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CIPS Managing Teams and Individuals Sample Questions (Q10-Q15):

NEW QUESTION # 10

(Explain 5 different metaphors that can be used to describe an organisation)

Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for Detailed Answer

Explanation:

Organisations can be understood in many different ways through metaphors, which help managers and leaders interpret behaviour,

culture and performance. Morgan's metaphors are widely used to explain these perspectives. Five key metaphors are explained below.

The first metaphor is the organisation as a machine. Here the business is seen like a well-oiled mechanism with standardised processes, clear rules, hierarchy and repeatable outputs. This works well for efficiency and control, for example in a procurement shared services function, but can be rigid and demotivating if flexibility and creativity are required.

The second is the organisation as an organism. This views the business as a living system that must adapt to its environment. Structures, processes and leadership styles must "fit" the context, whether technological, market-driven or human needs. In procurement, this could be seen when category teams adapt to sudden supply market changes, showing flexibility to survive in a dynamic environment.

The third is the organisation as a brain. This emphasises learning, feedback loops, and knowledge-sharing, where continuous improvement and innovation are central. Leaders encourage collaboration, reflection and data-driven decision-making. For procurement, this might be using spend analytics, lessons learned from supplier negotiations, and knowledge sharing across teams to improve sourcing strategies.

The fourth metaphor is the organisation as a culture. This highlights the shared values, beliefs and rituals that shape "how things are done." Leadership here involves role-modelling behaviours, building ethical cultures, and maintaining consistency between words and actions. In procurement, culture may show through an organisation's commitment to ethical sourcing, sustainability, and supplier diversity.

Finally, the organisation as a political system sees it as an arena of power and influence where decisions are made through negotiation, persuasion and coalition-building. Managers must understand power bases and stakeholder interests. In procurement, for instance, winning senior approval for a sourcing strategy may require influencing finance, operations, and CSR teams with different agendas.

In summary, each metaphor offers insights into how organisations function. The machine focuses on control, the organism on adaptability, the brain on learning, the culture on shared values, and the political system on power and influence. Good leaders in procurement should recognise that all these metaphors may apply in different situations, and use them to manage individuals and teams more effectively.

NEW QUESTION # 11

Discuss the importance of the following when entering a negotiation with a new supplier: curiosity, creative thinking, reflective analysis (25 points).

Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for Detailed Answer

Explanation:

When entering negotiations with a new supplier, a procurement professional must use a variety of interpersonal and cognitive skills to achieve the best outcome. Three important qualities are curiosity, creative thinking, and reflective analysis.

Curiosity (8-9 marks):

Curiosity means asking questions, exploring options, and seeking to understand the supplier's position. In a negotiation, curiosity allows the buyer to uncover the supplier's motivations, constraints, and priorities. For example, asking why a supplier has higher costs may reveal underlying logistics challenges, which could be solved collaboratively. Curiosity builds rapport, demonstrates interest, and helps procurement move beyond price to explore value-added benefits such as quality improvements or sustainability initiatives.

Creative Thinking (8-9 marks):

Creative thinking is about generating new solutions and finding alternatives to traditional approaches. In negotiation, this may involve looking for win-win outcomes rather than focusing only on cost. For example, instead of demanding lower prices, procurement could propose longer contracts, volume commitments, or joint innovation projects that benefit both parties. Creative thinking expands the scope of negotiation and helps develop more sustainable supplier relationships.

Reflective Analysis (8-9 marks):

Reflective analysis involves reviewing past experiences and learning from them to improve decision-making. Before negotiating, procurement professionals can reflect on what has worked or failed in previous negotiations. During the negotiation, reflective analysis helps assess whether strategies are effective and adapt accordingly. After the negotiation, reflection allows continuous improvement in approach. For example, a buyer may reflect on why a past supplier negotiation failed due to being too aggressive, and adjust by using more collaborative tactics with the new supplier.

Conclusion:

Curiosity helps procurement gather insights, creative thinking enables innovative solutions, and reflective analysis ensures continuous improvement. Together, these skills allow procurement professionals to build trust, secure better value, and establish strong long-term relationships with new suppliers.

NEW QUESTION # 12

Describe FIVE types of power that a stakeholder may have and compare how they may interact with the procurement department (25 points).

Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for Detailed Answer

Explanation:

Stakeholders can exert influence over procurement decisions in different ways. French and Raven identified five types of power that stakeholders may hold. Each has different implications for how procurement interacts with them.

1. Legitimate Power:

This comes from a stakeholder's formal position or authority. For example, a Finance Director may require procurement to comply with budgetary controls. Procurement must respect legitimate authority but can also influence decisions by providing evidence and business cases.

2. Reward Power:

This is based on the ability to provide benefits or incentives. For example, senior management may reward the procurement team with recognition or bonuses for achieving savings. Procurement can use this positively by demonstrating performance and aligning with organisational goals.

3. Coercive Power:

This is the power to punish or impose sanctions. For instance, a project manager may pressure procurement to prioritise their project by threatening escalation if deadlines are missed. Procurement must manage this carefully, balancing demands with fairness and compliance.

4. Expert Power:

This arises from specialist knowledge or skills. For example, a procurement professional with strong knowledge of supplier markets holds expert power, which can influence strategic decisions. Conversely, technical departments may hold expert power in specifying product requirements, requiring procurement to collaborate closely.

