Case Study: Ardmore Group

Priority Supplier – Engagement Feature

The Construction Leadership Group invited Steve Watson, Ardmore Group, to share their experience of embedding the School's Priority Suppliers feature as part of their business.

The feature allows School Partners to upload your key suppliers onto the School platform to analyse who among them are already registered and their level of engagement with us. Within this, you can also identify who is not-yet registered and take the opportunity to encourage them to sign up.

Getting Started – Refining The List

Ardmore began this process with a list of about 2,000 suppliers, which they needed to refine before uploading to the School;
1. They started by ranking their suppliers based upon:
    - Who has the biggest impact in sustainability
    - Who needs to improve their performance
2. The next stage was to collate a list using data indicating where they are spending most as an organisation, signifying where the biggest impact lies.
3. A further list was put together looking at:
    - Who are the top ten trades
    - Who do they use repeatedly – this includes any suppliers used at least twice
    - Who do they want to have a relationship with going forward
4. These three lists were compared and contrasted, and this resulted in a refined list of 106 Priority Suppliers.
5. This process of refining the list lasted 3-4 weeks, which included validating data by corroborating across different departments.

Engaging the Suppliers

The confirmed list of Priority Suppliers was then uploaded onto the School platform. For further information on how to do this, please refer to this guide. Ardmore were then able to download a breakdown of which suppliers were already registered to the School and which suppliers were yet to do so.

In order to target the cohort of key suppliers that hadn't yet joined the School, Ardmore hosted an introductory meeting for them with the School. This hour-long briefing outlined Ardmore's relationship with the School, describing how Partnership aligns with their sustainability strategy, and why they are asking their suppliers to come on this journey with them. The suppliers were shown how engaging with the School can benefit their own businesses and given a demonstration of how to sign up and start using the School resources and features. Steve followed up this session with an email to each supplier, reminding them of the ask, and Ardmore were then able to use the platform to monitor which of the suppliers signed up as a result.

Top Tips for maximising the benefits of the Priority Supplier feature:

-   Update your list at least annually

-   Consider setting targets for your priority suppliers (for example, become a Bronze member)

-   Set up learning pathways for your supply chain to complete a curriculum of learning relating to your sustainability priorities

-   Invite the School to present at your own supplier sessions to encourage engagement

-   Measure and monitor supplier engagement and reward your most active suppliers

"Without the list, how do you know what you're achieving?"

Steve Watson, Ardmore Group

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Monitoring Engagement

With the list uploaded to the School platform, Ardmore began to report regularly on the progress the suppliers were making on their School journey. These downloadable reports contain engagement data including:

- Resources that Suppliers are accessing and completing in the resource library
- Assessments Suppliers are taking
- Training sessions Suppliers are attending
- School Membership level of Suppliers (Bronze/Silver/Gold)
- Supplier company size

This data is also displayed on filterable interactive dashboards for Partners, where they can see visual representations of trends in their Suppliers' engagement.

Promoting Activity in the School

Monitoring engagement via reports and dashboards then allowed Ardmore to start creating targeted objectives for their suppliers, for example, creating bespoke Learning Pathways designed to meet any training requirements, or setting membership-level targets.

In order to keep Suppliers engaged in the School, Ardmore conduct regular review meetings to stay in touch, often picking up the phone to offer support and encouragement. This can be time-intensive, but Ardmore have found that following a few times of being chased, most realise the value of engaging in the School and act upon it. Ardmore also make it clear that there could come a point where they stop working with that supplier if they continue to resist engaging with the School.

Ardmore review their list of suppliers every 6 to 12 months, taking into account new projects and new repeat suppliers. Being added to the list is not part of the Supplier onboarding process, however – Ardmore will only if do this if they have been chosen to be targeted. Ardmore refrain from starting Suppliers on this journey unless they will be used repeatedly. The reviewed and refreshed list is then uploaded to the School platform to update which data is being tracked in the reports and dashboards.

Data Sharing – What you need to know

- By sharing your data (re: your priority suppliers) with us, you are stating that you are complying with GDPR and have all the necessary consents in place. In turn we confirm that we have all the necessary processes in place to ensure our compliance to GDPR.
- Please refer to our Privacy Policy for more information on how we treat data.
- By uploading priority suppliers you agree for the School to contact those "potential" suppliers who do not have accounts to encourage them to create an account and take advantage of the free learning the School offers. To opt out of this process please contact becky@supplychainschool.co.uk.
- Please refer to our Data Sharing Agreement for full details.