

Covid-19

Recruitment Impact: Responses & Strategies

Survey of Procurement, Supply Chain & Finance Leaders



- > Impact of Covid-19 on recruitment confidence, interview & assessment best practice
- > Responses taken during the pandemic and future plans
- > Future challenges and opportunities in the next phase of recovery



The impact of Covid-19 on Procurement & Supply Chain Recruitment strategies.

The Recruitment survey ran throughout July, August and September (Q3, 2020) with an invited audience of over 500 procurement, supply chain & finance leaders and their teams. Although the survey was cross-border, covering the UK, Europe and US, the results in different regions were almost identical, as such the report covers all countries and Insights learned to help shape future recruitment and workforce planning in 2020/21. A further survey will be run through Q4 2020, to track developments and innovations through this period as lockdown strategies change.

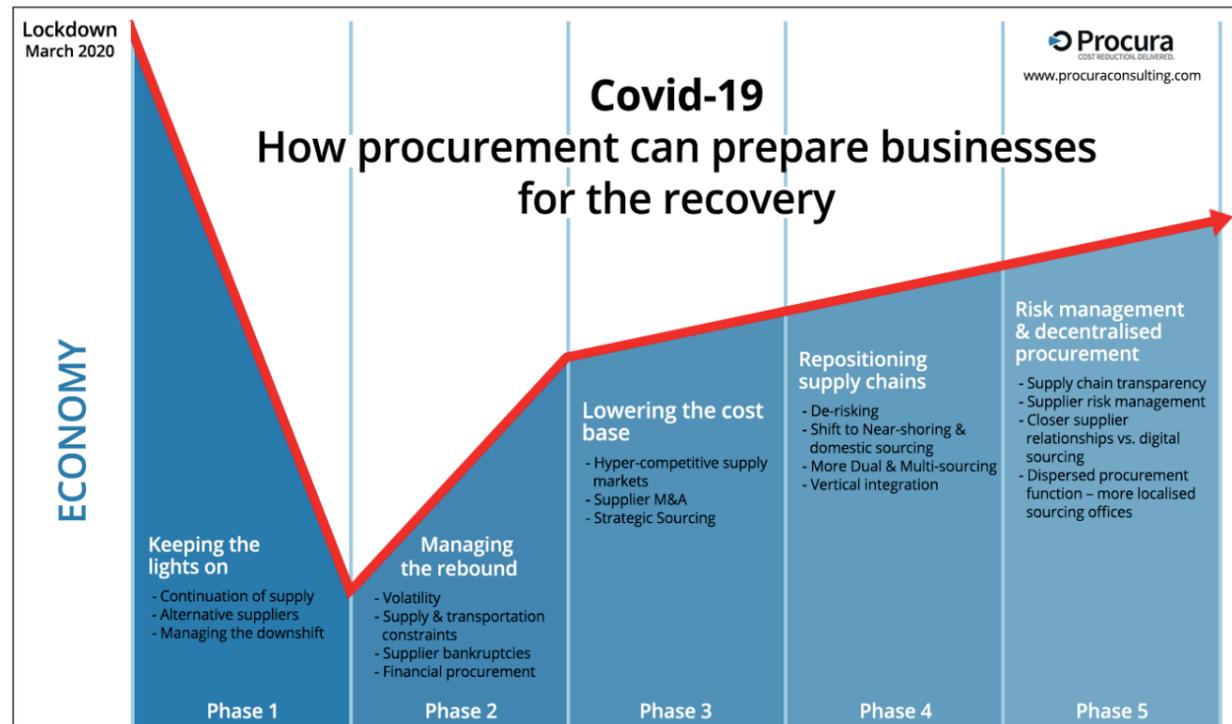
The purpose of the survey was to assess recruitment confidence, changes of behaviours & interviewing processes during the pandemic and support organisations to develop strategies to respond to any future periods of lockdown as the pandemic evolves.

