But how can I manage staff health and wellbeing?

On the job
Making the most of Occupational Health

Cleaning up: Is it time to audit your products and processes?

Social life: Has the digital age and online networking impacted buyer behaviour?

Staying local: Practical hints and tips for engaging local SMEs in your procurement
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**PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW CONTACT DETAILS**

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Please send your comments and suggestions on how to improve this magazine, and any article ideas to l.compton@lupc.ac.uk
To Members, suppliers and visitors - who supported our 2014 Conference in April at the Institute of Education. We were very pleased with the positive reaction to the event and we look forward to staging an even better event in 2015.

I have to say I had no idea that there was so much involved in taking on a new lease for office premises, but we’ve finally completed and will be moving in to our new office during June – watch our website for detailed announcements. After a protracted search we feel we’ve found just the right place – in Tottenham Court Road, W1. Our move is also a case study in using our framework agreements – all our purchases of new office furniture, white goods, audio visual equipment, IT, a multi-functional device, window coverings, cleaning services, legal services, electricity supply, fire extinguisher servicing, insurance and removal services – were made through LUPC agreements.

On 3 June we launched our new money-saving deals for Temporary Staff and Occupational Health Services at a free event for Members at Senate House. These events provide the ideal opportunity for Members to meet our suppliers, both new and established, in an informal way. We also put on a short programme of workshops at the event to give your institution some valuable knowledge to take away.

Hurtling down the procurement pipeline is our brand new Sustainable Waste Management Services agreement, now in tender evaluation stage. Watch out for developments on this soon.

You might remember from the last issue that we ran a piece by People & Planet’s Jim Cranshaw about Electronics Watch, the campaign that will press the IT multi-nationals to improve conditions for workers in low-cost countries. Our Board, partly swayed by Dr Mahmood Bhutta’s appeal for workers’ conditions at our Conference, decided we should commit LUPC to the Electronics Watch cause as a Founder Member, one of just 25 across the EU.

Finally, we bid a warm welcome to our new full Members: the Horniman Museum and the Intensive Care Society. We look forward to working with all our colleagues at both organisations.

Andy Davies
June 2014
New Chair on the horizon

LUPC’s Board will bid farewell to current Chair Marcus McDonald (left) this month, and welcome in a newly elected Chair to take up the role.

Marcus, who is Director of Finance and Estates at the Royal College of Music, was elected to the LUPC Board in 2005, serving as Deputy Chair and then Chair. All Board Members are elected for a maximum nine-year term, so this year will be Marcus’s last as both Chair and as a Member of the LUPC Board.

LUPC Director Andy Davies said: “The LUPC Board has an enormously important job in leading the strategic direction of the consortium and ensuring we operate in a sustainable way for the future. Marcus has been an exceptional Chair, helping us respond quickly and adaptably to both internal and external challenges in the last nine years, such as supporting the sector to meet the Diamond Report recommendations. On behalf of all the LUPC team and Members, I wish to thank him for his dedication to the role, and look forward to working with our new Chair from this summer.”

On stepping down, Marcus said: “I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as Chair, and I hope that I have played some part in LUPC’s transformation over the last five years. I thank my fellow Board Members, and especially wish to thank Andy and his team for the excellent job that they do.

“I’m also grateful for the support and hard work of the Executive Committee and all the LUPC Working Groups. Without the enthusiasm of our Members we would not be the success we are today. I wish my successor well for the future and hope that you will enjoy your time as Chair as much as I have.”

All Board Members are democratically elected by the Membership with just one exception – LUPC’s Director, Andy Davies, who is accountable to the Board. The Board will elect a new Chair at its next meeting on Friday 13 June; you can read more about them in the next issue.

Annual Conference

More than 140 Members, 100 suppliers, plus guests and sector partners attended LUPC’s annual Conference on 1 April at the Institute of Education in Bloomsbury. The event, free for all Members to attend, received some very positive feedback - more than 98% of Members said they would attend an LUPC Conference again.

Keep an eye out for details of Conference 2015 later this year.

LUPC on the move

LUPC has moved to new premises. The consortium, which was previously based in the University of London Union Building in Bloomsbury, is now located at Shropshire House, 179 Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 7NZ.

This is the first time in its 46-year history that LUPC has moved away from the University of London estate, having originated as the University of London Bulk Ordering and Purchasing Group in 1968. After an extensive property search, the new premises provide additional space for the growing team and are still located close to several Members in and around the Bloomsbury area.

Members and suppliers are reminded to note LUPC’s new contact details – full information is on page 2.
LUPC has become a Founding Member of Electronics Watch, a new independent organisation that aims to monitor working conditions in the global electronics industry to enable socially responsible public purchasing across Europe.

The electronics industry is one of the fastest growing global industries with an expected yearly growth of 7% between 2013-2015. However, poor working conditions and labour rights abuses are commonplace in many parts of the developing world, where the majority of ICT products are made.

