



ProcureCon  
EUROPE EU

# PROCUREMENT **PULSE CHECK**

Top Priorities for 2021

**ALIGNMENT  
AND IMPACT**

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## FOREWORD

# WHAT IS YOUR NEXT MOVE?

By Denis Royer – Senior Vice President, WNS Denali



Imagine the future of your Procurement organization. Are you crystal-clear on your priorities? Have you kept in touch with what your peers are doing in the absence of networking opportunities?

While 2020 was a rollercoaster for many of us, I observed that many procurement leaders demonstrated fantastic resilience and agility in a disrupted world. They accelerated digitalization, heightened Procurement's impact, and developed strong alignment to their business stakeholders and group priorities. However, they had limited insights and certainties to conduct an acid test on their strategies for the future.

I partnered with a large multinational company that embarked on a major project in spring 2020 to enhance the end-user experience through digitally guided buying. They aimed to drive efficiencies and improve compliance with state-of-the-art touchless bidding technology. Six months of competitive sourcing and provider pitches ensued. A winner was declared. Yet, a contract was never signed. Why? Because **priorities had changed for the C-Suite**. Did similar priority changes happen for you?

We decided to investigate the current and future priorities of procurement and embarked with ProcureCon on a global benchmark survey. This study will provide you with **quantified insights to bolster your strategic planning** with confidence and purpose. I'd love to share a few key takeaways which resonated with me. First, CPOs strive to increase their **reach, effectiveness and efficiency**. They recognize which gaps impede their organization to capture optimum value, while the goal post keeps advancing. Second, the key challenge resides in prioritization and laser focus, as resources and investments are not infinite, while time passing without meaningful progress can reveal lost opportunities or trouble ahead. And third, I noticed significant gaps according to the survey results, including:

- **Stakeholder and business alignment** - 64% are not aligned with the business
- **Digitalization** - 45% are not happy with the pace
- **Operating Model** – 58% have not fully segmented tactical from strategic work
- **Talent** – 49% say they need to do more

While you read these survey results, I encourage you to reflect on your strategic objectives. Take time to rank your inventory of gaps and aspirations. Create space to validate that your short, mid, and long-term strategy continues to be aligned with your company's needs (not just your own, nor yesterday's needs). Those three steps above will help you **achieve total business alignment**.

You will discover that many of your peers intend to invest in Talent, Operating Model enhancements (such as activity-based organizations, out-tasking and automation), and core digital systems and process enhancements. Fortunately, many CPOs intend to go beyond cost savings (which remains the #1 priority overall) to increase the value and impact of Procurement in Sustainability and Supplier Management. However, **keep in mind that only you can define what priorities are the right ones for your organization**.

Albert Einstein once said: ***You cannot achieve a new goal by applying the same level of thinking that got you where you are today.*** Procurement keeps reinventing itself and moving forward. You are the engineer of this transformation. I wish you every success in this exhilarating journey!

**"I'd like to thank ProcureCon for their support in this initiative. I was honored to join a lively panel at a ProcureCon 2020 event on Procurement agility, where we discussed how to rapidly adjust strategies during significant supply and demand shocks. We talked about digital and enhanced operating models, yet I remember one of the panelists highlighting that the foundation of performance, resilience, and agility is the motivation and strength of our people. Let's never lose sight of that!"**

# INTRODUCTION

Where will CPOs focus their limited time and investments after overcoming and adjusting to the disruptions from 2020? And, more importantly, how *should* CPOs most effectively allocate their energy and resources in 2021? WNS Denali and ProcureCon sought to answer these questions through the **Procurement Pulse Check for 2021** benchmark survey. We assessed the current state of Procurement and strategic priorities for the coming year. Our goal was to provide procurement leaders with the data points to enter this year with **confidence and purpose, amidst the noise and confusion**. In this paper, we examine themes from the data and share insights on CPO's priorities and investments.