The graph below shows the views of Procura Consulting at the beginning of the pandemic, and how organisations would respond to their business challenges as lockdown eased, which proved to be an accurate assessment. **However, with a second wave approaching, what lessons can be learned and how do organisations seek to resource the talent to deliver against the challenges every business faces?**

“We consider that there will be a number of phases to the recovery and procurement & supply chain teams will need to tackle a number of significant challenges in each phase of the recovery, taking the opportunity to adjust their cost base, re-position supply chains and add future value to the bottom line. These functional teams have been at the heart of operations, managing complex supplier relationships and driving efficiencies. With the impact of Covid-19, their expertise is central to maintaining business momentum.”

Richard McIntosh
Managing Partner
Procura Consulting

Tony Goldsby
Managing Partner, ProSearch



The ProSearch Covid-19 Procurement & Supply Chain Recruitment Survey.

The Recruitment survey was conducted during the easing of lockdown restrictions in Q3, and was designed to examine the effect of Covid-19, specifically in terms of how organisations procurement & supply chain teams were facing the challenge of delivering more projects at pace, with potentially less resource due to furlough, or illness.

At the outset of the pandemic, there were also challenges in terms of expertise and skill gaps in the teams, who were faced with disruptions in supply chains, the prospect in some cases of having to re-shore suppliers, or working even closer with key suppliers to ensure they kept their lights on.

Initially most supply chains were impacted outside of the food and household goods sectors, however from June onwards this was changing, with businesses coming to terms with the pandemic and the economy unfreezing and businesses restarting. In July, August and September most organisations were operating in some form of normality, even if this meant working from home and changing the nature of their day to day operating strategies.

Throughout the pandemic, we were constantly told of inspiring stories of how teams were working closer, with the ability to operate through online video platforms, many were building stronger relationships and challenging old working practices. However, this was not the case for everyone subject to the complexity of their supply chains and the economic challenges for their business sector.

The survey revealed some interesting facts and underpinning the responses, is a common view that procurement & supply chain functions must be more agile, flexible and responsive.

As we enter a second wave of the pandemic, we can take some solace that we know more about Covid-19 and how to manage the impact. However, it will be essential to learn the lessons of the first wave and take advantage of any Insights from the broader procurement & supply chain community to ensure we all survive and thrive.

This survey asked these key questions:

Recruitment Activity

- Q1) Have you recruited permanent staff during lockdown?
- Q2) Have you used Interim resource during this period?
- Q3) Have you used Augmented teams from external consultants to deliver against short term projects?

Recruitment Process

- Q4) Have you used video interviewing for the first-time during lockdown?
- Q5) During lockdown, have you recruited virtually (Permanent or Interim) and not met the successful candidate prior to their start date?

Skills Assessment

- Q6) Have you used online experience & capability assessment tools, to support virtual interviews?

Remote Working Challenges

- Q7) What are the 'Top Three' biggest challenges the team are currently facing while working remotely?