Electronics Watch, which aims to be up and running by mid-2015, will act as the ‘eyes and ears’ of EU public sector organisations on the ground in regions where their ICT products are made. The organisation, which is part EU-funded, will enable buyers to monitor compliance with policy and commission interventions when required, and help to improve conditions for workers in tiers 1 and 2 of their supply chains.

LUPC Director Andy Davies said: “This is a very important social issue for LUPC and our Members. It also means that we have a very active part to play, representing our Members at EU level. We hope that our Members will follow our lead by supporting and contributing to Electronic Watch’s work, auditing our supply chains in low-cost countries and calling the major IT multinationals to account.”

“LUPC leads the £100m pa national framework agreement for desktop PCs and notebooks, the largest in the UK HE sector, so collaboratively we have the power and influence to make a real difference.”

People & Planet campaigner Jim Cranshaw, who represents Electronics Watch in the UK, said: “By being one of only 25 Founding Members of Electronics Watch across Europe, LUPC has again positioned itself at the forefront of socially responsible public purchasing. We call on other public bodies to follow their lead.”

Read more about Electronics Watch at http://electronicswatch.org/en/
COMMODITY UPDATES

ENERGY

Carbon Reduction Group
A Carbon Reduction Group meeting was held on 8 April, with three presentations arranged and managed by LUPC. The agenda included:

- Introducing the Greater London Authority’s RE:FIT programme – helping to save energy and money across your estates;
- Flexible energy buying and how it supports mitigating the impact of energy market reform; and
- Energy costs drive reduction-renewables technologies, what is available? What is right for your institution?

ESTATES

Cleaning and Security Services
The format of Commodity Group meetings is under review to ensure greater engagement with Members, alternating the emphasis for each meeting between security and cleaning with more of a forum feel. LUPC’s Security forum was held on 13 May with all Security suppliers on the framework in attendance, Commodity Group Members and Members who have expressed an interest in running a mini-competition against the framework.

A mini-competition for Security is being carried out for Royal College of Music through LUPC’s mini-competition service; other Members interested in mini-competitions are Newham College (Cleaning & Security either combined or as separate lots); Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (Security); Royal Veterinary College (Security); Royal College of Art (Combined Cleaning & Security); and Courtauld Institute of Art (Security - April 2015).

Estates Maintenance
Interested Members currently include Kingston University (Lot 1 – Fabric Maintenance); University of East London; University of Westminster (Lot 2 M&E); London Metropolitan (Lot 4 - Asbestos); Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; University of Greenwich; St George’s, University of London; and Courtauld Institute of Art (Lot 6 – Fabric and M&E). We are considering running another Estates Workshop in the autumn.

Sustainable Waste Management Services
ITTs were received on 13 June from 12 out of 14 shortlisted suppliers. Evaluation of tenders is underway. Suppliers to be notified of proposed appointments to the framework by 16 June. Framework agreement to commence 1 August 2014.

There is strong interest in this framework from Members participating in the tender process, with a minimum of four Members intending to run mini-competitions as soon as this framework goes live, with a further 10 Members expressing intention to use the framework when their current contracts expire.

Audio Visual Equipment
LUPC attended and contributed to the first Tender Working Group for re-tender of this agreement, which will include three lots:

- Lot 1 Equipment Only
- Lot 2 Equipment and Fit
- Lot 3 Presentation Systems - design, project manage, supply and install.

Suppliers will be awarded by region, with different numbers of suppliers to be awarded according to the lot. LUPC was asked to prepare a proposal to lead large AV supply and installation mini-competitions. LUPC will be calling-off from this agreement to provide presentation, telephone and video conference facilities for our new office relocation.

Office Furniture
LUPC has awarded a contract to supply and fit furniture for new premises under this framework. LUPC will contribute to the re-tender agreement due to be held on 29 May.

National Desktop and Notebook Agreement (NDNA)
Draft minutes from the reviews in February have been produced and will be checked and issued in the next few weeks. Sales management information reporting for Q3 has started to arrive, with a final supplier deadline of 31 May. This will then be hosted on the NDNA portal by early June.

Discussions with Samsung on the formal inclusion of their Galaxy Tablet range within the agreement have concluded and these should start to appear from June onwards.

Following successful discussions with Toshiba in mid-April, a new suite of NDNA specials have been made available under the title of “Toshiba Recommends for HE”. These offer an additional NDNA discount of up to £170 against the previous price. In addition, the tendered discount was improved across a number of models as part of the initiative; for example, the R series 13” from 12% to 15% and the 13” Z series from 8% to now 13%.

An interim open-book price and service review meeting was held with Dell on 16 May. The NDNA benchmarking exercise was correspondingly updated and added to GeM/NDNA portal ahead of the review.

Together with regulatory body ADISA, WEEE recycling partner CDL presented on the challenges and solutions faced by institutions at April’s LUPC Conference at the Institute of Education. The two presentations from the day are now available on the LUPC website.

The next reviews are in the process of being planned with the other members of the group and are expected to be held in either late August or early September.