During the winter of 2020, more than 100 procurement executives from around the world shared their perspectives on:

- The current state of priorities in their organization today and in the future
- Critical investment areas for the year ahead
- Their TOP priorities for 2021

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Respondents were asked to rank their current state and future priorities across a number of Procurement's most critical initiatives: **Digital Transformation, Talent, Operating Model, and Strategic Business Alignment**.

While the respondent's maturity levels and priorities varied, the broad themes were undeniable:

- Procurement needs to **align better with core business objectives** and the needs of all stakeholders
- Procurement has **increased the potential for creating business value** and making an impact
- **Digital transformation has accelerated rapidly** due to the pressures placed on organizations to build fully virtual workforces

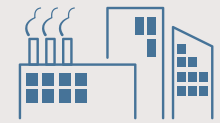
In this paper, we will examine these main themes and explain how they will drive and should influence key procurement initiatives for 2021.

## DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

More than  
**60%**  
of respondents  
are in global  
procurement roles



More than  
**15**  
industries represented  
in the findings



**48%** of the  
responses  
from organizations managing  
more than 1B Euros of spend  
annually

**65%**  
of respondents are Heads  
of Procurement



The majority  
of respondents  
focus on indirect spend



# FINDINGS: THE CURRENT STATE OF PROCUREMENT

In the early days of the Covid-19 crisis, **many industry experts predicted that procurement would once again be relegated to back office cost-cutting and assumed that broader value creation would be minimized.** The findings from this survey indicate **that hypothesis was inaccurate.** In fact, many **procurement executives have found a return to normalcy.** Today, CPOs continue improving their functions by focusing on strategic planning, talent management, and infrastructure building. Yet, our survey responses indicate that Procurement Organizations still face many challenges.

## TOP CHALLENGES FOR CPOs TODAY

**64%**

of respondents indicated that they are not yet **aligned with the business**

**49%**

say they are not doing enough in **Talent Management**

**58%**

of respondents do not have a fully segmented **Operating Model**

**47%**

of respondents are currently not **outsourcing or outtasking** any of their procurement

**45%**

of respondents are not happy with the progress of **digitalization**

We cross-referenced the data from this benchmark survey with first-hand client experiences and procurement leader perspectives to identify the biggest gaps for procurement organizations today. **Three clear themes emerged.** To be successful in 2021, procurement organizations need to address these three imperatives:

1. **Build closer alignment with business stakeholders** to understand additional value they can add and to increase reach and impact
2. Structure the organization in a way that allows team members to **deliver the maximum impact possible** through vision alignment and increased effectiveness
3. **Implement and optimize core digital enablers** that will improve partnership with the business and increase efficiency

Let's dive deeper...

## STRATEGIC BUSINESS ALIGNMENT

Procurement organizations that integrate with core long-term business objectives outperform their short-term-focused peers. As a business-aligned procurement team, you have a **holistic approach to increase total business value** that includes cost, risk, innovation, user experience, supply assurance, time-to-market, and compliance, among other drivers. Most survey respondents had not achieved this strategic alignment.

**64%** of respondents are not strategically aligned to business objectives

### WITHIN THIS SUBGROUP:



Only

**4%**

are satisfied with their talent management program

Just

**10%**

are realizing benefits of their implemented Operating Model that segments tactical from strategic work



Only

**3%**

have implemented 3<sup>rd</sup> party support for procurement execution (outsourcing or outtasking)

**50%**

say they are still in the “early stages” of digital transformation



“I found that our organization, like many, was focused on savings, but it’s just as important to have a clear

plan for customer relationship management (CRM) especially during a pandemic! As we made that pivot, our changes were around building trust, business alignment, and establishing clear guidelines on what it means to partner as a procurement person. For example, this included defining how to listen, help, maximize our impact, win, and make sure that our messaging was crisp and aligned to the business. We wanted to earn the right to become a trusted advisor.”

