resilience, procurement efforts become counterproductive.
- Missed opportunities**
 Without a strategic approach, savings, innovation, and supplier collaboration potential remain untapped.
- Vulnerability to market trends**
 Neglecting predictive analytics or supplier diversification leaves the organisation exposed to shifting market conditions.
- Weakened credibility**
 Ineffective sourcing erodes trust with stakeholders, making it harder to secure resources or gain influence.
- Poor collaboration**
 Failing to engage cross-functional teams or secure buy-in from finance and leadership limits your ability to implement transformative strategies.

Your Game Plan



**Lay the
Groundwork**



**Develop a Data-
Driven Plan**



**Execute
and Scale**

STEP 01

STEP 02

STEP 03

STEP
01

Lay the Groundwork



- In your first 30 days, focus on building visibility and diagnosing where the biggest opportunities lie. Start by implementing spend analytics tools to get a clear picture of where the money is going and to identify inefficiencies. Where possible, use platforms that leverage AI to provide predictive insights and cost-optimisation opportunities. Alongside this, map out procurement inefficiencies – pinpointing bottlenecks, redundancies, and areas for improvement across the process. Engage with Finance early to align sourcing objectives with broader business goals and secure support for upcoming category reviews. Finally, prioritise your categories, focusing on high-impact spend areas such as marketing, logistics, or IT, where you can deliver quick wins.

STEP
02

Develop a Data-Driven Plan



- Once you have a baseline, turn insight into strategy by day 60. Conduct deep-dive category reviews to uncover opportunities for supplier consolidation, renegotiation, and innovation. Set clear savings and performance targets for each category – for example, reducing overheads by a set percentage or improving supplier delivery times. At this stage, integrate supplier diversity and ESG objectives into your sourcing approach to ensure alignment with corporate sustainability targets without compromising efficiency. Work cross-functionally with stakeholders to make sure each category plan supports wider operational and strategic priorities.

STEP
03

Execute and Scale



- With your plan in place, it's time to execute. By day 90, you should have launched your strategic sourcing program by rolling out initiatives in priority categories – whether it's consolidating suppliers, renegotiating contracts, or deploying digital procurement tools to improve efficiency. Communicate your progress as you go, sharing measurable wins with stakeholders to build credibility and maintain momentum. Establish quarterly reviews with key stakeholders and suppliers to monitor performance, refine targets, and ensure alignment over the long term. Finally, evaluate where additional investment in talent, technology, or partnerships will support sustained transformation, and build these into your ongoing roadmap.

Summary of Key Actions

30 Days

- ✔ Implement spend analytics tools for visibility and insights.
- ✔ Map inefficiencies in procurement processes to identify improvement areas.
- ✔ Prioritise high-impact categories for early action.
- ✔ Engage the CFO and finance team to align sourcing objectives.

60 Days

- ✔ Conduct detailed category reviews to uncover optimisation opportunities.
- ✔ Set clear, measurable targets for cost reduction and performance improvements.
- ✔ Develop category strategies, such as consolidating suppliers or renegotiating contracts, ensuring alignment with ESG, innovation, and business goals.
- ✔ Collaborate cross-functionally to secure buy-in.

90 Days

- ✔ Launch a strategic sourcing program to optimise categories and align with organisational goals
- ✔ Share progress and measurable wins with stakeholders.

- ✔ Establish quarterly reviews to ensure alignment and track continuous improvement.
- ✔ Allocate resources to sustain momentum and scale transformation.

Things to Watch Out For

- **Lack of alignment**
Ensure sourcing strategies reflect organisational priorities like growth, ESG, and operational resilience.
- **Short-term thinking**
Don't chase savings at the expense of supplier relationships or long-term value creation.
- **Underutilising technology**
Failing to adopt advanced tools, like AI-powered analytics, limits visibility and decision-making.
- **Overlooking collaboration**
Without finance and stakeholder support, even the best sourcing strategies will struggle to gain traction.
- **Ignoring market shifts**
Stay ahead of trends like supply chain disruptions, supplier innovation, and geopolitical risks to maintain relevance and competitiveness.