National Education Printer Agreement (NEPA)
The minutes from the review meetings held in March 2014 at LUPC in the presence of the manufacturers have now been completed and approved. Advice and assistance has been given to Royal College of Music as part of their Managed Print mini-competition being conducted under NEPA.

Network Equipment
The new agreement has been well supported by all HE Consortia with total spend of £11m across both the old and new agreements in 2013-14. The first supplier review meetings are due on 23-25 June 2014.

Electrical Materials & Associated Products
The National Group convened in Manchester on 23 April in the presence of City, Edmundson, Eyre & Elliston and Amble. City hopes to launch a series of ‘lunch and learn’ style events in the near future. The company has already been successful in offering student internships in areas such as IT and R&D (as part of their own-brand development). There are some concerns that certain OEMs can and will sell directly and cherry-pick large projects in order to secure the business.

LUPC spend has increased by over 50% in 2013/4 compared to the previous year. A number of LUPC Members gave positive supplier feedback ahead of the meeting including the Museum of London, Wellcome Trust and Courtauld Institute of Art.

Electronics
A review meeting was held in York on 6 March in the presence of Onecall, Rapid and RS. Spending through the agreement between December 2012 and January 2014 was just over £11m. Onecall continues to benefit from its well-regarded willingness to engage with a number of e-commerce offerings, from which 41% of all its NUWPEC sales are generated. Multiple ship-to addresses tend to represent the biggest challenge.

White Goods
Work will begin on the new framework at the end of this year. Consideration will need to be given as to how we can develop the supply chain and ensure the suppliers are of sufficient financial standing to survive the framework term.
An online survey will be distributed shortly along with invitations to the meetings.

**IT-Related Accessories and Parts (ITRAP)**
Supplier review meetings were held in mid-April and these were led by SUPC’s Carli Thorpe, who has taken over as Contracts Manager. A large number of universities continue to place low value orders fragmented by different departments with multiple drops on the same day across a given campus. SUPC has been tasked with sending a communication to Members about consolidating their orders.

**PCs with Apple Operating Systems**
The most recent review meeting with Apple took place at the University of Cambridge on 29 April. In the six months to March, total sales were £52.6m including £36.5m individual sales. LUPC institution sales totalled £22.25m over the period and institution sales as a whole are down slightly year-on-year. Mobile devices such as the MacBook Pro continue to be the most popular devices.

Of the matters covered, MacPro system delivery lead times are now down to about 4 weeks and are expected to improve further over the coming months. Even though each device sold through the agreement comes with 3 years warranty in the box, 32% of all systems have the paid upgrade to Apple Care attached to them.

The Buyer’s Guide has been amended to reflect the position of the Apple Retail Stores in clearer detail. This confirms that in certain instances the Apple Retail Store may be able to offer price matching, however, this is discretionary. The standard one-year Apple warranty will apply to all purchases made through the retail store. Only purchases made via the HE National Agreement attracts the 3-year warranty at the time of purchase. Service events can be managed through a retail store as they act in the same way as any Apple Authorised Service Provider.

iPhone and iPad systems are able to live configure to institution requirements upon initial set-up and connection to the network. A revised discount of 6%, up from 3%, has been agreed on iPad. The extended warranty piece is still to be passed on to these products at this time.

**National Server & Storage Agreement (NSSA)**
The minutes from February’s supplier reviews have now been completed and issued. Management of the agreement has now transitioned to Carli Thorpe.

**Telecommunications inc. landline and mobile (GPS)**
The sector’s National Telecoms Group (NTG) met on 27 March at LUPC. Minutes from the meeting will be issued shortly and there are plans to develop and issue a questionnaire in order to collect views and develop a coherent strategy going forward.

The Crown Commercial Service (CCS) is currently exploring options for a Telecoms Expense Management Service (TEM), as can be viewed at http://ccs.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/i-am-supplier/supplier-industry-days/telecoms-expense-management-service-rm1014. The scope is likely to include inventory management and optimisation, invoice management, usage analysis, dispute, reporting and business intelligence, sourcing and ordering and fulfilment services.

National Further Competition (NFC) 3 for mobile is due to close on 15 July. Further details on result and savings will be provided in the next update. NFC4 is in the planning stage and aggregation volumes stand at 48 customers and c.£5m spend. Customers still have time to participate in this exercise should they wish to join via ict_aggregation@ccs.gsi.gov.uk.

The Technology Aggregation team is also keen to hear from customers and, in particular, groups of customers who have requirements for common technology goods and services which they believe they could aggregate to deliver savings. The aim is to provide a fully managed further competition exercise on behalf of an aggregated group of customers with a common technology requirement.

**SMS Text Messaging Service (JANET)**
The new SMS framework agreement commenced on 1 May 2014 between Janet and PageOne Communications for a period of four years. New lower SMS messaging prices and lower service charges, plus a new pricing structure, were introduced on 1 April 2014, one month early than contractually required. A New Buyer’s Guide is available and can be viewed at: https://community.ja.net/library/janet-txt-buyers-guide-0. A new integration solution is available for Tribal ebs4.