Recruitment Confidence

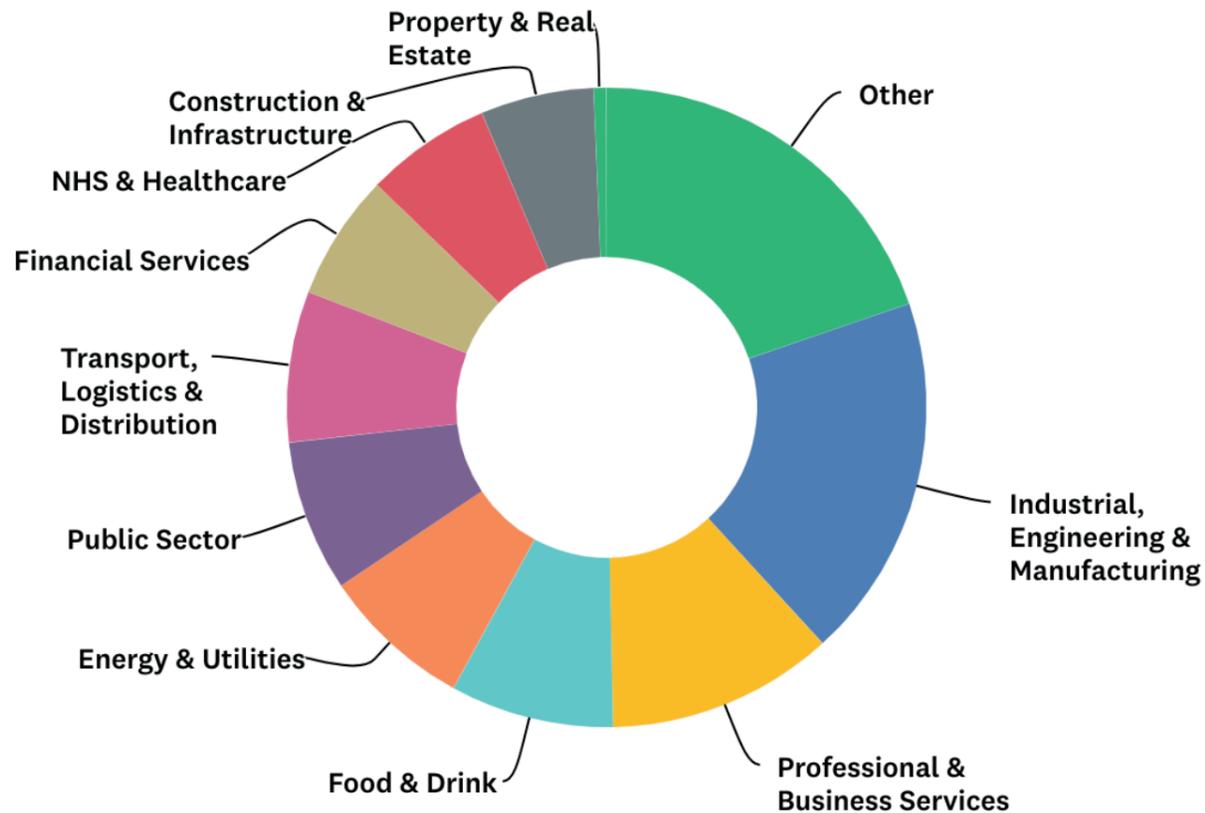
- Q8) Based on current market conditions as Covid-19 lockdown restrictions ease, how confident are you that you will maintain, or grow the headcount in your Procurement and/or Supply Chain Teams?

In the Survey we provide insights to guide recruitment strategies in the next phases of recovery.

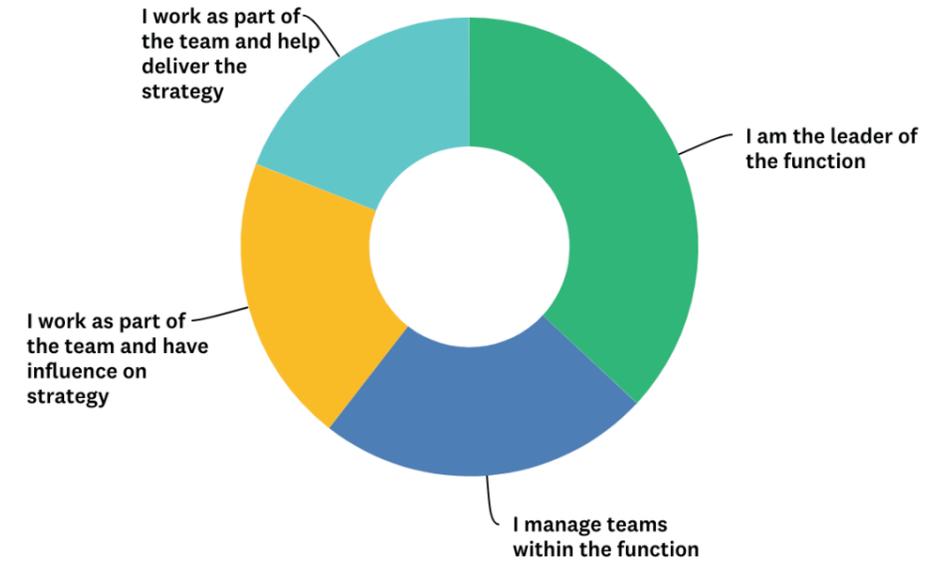
What is your job title?

