

Sarah Ricketts - Transforming procurement with data, culture, and tech.

Senior VP of Procurement at Rolls-Royce

Emma Carroll..... 00:00:01

Welcome to the Business Leaders Voice podcast. I'm Emma Carroll and I'm head of Content here at Source. And today we're going to be discussing transforming procurement and we're going to be looking at that through the prism of data, through culture, through technology and various other things. And I'm absolutely delighted to welcome our speaker, Sarah Ricketts. And Sarah is SVP for Procurement of Rolls Royce. Sarah, welcome to the podcast. It's great to have you here.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:00:30

Hi. Thank you. Yeah, I'm delighted to be with you today, Emma.

Emma Carroll..... 00:00:34

Thank you. And just to kick things off, Sarah, could you tell us a little bit about yourself and give us a little potted history of your career so far?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:00:42

Yeah, sure. So I have 20 plus years experience in procurement and supply chain. So I started out my career as a graduate trainee at a company that's now called Alstom. Back then it was Bombardier. And through my career I've kind of moved between direct purchasing, direct goods, indirect goods. I've done a lot of engineering and manufacturing, but also some fast moving consumer goods in the beer and leisure industry. And as I've gone on through my career, I've kind of intentionally moved between operational roles, managing kind of large teams, and then strategic roles and also functional roles.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:01:22

And I think it's really important to spend time at the cold phase, but also thinking about functional roles and how you can bring on transformational change. So manage various working patterns as well as I've gone along the way, so managed to bring up two daughters whilst progressing a career and finding that balance has always been something that I've worked really hard to get right and worked in a few companies in industries where the lack of diversity is still a challenge. So that's one of the things that's really a passion for me and I'm sure that will come out in our conversation as we go.

Emma Carroll..... 00:01:53

Yeah, it'd be great to hear about that and to kick off talking about the transformation you're going through at the moment. I know that Rolls Royce is kind of going through a big process, isn't it? Can you bring us up to date on that? Where did you start? Where are you going?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:02:09

Yeah, it's a super exciting time to be at Rolls Royce at the moment. So we are transforming and growing as a company. We had a new CEO to found Oakham Village two years ago and we are on a really ambitious and continuous transformation plan. So our share price has gone from just under a pound to today over six pounds, and today we're valued at 50 billion market value. So it's really exciting, the journey that Rolls Royce is on. This is a whole scale organization transformation and we're still at the very early stages. And as part of that we've centralized the procurement function, which is over 1200 employees, and elevated it in the business to one of the two key business capabilities.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:02:54

So we sit alongside engineering, which is really exciting for everyone in procurement. And there's a huge focus in procurement on kind of driving leaps forward in our performance through clear and aligned strategy that's absolutely aligned to the strategy of our business and our transformation plan as a business through ambitious targets, efficiencies and really driving digital and sustainability. And every area of the business is changing and procurement are right at the centre of it. It's really exciting. So we've got a Winning Together program at Rolls Royce and that Winning Together transformation programme is focused on really driving us to a high performing, competitive, resilient and growing company. And it's a super, super great place to be part of at the moment.

Emma Carroll..... 00:03:44

Okay, really interesting. And so focusing on that procurement piece of change. Really interesting. You've got engineering at the top alongside procurement. So focusing on that transformation within procurement, can you kind of pull out the strands for us? What would that change program look like? What are the different work programs?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:04:03

Yeah, so there's a lot going on to get us to where we really want to get to. So we're really focused on our digital strategy and our data strategy. So thinking about the tech side of things, we're definitely focused on people and culture, the capability of our people, what our people do, clear accountabilities. We're looking at our outcomes of the tasks we do, like for example, negotiation, excellence. How do you get the best outcomes? We're looking at our strategies, making sure we've got our strategies in place, the right governance around them, and then we're also looking at cost and making sure we've got that we understand our numbers, that we drive our numbers and that we've got the right financial capability within procurement to drive cost really well. So there's overall, there's a whole bunch of work that we're doing to drive this transformation change.