AI in Procurement: Moving from Potential to Impact

While 85% of CPOs recognize AI's potential, only 32% have implemented AI-driven procurement tools. The gap? A lack of clarity on practical use cases and how AI fits into existing workflows. To move beyond theory and drive real impact, procurement leaders must take a targeted, results-driven approach.

- ✔ **Automate Supplier Risk Monitoring** – AI-driven risk assessment tools have helped companies reduce risk exposure by 30%, using early warning systems to flag financial instability, geopolitical threats, and ESG violations before they escalate.
- ✔ **Use Predictive Insights for Smarter Buying** – AI-powered demand forecasting has enabled firms to cut inventory waste by 15%, optimising orders based on market trends, seasonal demand, and external risk factors.
- ✔ **Turn Contracts into Dynamic, Living Documents** – AI-driven contract analytics identify compliance risks before signing, reducing legal exposure and ensuring terms stay aligned with real-time market conditions.

CPOs who invest early in AI are already seeing cost savings, risk mitigation, and operational efficiencies. AI won't replace procurement leaders – it will give them a strategic edge. The real question is: how fast will you close the AI adoption gap?

Finding the Right Spend Analysis Tool

Gaining visibility into spend data is one of the biggest early challenges for procurement teams. Imagine walking into a room with the lights off – without clear spend analytics, procurement operates in the dark.

ERP systems like Coupa, GEP SMART, and Jaggaer integrate spend analysis within broader enterprise resource management, providing a centralised view of procurement alongside other business functions. While these platforms offer versatility, some organisations find that dedicated spend analysis tools give them a more focused lens on procurement data.

Platforms like SpendQube, designed specifically for spend analysis, help teams drill deeper into procurement insights, consolidating data into custom dashboards that highlight inefficiencies and cost-saving opportunities. Regardless of the tool, the real value comes from how insights are used – turning data into action, building awareness across teams, and embedding transparency into everyday decision-making.

Governance

Why It's Important

Governance is the backbone of effective procurement. It's what keeps the wheels turning smoothly, ensures accountability, and minimises risks before they become disasters. In a function as cross-functional as procurement, robust governance provides the structure needed to operate consistently across the organisation – ensuring decisions are transparent, workflows are efficient, and risks are mitigated.

Without governance, cracks appear. Bottlenecks stall decisions, compliance risks pile up, and inefficiencies spiral out of control. Procurement becomes reactive, leaving the business exposed to disruptions and reputational damage. But with a strong governance framework in place, procurement evolves into a resilient, strategic partner the organisation can count on.

What Happens When You Get it Right?

When governance is done right, procurement transforms into a well-oiled machine that delivers consistent results:

- ✔ **Smooth Processes**
Decision-making becomes streamlined, delays are minimised, and workflows are crystal clear.
- ✔ **Risk Mitigation**
Compliance risks are proactively managed, reducing exposure to legal, financial, or reputational harm.
- ✔ **Stakeholder Trust**
Clear accountability builds confidence in procurement's ability to deliver on its commitments.

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Strategic Alignment
 Governance frameworks align procurement's operations with broader organisational priorities, ensuring procurement is a reliable and strategic partner.

For you as a CPO, a solid governance structure demonstrates your ability to lead with precision, instil confidence, and deliver sustainable results that withstand scrutiny.

What's At Stake?

Weak governance can unravel everything you're trying to achieve:

- Bottlenecks**
 Without defined authority levels and workflows, decisions get stuck in limbo, delaying critical initiatives.
- Compliance Risks**
 Weak or outdated policies leave the organisation vulnerable to audits, fines, and reputational fallout.
- Lack of Buy-In**
 Without stakeholder support, governance initiatives can falter, undermining procurement's credibility.
- Reactive Risk Management**
 Waiting for problems to escalate instead of proactively managing them leaves the business exposed to unnecessary challenges.
- Cross-Functional Disconnect**
 Failure to collaborate with key teams like legal, finance, and operations can lead to misaligned objectives and failed implementation.