**Software Licence Resellers**
Lead contract management for this framework has now transitioned to SUPC’s Carli Thorpe. Supplier review meetings were held in early April 2014 and as part of these, an online questionnaire was created to receive feedback. Minutes of the meeting and a summary of the responses should be available shortly.

**INSURANCE**
Following discussions led by broker Gallagher Heath (GH), Zurich Municipal confirmed in early May that they will be maintaining the Long Term Agreement (LTA) with the only increase being the 3% agreed at time of tender on the Employer’s Liability policy.

Following the GH Risk Seminar on 26 March and the verbal report from Tim Devine at GH on the worsening cumulative claims experience of the LUPC as a group with regards to the Personal Accident & Travel Policy, a Travel Risk Management Working Group was formed with the purpose of establishing and effect ‘best practice’ methodology of a) keeping track of those travelling on university business and b) managing claims more effectively. The group has now been formed with the Members’ first task being to assist in drawing up a ‘best practice’ template to enable those who are struggling to try and implement these practices within their own institution.

This year’s National Conference for Insurance Managers in HE is to be held at the 4* Weetwood Hall Conference Centre and Hotel, Leeds on 5 and 6 June 2014. A final programme has been published and shared with the group. Four free places remain at time of writing for any member of the LUPC Insurance Group to attend Airmic’s Annual Conference taking place between 16 and 18 June this year at the ICC in Birmingham.

**LABORATORY**

**Laboratory Consumables and Chemicals**
LUPC attended the first tender working group evaluation meeting on 15 and 16 May, where qualification aspects were completed, non-qualitative aspects discussed and product specifications compared. A total of 28 suppliers submitted responses across all of the lots. LUPC and Aston University are leading the gloves lot for technical evaluation. Evaluation is due for completion by mid-June. The plan is for LUPC to carry out an improved price project across all suppliers and all lots starting in September, for which key lab-buying Member volunteers are needed.

**Laboratory Gases**
The helium pricing review has been concluded with BOC and published to Members. All other pricing remains fixed until October 2014 and will be subject to review at the next review meeting scheduled for early July 2014. An interim meeting was held with Air Liquide in early May to try and assist in extending their marketing reach and overall proposition into more universities.
COMMODITY UPDATES

LIBRARY

Books
LUPC’s Library Commodity Group met on 16 May at Kingston University. A Joint Consortia Books Agreement E-books Event was held on 9 May and 25 LUPC library representatives attended to hear presentations from a range of providers on the e-book lot of the framework. LUPC is working with some Members on potential opportunities for local or inter-institutional collaborative deals for the bulk purchase of course material (print and electronic). A pilot project is now planned with Queen Mary University of London as a ‘proof of concept’, with the intention to add further institutions in the second phase if it is successful.

Postal Services
An LUPC Member representative is still required for the Postal Group. Interested Members should contact Mike Kliner, m.kliner@lupc.ac.uk.

The most recent National Post Group took place on 24 April and discussed final plans for the next agreement based on a converged tender covering airmail, parcels, Hybrid and any other services that are required under the next framework agreement. The new ITT is expected to go out in October 2014 for response in November and award by February 2015, with a 1 April live date. The next full group is expected to be in October with a tender sub-group convening before then.

Royal Mail have committed to providing weight and item data by consortium and institution. These should be captured and sanity checked with HEIs as part of surveying the new programme and associated ideas during 2014. Elements of the scoping are expected to be problematic, for example, suppliers generally hold weight and item data but have poor records when it comes to destination profiles.

The agreement is due to end in July 2014. It is intended that a new agreement will be set in place as part of the Postal & Courier tender, leaving a hiatus of around six months when no airmail agreement will be in place. Arrangements will be set in place to provide institutions with a supply facility. Even though they take 25% of agreement spend, Spring Global have decided to decline the invitation and will not be going forward beyond July’s expiry date.

OFFICE

Professional Services

Legal Services
On 28 March a voluntary OJEU Contract Notice and PQQ was issued for a new LUPC Legal Services framework (in accordance with the legislation currently applicable to Part B services). As agreed by the Executive Committee in previous meetings, this will complement the national framework agreement for Legal Services awarded by APUC in 2013.

PQQ responses were received from 20 law firms in advance of the deadline on 29 April and all passed the mandatory compliance questions. The Tender Working Party, including representatives from British Council, Institute of Cancer Research, Science Museum, British Library and University of Hertfordshire, is currently evaluating the responses and moderation meetings will be held on 19 and 20 May to finalise the PQQ scoring and the shortlist of firms to receive invitations to tender.

The Tender Working Party is also in the process of reviewing a set of draft tender documents and further discussion on the Invitation to Tender will take place at a meeting on 19 May. Following that, the intention is to issue the ITT to shortlisted firms on 2 June.

Temporary Agency Staff
Following award of the new framework agreement on 18 March, implementation meetings have now been held with all 11 framework providers. Full information about the agreement is available online via the LUPC website and GeM, and announcements have gone out to Members.