Emma Carroll..... 00:04:54

Brilliant. And maybe I could delve into some of those because you've given me such a lot of strands to pull on there. And I know we're going to talk quite a bit about technology in a little bit, so I thought maybe some of the others you talked about strategies and governance around. Strategies. Strategies, what does that look like? What are some of the things you're doing there?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:05:11

So strategy we're looking at at the moment in terms of understanding, firstly, how our strategies link to our corporate strategy and making sure we're fully aligned to where the business is going. Then we're looking at how our strategies link into other areas of the businesses and their strategy governance. We're looking at what our governance should be, who signs off strategies, how many strategies we should be doing, which strategies we should be doing, and then looking at how we execute them and making sure that it's not just a really glossy strategy that looks great but doesn't actually get executed. So what's the gold standard for a strategy? And then how do you ensure that we have really clear execution to make sure it gets done and.

Emma Carroll..... 00:05:56

Okay, Sarah, to pull on one of those other strands, you also talked about risk. What are you doing in terms of risk?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:06:03

Yeah. So risk management is an area that we really need to focus on because there's so much disruption in the supply chain at the moment. There's geopolitical risk, there's financial risk, we've got risk around capacity as the industry ramps up. So risk and issue is all around us. Our risk management framework becomes absolutely critical. So we're focused on having a standardised framework. We're focused on really clearly understanding our risk and.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:06:31

And looking at any leading indicators for future risk. We're focused on prioritising our risks so we understand what the key ones are and then mitigation for those risks. And we're also looking at that standard approach across the function. So our risk management framework, we're really proud of it and it won a World Procurement Award and was highly recommended at SIPS this year. So it is something we focused on. There's a long way to go. There is so much disruption in the supply chain at the moment. We feel like there is a long way to go.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:06:59

But the framework is there and it's sound and it's really now about doing the hard work around making sure you fully understand all your risks and you prioritise them well. So that's something that is getting a lot of focus at Rolls Royce at the moment.

Emma Carroll..... 00:07:13

Interesting. And clearly you said it won a prize. I'm wondering, what do you think were the bits that it won the prize for? What are you most proud of within that framework?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:07:22

I think it is that real logical process that we've got a process. It looks at risk within our suppliers, so it gets our suppliers involved and there's that collaboration. It then rolls

that supplier risk up to internal risk and brings it all together. It also. We look at for our suppliers, where we know that they've got risk, how high is the risk and what's your mitigation plans? And we work with our suppliers through that and then it's that. That way that it prioritizes up and we can work out what our highest risks are.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:07:52

So I think it's that, that overall framework that we're really. That has won the award and that we're proud of. That said, we are still dealing with a huge amount of risk and disruption.

Emma Carroll..... 00:08:03

Yeah. You couldn't have a more uncertain time, could you? So, yeah, that's really understandable. And the other thing you mentioned, I thought sounded really interesting was negotiation excellence. What can you share that you're doing there?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:08:16

Yeah, so that's really focusing on negotiation is a key part of what we do in procurement. And it's making sure that across the function, we all understand how to do that to the best standard, that we're supporting the teams with the right training and the right capability, and that we support them through deal clinics to make sure that they feel confident to go out and get the best deals we can get and that the deals work for our suppliers and for us. But it's really about having that solid framework and helping to build capability across the function and do it really well.

Emma Carroll..... 00:08:49

I know when we were prepping for this call, you mentioned an AI bot and potential to use that in some areas of negotiation. It'd be fascinating to hear, you know, where that could fit, where you might use it, where you wouldn't use it. Anything you can share on that?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:09:04

Yeah. So it's one of the things when we, when we talk about AI, it's one of the things that we've been playing with. So we have launched an AI bot. It is doing some negotiating. It's negotiating for us in areas that we may not have touched previously. But we

definitely are going to expand the use of it into kind of the low value, low complexity negotiations so that our teams can really focus on the complex stuff where they really need good strategy and good strong thought process and negotiation. So the more that we can use a bot, the better.