Your Game Plan



**Diagnose the
Current State**

STEP 01



**Build and Align
Frameworks**

STEP 02



**Operationalise
Governance**

STEP 03

**STEP
01****Diagnose the Current State**

- In the first 30 days, assess where procurement governance currently stands. Review existing frameworks to identify gaps, inefficiencies, and risks. Collaborate with key teams, including finance and legal, to prioritise business risks and establish mitigation strategies. Define authority levels and approval workflows, ensuring clarity across the organisation.

**STEP
02****Build and Align Frameworks**

- By 60 days, draft updated governance frameworks tailored to address the gaps you uncovered. Engage stakeholders to align on these frameworks and ensure buy-in through clear communication and targeted training. Develop long-term risk management strategies that proactively address compliance, supplier risk, and operational vulnerabilities. Introduce practical, targeted policies to reinforce governance, such as supplier compliance scorecards, approval workflow automations, or no-gift policies.

**STEP
03****Operationalise Governance**

- At 90 days, roll out your updated frameworks and start monitoring their effectiveness. Transition any crisis management measures into proactive risk management processes that adapt to new challenges. Set up regular risk review meetings with stakeholders to ensure continuous oversight and improvement. Use tools like dashboards to communicate progress and demonstrate how governance is driving results.

Summary of Key Actions

30 Days

- ✔ Review current governance frameworks and identify gaps and inefficiencies.
- ✔ Assess top business risks with finance, legal, and operations, and prioritise mitigation efforts.
- ✔ Define clear authority levels and workflows for key decision-making processes.

60 Days

- ✔ Draft updated governance frameworks tailored to organisational needs.
- ✔ Develop and document long-term risk management strategies.
- ✔ Introduce targeted policies to address compliance and operational challenges (e.g., supplier compliance scorecards or approval workflow automations).

90 Days

- ✔ Roll out updated governance frameworks and monitor their effectiveness.
- ✔ Transition crisis management measures into proactive risk management processes.
- ✔ Establish regular risk review meetings to ensure continuous oversight and improvement.



Things to Watch Out For

Delays from Bottlenecks

Ensure authority levels and workflows are clearly defined to prevent decision-making stalls.

Weak Compliance Controls

Address gaps in policies to mitigate legal, financial, and reputational risks.



Lack of Stakeholder Buy-In

Without early and consistent engagement, governance initiatives risk falling flat.

Reactive Risk Management

Proactively manage risks to prevent disruptions instead of constantly firefighting.

Underestimating Collaboration Needs

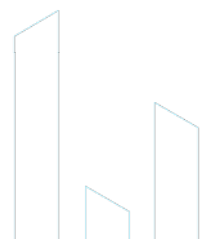
Failing to work closely with finance, legal, and operations can derail governance frameworks before they gain traction.

Why Governance Matters: A Costly Delay

Good governance isn't just about compliance – it's about keeping procurement agile and efficient. Without clear frameworks, even simple processes can stall, leading to unnecessary delays and frustration.

In one case, a CPO faced significant challenges with contract signing delays. A routine NDA approval with a private equity client – something that should have been straightforward – was delayed by two weeks due to unclear signing authority. The bottleneck wasn't a complex negotiation; it was a lack of defined processes. All purchasing officers had the authority to sign off, but without a structured framework in place, the approval process dragged on.

This is why clear roles, workflows, and decision-making authority matter. Governance isn't about bureaucracy – it's about eliminating friction, ensuring procurement moves at the right speed, and keeping critical processes on track.





90 Days and Beyond – Sustain, Scale and Set the Next Quarter

By day 90, you should have a rhythm in place

Dashboards running, stakeholder check-ins embedded, and your first wave of wins materialising.

From here, your job shifts from proving value to compounding it; sustaining the operating momentum, scaling what works, and locking in the next 90-day agenda. This section ties together the playbook you've already built across the six key themes and turns it into a repeatable engine for results.



