

SPEAKER Q & A: DAVID WYLIE

**DAVID WYLIE, CPO, CENTRICA TALKS BIG DATA:
PROCUREMENT'S BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY YET OR POTENTIAL EXTINCTION?**

David Wylie will be offering further insight on these topics at this year's Data, Intelligence, & TechX Summit, taking place September 20-21, at The Crystal, London. The event will host inspirational keynote speakers from Ericsson, Google, Guardian News & Media, Microsoft, Nokia, SAB Miller, and many more.

Q. What do you see as being the biggest opportunity for procurement as a result of better usage of data and intelligence within procurement?

I think it's really the ability for better data to give you better information thus offering you the opportunity to make better decisions. That's certainly one of the key areas; but it's really the final part of the journey that starts to bring you the ability to access the marketplace far more quickly. With data, the big data revolution, it's a real chance to access the market any time and in real time. That's the really big opportunity for procurement, I think.

Q. Could you talk us through some of the processes that were implemented at Centrica and the importance placed on data within the business?

At Centrica, we're only a part of the way through the journey. We've done a lot of the things around automating the more transactional part of the procurement process. We've taken time out of the sourcing process and made it a lot faster and more dynamic. We've done a lot of work around procurement spend and around procurement visibility. Where we're heading next is really to use what's out there to better inform our category strategies and to gain better insight. We have a lot of information, but turning that into insight can be a challenge. We see this as a real opportunity to have better insight into our category strategies.

Q. Do you think greater automation of processes will pose a threat to the future of the function?

I do. It's one of the things that I'll be talking about at Procurement Leader's Data, Intelligence & TechX event this year. Not only is data intelligence a wonderful opportunity but it is also a threat, there's no denying that. There's a very similar thing in the energy industry that we call disintermediation, which is effectively, if you can bring the market to the consumer in a more impactful way, then why do you need that person



who is opening the door and bringing that solution to them in the first place? For me, it just means that the role of procurement needs to continue on the same journey; it needs to continue to change and adapt. This means that procurement is more about solution building within the business and thinking about how you can access different solutions in the market place, rather than the process of using people to access them. If you continue to follow these procurement processes, there's a danger it could become obsolete.

Q. How do we get new innovations for visibility of the market going forward?

We always talk about really understanding business needs and understanding where the

business is trying to get to. Then you can think about what type of third party solutions are going to get you in that state or open up those opportunities with suppliers who can grow and allow you to develop. That's where procurement is going to have to be in the future. Once you've decided what you actually need, going out to the marketplace should be a far quicker and far more dynamic process, and not one that you're going to need procurement people to do because that part of it is a non-value adding, paper shuffling exercise really. We don't need procurement people to provide that, we need procurement to provide the up-front thinking and strategy for what solutions are going to drive your corporate strategy.

Q. Can you tell us a bit about what you will be doing at the Data, Intelligence, and TechX Summit in September?

Part of what I wanted to talk about is really whether this is procurement's next big opportunity, next big push, or is it procurement's next big extinction event. The argument is really about, if you don't move and you don't adapt then there's a danger that procurement becomes an irrelevance in your organisation. If we continue to adapt, though, and continue to bring in people from other areas of the business and people who are very commercially focused, then actually this is a wonderful opportunity for procurement to take another step up the ladder and step up their engagement with the organisation once again. I'll be talking about how I see that journey, those risks and those opportunities.

Q. What do you think will distinguish this event from others?

I've always felt that Procurement Leaders have the best understanding of forward-thinking procurement and trying to push the function forward. There are a lot of events that talk about data, a lot that talk about procurement, but it's actually about bringing that external thinking into the procurement space and this is what this event will be all about.