Emma Carroll..... 00:09:39

Okay, fascinating. And, you know, I think at the beginning of my career, I don't know if it's the same for you. People always talked about, about change programs as opposed to transformation. And it was something with a real, really clear start, a really clear finish. But now it's kind of everything is continuous, isn't it? Transformation is a lot more continuous. And I wondered if you could talk to me a little bit about how digital tools are helping you with that kind of continuous process?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:10:05

Yeah, absolutely. And our transformation program is continuous, so that's a culture change in itself, and we can talk about that. But in terms of digital, digital is at the forefront of our transformation, not just in procurement, but across Rolls Royce, bringing the efficiency to allow our teams to focus on the really challenging stuff and the difficult negotiations and the difficult strategies. So there's so many tools available and you need to be really clear on your strategy around digital. So you need to understand what problem you are trying to solve for, and then you can look at the tools that are available for that. What is your priority focus area first, and you can build your strategy around that. So digital can help in so many ways.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:10:48

There's data and analytics, risk management, contract management, spend management, category management, quality, cost. You know, digital can do so much for the function of procurement. It's about being really thoughtful of where you go first and the biggest problems that you're trying to solve for and recognizing that investment's going to be needed. So you're going to need a really clear business case. And it's better, I think, to go in with an overall picture of this isn't the only thing we might be asking for. There's a whole strategy here. Rather than go in and potentially get funding to do one thing and then feel like you need to go back and back and back, and perhaps that's not expected. I think with digital as well, the other thing that's really important is change management.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:11:35

So I've seen tools be implemented and really not picked up with the users or, you know, really not get the energy that you need them to get to be used. And I think that's because a big part of rolling out a new tool is change management. So it's really important to think about that as you choose your tool and roll it out. What's the user journey that goes with it? Have you got some champions that understand how to work it? And how do you really roll out change management alongside it? The other thing that we found in Rolls Royce is start small. So start small, get something working and then grow it, rather than trying to bring in something perfect at the start that may take forever and still probably won't be perfect anyway.

Emma Carroll..... 00:12:19

So you've got that sort of two prong picture, because you've got to have the big picture about what technology you want, and that might be quite a large picture with lots of different bits involved, but you want to start small. That's interesting, isn't it?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:12:33

Don't try and boil the ocean all at once, but there is a lot we can do in this space.

Emma Carroll..... 00:12:37

Yeah, fascinating. And you already talked a little bit about people there, but I'd love to hear a bit more about culture change, because you said it was a big culture change. So what are you doing and how are you making that work?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:12:48

Yeah, absolutely. So transformation. A lot of people, including us at Rolls Royce, we did a big organization transformation. And I think a lot of people think, right, that's it, that's the transformation done. And now we crack on with the job. What you actually do, if you don't change what you're doing and how you're doing at the same time, then you end up with the same result. So what we're really trying to drive here is a performance culture, a culture of efficiency and effectiveness that really drives through the synergies and does things differently.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:13:21

And that's so important. So we have created a team of change makers across the business. Actually, in every area of the business, we have change makers that are looking at our new behaviours, our ways of working, our engagement and really helping us to drive a different culture in the business. And that might be through listening sessions and focus groups, it might be celebrating small wins and getting those out to the businesses. It might be embedding new governance, whatever it is. It's about really thinking about the culture as you go through and getting some people on board to help you really drive that change.

Emma Carroll..... 00:14:00

Okay, and those change makers, is that a specific job role or is that something you've got lots of different roles taking part in? How does that work?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:14:09

Yeah, no, it's completely voluntary and it is on top of your day job. So you've got to find room for it. And it's the people that are really interested, you know, high energy, making, making things different, transforming the way we work. And actually, I was really impressed with how many people. I think there's between 40 and 50 in procurement people that volunteered to really be part of this and be part of the change. And change can be quite murky and woolly and we're not really sure where we're going and it's a bit ambiguous. And so it's great to have the energy behind trying to drive something and work out what we want to do and how we're going to do it and have some really good energy behind it.

