

## The business of procurement

*Gerald Flynn, Feb 10 2008*



**"There are plenty of recruitment opportunities within purchasing," said Liz Dolan, procurement recruitment consultant at Sigmar.**

Procurement has, and will, continue to become more of a strategic function within organisations of all sizes, from indigenous SMEs to large Multinationals.

"As a direct result of the recently announced reduction in economic growth predictions, there has been increased focus on reducing costs. Purchasing has therefore become a critical function," said Julie Valentine, supply chain recruitment consultant at Sigmar Recruitment.

While purchasing has been traditionally associated with manufacturing multinationals, it is because of this need to tighten the purse strings for 2008 that it has become indispensable to all Irish organisations. Purchasing has now penetrated into every sector, specifically banking and professional services. There has also been an increasing trend in procurement consultancy services . . . all of which has led to significant opportunities for people interested in a career in the sector.

"Purchasing is now a serious career option in its own right . . . independent of the supply chain family.

Opportunities range from entry level right up to director level, with entry level salaries starting in the late twenties.

The scope of the role is quite broad - with core aspects of the role including contract negotiation, vendor/relationship management, process improvement and systems development.

And while there is plenty of opportunity within this sector, both nationally and internationally, so too are the educational opportunities within this area are developing alongside the industry.

For example, the Irish Institute of Purchasing and Materials Management (IIPMM) provides the standard qualification in Ireland, offering courses from certificate level up to diploma level. The Institute is currently reviewing the level of this qualification, and hopes to offer Degree-level courses by the end of 2008. Other institutes that offer procurement focused courses include Carlow IT (within its Business Degree) and the Smurfit School of Business (Masters in Supply Chain.) "Procurement is a rewarding area to explore, " said Dolan. "It provides you with the opportunity to travel, to meet new people and to work within an office environment . . . as well as providing a defined career path."