Summary of feedback received following the Annual Purchasing Exhibition 2014

The fourteenth Annual Purchasing Exhibition took place on Wednesday 5th March 2014 over at the DoubleTree by Hilton Cambridge. The event was opened by the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Institutional Affairs, Professor Jeremy Sanders. The exhibition consisted of 29 external preferred suppliers of various goods and services ranging from scientific equipment to office furniture and stationery to IT.

This year we continued to use the Finance Divisions e-sales system to accept supplier payment, which is a quicker process for all involved and notifies the suppliers automatically once their payment has been accepted. Like previous year’s we have continued the use of the online booking facility for pre-registration for the event, which not only saved time on the day, but also automatically entered visitors into the prize draw. Seminar bookings were also confirmed through this tool which enabled Procurement Services to monitor attendance numbers.

1. COMMENT CARDS

From a total of 199 visitors, 103 comment cards were completed. Those that returned the comment cards thought that the event was very organised, many felt it had been useful, and that there was a good variety of suppliers and that it was good to see the event being held at a new location.

Visitors felt that the exhibition was of great benefit to their department or school as they were able to talk to knowledgeable suppliers in detail and make new contacts. Visitors mentioned that it was good to be able to meet suppliers face-to-face and that it was nice to see a variety of suppliers.

Majority of visitors heard about the event via e-mails sent by Procurement Services, others mentioned that they had heard about the event by word of mouth, through purchasing groups and by promotional posters displayed in their departments. Procurement Services marketed the event by sending out invitations and posters to key purchasing contacts prior to the event. The event was also advertised in the Procurement Services Newsletter, the University Reporter and on the Procurement Services website.

Visitors also gave constructive criticism on the event: some felt that the venue was a bit small which meant there was less commodities that could have been represented. We greatly appreciate this feedback and use it to continually improve the event. Every year we review the space allocation to supplier commodities. We also regularly review the location of the event.

Below is a selection of positive comments received from visitors to the event:

- “Good selection of suppliers. Good seminar - In pursuit of Responsible and Ethical Procurement.”
- “Useful to talk face to face with procurement staff especially”
- “Well organised and supported on the day. Good range of suppliers for my dept.”
- “Very useful - good to see other suppliers and learn what they have to offer”
- “Very well organised and friendly and helpful reps”
2. SUPPLIER EVALUATIONS

29 suppliers attended the exhibition, 26 supplier evaluations were returned. Comments were positive; with some suppliers pointing out that they had the right kind of people at the event which meant the suppliers were able to get more leads from visitors. Majority said that they would definitely attend the event again in the future.

THE VENUE

The majority of suppliers rated the venue a 4 on a 1 to 5 scale (1 being poor and 5 being excellent). All suppliers were happy with the size and layout of the room and the central location, a positive with regards to attendance and parking; the negative was that the supplier stands had been reduced to 2m x 2m so some suppliers felt the space allocation was too small. Food at the event had mixed reviews, the food was given a rating of 4 but many people would have liked to have seen less sandwiches and more choice of food, but there was plenty of food for everyone. On the whole, the venue was popular, as it was in a convenient and central location but it would be nice to consider a new location for next year’s event.

VISITORS

Below is a selection of comments from suppliers regarding visitors who attended the event:

- “Good mix of people - more than expected”
- “Having been to other University exhibitions very impressed with number of people who are aware of SUPC framework in Cambridge”
- “We expected less, so quite happy”
- “Excellent - really pleased”
- “Attendance was excellent, however we can always do with more”

ORGANISATION

The organisation was rated by suppliers on a 1 to 5 scale (1 being poor and 5 being excellent). Most suppliers rated the organisation as being a 4.

3. SEMINARS

Three seminars were given at the Exhibition. The first was presented by Jae Mather, Director of Sustainability, Carbon Free Group on The Pursuit of Responsible and Ethical Procurement. The second seminar was about R12 and this was presented by Karen Sheldon and Becky Darlow. Lastly the third seminar was presented by Steve Tosh, CIPS Global Corruption Advisor on Procurement Fraud.

In total 62 visitors attended the seminars. The responses received from the evaluation forms suggested that there was a general consensus that the seminar booking was handled in a timely and efficient manner. Majority of attendees felt the content and length of the seminars were at the right level and left feeling confident about their chosen subject.
In general attendees felt that the seminars were informative and that the speakers were knowledgeable and easy to understand.

Feedback from some of the seminar attendees:

- “Excellent – wow informative exceptional”
- “Seminar 1 very good and informative”
- “Excellent Seminars”
- “Excellent talk but didn’t really tell us how to procure ethically”

In summary attendees found the seminars beneficial and thought that the subjects were relevant. In future it may be a consideration not to have the seminars run back to back to allow visitors to look around the exhibition.

4. SUMMARY OF THE EVENT AS A WHOLE.

Feedback received from both visitors and suppliers suggest that the exhibition was a successful way of promoting preferred suppliers across the University. Both staff members and suppliers found the exhibition to be a positive way to communicate with one another. The exhibition attendance wasn’t as high as previous years. We did have 173 staff pre-register for the event but only half attended on the day, some staff said they had forgotten but also due to staff illnesses were unable to attend. Visitors that had not pre-registered prior to the event were given the opportunity to be added as a Purchasing Key Contact, we had 20 visitors uptake on this. The Procurement Services Office has taken on board all of the comments received from both University staff and suppliers and will be using them to help make the 2015 exhibition even better!

If you have any comments on this report or suggestions on our future events please do not hesitate in contacting Procurement Services on (3)32233 or email procurement.service.enquires@admin.cam.ac.uk.