Emma Carroll..... 00:14:50

Okay, thank you. And maybe this also links as well. You mentioned earlier, building towards a skills based organisation. Can you tell us what that means? What does it look like for you?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:15:02

Yeah, so we're doing a lot of work at the moment looking at, as we brought the function together in procurement, over 1,200 people. How do all the role profiles look? Are they standardized? And then what's the capability needed against the role profile? Have we got really clear accountabilities? That's kind of laying the base foundation for a skills

based organisation. Then you, then the next step is understanding, well, what skills does everybody have?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:15:31

And we've got a system within our HR system. There is a space for us to go and kind of tick our skills and it can read off our CVs and et cetera, and builds a skill base per employee. What that means is as we use more and more digital and AI and that comes into the way that we work, we can develop a more flexible and agile workforce so we can move people around and use their skills effectively to focus on the more complex stuff where digital comes in and does some of the more easy to automate stuff. So this isn't about, this isn't about digital or AI replacing people. This is about working alongside digital AI and being flexible in our skills workforce to be able to move people around and be able to do that. And that's really what we're focused on.

Emma Carroll..... 00:16:23

And clearly that you've sort of talked about that balance between people and AI and is the system, the system, the HR system using AI at the moment? I've heard that a few times recently. People been talking about AI systems sort of pulling out skills from across the.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:16:39

Business and I wondered whether the HR system is pulling. If you upload your cv. I mean, it's completely optional to do that, but if you upload your CV onto the HR system, it would use that to pull out your skills. It can use it from the job roles that you've done that it can see in the system. If you did a gig somewhere else in the business, which is going and doing a small second somewhere, if you did a gig, then it would take your skills that you've learned there and the system uses AI to do that. So you can add to it, tweak it, change it yourself, you're in control. But it's a great starting point that the AI, you know, gives you a base for that.

Emma Carroll..... 00:17:17

Yeah, definitely. Thank you. And you've mentioned tech, you've mentioned data. Let's delve into that a bit because it's always really interesting and it's also, data wise, whenever I have conversations with business people and they're talking about making

their technology work, the biggest stumbling block is always, always quality of data. So it'd be great to hear what you've done around that, what's worked well.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:17:42

Yeah, I completely agree. Data is always the thing that holds teams back and it just can be so frustrating and it's a waste of valuable time as well, trying to get the data and then finding you've got conflicting data. And it just, it really does drive a lot of frustration. So we focus a lot on that at Rolls Royce. The org transformation that we did last year was huge in procurement, so we had to change our data. So we went right back to the basics and looked at how do we use the different data that we've got, how does the new organization look, who uses what data, how will they use that data and therefore what do we need going forward? And from that we built a control tower which is able to look through different lenses for the different parts of the organization at the same data.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:18:33

The idea being this is one source of the truth that we use in the function for all roles and at any level in the organization. So we can roll things right up to report upwards and we can use it at the working level as well. And we've now put targets, we're in the process of putting targets into the control tower so we can then look at performance. So it becomes not just this is our data, but it becomes this is our data, these are our targets and this is how we're performing and this is where we need to drive a change to make sure that we do perform. Where we're going to next will be to overlay some AI and maybe some gen AI to start looking at stress testing our organization and showing us where our risks and opportunities are and perhaps creating some potential solutions for us so that we can be more intelligent in the strategy that we do and the actions that we take.

Emma Carroll..... 00:19:28

Well, I love when you've got further to chat to you more about that because that sounds really, really interesting. What are you working on there at the moment? What are the big challenges?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:19:38

So there is all sorts of challenges. Getting the data right is still a challenge. Getting it built into the governance of the organisation so that that is the only tool that we use. So into our reviews at all levels, that tool has to be used. If the data is not right, we'll use it

anyway and then get it right for next time rather than let's go and look at this other spreadsheet that I've got on the side that is right. So it's really about getting it into the governance, then getting everybody to Measure in the same way across the function, whether you're looking at quality, delivery, cost. What we found as we brought the function together is everybody's got slightly different ways of measuring, therefore you've got to try and standardize that if you're going to bring it together and then roll it up.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:20:21

So that's the next problem to solve. So this is a whole journey with the control tower that we're on that will take it from a source of data to hopefully a Command center in 18, 24 months time. But for now we're still very much at the basics of how do you get everybody to measure the same things in the same way using, you know, the same bits of data so that we can create something that really eventually we use to stress test the organization or the function.