5. Referent Power:

This is based on personal relationships, respect, or charisma

a. For example, a well-liked senior stakeholder may influence procurement decisions even without formal authority. Procurement must manage these situations by maintaining objectivity while leveraging strong relationships to gain support.

Comparison of Interaction with Procurement:

Legitimate power often requires compliance, while procurement may respond with process adherence and evidence-based justification.

Reward power creates motivation for procurement, but risks short-term focus if overused.

Coercive power can create conflict and stress; procurement must use negotiation and diplomacy to manage.

Expert power can be collaborative, as procurement and stakeholders share knowledge to improve outcomes.

Referent power relies on trust and relationships, which procurement can use to build coalitions and support for initiatives.

Conclusion:

The five types of power - legitimate, reward, coercive, expert, and referent - shape how stakeholders interact with procurement.

Understanding these power bases enables procurement professionals to adapt their approach, whether through compliance, persuasion, collaboration, or relationship-building. This ensures stakeholder management supports both procurement objectives and organisational goals.

NEW QUESTION # 13

Describe THREE ways in which a procurement professional could be biased when selecting suppliers to work with (15 points).

What are the benefits of remaining unbiased when selecting suppliers? (10 points).

Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for Detailed Answer

Explanation:

Part A - Three Ways a Procurement Professional Could Be Biased (15 marks):

Personal Relationships / Conflicts of Interest:

A buyer may favour a supplier due to friendship, family connection, or long-standing personal ties. For example, awarding a contract to a supplier owned by a relative, even if another supplier offers better value. This undermines fairness and can damage organisational reputation.

Preference for Incumbent Suppliers (Status Quo Bias):

Professionals may repeatedly select the same suppliers simply because they are familiar, ignoring new entrants who could provide

better innovation, cost savings, or sustainability. This limits competition and supplier diversity.

Cultural or Geographical Bias:

A procurement professional may favour local suppliers over international ones, or show unconscious bias against suppliers from certain regions. While local sourcing can have benefits, excluding other suppliers without objective evaluation reduces fairness and potentially increases costs.

(Other possible biases include brand preference, ignoring SMEs, or favouring suppliers who provide personal benefits - but only three are required for full marks.) Part B - Benefits of Remaining Unbiased (10 marks):

Remaining unbiased means making supplier decisions based on objective, transparent, and fair criteria such as cost, quality, delivery performance, risk, and sustainability. The benefits include:

Fairness and Transparency: All suppliers have equal opportunity, protecting the organisation's integrity and compliance with regulations.

Best Value for Money: Objective evaluation ensures the chosen supplier offers the best mix of cost, quality, and service.

Encouraging Innovation: By considering a wider pool of suppliers, procurement can benefit from new ideas and technologies.

Ethical Compliance: Avoids corruption, fraud, or bribery, maintaining alignment with the CIPS Code of Conduct.

Reputation and Trust: Stakeholders and the market see the organisation as professional and ethical, which strengthens long-term supplier relationships.

Conclusion:

Procurement professionals may show bias through personal relationships, favouring incumbents, or cultural preferences. Remaining unbiased ensures decisions are fair, transparent, and ethical, leading to better value, innovation, and stronger supplier trust. This supports both organisational objectives and the professional standards of procurement.

NEW QUESTION # 14

Zarah is the Head of Procurement at a hospital. She feels that the Procurement Department is understaffed and due to the large volume of work she has decided to put together a business case to recruit one additional Procurement Assistant. Explain the process Zarah should complete in order to create this Business Case. (25 points).

Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for Detailed Answer

Explanation:

When preparing a business case for additional resource, Zarah should follow a structured process to ensure that the proposal is clear, evidence-based, and aligned with the hospital's strategic objectives.

The first step is to identify the need. Zarah must gather evidence to show that the current department is understaffed and unable to manage the workload effectively. This may include statistics on increased purchase orders, supplier contracts, delays, or risks caused by the lack of staff.

Secondly, she should define the objectives of the business case. In this case, the objective is to secure funding and approval for an additional Procurement Assistant to ensure efficiency, compliance, and risk management in hospital procurement.

Thirdly, Zarah must analyse options. The business case should not only present recruitment as the only choice but also consider alternatives such as outsourcing, redistributing workload, or temporary staff. Each option should be reviewed in terms of cost, feasibility, and benefits.

Fourthly, she should present the costs and benefits. The costs will include salary, training, and any associated overheads. The benefits may include faster order processing, reduced errors, improved supplier management, compliance with healthcare regulations, and freeing up senior staff for strategic tasks. Non-financial benefits, such as improved staff morale and better patient outcomes through timely supply of materials, should also be highlighted.

The fifth step is to assess risks. For example, not hiring an additional assistant may risk delays in ordering medical supplies, poor compliance with procurement standards, and reputational damage to the hospital. Conversely, recruiting without sufficient workload planning could lead to under-utilisation of resources.

Sixthly, Zarah should recommend the preferred option. Based on evidence, she would recommend hiring one additional Procurement Assistant as the best way to meet the workload demands while delivering value.

Finally, she should prepare the formal document and presentation for hospital executives or the finance committee. The business case should be structured with an introduction, background, options, costs/benefits, risks, and recommendations.

Conclusion:

To create a strong business case, Zarah must identify the need, set clear objectives, analyse options, present costs and benefits, assess risks, and make a clear recommendation. A well-prepared business case will increase the likelihood of approval and ensure the procurement team has the resources needed to deliver efficient, compliant, and high-quality outcomes for the hospital.

NEW QUESTION # 15

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