An early ‘win’ for the agreement is signing up London Metropolitan University as a new user under the One-Stop-Shop lot.

A Temporary Staff and Occupational Health Launch Event is being held on Tuesday 3 June at Senate House. All Temporary Staff providers will exhibit and some will also be delivering free workshops for Members on topics of interest. Invitations for the launch event have gone out and Members are encouraged to come along to this free event to meet with providers, hear more about the agreement and how it works (as well as the Occupational Health agreement), and attend workshops from providers on topics that have been specially chosen for an audience of LUPC Members. Members are also encouraged to bring colleagues from other disciplines, such as HR, student services, operations and health and safety.

Occupational Health
The British Museum has now completed its mini-competition and is signing up to the framework. Meetings/discussions have also been held with a number of interested institutions, including London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, LSE, Royal Holloway, V&A and SOAS; more sign-ups should follow soon.

On 14 May, LUPC presented on the Occupational Health framework at the University Human Resources (UHR) Conference. The presentation was very well received and the Conference was a good opportunity to highlight to the HR community some of the framework agreements on offer that might be of interest to them.

All five framework providers are signed up to exhibit at the Temporary Staff and Occupational Health Launch Event on 3 June and two will be delivering free workshops for Members on using occupational health services to achieve best value.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Website
A simple bookmark app was created to help smartphone and other device users access the website more easily.

HEPA Courses
The 2014-15 Higher Education Procurement Academy course titles (open to all LUPC Members) have been agreed. These are: Introduction to EU Procurement; Advanced EU Procurement; Effective Use of Competitive Negotiation; Specification Writing; Sustainable Procurement; and Advanced Negotiation (2 days). Details to follow.

CORRECT AS OF 31 MAY 2014

Full details of all agreements open to LUPC Members are available at www.lupc.ac.uk
A healthy partnership

Bernie Waters explains what an Occupational Health provider can and should deliver for your organisation.

All organisations are under increasing pressure to produce more for less. Education institutions are facing rising demands from their students, greater focus on their research activities, and fundamental reforms to their overall funding arrangements. These challenges are mirrored across all LUPC Member institutions who are also expected to deliver their services more efficiently.

So, how does investment in Occupational Health (OH) services help overcome these challenges and what should organisations expect of their OH provider?

Most organisations understand that staff health and well-being is important, not only for ensuring compliance with legal obligations, but for creating a motivated workforce able to achieve sustainable success. An effective OH partner will provide expert and up-to-date advice to managers and help them review the legislation relevant to their sector. Choosing an OH provider with a recognised quality certification, such as SEQOHS (Safe, Effective, Quality Occupational Health Service), will give confidence in the standard of advice, guidance and recommendations made by its practitioners.

A high-quality, specialist OH service should play a central role in the organisation and must work to develop an in-depth understanding of the business. This will only be achieved by working in close collaboration with the organisation and understanding its policies and procedures. OH providers will also take the time to meet with key people in the business and acquire a full understanding of its overarching ethos and what drives its success.

Ongoing communication - facilitated by regular review meetings as well as more formal reporting and OH performance measurement - allows the partnership to develop to the point where OH advice becomes tailored to the specific needs of the individual business and not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach.

A successful partnership between an organisation and its OH provider will deliver a number of benefits, including increased productivity, improved morale and decreased staff turnover; reduced cost associated with ill health, sickness absence and claims for work-related ill health; and, of course, legal compliance.

Organisations must ensure that they achieve real value from every penny they spend. Investing in an effective and high quality OH partner will help them strike that elusive balance between meeting their statutory obligations to provide a safe and healthy workplace for their staff and enhancing team performance to a level that gives them a genuine competitive advantage.

Bernie Waters is Business Development Manager at Robens Centre.

Whilst any good OH service should be tailored to an organisation’s needs, it is likely to include (as a minimum):

Pre-employment health assessment
• Collaborative working with recruitment teams
• Assessment of fitness for the specific role
• Avoidance of inheriting pre-existing health conditions
• Reference to Equality Act 2010 giving appropriate advice and recommendations

Sickness absence management
• Reduction of absence through early intervention
• Supporting return to work after sickness absence
• Guidance and reference to Equality Act 2010
• Advice on Ill Health Retirement

Health surveillance
• Meeting legal requirements for risk assessment and health surveillance
• Monitoring and protecting staff/students from hazardous substances

Health promotion
• Linking with public health agenda for health promotion activities
• Leading on well-being initiatives such as non-smoking events
• Helping with improved staff morale and improving general health and well-being.

Bernie Waters is Business Development Manager at Robens Centre.
Digital buying behaviours

Tony Marven asks, does social media really change purchasing behaviours?

Does social media really affect the way people buy? In short: it does, but not as you may expect.

To make sense of this digital landscape let’s consider how consumer behaviours differ from that of an organisation’s purchasing team. Clearly there is a difference in the levels, types of spend and the due diligence processes a corporate function needs to adopt, but research shows that social media at this level has very little effect.