Operation Management Global Category Manager Consultant
 Procurement Manager Group
 Head of Procurement Sourcing
 Procurement Director Specialist CFO Contracts
 Supply Chain Procurement Officer Lead Buyer Purchasing Manager

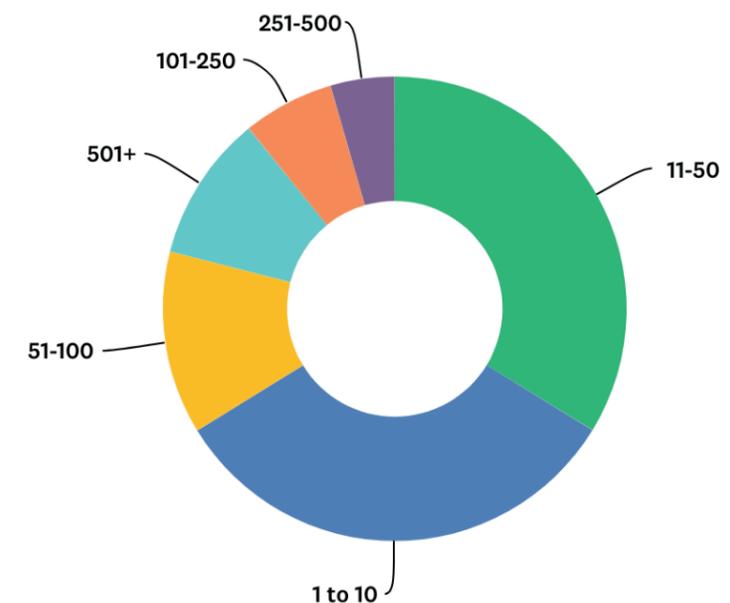
Which sector does your organisation work in?



What is your primary role in workforce planning to respond to COVID-19?

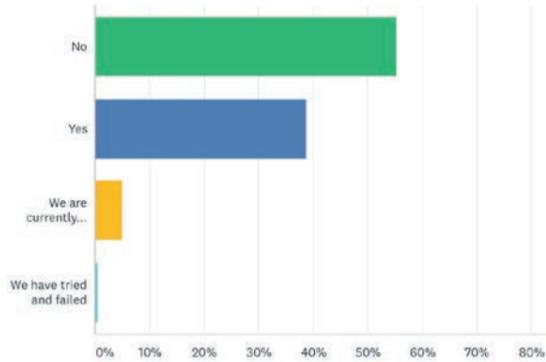


How many people work in your Procurement & Supply Chain Team?

