

# Communications Procurement: - Making an Informed Decision

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**W**ith many new entrants in the Telecom's market in Ireland, and unfortunately some recent telecom's casualties, the current market is in a volatile state. Comms-Online examine the need for independent unbiased advice in an ever changing telecom's environment.

Many IT Managers are familiar with the current telecom's landscape in Ireland, and the main service offerings from the telecom's carriers, however it is advisable that IT managers look closely at using a telecom's consultant for delivering the most cost effective solution, ensuring your technology investment is being fully utilised. Outsourcing the procurement process to the independent consultant will ensure your project is effectively managed.

As many corporate companies review their telecom's requirements every twelve to eighteen months, due diligence needs to be completed when embarking on such decisions. With so many new entrants into the market, new and improved services on offer, and many new technologies, it can be difficult keeping up to speed on all these developments. Comms-Online's experience shows that many companies are faced with risky and complex decisions regarding their service providers and infrastructure requirements. Many of our clients, throughout all sectors, utilise the consultancy service to keep abreast of new technologies and ensure that they are receiving the best possible service and price available.

So, where can the telecommunications consultant add value to the operations of the IT and finance department when assisting in the decision making process within these organisations? There are many factors to be considered with regards to the decision making process, and it is important to take the time to examine how a quality telecom's consultant can add value not only to the procurement process, but also to the outsourcing of various services. These services should include on-site technical resources such as network health checks



and network management.

Because of the occasional but highly specialised nature of Comms purchasing, set against a backdrop of extreme pace of change, there is a clear market for the provision of objective purchasing advice. In the case of corporate clients seeking substantial voice and data requirements, the various offerings of a constantly changing pack of suppliers presents a daunting purchasing situation. The consultant should ensure that their clients are assisted through the evaluation and selection process with ease.

All sectors require another value-add above and beyond the ability to assess price and offerings within a highly competitive tendering environment – they need confidence in the quality, integrity and expedition of the service. Ensure you are dealing with a major player, who is capable of driving your individual orders through appropriate priority and escalation procedures.

Relationship Management is the key to the success of the project on an ongoing basis. Many corporate clients deal with multiple carriers, and this can be the crux of the

problem with regard to the successful implementation of new products and services. By using a consultant, an IT Manager can use one point of contact to expedite their services successfully.

With every decision, price is important. Our experience has shown that price is not usually on top of the list of priorities, however it is an important factor when negotiating with the service providers. The new breed of telecom's consultant not only provide services such as project planning, network design, professional procurement, selection of technology, and relationship management, but are also in an ideal position to advise on price points as they are dealing with many contracts on a weekly basis. The consultant should have a deep understanding of market conditions, therefore ensuring that your company receive the best prices for their particular contracts. Often when negotiating with your preferred service provider, the consultant may be managing other business with that supplier, and on occasion further discounts can be achieved.

When purchasing telecom's services, ensure that the consultant is not a tied agent to any particular carrier. You want to ensure you receive unbiased independent advice at all times throughout the project. Examine which service providers your consultant has relationships with. This is important, as this will demonstrate the quality and variety of the product offering in the marketplace.

Finally, and probably most importantly, build a good relationship with your telecom's consultant for the long term. Ongoing project management can also be provided by your consultant, which could include fault escalation, resolution of billing issues, and ongoing price evaluation. A good relationship will ensure that you are always kept up to date on improvements in technology and services, as the consultant will know your business and business drivers in relation to your communications requirement.