Emma Carroll..... 00:20:52

And it sounds like it's been really important to you to make sure that people aren't using like their own sources of data or their own spreadsheets to play around with things. Even if it's what's really struck me that you said there was, even if it's not perfect, we use it so people aren't using other ways. How have you embedded that? Because that can be a challenge, can't it?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:21:11

Yeah, the change in the organisation helped us actually, because that was a great point for us to kind of draw a line in the sand and make it really clear the tool will come from the centre and everybody's going to work with that. We use the top down approach. So if you can get the top people in the organisation brought into the idea, then that will be pushed down through the organisation. We also worked with champions throughout the organisation. So each area of the business we had some champions working with us on how does this work in your area, what do we need to do for quality, what do we need to do for delivery, what did you used to do, what would good look like and how do we build that? So it's about getting the top level seniors brought in, it's about getting the working level brought in and it's about being really clear that this is the one tool and getting that communication to everybody. And then it was about delivering something very quickly and going back to that.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:22:10

It doesn't have to be perfect, but give the team something to start with and then have a really clear feedback button that they can use to tell us what they need and what doesn't quite work. So it was a constant reiteration with the teams, but this is the base tool we're using, being really clear on that. And you can give us as much feedback on that as you like.

Emma Carroll..... 00:22:32

Okay, and what about ownership around data? Have you kind of driven a sense of ownership?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:22:37

I think that's part of the culture change that we bring in. So that will come through the change makers again. But also using the tool that we're using, the control tower tool in our governance is really important for driving that ownership of data. Then you get to the conversation of, well, the control tower numbers aren't right, and the answer has to be. They're your numbers, you own the data. And as long as you're doing that and not allowing people to bring in their own spreadsheets with different, different ways of working, then you force people to get the data right. And that's.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:23:10

That really is one of the. The ways to do it is by making sure it's embedded in your governance.

Emma Carroll..... 00:23:16

Okay, and you talked a little bit about driving performance, and is there anything we haven't touched on, any other lessons you could share in terms of driving performance through data?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:23:26

I think it's about being really clear on targets as well. It's about being clear on targets, being ambitious on targets, and driving people harder or driving targets that are more

ambitious than you would necessarily feel comfortable with, and then making sure that they are cascaded through the organization and embedded into people's objectives so that everybody knows what part they have to play for the overall delivery. And that's the other bit that's absolutely critical when you're driving performance is making sure that everyone knows their parts of play. Really clear in our objectives. And we're reviewing that regularly with our teams. That would be the other thing that I add.

Emma Carroll..... 00:24:06

Okay. And looking back at what's happened so far, how the distance you've got through this transformation and all the things we've chatted about so far, what would you pull out as being the. The biggest challenge?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:24:18

That is a really good question. I would say one of the biggest challenges is driving such a transformation program around digital data. Our processes, our strategy, our negotiation, our people, our culture alongside delivering. We've got a huge, huge amount to deliver. You know, we've got a lot of disruption in our supply chain, and trying to do both is really tricky. And being really respectful of the workload that is on the teams that are really driving that operational procurement. So that.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:24:53

That is definitely a challenge in itself. I would say the other piece is around changing our culture. That does not happen overnight. You know, that really is something that takes a while to happen. And you have to be persistent and you have to be Consistent and it really takes some high energy. And so you have to be resilient to. We haven't got time for that. We're not interested.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:25:15

We've got a deal to do. There is some resilience that comes in there as well. But I would say changing the culture is another. Another really difficult thing to do.

Emma Carroll..... 00:25:24

And you talked just now about sort of the balancing business as usual with the transformation. Any, any big tips on that for other people who are sort of about to go through a big transformation?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:25:34

One of the big things that we focused on is benchmarking. So this isn't about what, what we did before and what does good in Rolls Royce look like. This is about what is industry standard, what is best and how do we almost leapfrog that and be the best. So for us, it's about benchmark, benchmark, benchmark. So we talk to other companies, we go to conferences. We are really trying to understand, making connections externally with companies that we don't compete with to understand what good looks like. And then you apply, think about how that can apply to Rolls Royce.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:26:14

Which bit works for us? What's the right timing to bring things in? You can't do everything all at once. And really thinking about the strategy for transformation to get us to a place that is world class, not a little bit better than what we did before.