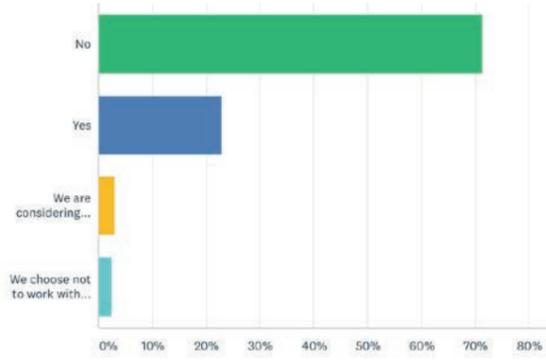




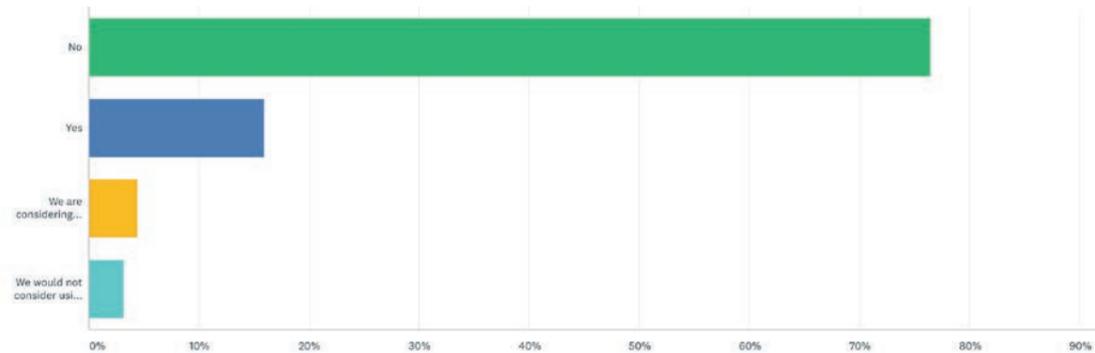
Q1: Have you recruited permanent staff during lockdown?



Q2: Have you used Interim resource during this period?



Q3: Have you used Augmented teams from external consultants to deliver against short term projects?



A: Although a majority of companies did not recruit, there are some surprisingly positive results.

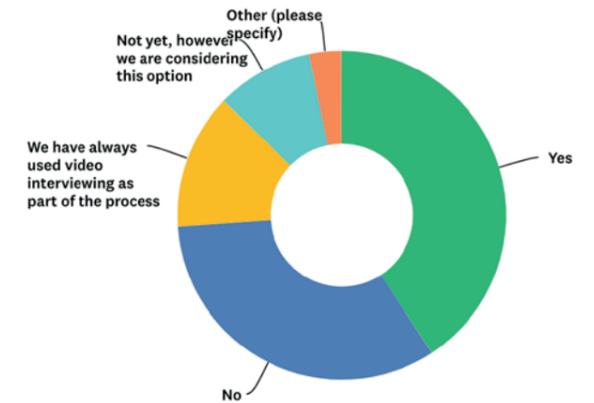
- 45% of businesses recruited 'permanent' staff for their procurement & supply chain teams during lockdown, or plan to in the coming months.
- 25% of employers either worked with Interim resource to plug skill gaps and increase capacity, or are considering this option to deliver future business projects.
- Over 20% of surveyed organisations are working with external procurement & supply chain consulting organisations, or will consider this option for future projects during the pandemic.

INSIGHTS:

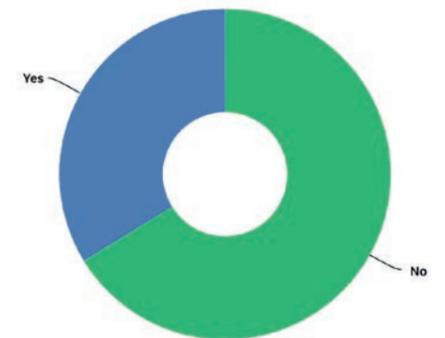
Feedback from participants in the survey confirmed that recruitment freezes during the early stages of the pandemic, led to delays in delivering projects. This eased when it became clear that procurement and supply chain teams were a key function for business survival. Others experienced challenges during redundancy processes, where it is politically insensitive to recruit which led to external consultancies leading larger scale projects. This may need to be managed during any second wave and delays reduced, by providing greater resource earlier to these key functions.



Q4: Have you used video interviewing for the first-time during lockdown?



Q5: During lockdown, have you recruited virtually (Permanent or Interim) and not met the successful candidate prior to their start date?



A: During lockdown, everyone's use of video meeting platforms escalated. The use of these platforms for screening interviews was a natural next step.

- 40% of organisations surveyed used video interviewing for the first-time.
- 66% are now using, or are considering the use of video interviews as part of their recruitment process.

