Sharpen Your Supplier Evaluation and Performance Development Skills

You can find power and profitability in developing the capabilities of your supplier community. In her book, *Supplier Performance and Process Excellence: A Guide to Meaningful Metrics and Successful Results* (J. Ross Publishing, Fort Lauderdale, FL, 2008), Sherry R. Gordon guides the reader through greater understanding of what’s needed from suppliers for world-class performance, and how to find ways to collaborate with suppliers in more successful partnerships.

Gordon describes how to get ready for supplier performance management, and the components of the supply management system (supply management leadership and strategy, operational planning, business relationship and quality/performance management, etc.). The basics of developing strategies and goals as well as procurement strategy development are covered.

Chapters focus on choosing a team, and developing and designing the supply management system plan, evaluation strategy, determining what to measure, evaluation approaches and related technology, and measuring and managing supplier performance. In the recognition and rewards chapter, Gordon provides pointers on developing a supplier certification process, supplier self-assessment, etc.

Additional counsel ranges from selection of supplier development approaches to rolling out specific initiatives to the supplier. The author’s step-by-step account of how to conduct a successful supplier development project starts with identification of performance gaps and continues with assessment of supplier readiness for the development process, gaining and building supplier commitment and support, developing and implementing the improvement plan, and transition of responsibility to the supplier. Gordon cautions that “quick hits” and short-term gains are no substitute for sustainable, long-term progress in supplier development.

Excerpt

Now, how to listen? It is harder than you think … Listening, not talking, is the gifted and great role, and the imaginative role. And the true listener is much more beloved, magnetic, than the talker, and she is more effective, and learns more, and does more good. And so try listening; to those who love you and those who don’t, to those who bore you, to your enemies. It will work a small miracle. And perhaps a great one.