

NKP BEST PRACTICES:

HOW TO CONDUCT AN EXPERT INTERVIEW: TEMPLATE INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PROCUREMENT OPTIMIZATION

July 2018

NORDIC KNOWLEDGE PARTNERS IN BRIEF

ABOUT

Based in Copenhagen, Denmark, Nordic Knowledge Partners (NKP) serves corporations, top-tier consulting firms and investment firms operating in and out of the Nordics. Leveraging a high-touch customized service, we help clients answer questions like:

- *What are the current dynamics and future outlook of this industry?*
- *How is the target perceived by its competitors and customers?*
- *How can I avoid any post-investment surprises?*

Our clients are professionals who find that evaluating new investment opportunities, doing due diligence work or exploring new markets with external support maximizes value, highlights potentially unseen pitfalls and saves many research hours.

HOW DO WE DO THIS

We connect you with subject-matter experts through direct confidential micro-consulting engagements - typically one hour on the phone. These individuals may include former executives of a specific company such as an M&A target, customers and competitors of a specific company, as well as function-, or geography-specific experts.

Most of the experts we engage with are not working as consultants nor are they actively looking for consulting work. As a result, we operate a high-touch personalized service model to ensure that all engagements are meaningful, saving time for both our clients and expert advisors.



Andreas von Buchwald

CEO & FOUNDER

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

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Introduction

This example interview guide was written to help clients - especially those new to the concept of expert interviews - prepare for expert interviews and to secure mutually meaningful discussions. Every project and client request is unique, so this should be used as a framework for inspiration, and not as a plug-and-play user manual.

The guidelines are based on findings from the many expert interviews we facilitate on a daily basis, however they are by no means exhaustive. We would like to point out that many of the interviews we facilitate are carried out successfully without any interview guide or detailed scope - it is by no means required to have an interview guide, and we can help you structure the discussion with the expert in all cases.

We recommend you also read our guidelines on [HOW TO SCOPE AN EXPERT INTERVIEW REQUEST](#).

Interview guide template: Procurement optimization case (60 min. expert interview)

Note: relevant expert profiles would be someone with extensive corporate procurement experience, i.e. Head of Procurement, Head of Supply Chain, Sourcing Manager.

Introduction

Hi **[first name]**,

Thank you for accepting this interview on such short notice, that is highly appreciated. We are working in the **[industry]** industry and we are trying to get a better understanding of the best ways to procure **[service/product #1], [service/product #2].....** We are mainly focused on **[geographic scope]**. Our aim is to identify potential savings initiatives in these cost-buckets, so any topics related to this would be of interest.

There are a **[number of]** areas we would like to cover in this interview:

- Product/service category #1: Best practices for procurement strategy for **[service/product]**
- Product/service category #2: Best practices for procurement strategy for **[service/product]**

Before we get started, could you provide me with an introduction to your own background so I can tailor my questions accordingly?

Note: The goal of the introduction is to set the agenda and getting the expert comfortable.

Part A: basics of procuring **[product/service category #1]**

1. Could you please walk me through the process of how a company in the **[industry]** would normally source a **[service/product]**?
2. How long in advance of the implementation/usage do they start and conclude the sourcing process?
3. Is there any savings in reaching out earlier?
4. What is your view on alternative procurement strategies for **[service/product]**, how is the normal approach?
 - a. Tendering each purchase as a stand-alone project:
 - i. How many vendors do the companies usually reach out to?
 - ii. Do companies bundle several orders/items together in a tender?
 - b. Tendering each purchase within a pre-selected portfolio of frame-agreement vendors?

- c. *Selecting one or a couple of strategic suppliers to work with over a certain time period?*
 - i. *What are typical price elements for a frame agreement or strategic supplier agreement?*
5. *What is the normal and best approach for managing sub-suppliers? (let the vendor choose or require use of own frame agreements)*

Part B: pricing of [product/service category #1]

1. *What percentage of the costs in a [insert cost bucket #1] purchase is fixed, and what are the key components?*
 - a. *How much difference in the pricing of these fixed costs do you see in the marketplace?*
 - b. *What would you estimate is the difference in prices given to the companies that are the best negotiators vs. those who are the weakest?*
2. *What is the normal pricing structure for the project/order specific services/products delivered: time & material, or fixed price?*
 - a. *What would you estimate is the difference in prices given to the companies that are the best negotiators vs. those who are the weakest?*
3. *What are the key elements of the price discussion with vendors?*
 - a. *Main arguments put forward by the best negotiators for obtaining a lower price?*

Part C: general trends

1. *Do you see any particular trends in the organization and procurement of [product/service]?*
2. *What are the best companies doing when procuring?*

Note: Repeat A, B C as needed if you have multiple product/service categories you would like to inquire the expert about.

Conclusion:

Now before we hang up, is there anything you would like to add, something we forgot to ask about?

Thank you for your time.

Note: We recommend clients to ask open-ended, probing questions, and to pay attention to not talking too much themselves. It is important to let the dialogue develop, i.e. going slightly off-topic or changing the order can be useful to open up the discussion.