Emma Carroll..... 00:26:33

And do you think sometimes lessons can be learnt from sectors that are completely different from yours? Because obviously you don't want to work directly with your competitors, but sometimes, you know, even something as random as banking, are there lessons to be learned from other sectors, do you think, in terms of procurement?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:26:49

Absolutely. I mean, really, I am looking to build my network in lots of different sectors so that I can really understand what everyone's doing. And we should be sharing this stuff because, you know, the function of procurement needs to change. We are changing AI and digital sustainability. You know, we, we have to change. So it is really about learning the best practice from all sectors and. And then that.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:27:12

That's where it comes back to, and then what works for Rolls Royce. But absolutely, my antenna are looking at, you know, as much as I can learn externally. Absolutely.

Emma Carroll..... 00:27:22

So, Sarah, you talked about different sectors. Is there anything you could put your finger on that you've kind of leveraged or pulled on from another sector?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:27:30

Yeah, I've specifically noticed that probably in automotive and also pharmaceutical, those sectors are further ahead in terms of what they're doing in digital, in terms of what they're doing with AI. And so there is certainly some things we can take from. From that and bring in. So, yes, I've definitely noticed that in some areas are further ahead than others.

Emma Carroll..... 00:27:55

And what are you most excited about when it comes to the future of procurement?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:27:59

Yeah, I'm so excited about everything that digital and AI are going to give us. I think it's going to absolutely change the way we work and we need to embrace that. There's so much that that can help us with and help us to really accelerate all the other work that we need to do. You know, the workload and procurement has gone up significantly because of the disruption supply chain, because of our legislation and because of sustainability. There's so much more that we need to think about. That digital I will transform. That's not about getting more resource in, it's about using digital AI to make us more efficient and effective so that we can focus on sustainability and legislation and some of the other things that we need to get right.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:28:45

So I'm super excited about everything that will bring.

Emma Carroll..... 00:28:49

And Sarah, at the very beginning, you also hinted, well talked about how passionate you were about diversity within procurement. It would be great to hear something from you

on that. You know what is really exciting in the area? What are the big challenges about diversity within supply chain?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:29:05

Yeah, diversity has been a passion for me. I mean, all diversity all the way through my career. It brings psychological safety, it brings innovation and actually it helps change the bottom line. So there is a Data source from McKinsey that talks about companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on Exec teams are 25% more likely to experience more than average profitability than those in the bottom quartile. So it absolutely changes the bottom line. I think Rolls Royce were about 15%, 15 female, maybe slightly more. Now we've got our first ever female chair on the board and we also have.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:29:43

Our board is about 50% male, 50% female. I'm actually interested in all levels of diversity. I've talked a lot about gender diversity there. But having a really diverse workforce gives so many different points of view, so many different new ideas, creative ways of thinking. And actually, I also firmly believe that unless you can see diversity above you in the organisation, you've kind of got to see it to believe it. If you can't see it, you won't necessarily think that you can get there. You may not speak out about anything, you may not give your views and opinions because you may not feel safe to do so. So it really does bring psychological safety into the workforce.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:30:22

So there is no reason not to have diverse workforces. However, you know, tradition and the industry that I work in means that we're not as diverse as I would love us to be yet. So there is a lot of work to do to get there. Now, how you get there is a choice. You know, there's many ways to do it. Some people want to set targets around diversity. Some of it could be flexible working policies, it could be subconscious bias training at interview stage. There's lots of different things that you can do with your workforce to get there.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:30:53

But for me, the really important thing is that we do get there. So I do a lot of work with our supply chain, particularly with females in our supply chain, because our supply chain is very male dominated and I'm really keen to see that change. So I spend a lot of time talking with our supply chain around that, around how we get females in particular

to be more confident, how we get inspiration, how we create a bit of a buzz around diversity and hopefully change that dial, that diversity dial. But I do think over my career, which is over 20 years, we've come a huge, long way and I've seen so much change and it gives you so much positive energy. However, I still think there's a way to go.