While content and information research collection has increased, and the web has certainly helped, the preference is for more traditional sources of information, with supplier face-to-face contact preferred. Formal networks for purchasing professionals have moved more online to platforms like LinkedIn, but when it comes to the purchasing process and decision-making the majority of behaviours are off-line.

Where the organisational behaviours do begin to change is in the contract delivery stage.

There is well-documented research on the different online behaviours across the different generations that make up today’s workforce (see box).

Long gone are the paper requisition forms; today’s busy managers expect their internal buying experiences to be similar to their consumer experiences. They want to be empowered with all the relevant information and tools to choose the best product or service for them. They are happy to collaborate with peers and share feedback on their experiences. As consumers, over 70 percent say they’re more likely to buy something based on social media referrals, and that consumers generally trust the recommendations they see from friends, and even strangers, more than they trust advertising. So why would this be different in the workplace?

Whilst purchasing teams rely on financial data to monitor spend, this kind of user feedback is just as valuable for ensuring suppliers deliver quality and value for money. The challenge then comes in delivering a user-oriented system which allows the freedom of choice to buy from within centrally procured services. There is even scope in some sectors to share these platforms across non-competing organisations, to gain greater buying power, economies of scale and richer user feedback and involvement in the delivery of services.

Where the organisational behaviours do begin to change is in the contract delivery stage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation Y</th>
<th>Generation X</th>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Born 1977-1994, this generation grew up with technology, so being connected and tech savvy is in their DNA. Their social lives and interactions naturally gravitate online.</td>
<td>Born 1966-1976, this generation tends to use technology for convenience purposes, such as online banking and shopping, and it’s not as central to their social lives.</td>
<td>Born 1955-1965, this generation has witnessed the expanding effect of many technological advancements, and mainly adopt them only as ‘tools’ to do ‘jobs’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Read a newspaper regularly | 43% | 50% | 58% |
| Internet use | 90% use the internet; 20% have posted a video of themselves | 87% use the internet; 6% have posted a video of themselves | 79% use the internet; 2% have posted a video of themselves |
| Purchasing influences | Internet user reviews | Peer recommendation | Brand reputation |
| Social media | 75% use a social networking site; 29% logon several times a day | 50% use a social networking site; 19% logon several times a day | 30% use a social networking site; 11% logon several times a day |
| Mobile phone (no landline) | 41% have just a mobile | 24% have just a mobile | 13% have just a mobile |
FEATURES

With tuition fees at an all time high, today’s university students are struggling to meet their everyday costs. What’s more, many also face shortfalls of thousands of pounds, despite the ever increasing bill for government-funded student loans.

Why is this? Figures analysed by the National Union of Students (NUS) show that student loans have not kept up with rising living costs. Therefore many students starting university are now facing a cost of living crisis, with financial support in loans and grants failing to keep pace with spiralling bills - even for the basic essentials. Flying the security of the family nest and into student accommodation for the first time brings many new anxieties for students, especially those away from home for the first time. It also brings the added financial responsibility of being well-equipped for university life, both practically and emotionally. And this can be time-consuming and confusing - not to mention expensive - for an 18-year old.

Online companies, such as Gailarde’s UniKitOut, are available in the marketplace to bridge this gap by providing packs of all the everyday student essentials required to smooth the transition into university life. Students are able to save time and money in a convenient and well-managed online process that meets their needs.

Students are the most prolific users of the internet in our society and, with the increasing use of smartphones and other technology, many automatically go online for tasks such as researching and shopping for essentials. So, when it comes to finding out exactly which items are needed to start university life, the internet will be the first port of call for prospective students.

“Students are able to save time and money in a convenient and well-managed online process”

Products for the bedroom, bathroom and kitchen can now be provided in compact, tailor-made packs comprising a wide variety of bedding, linen, towelling, cooking equipment, crockery, bathroom essentials and homewares. A one-stop online shop can set parents’ minds at rest and provide all the necessary equipment away from home.

For students, a dedicated landing page and ability to browse for essentials makes the shopping experience hassle free. Not only can substantial savings be made by incoming students using this service, but a percentage rebate can also be negotiated, providing an additional revenue stream.

The upshot is that when students arrive at university for the first time, all the chosen equipment to ease their way into university life will already be there waiting for them. From feedback received to date, it is clear that a totally bespoke online service significantly enhances the student experience for the benefit of both students and universities alike.

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Students can buy a range of home essentials via a one-stop online shop, explains Dan Roston.

Get kitted out

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Institutions are often required to save money on cleaning and hygiene, but it can be difficult to see ways of making marked improvements on already slick operations. Often, a step backwards and a strategic view of each process can make such savings achievable.

There are several key areas in which savings can be delivered if they are managed correctly. The first one is using the right products for the right applications. It seems obvious that using the correct products in every application will increase efficiency. But all too often this is an area which is overlooked by cleaning and hygiene suppliers where existing products are matched, rather than reviewing each process and considering whether this will yield the best results.

This can be seen particularly in paper and skincare systems in washrooms, where manufacturers will install dispensers and put the consumables into a contract which legally holds for the duration, often up to three years. There are often more cost-effective paper and soap systems available, and this is an area which can give cost savings quickly and easily.

