



Trading with the public sector: Suppliers' guide to e-procurement



connecting your business with the public sector

E-procurement

@UK PLC specialises in providing systems so that public sector organisations such as councils, hospitals and schools can buy online from companies such as yourself. This process, called “e-procurement” offers suppliers many benefits, allowing your business to cut costs and reach new customers. This booklet explains how and why it is not expensive for you to safeguard the future of your firm as the public sector, companies and the general public all buy more and more online.

The move towards e-procurement

A growing number of public sector organisations and businesses are introducing e-procurement systems to purchase their goods and services online from suppliers. Whilst this trend helps to drive down costs for the public sector, trading online also brings significant cost savings and benefits to suppliers.

Involving suppliers in e-procurement

In order for organisations to buy electronically (online), suppliers need to sell electronically. Rather than receiving purchase orders and sending invoices via fax, post or e-mail, suppliers will be required to accept orders and send invoices electronically. To achieve this, your business will need an e-commerce website that is integrated with the public sector organisations you are supplying. @UK specialises in providing such websites to suppliers.

If your business already has an e-commerce website @UK can seamlessly connect it to the public sector organisations you supply – we simply make your technology talk to their technology.

@UK has already deployed e-procurement solutions for a vast range of public sector bodies across the country and connected thousands of suppliers to their systems.

How does the move to e-procurement benefit suppliers?

e-procurement benefits suppliers in many ways:

- ✓ On time payment of invoices
- ✓ More accurate payment of invoices
- ✓ Reduced time and labour receiving orders. (Orders can even go straight to back-office systems e.g. Sage line 50)
- ✓ Correct prices shown –no disputes over terms
- ✓ Offer multi-level pricing to different sized clients
- ✓ Offer real-time stock availability information
- ✓ More accurate ordering / less costs from “returns”
- ✓ Less time generating quotes / offers made in quotes not disputed by clients
- ✓ Take card payment for smaller orders eliminating bad debt and helping cash flow
- ✓ Possible to code your products to a national system if your clients require

Setting up supplier websites and linking to the public sector

@UK has already partnered up with around 100 public organisations to set up their e-procurement systems. @UK has also connected thousands of suppliers to these systems by providing them with an e-commerce website.

Setting up a website with @UK is very straightforward, costing from as little as £48+ VAT per annum. A supplier can have a website set up and be receiving orders from public sector customers in no time at all. Furthermore, these sites will also enable you to sell to other businesses not in the public sector and if applicable, consumers too.

Q: “What if I already have a website which my business sells its products and services through?”

A: You still need @UK to integrate your website with the e-procurement systems of the public sector organisations you trade with. This can be achieved through what is known as a ‘Punchout’ or ‘OrderXChange’, again we can take care of these practicalities.

@UK Websites

What are the key advantages of an @UK website?

- ✓ Low set up costs
- ✓ Easy to use
- ✓ Email and telephone support on hand
- ✓ Around 100 public bodies signed up – with more joining daily
- ✓ Issue automatically generated invoices
- ✓ Trade with other public organisations
- ✓ Eliminate postage costs and delays
- ✓ Eliminate / reduce costs involved in printing catalogues
- ✓ Prices and product information can be kept up to date anytime, for free
- ✓ Customers can order 7 days a week, 24 hours a day
- ✓ Serve public sector, private companies and even consumers all at low cost

How to set up a site with @UK

REGISTER

Go to www.suppliertradingcentre.co.uk and enter your unique supplier number which can be found within the letter which has been sent to you. (If you no longer have this, please contact our sales team on 0870 486 6006)

1

DECIDE PACKAGE

A member of the @UK team will then call you to discuss your business and which solution would be best suited to you.

2

BUILD

You will be supplied with a username and password. Simply go to our home page at www.ukplc.net enter your username and password details and starting building your website. Alternatively @UK can build the site for you at a small extra cost.

3

e-commerce website packages

@UK's "SG" packages allow businesses to set up an ecommerce website quickly and easily. It requires no technical knowledge and there is no software installation. If you would prefer, @UK will build your site for you at an extremely competitive rate (see Options section below).