**Ann Fleishell,**  
Head of Global General  
Procurement – Applied Materials

## BUSINESS IMPACT

Agile procurement organizations have fared well during the pandemic because they have adjusted and made pivots to increase their business impact: collaborating with key stakeholders to develop new models of delivery, supporting operational continuity plans, ensuring employee safety through strategic acquisition of PPE.

**A critical component of agility and the key to unlocking impact potential is to structure operations to optimize the team's reach, effectiveness, and efficiency.**

Organizations with an updated operating model actively segment the work performed by procurement into tactical and strategic roles. Transactional work is optimized and possibly outsourced or automated while strategic procurement roles increase their reach and impact. This year, organizations that do not shift to segmented and augmented operating models will miss the ability to make a bigger impact and rise to the expectations of stakeholders.

Currently,  
**58%** of survey  
respondents are  
running an older operating  
model for procurement.

### WITHIN THIS SUBGROUP:



**68%**

are not satisfied  
with their approach  
to talent management



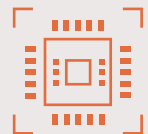
**44%**

are actively rolling  
out digital initiatives  
and transforming



**42%**

have outsourcing  
programs that are  
either struggling to  
produce value or not  
fully implemented



Only

**2%**

have implemented  
automation



**"Today, CPOs need to implement broader value creation strategies to meet business needs. But they**

**cannot lose sight of Reach, Effectiveness, and Efficiency, which have consistently been the top three objectives for every procurement organization since we began helping clients transform procurement in the 1990's. *Reach* is your access to all the spending and supplier decisions; your mandate is to influence those decisions in the best way possible. *Effectiveness* is a measure of how well you create value. Not all value simply equates to savings, so we talk about sustainability, risk, and growth. *Efficiency* includes speed, process, automation, and compliance. With limited resources, procurement needs to do things faster, and more cost effectively."**


**Alpar Kamber,**  
*EVP, Head of Procurement Services,  
WNS Denali*

## DIGITAL MATURITY

In 2020, many procurement organizations implemented new tools, processes, and ways of working to move to a digital business model. These organizations were actively using proven digital tools and emerging technologies to augment their teams and provide new value-producing opportunities. However, 2020 was a year of digital reckoning and it exposed many of the gaps that procurement organizations face with existing tools and technologies.

**45%** of respondents are not happy with the progress and impact of digitalization efforts

### WITHIN THIS SUBGROUP:

**16%**   
have implemented an advanced analytics program, half are still not happy with the impact

**36%**  
have a business alignment strategy, but the majority are not satisfied the level of alignment, showing that the vision and mission are out of sync

**20%**  
have implemented automation, over  $\frac{2}{3}$  are not satisfied

Over **80%**   
have digitalized their P2P process, but only 11% are satisfied with the results



**“The most desired trait of procurement professionals of the future is the ability**

**to work independently. This past year has taught us to let go of the work structure of 2019 where people go into an office five days a week. Early in my career, an advantage for me was working in an office with the rest of my team or other departments. During the day it was easy to informally pick up knowledge of how to deal with certain situations. But today, people need to master working independently and creating their own network to learn and grow. CPOs should seek out team members who have the inquisitiveness to learn and develop.”**

**Stephen Tonks**  
*Chief Purchasing Officer,  
Fujikura Automotive Europe*



# TOP INVESTMENTS FOR CPOs IN 2021

To move forward on the path to greater business alignment, increased impact, and accelerated digital transformation, **CPOs need to be intentional in prioritizing the key investment areas** for the year ahead. The survey responses revealed many gaps in current state Procurement, and consequently many competing priorities for 2021. When we asked CPOs to ruthlessly prioritize their top initiatives in the benchmark survey, we discovered which areas would get the most investment.