Chemical is another area which can deliver savings. Should you install a water-fed dosing system? These systems can cause many issues such as fluctuations in water pressure, which results in fluctuating dilution rates. Also, if you are in a hard water area, these systems can develop constant problems with the air gap scaling up regularly. The wall units are expensive to install for manufacturers, and they have to get payback through the chemicals, meaning these will often be expensive.

This is where the role of audits really come into their own. Getting an experienced review of every area and providing recommendations based on the experienced gained from other similar institutions is invaluable if you are serious about cost and efficiency savings. Audits identify areas of savings and a list of recommendations and estimated savings are provided completely free of charge. Remember that this doesn’t just apply to existing facilities; remember to take advice when opening new or renovated facilities.

The second area in which savings can be made is in training staff to deliver better results. The biggest ongoing expense in any cleaning programme is people. And people deliver the results. This is an area which is often overlooked; janitors are often left to get on with the job themselves and are not given any guidance on how they should do the work. Equipment can be quickly mothballed when janitors don’t understand how it should be used and return to more labour-intensive methods they are familiar with. Their frustration can be easily overcome with basic training which will quickly increase efficiencies.

People really are your biggest asset, and with the assistance of some training this can bring big savings in time and efficiency. Getting to the grassroots of the cleaning team and offering them training and support brings significant improvements to morale, and of course the cleaning results. Training also means staff have a better grasp on health and safety matters. Those requiring control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH) training can do so online at www.adswsupplies.com. In 20 minutes the training and multiple choice test can be carried out and a certificate will be sent in the post.

“Equipment can be mothballed when janitors don’t understand how to use it”
In the past year, the higher education sector has twice been the focus of the Office of Fair Trading’s (OFT’s) attention. In July 2013, the OFT began an investigation into how universities’ terms and conditions may, in breach of consumer protection legislation, operate against students who owe their university non-tuition fee debts.

Then, in October 2013, the OFT launched a call for information (Cfi) to understand how recent higher education reforms had affected the sector’s competitive landscape. The OFT wanted to establish how this has impacted on the “student experience”.

Last month, shortly before closing its doors for the last time, the OFT published its findings from the Cfi. The OFT reported that, on the whole, it believes the higher education sector is working well. But the OFT did highlight a number of issues and recommended that its successor, the new Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), conduct further work into potential improvements when it assumed the reins of competition authority on 1 April 2014.

A number of headline concerns are made in the OFT’s report. One covers a lack of information about long-term employment prospects and teaching staff’s experience – there are concerns that students do not have enough information to make informed choices about where and what to study. The OFT has recommended that the CMA share the insights of HEFCE’s current review into information provision to prospective students and then work with universities to explore how to resolve any issues.

Policies and/or practices which could disadvantage students or even breach consumer protection legislation are another concern. Course fee increases, additional or hidden charges and changes to course content/structure are all practices which the OFT identified as having the potential to be unfair or misleading under The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008. The OFT has recommended the CMA conduct a compliance review to establish how prevalent these practices are before then assessing how any concerns can be addressed.

The OFT acknowledged that the slowness and inaccessibility of the complaints process was being improved by the current redress system, however it identified room for further improvement. It has encouraged the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education to work with the CMA to implement further changes.

Finally, higher education suffers from an overly complex regulatory regime – the OFT found that the higher education regulatory framework was unfit for purpose in light of increased student choice. The OFT has recommended that the CMA work alongside students and universities to overhaul the regulatory system.

The CMA has confirmed its intention to pick up where the OFT left off, saying that it would “look at the most appropriate ways” to take the OFT’s recommendations forward. As the CMA beds in to its new role, it is unsurprising that there has been no word on next steps just yet. But universities will be encouraged to participate in the CMA’s review and so should keep their eye out for further announcements in due course.
As a follow-up to my article in the last issue of *Linked*, which discussed how public sector bodies can legitimately open up opportunities to local SMEs through procurement, I now want to address practical steps to make this happen in your organisation.

Supply Cross River is working with the City of London on a pilot project to help them procure suppliers for goods and services under £100,000 from SMEs in the City fringe boroughs. At this level, the City’s policy is to go out to three companies for quotations. The City has a strong commitment to buying from their neighbouring boroughs, but up until recently found it difficult to identify local suppliers. Their buying team sends the specification for a particular item or service out to a dedicated staff member in Supply Cross River 2. We then have 24 hours to say whether or not we have anyone suitable among our 400 or so SME membership. If we do, we send them an RFQ (request for a quote), which they send direct to the City buyer. This has resulted in several successful outcomes already.

Another initiative that public bodies can take to channel some of their discretionary spending toward local SME suppliers is to hold a Meet the Suppliers event organised in conjunction with a programme like Supply Cross River. This is where your buyers get to meet with a range of innovative local suppliers matched to the types of goods and services you specify. Supply Cross River has carried out such events with, for example, the British Library, Balfour Beatty and the City of London. Such events are usually held on the buyer’s premises and suppliers are given 15-20 minute meetings with the appropriate buyer for their service.