The use of video interviewing strategies, was a necessity due to the pandemic and the need for safe working practices and social distancing, which created an awareness of the benefits. However, the next step of recruiting without actually meeting the successful candidate in the flesh, was always going to prove a harder shift. Or was it?

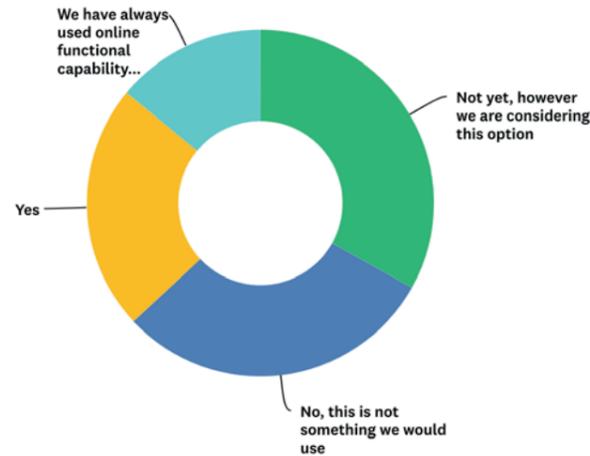
- 33% of recruiting companies recruited without meeting the successful candidate. Which is a quantum shift and would never have occurred previously

INSIGHTS:

We have first-hand knowledge of this shift and also the positive benefits that forward-thinking organisations have found from the ability to meet candidates for senior roles and embrace the ability to move at pace, allow more people to meet the prospect shortlist candidates and ensure candidates join the company with their 'eyes wide open'. The opportunity to meet the broader stakeholders, who have also had a part in their selection, may provide a greater likelihood of success and allow the new starter to meet more people in the business and understand the challenge to a greater degree before they join.



Q6: Have you used online experience & capability assessment tools, to support virtual interviews?



A: Psychometric profiling is a commonly used online tool during the recruitment process. Procurement & Supply chain skills & capability assessment was previously mainly used during training & skills development.

Has the need for greater support during the online screening process changed its use? The answer is, significantly. Only 15% of the surveyed audience used online assessment prior to the pandemic.

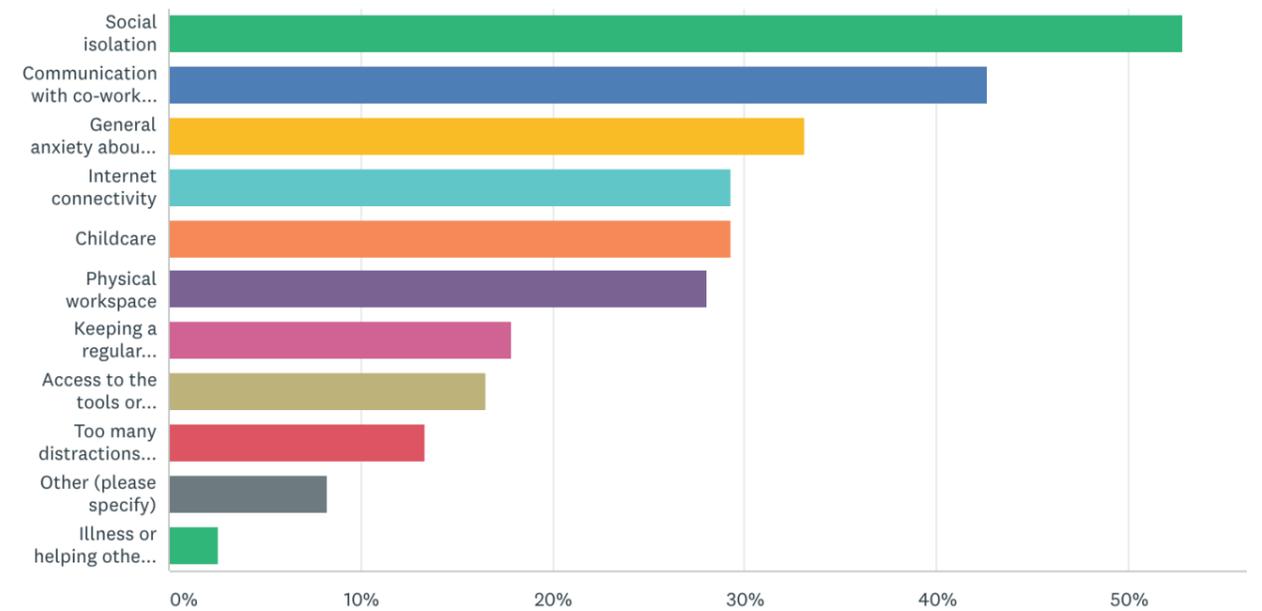
- Over 37% of companies surveyed use, or trialed online functional skills assessment during the pandemic
- Over 70% use, or are considering using capability assessment to support stakeholders during the interview process
- Only 29% would not use online assessment techniques