All SG packages include the following tools and features:

Website tools and features

- ✓ User friendly editor to update pages
- ✓ Tools to increase search engine rankings
- ✓ Generate visitor reports
- ✓ Free hosting

E-commerce features

- ✓ Accept orders on account
- ✓ Accept orders by Cheque
- ✓ Accept orders by credit / debit card
- ✓ Obtain notification of orders by fax, email or online
- ✓ Send invoices electronically
- ✓ Generate sales reports

Website Catalogue features

- ✓ Stock control
- ✓ Apply offers e.g. discounts or buy one get one free
- ✓ Set different price lists for different accounts
- ✓ Add and remove products

Packages

Package	Items or services	Annual Fee (excl VAT)
SG Alpha	1	£48
SG 50	50	£120
SG 100	100	£240
SG 200	200	£360
SG 2000	2000	£480
SG Unlimited	Unlimited	£960

Extras

Extra	Description	Fee
Assisted Build	A member of our implementation team can create your trading site if you prefer. This includes the set up of your webpages, catalogue, customer accounts, keywords and invoicing	From £50
Support	We offer a range of support packages based on e-mail, and telephone contact, onscreen training and personal account management services	From £9.99 per month

Solutions for existing e-commerce websites

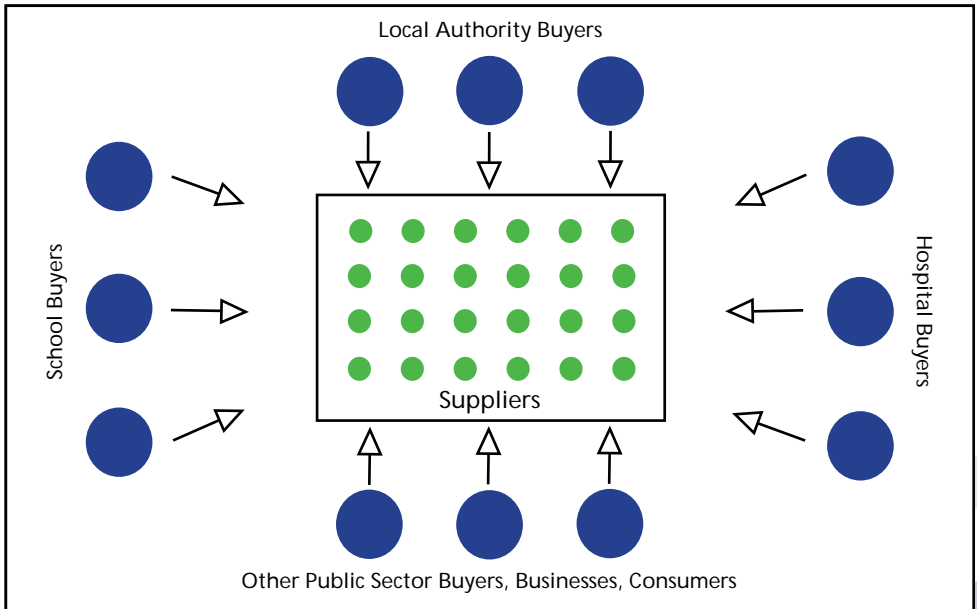
Solutions	Description	Annual Fee (excl VAT)
Punch-out	If your business has already invested in a trading website, it may be the case that we can link it to the @UK marketplace via a 'punchout'. Please contact a member of our technical team for further details	£1500
Order Exchange	If your business has a trading website but does not have 'Punchout' functionality. Please contact a member of our technical team for further details	From £1200

Growing your business

The @UK Marketplace

The @UK marketplace is composed of around 100 public sector buying organisations and literally tens of thousands of individual buyers.

When a supplier sets up a website with @UK, their website automatically becomes a member of the national @UK marketplace.



Every supplier in the @UK marketplace can be viewed by any buying organisation (e.g. schools, councils, hospitals) that has been set up with an @UK e-procurement system, providing an excellent opportunity to further grow your business.

In addition, once a supplier has a trading website on the @UK marketplace, this provides a great opportunity for them to contact these buying organisations and trade with them electronically.

Registered organisations

The following are just some of the public sector organisations that have joined the @UK marketplace. A full list can be seen at www.ukplc.net/authorities



A great place to live, work & play

Obtaining a real online presence

In addition to gaining access to thousands of potential new public sector customers via the @UK marketplace, @UK websites also provides you with a presence on the world wide web (or Internet). This provides opportunities to grow your business by selling to other companies and consumers and provides access to a worldwide market.