Another less targeted format, but which nevertheless generally throws up some good SMEs, is to attend a Meet the Buyer event where upwards of 20 buyers are represented together with a wider range of suppliers.

In addition to such events, public bodies can work on a one-to-one basis with a buyer engagement expert from a supply chain programme like Supply Cross River, again at no cost. Organisations like Supply Cross River will act as a broker and source suitable local SMEs, screen them and put them forward together with their company profile for consideration. The buying organisation will generally be required to keep a ‘log’ of all local procurement activity so that results can be documented and disseminated internally on both sides.

This process can work equally well if not better with a public body’s first tier contractors, especially where some form of local procurement has been embedded in their contract. Services such as repair and maintenance, facilities management and catering are well suited to the use of local SMEs. These contractors very much welcome introductions to well qualified SMEs in services they need to outsource with all the convenience of being based in the local area.

These are just some of the practical ways that large public bodies can engage with local SMEs to the advantage of both sides. For it to work well in practice, it is a great advantage if the public body has a formal commitment to using more SMEs as part of its overall vision or corporate strategy. There are increasing external pressures to do so, whether it be the Public Services (Social Value) Act, the government’s target of 25% of spending by the public sector going to SMEs, or the new EU procurement regulations that encourage buyers to break contracts into smaller lots.

Read more about London universities’ impact on the local economy on p.19

**David McAlpine** is Head of Buyer Engagement for the Supply Cross River 2 local procurement programme, david@mtwconsultants.co.uk; www.supplycrossriver.co.uk

**FEATURES**

David McAlpine sets out practical ways to widen contract opportunities to local small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).
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Let’s talk…

This issue, we talk to Adjoa Boateng, Head of Information Services at the University of East London.

How long have you worked at the University of East London (UEL)?
Three years.

How did you get into procurement?
My responsibilities as Head of Information Services include budgetary responsibility for acquisition of all information resources provided through the university’s Learning and Library Services. When I initially started my role it became clear that the area of negotiation and maintenance for information resources at UEL required some development. I subsequently realised the benefits of becoming a proactive Member of LUPC.

What do you most enjoy about your job?
The diversity of knowledge required. On a weekly basis I lead on negotiations, investigate future possible resources for acquisition, and provide training and advice while working within a team that is enthusiastic about the services we provide.

What’s the most difficult aspect?
Balancing the factors affecting academic and institutional preferences for procurement is a recurrent challenge. This includes transparency; long-term costs; value of resources; cost of administration; and compliance. The additional demands of an annually restrictive budget often bring these areas into conflict.

If you weren’t involved in procurement, what would you be doing?
I would be training full-time for the Ironman in Zell am See-Kaprun, Austria.

What’s the most interesting item or service you’ve had to buy?
At UEL I would say the self-service lockers for mobile devices, which links into the Library Management System. These are a facet of a larger project, however I have been particularly pleased with the level of satisfaction openly expressed by our students following the acquisition of these items.

In your view, what value can working with the Procurement team bring to other areas such as Libraries?
Working with the Procurement team has maximised efficiencies. Areas of procurement such as the management of serials have become much less complicated and time-consuming.

University of East London is a Member of LUPC – what do you think have been the main benefits of joining the consortium?
From my perspective this has been reliability in terms of financial savings, legal and technical advice. This is in addition to the very enjoyable side of networking during our meetings.

What are the key challenges ahead for your institution?
I think that UEL, like most HE institutions across the UK, now exists in an increasingly challenging era. Changes in government policy, financial uncertainties and international competition all play a key part. For the immediate future, I would suggest that a key area for attention would be the direction, development and maintenance of key infrastructure, particularly IT and the services this should support. Strategic procurement is critical within this area.

What achievement are you most proud of (and why)?
In terms of procurement, it’s ensuring that UEL has a portfolio of information resources that more than fulfils requirements for teaching, learning and research.

What was the last film you saw/book you read?
20 Feet from Stardom – and I would recommend this documentary as a simple pure acoustic pleasure.

Fancy being our next Member interview? Contact: l.compton@lupc.ac.uk
**Impact on local employment**

London universities punch above their weight in creating and sustaining employment opportunities in the capital, and the rest of the UK.

- **56,896** full-time equivalent jobs were provided by London universities, across a range of occupations and skill levels in 2011-12 (South East 45,982; North West 31,085).

- For every **100** direct full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs created in London universities themselves, another **138** UK jobs would also be generated in other industries, of which **113** would be in London.

- **145,921** jobs were generated in London by local universities in 2011-12, together with the expenditure of their international students and students from the rest of the UK. This was equivalent to **3.7%** of the workforce in employment in 2012.

  Whereas cleaners, catering assistants and security officers comprise around **14%** of UK higher education’s directly employed support staff overall, in London institutions they only make up around **6.5%** of the support staff. This reflects greater outsourcing of support roles in London.

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