Let's be honest. **We are procurement people.** This means cost savings remains our top priority. Prioritizing cost savings does not mean cutthroat negotiation and uncompromising procurement policies also become priorities. In fact, strategic initiatives such as planning and category management, supplier relationship management and collaboration, improved efficiency and automation and building a more experienced talent pool are more likely to help you reach your savings objectives than focusing on cost savings alone. For that reason, we will focus our analysis on the following top areas of investment in this paper:



Building stakeholder trust and relationships and improving **business alignment**



Developing a stronger and compelling approach to **Talent Management**



Implementing a more agile and impactful **Operating Model**



Refocusing **digital transformation** efforts to become more realistic and attainable



**Enhancing the business value** of procurement and creating a strong value proposition for procurement

## TOP 10 CPO PRIORITIES RANKED

- 1 Cost Savings
- 2 Stakeholder Alignment and Satisfaction
- 3 Risk Management
- 4 Sustainability
- 5 Supplier Management
- 6 Operating Model Enhancements and Efficiencies
- 7 Compliance
- 8 Data and Analytics
- 9 Digital Transformation
- 10 Increased Reach and Spend under Management

# STAKEHOLDER ALIGNMENT

Only 9% of CPOs are satisfied with the current level of stakeholder alignment in their organization.

PROCUREMENT SHOULD DELIVER THE VALUE THAT STAKEHOLDERS NEED AND CREATE HOLISTIC VALUE FOR THE BUSINESS.

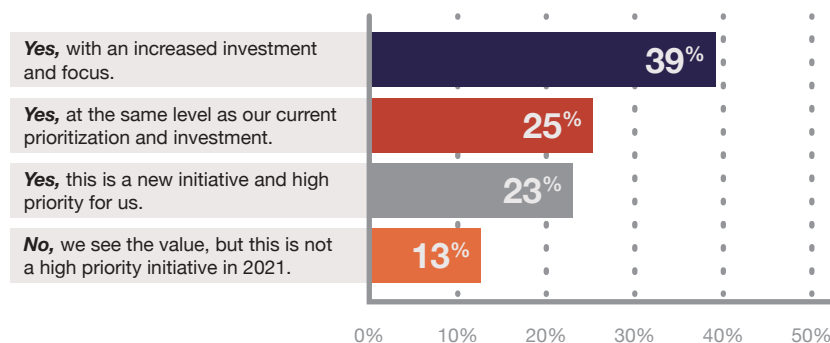
Our findings suggest that the disruption in 2020 placed an increasing demand for procurement to effectively work with stakeholders and align to core business objectives. With the additional pressure of remote working and shifting business priorities, procurement teams are struggling to stay engaged and aligned with stakeholders beyond one-off projects. Better business alignment leads to greater value creation, joint success models and opportunities to greatly increase impact.

**Strategic business alignment is critical to success.**

Without it, teams are more likely to fall short of cost savings commitments, lag in innovation, miss additional value creation opportunities, and face the consequences of low end user satisfaction. In this scenario, Procurement remains reactive and will struggle as more people in the organization work around procurement, instead of **working in partnership with procurement**.

## INSIDE THE DATA: SURVEY RESULTS

### WILL YOU BE PRIORITIZING BUILDING BETTER BUSINESS ALIGNMENT IN 2021?



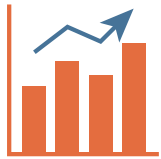
**87%** RESPONDENTS WILL PRIORITIZE BUILDING BETTER BUSINESS ALIGNMENT NEXT YEAR, AND 60% ARE PLANNING TO INVEST MORE TIME AND RESOURCES

The majority of survey respondents agreed that stakeholder alignment requires an increased investment and focus in 2021. **Building better alignment is not an overnight process.** Successful CPOs invest in talent, capability building, improving user experience, and streamlining operations. These areas are **essential elements of the Procurement Ecosystem** that should be addressed together to better align with the business.

[For more information on the importance of Strategic Business Alignment, read WNS Denali's 2020 Performance Procurement benchmark study.](#)

# HOW ARE CPOs THINKING ABOUT BUILDING TOTAL BUSINESS ALIGNMENT?

An encouraging trend: a review of the survey responses from CPOs who ranked stakeholder alignment as a top priority shows the majority will **invest in talent to improve relationships and provide better service**.