INSIGHTS:

The traditional use of capability assessment tools is to support training needs analysis and to prioritise training activities for the procurement & supply chain teams. However, the need for greater interview support with more detailed competency assessment questions, in some cases for non-functional stakeholders, has greatly increased the use of these online tests. Simple and quick to use, they can provide a quick snapshot of the way someone works in their current role and offer a comprehensive guide for key competency questions during online video interviews.



Q7: What are the 'Top Three' biggest challenges the team are currently facing while working remotely?



A: It's a challenge everyone has faced, and we still are. Remote working is becoming the norm and the organisations that embrace the opportunities it can present, can reap the benefits.

However, the survey confirmed that the biggest challenge is Social Isolation and the associated wellbeing of staff. This coupled with general anxiety about coronavirus proved to be the primary issues for employees and business leaders.

Engaging with teams and finding the right way to blend communication and support will be essential as the pandemic affects the way we work and live our lives safely.

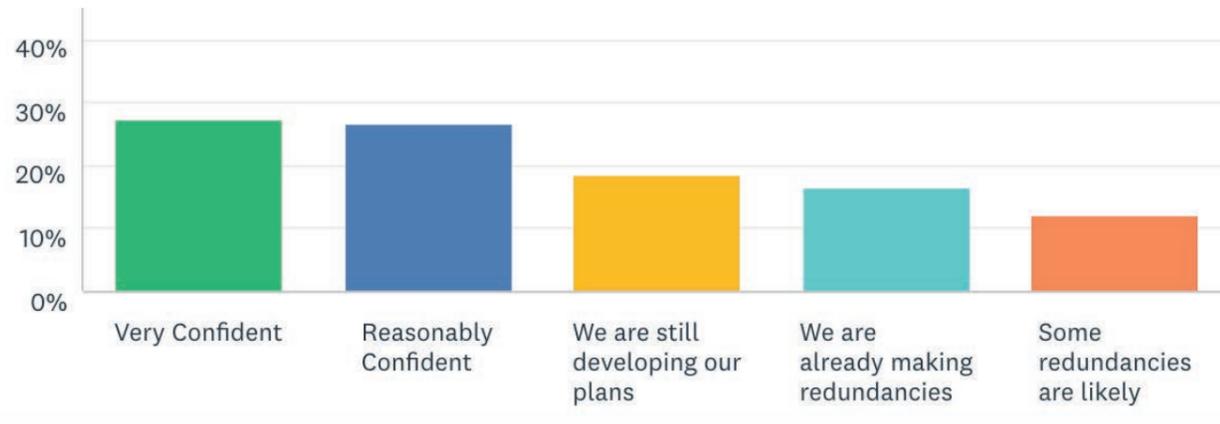
INSIGHTS:

When we asked the question, it also became evident that there is still a lot of work to be done to help people through the rapid change of working practices. Surprisingly internet connectivity, or the lack of it, still proved to be a problem with nearly 30% of respondents claiming it challenged how they worked on a daily basis.