Sustain, Scale and Set the Next Quarter

What “Good” Looks Like After 90 Days

Operating momentum is embedded

Monthly performance reviews, quarterly supplier business reviews, and CFO touchpoints are happening as routine business, not one-off efforts.

Benefits are tracked and believed

Savings, risk reduction, and value metrics are supported by clear evidence and shared widely, so wins are recognised.

Priority portfolio for the next quarter is clear

Which categories to tackle, which supplier relationships to strengthen, and which team capabilities to develop – without 25 competing initiatives pulling focus.

Good governance keeps things moving

Approval levels are defined, workflows are streamlined, and risks are flagged before they cause delays.

Make Your System Repeatable

Now that you've got the basics running, your goal is to make the first 90 days the blueprint for every quarter that follows.

Lock a 12-month roadmap

Roll forward the 30/60/90 into a quarterly plan – categories to source, suppliers to renegotiate with, or risk issues to resolve. Make sure to assign owners and target dates so progress is visible.

Run a benefits cycle

Create one source of truth for savings and value delivery, with a simple comms plan so progress is visible beyond procurement.

Keep the momentum alive

Monthly performance reviews with Finance, QBRs with top suppliers, and regular stakeholder check-ins keep priorities aligned and blockers removed.

Strengthen governance

Update approval limits, workflows, and risk reviews each quarter based on what's working (or slowing you down). Make sure decisions move faster, not slower.

Develop the team

Progress your capability plan with HR – deliver targeted training, hire for any critical gaps, and address under-performance before it derails momentum.

Scale digital & innovation

Prioritise quick-win analytics and AI use cases that save time or reduce risk. Build a running pipeline of supplier innovation ideas and review progress regularly.

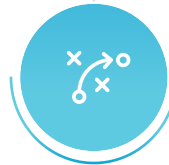
Signals You're On Track



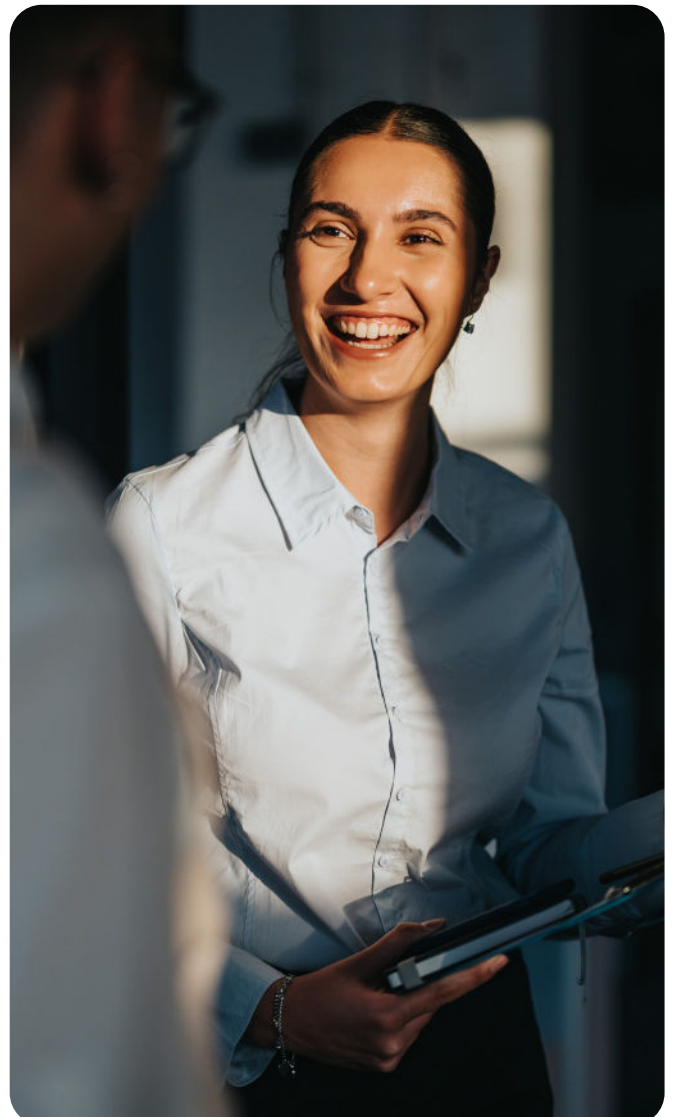
Senior leaders proactively involve procurement in growth, risk, and ESG initiatives.



