

Mobile Procurement Strategies



Could the future of procurement soon lie literally within your hand?

The desire for higher efficiency, maximum return on investment (ROI), and total flexibility has ushered in today's increasingly paperless office—and created a monumental shift across industries and markets toward digital, cloud-driven practices.

And while some might still see procurement as mired in the past, the truth is procurement professionals around the world are eagerly seeking out, and implementing, mobile procurement solutions as part of a comprehensive digital overhaul to what used to be a strictly pen, paper, and footwork profession.

The Mobile Procurement Revolution

Bringing together a plethora of mobile devices to make the entire procure-to-pay (P2P) process more accessible, efficient, and transparent, mobile procurement technology is fundamentally altering everything from purchase order processing to contract management, supply chain management. In essence, it combines the freedom that accompanies mobile access with the process improvements, automation enhancements, and robust data management features of an existing or expanded enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.

It pairs well with other centralized software solutions (such as Customer Relationship Management, or CRM) to provide a fully realized workflow for those directly and indirectly involved with procurement.

The “mobile” in “mobile procurement” refers to tablets, smartphones and next-gen wearables, running cloud-driven mobile applications.

End users can either access your system through a custom mobile application for Apple and Android environments, or use the mobile Web to log into the system remotely.

By centralizing data management, document libraries, and data analysis while freeing stakeholders from traditional limitations, mobile procurement lets procurement teams make informed decisions with real-time access to ordering, approvals, reviews, and analysis from just about anywhere, at any time.

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Benefits of Mobile Procurement

Making the move to mobile technology grants your procurement team several benefits to its workflow.

An Enhanced Technological Toolkit

The technologies at the heart of modern procurement solutions—primarily artificial intelligence and automation—are enhanced by complementary technologies that accompany a mobile app.

- **Global Positioning System (GPS) Tracking**

Global Positioning System (GPS) Tracking makes it possible to track and verify purchase order submission, approval, and fulfillment times and locations. It also can provide an extra layer of security, using location to

limit orders, approvals, or changes to specific locales.

▪ **Push Notifications**

Push notifications help reduce and even eliminate delays in the purchase order process. Users are notified of pending submissions and approvals instantly, greatly boosting the speed and efficiency of your P2P process. Push notifications also ensure every stakeholder is kept informed of changes to the status of an order as it moves through the supply chain.

▪ **Flexible (But Still Limited) Access**

Flexible (But Still Limited) Access is controlled at the software level. Team members, management, and vendors can all access the system from their mobile phone, tablet, laptop, or other devices on the go, limited only by Internet connectivity. Account controls make it easy to use the information relevant to each user's role for collaboration, analysis, and management processes while still providing security against unauthorized access.

▪ **Digital Cameras**

Digital Cameras built into mobile devices make it easy to provide visual documentation, as well as integrate data management tools such as QR codes and barcodes into your procurement processes. The end result? Fewer errors, greater accountability, and an improved audit trail.

Across-the-Board Business Process Improvement

Every procurement process is improved when speed increases, delays are eliminated, and accuracy is enhanced.

Using mobile devices, you can create, change, approve, and track purchase orders on the fly, with total transparency and instant updates.

This helps trim rogue spend, human error, and missed opportunities.

Clear, immediate, and comprehensive access to all relevant data using mobile

devices makes contract management and negotiation easier with built-in contract building tools and legal-provided boilerplate.

Your supply chain management and strategic sourcing are both easier and more value-driven, as centralized data provides complete context for spend analysis, vendor performance, and partnership opportunities.

Across all procurement processes, automation transforms formerly complex and time-consuming tasks into one-click actions for mobile and local users.

As human error is reduced, less time is spent on low-level tasks and chasing exceptions, freeing your staff to perform more strategic functions and reducing the need for additional overhead from temp hires.

Cycle times drop, and productivity grows.

The Future of Procurement is Mobile

The one constant in the world of business is change, and as the workplace becomes defined not by location, but by access to shared resources, the need for centralized solutions to keep teams tethered and on the same path is essential.

As mobile technologies evolve, savvy procurement professionals will ensure their organizations are ready to connect, collaborate, and create value for the company, whether they're in Timbuktu or down the hall.

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