Employers have needed to help their teams, providing better IT support, standardising the use of platforms such as MS Teams or Google Hangouts to streamline communications and safe sharing of confidential information.



Q8: Based on current market conditions as Covid-19 lockdown restrictions ease, how confident are you that you will maintain, or grow the headcount in your Procurement and/or Supply Chain Teams?



A: The results are mixed, and understandably sector specific. However positively, over 54% of organisations are planning to maintain or grow their permanent teams, identifying savings delivery, widening the supply base and developing robust supplier management, evaluation & monitoring activities as key projects.

Although 28% of companies are making, or likely to make redundancies, these are within predictable sectors, and size is no protection, the majority of redundancies are within the larger multi-national organisations.

For growing teams, this can be an opportunity, allowing access to available talent, however there will also be a need to employ a greater level of active ‘search’ strategies in the recruitment process to attract passive candidates who may not be moving from potentially secure jobs.



Summary – The current recruitment market.

There is no question that we are in the midst of one of the most difficult economic periods in our generation due to Coronavirus, and if you factor in Brexit and IR35, then you can understand why recruiting the right talent can be extremely challenging.

However, the question is, do you have the right people, with the skills to navigate your way through these challenges and deliver what you need?

Many procurement & supply chain leaders recognise the need to upskill, or increase their team’s capacity and are working on training & team development planning, as well as recruiting the best available people in the market. Which leads to the challenge of finding the right talent.

With many people looking for jobs due to redundancy, you would naturally believe that it’s an excellent time to recruit, and that hiring, despite the increased demands, should be easy? Well, think again. Whilst recruiters are inundated with applicants, few people in secure work want to switch jobs at the moment.

More so than ever, recruiting the right person, first time is paramount. So how do you win the race for the best talent and attract the right skillsets, if the right people are not actively looking in a market and are rightly risk averse?

What’s the solution? Seek and you shall find!

There are many factors which attract people to leave their ‘safe’ secure role and seek a new career, including flexible working, training, development, career progression, culture, financial and job security, to name a few. But none of these will matter if prospective candidates are not aware of your company’s career USP’s.

Positioning the company, the role and actively searching for the right talent match with promotional material, 360 capability assessment and other selection tools, ensures candidates know they are a good fit, providing confidence for both candidates and recruiting organisations, reducing the risk for both.

Hiring great talent has not got any easier, but there is a solution.

Reach out for a confidential discussion and we can guide you through a range of innovative, flexible & cost-effective support options that will help you solve these challenges.

Adam Roughton, Partner, ProSearch Recruitment Solutions
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ProSearch Recruitment Solutions.

As a specialist Procurement & Supply Chain recruitment practice, we deliver market leading solutions for clients in the UK, Europe & US.

We help clients recruit the best talent in a crowded market, with a range of Executive Search, Contingent Permanent and 'Accredited' Interim recruitment. We also deliver 'On-Demand' fixed cost project resource through our sister Consulting practice and Procurement capability assessment tools to help your own internal recruitment teams recruit the best talent.

We are specialists.
ProSearch can help you recruit the right Permanent & Interim talent. Our experienced consultants work with organisations across all sectors in the UK, Europe & US.
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**Attract the right Procurement & Supply Chain talent.
Let ProSearch help you stand out from the crowd.**



Procura Consulting.

We provide a range of professional services that help clients improve operational performance and profitability - from identifying and evaluating opportunities for savings, to implementing and managing category-specific cost reduction programmes. We work closely with your teams to embed best practice and ensure that procurement spend is optimised – and stays optimised.



We're focused on building long-term partnerships with our clients that deliver ongoing cost reduction and continuous improvement in procurement processes that add value to the bottom line. Our fees are based on the savings we are able to achieve, so there's no financial risk for clients because projects are self-funding.

Our consultants are constantly sourcing, on behalf of clients and for our own frameworks and have exceptional supply market knowledge, combined with a deep understanding of the latest procurement techniques, strong analytical skills and excellent project management capabilities.

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