More than **60%** are increasing investment in talent and capability building

And **62%** are investing more in knowledge management for their organization

**Successful CPOs** in 2021 recognize the importance of **segmenting work** and allowing time for **strategic planning** and **relationship management**.



**80%** will invest in an updated operating model for procurement this year

Yet, **48%** are not interested in outsourcing, which is the quickest way to free up strategic impact in your organization

In addition, CPOs who are focused on improving business alignment also plan to do more **digital transformation** in 2021:

**90%** of CPOs see digitalization as critical for success in 2021

Only **23%** are satisfied with the impact of digitalization so far

**48%** are increasing the investment in P2P digitalization to improve end user experience



**Key Takeaway:** While CPOs fully appreciate the importance of building better alignment to create more value, **roughly half are willing to make the investments necessary to make it happen.** Which half are you in? If you recognize there is more work to do to improve strategic business alignment, you must first **understand the biggest pain points in the business stakeholder relationships.** Armed with that intel, you can begin to solve for those at the people, processes, and technology levels.

Many CPOs are already on the right track to improve strategic stakeholder alignment.



More than **50%** of CPOs say they are starting to implement better business and stakeholder alignment strategies

# TALENT MANAGEMENT

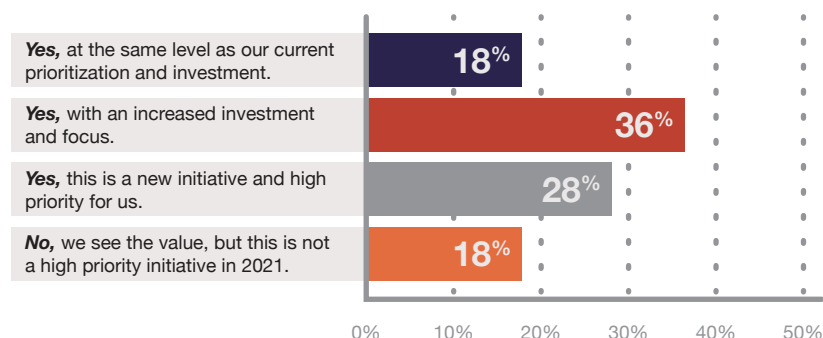
**52% of CPOs say they need to improve Talent Development and Capability Building; yet, only 22% rank it as a TOP priority for 2021.**

## CPOs NEED TEAM MEMBERS WHO CAN ANSWER THE CALL FOR HELP.

Reevaluating the profile of Procurement Talent is essential to increasing impact, driving better alignment, and implementing effective digitalization. 2020 work environments have exacerbated the gaps in many procurement teams capabilities and highlighted clear areas for improvement. As new skillsets, especially soft skills, digital competency, and broader business awareness are quickly evolving, **CPOs must invest more in Talent Management, training and upskilling to meet these new requirements and challenges.**

## INSIDE THE DATA: SURVEY RESULTS

### WILL YOU BE PRIORITIZING TALENT MANAGEMENT IN 2021?



[For more information on Procurement talent trends, download A Talent-First Approach: The Missing Piece of the Procurement Transformation Puzzle](#)



## HOW ARE CPOs THINKING ABOUT TALENT MANAGEMENT?

The survey data indicates that CPOs understand the value of Talent Management. Yet, CPOs are struggling to prioritize and develop procurement talent skillsets. There are a variety of reasons why talent management is challenging, including a lack of time, resources, and employee engagement. Additionally, developing talent alone is not enough. As CPOs build and develop their teams, **they need to structure an organization that works to best leverage the capabilities of the team.** A stronger focus on **capability and capacity building** requires additional planning, organizational change, and, of course, investment.



**64%** of CPOs will be increasing their investments in talent

**28%** of all respondents say improved Talent Management is a NEW initiative for their organization

CPOs who are focusing on talent management in 2021 are also directing their attention to **improving their Operating Model to make a bigger impact in the business:** Investments in team culture, employee experience, and infrastructure improvements in areas like process and Knowledge Management should be evaluated.