Emma Carroll..... 00:31:38

And you talked about a couple of the challenges at the beginning. You've very much talked about tradition, and I guess you've also talked about coming from a base where there are fewer women. Are there any other big challenges in terms of diversity that you'd pull out? And it doesn't need to be specifically in Rolls Royce, anything else? Because you work beyond Rolls ro, don't you? In this particular topic?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:31:58

Yeah. So the other, I think the other challenge that I would bring up is the time to raise awareness, to change people's thinking, to think about how you, how you change feels like that is over and above the day job generally. You know, that's not in your objectives, that's not in the. What you talk about about in daily meetings. So you really do have to, if you're really passionate about it, you have to make the time. And that could be evenings, you know, it could be weekends. But it takes time to drive a change, to think about what you would do to make things different, to raise awareness, to talk to people.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:32:41

All of that takes time. And so for me, the challenge is, where does the energy and the time come from when we're all super busy in our day jobs?

Emma Carroll..... 00:32:51

And what kind of conversations do you find yourself having with women in procurement? What kind of things do they worry about? Or what kind of things can you do to Inspire them. What. Where are those. Where's the heart of those conversations you're having?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:33:05

So I can make loads of generalized statements around how women. What, what. What women want to talk about, but one of the ones that comes to the forefront a lot is

imposter syndrome. So that is definitely something that women talk about a lot. Well, not as much as they should do. That women suffer with a lot and probably talk about a lot less. Now, that's not just women that suffer with imposter syndrome.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:33:33

Absolutely. I know men do, too. And everybody, Everybody probably struggles with it at some point in time. I think women struggle with it a lot, and we definitely have lots of conversations around. So what is it? So how do you become aware that you're struggling with that? And that's your mind talk? So what can you do to get over that?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:33:54

Alongside that comes confidence comes resilience. So that theme is something that comes up time and time again, and I would love for us to all talk about that really openly, for people to be really vulnerable around when they're struggling with it or when they have struggled with it and what they've done and not see it as a sign of weakness, because the more we talk about it, the more it becomes normal. And that's what the young people coming into our organization need to see and hear.

Emma Carroll..... 00:34:24

It's so true. And it's really interesting. You talk to group CEOs and group CFOs, and a lot of them will be really honest that they had or still suffer from imposter syndrome themselves, don't they?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:34:36

Absolutely. And I would say I have done and still do. You know, I think it's really, really common, but it's something that people don't like to talk about because it could be construed as a sign of weakness.

Emma Carroll..... 00:34:47

Yes, definitely. And do you know what? We always like to end this podcast with a really practical takeaway. So I'd love if there are some listeners here today who really want to drive up the diversity within their procurement function. What would be your, you know, top tips for them to take away?

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:35:05

Yeah, so for leaders, I think if you're looking to drive diversity, it's about visibly leading the way and making the space for it, understanding the status of your business today and then having a real strategy to address that. You know, whichever way you want to do that, there's lots of ways you can having that strategy and openly and visibly executing that strategy. For anyone who feels that they are in a minority group and they feel that they're being overlooked or spoken over or ignored, speak up. So don't let it get in your way. Address the issues as they arise. And I would say, do you know, if things don't change, leave and go somewhere where you are valued.

Emma Carroll..... 00:35:49

Sarah, thank you so much for your time today. Absolutely fascinating. I really enjoyed our conversation.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:35:55

That's an absolute pleasure. I really enjoyed it too. Thank you for talking to me today. Emma.

Emma Carroll..... 00:36:02

If you found today's discussion interesting, you can find more episodes on Spotify.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:36:06

Apple Podcasts, or anywhere else you get your podcasts.

Emma Carroll..... 00:36:09

To find out more about how we're.

Sarah Ricketts..... 00:36:11

Helping shape the firms of the Future, head to sourceglobalresearch.com.