Search Engine Rankings

Getting up the search engine rankings such as Google™ and Yahoo® is an important aspect to marketing your business and attracting new customers. Part of the criteria which the search engines use to index your website involves assessing the amount of links to it from other websites.

When a website is set up with @UK, it automatically becomes part of the huge and ever growing @UK marketplace. This vast network of sites interlinks which helps your search engine rankings and drives even more traffic to your website.

Case Studies

Hadley E.H.S. Ltd

www.hadleyehs.co.uk

Hadley E.H.S. Ltd is an Environmental Health Consultancy, providing services to both Local Authorities and private businesses. The company conducts food hygiene inspections for Local Authorities as well as working in partnership with them to provide training for local businesses. Hadley E.H.S. Ltd also provides training and consultancy for private businesses, together with some unusual services such as housing surveys for immigration purposes.

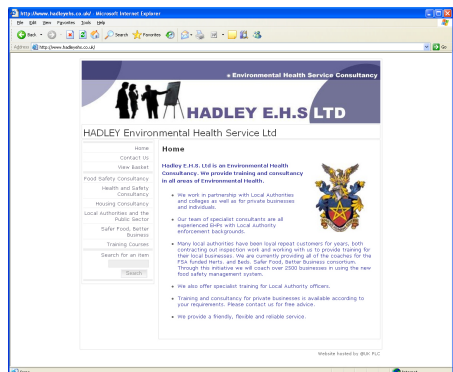
Following a move towards e-procurement by many of its LA customers (such as St Albans District Council, Stevenage District Council, Luton Borough Council and Watford Borough Council) Hadley E.H.S. Ltd was encouraged to take the appropriate steps of being able to trade electronically by means of a transactional website.

Solution

As Hadley E.H.S. Ltd did not have an existing website, @UK provided a fully functional ecommerce website, with the capability of receiving request for quotes and sending e-invoices; linking seamlessly to the e-procurement systems of its LA customers.

Benefits

“With the Government’s initiative to get LA’s to trade electronically, it was imperative to align our business accordingly. A large proportion of our business comes from dealing with Local Authorities so the trend towards e-procurement was something that we could not afford to ignore.



For small businesses such as Hadley E.H.S. Ltd setting up a website with @UK is extremely cost effective. Not only has it ensured I can continue to do business with my LA customers in the future, it has also provided me with a real online presence which increases my exposure to private businesses.”

Carol Gregory - Director, Hadley E.H.S. Ltd

Combined Office Interiors

www.combined-office.co.uk

Combined Office Interiors Ltd sells a wide range of office furniture to commercial companies but was keen to expand sales into the huge and 100 per cent creditworthy Local Authority market. It already had an attractive website as part of its marketing programme, but this was purely an “online brochure”, designed to help support first introductions to their range. They became aware through one of their target Local Authorities (Bristol City Council), that this level of online capability was not enough, given the impending requirement from the Government on all councils to purchase all their goods and services online.

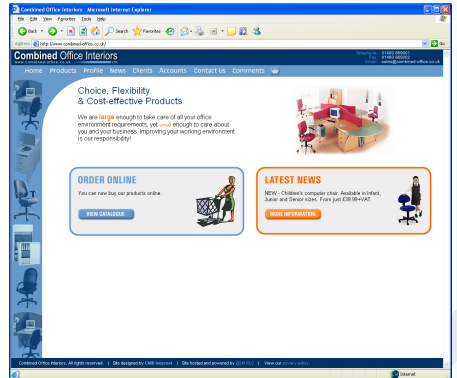
Solution

Because time and expense had already been invested in their website Combined Office approached @UK and asked if that could be adapted to trade electronically with public sector customers, using the @UK network to carry orders and invoices securely to and from the authorities. The exercise was completed in a matter of 3-4 weeks and cost significantly less than the original set up of their non-functional site.

Benefits

“This was like putting petrol in an empty car” says Combined Office Chairman, Paul Parrin.

“Suddenly we could approach local authorities all over the south of England and offer to help them solve their problem. Authorities could purchase all the office furniture they needed at specific prices already arranged with us, cut out all paperwork and meet their government target. This approach made us more efficient too. Our business continues to boom. Being able to supply online has undoubtedly been a major factor in this”.



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