Teams deliver without constant escalation – culture and metrics are understood and owned.



Category initiatives have scaled beyond pilots, with clear savings or risk reductions and visible stakeholder support.



Conclusion – Your Next Move

Congratulations – you’ve stepped into one of the most challenging yet rewarding roles in business! Your first 100 days as a CPO are your launchpad to redefine what procurement can achieve. This guide has given you a no-nonsense roadmap to navigate this critical period with focus, clarity, and impact.

Remember, it all starts with understanding what success looks like for your stakeholders. Set expectations early, align procurement with the big-picture goals, and deliver quick, tangible wins that prove procurement is a strategic enabler – not just a cost-cutting function.

Focus on building relationships that matter – with your team, stakeholders, suppliers, and especially your CFO. Trust and collaboration are the currency of influence, and they’ll be your biggest allies as you push for change.

This isn’t about doing everything perfectly; it’s about being deliberate, pragmatic, and impactful. Prioritise what drives the most value, communicate your wins, and lay the groundwork for long-term transformation.

The reality? Procurement’s role is evolving faster than ever, and this is your moment to lead from the front. By staying bold, focused, and strategic, you’ll set a new standard - not just for procurement, but for what leadership looks like across the organisation.

And lastly, if you have a partner or children, don’t forget them in those first 100 days! With all the focus on the new role, this can catch you out. Don’t lose sight of the other things that matter - your health, your relationships, and your own headspace.



About the Author



Matthew Parker is not your typical consultant – he’s a former CPO who truly gets what it’s like to be in the hot seat. With over two decades of

experience in both industry and consulting, Matthew has walked the path you’re on. He knows the challenges CPOs face because he’s been there, leading procurement functions from within, managing global teams, and navigating complex transformations.

As the Managing Director of Procurato, Matthew combines his hands-on industry expertise with his strategic

consulting background to deliver real-world solutions that work. His career has spanned industries across financial and professional services, aerospace, defence and manufacturing, where he’s consistently delivered measurable results – whether by hitting ambitious cost-saving targets, driving supplier innovation, or redefining procurement’s role as a strategic enabler

What sets Matthew apart is his pragmatic, down-to-earth approach.

He’s not about buzzwords or theory; he’s about helping CPOs succeed in the real world. By blending strategic vision with practical execution, Matthew empowers procurement leaders to create lasting impact and drive real value for their organisations.

“ I’m not just a consultant. I’ve sat where you sit. I know the pressure, the challenges – and how to turn them into wins. ”

About Procurato

Procurato is a specialist consulting firm with a focus on strategy, transformation, and technology. Founded by industry veterans who have also worked as consultants, we combine deep operational experience with the ability to deliver pragmatic, actionable solutions.

What sets us apart? We understand the realities of procurement because we’ve been there. We know what it’s like to walk in your shoes as a CPO, facing tight deadlines, high expectations, and the pressure to deliver. This unique perspective allows us to work as true partners, blending real-world insights with consulting expertise.

Our approach is practical, collaborative, and outcome-driven. From redefining procurement strategies to delivering measurable transformation, we help organisations achieve their goals. Our proprietary spend analysis tool, SpendQube, accelerates this process by turning complex data into clear, actionable insights.

At Procurato, we pride ourselves on

- 1 cutting through the noise,
- 2 delivering results that matter, and
- 3 helping procurement leaders position their function as a driver of business success.