**72%** of CPOs say they will invest more to improve their operating model this year

**40%** are increasing their investment in outsourcing

More than **50%** of CPOs will increase investment in knowledge management programs in 2021

[For more information on the impact of Talent on Strategic Business Alignment, read WNS Denali's 2020 \*\*Performance Procurement\*\* benchmark study.](#)

**Key Takeaway:** Great Procurement Talent will only become scarcer in coming years. CPOs need to adopt a strategic approach to Total Talent Management. This includes not just talent initiatives like training and capability building, but also infrastructure changes and alleviating capacity constraints through operational improvements. Automation, outtasking, and process optimization will allow teams to grow and overcome talent gaps.





# OPERATING MODEL

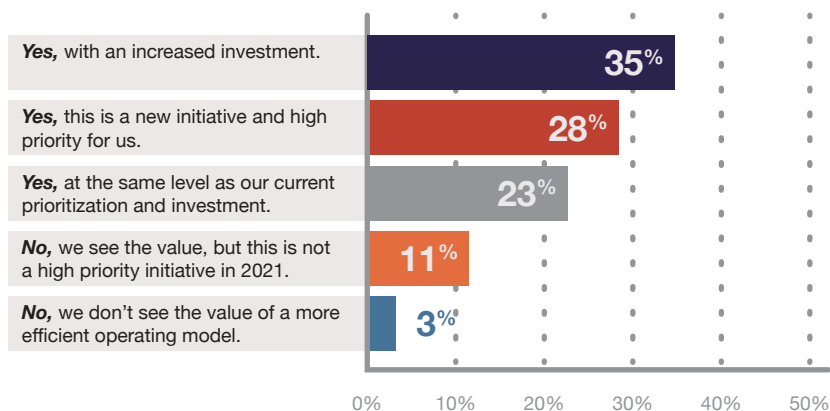
Only 13% of large enterprise CPOs are satisfied with the impact of their current Operating Model for procurement.

## CPOs WILL STRIVE TO MASTER THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE PROCUREMENT ECOSYSTEM.

Procurement's Operating Model is the underlying framework supporting end-to-end value generation. **A model that separates strategic work from tactical and transactional activities allows Procurement to be more agile, aligned and impactful.** Procurement teams that have not yet shifted to a segmented work model will need to implement changes that allow their strategic resources to align better with the business while consistently delivering value.

## INSIDE THE DATA: SURVEY RESULTS

WILL YOU INVEST IN UPDATING YOUR ORGANIZATION'S PROCUREMENT OPERATING MODEL?



## HOW ARE CPOs THINKING ABOUT THEIR OPERATING MODEL?

The majority of CPOs are in the process of shifting their operating model for procurement. Building an Operating Model that fosters more strategic thinking, more efficient operations, and **less friction creates more business alignment and increases the impact of procurement**. The ideal Procurement Operating Model is a function of each organization's unique ecosystem. CPOs who have a healthy, robust ecosystem report a model that provides balance, connectivity, and information flow among key players.

**61%** of CPOs will invest more to update their Operating Model in 2021. Of those,

**75%** will **INCREASE** investment in talent

**60%** will **INCREASE** investment in digitalization overall

**59%** will **INVEST** in outsourcing or outtasking

**59%** will **INCREASE** investment in P2P digitalization

**54%** will **INCREASE** investment in automation

**48%** will **INCREASE** investment in advanced analytics

The keystone of next generation procurement is creating an ecosystem of talent, digital enablers, information, processes, and knowledge. In 2021, the majority of CPOs admit that their operating model shift is still in progress.

**70%** of CPOs are still working to shift the model

**79%** of CPOs from large organizations indicate that improving the operating model is a top or high priority for 2021

**Key Takeaway:** Earlier research suggests that 80% of high-performing procurement organizations separate strategic from execution roles. This means that Category Managers are more closely aligned with business stakeholders and operational tasks are removed from strategic planning. A Center of Excellence model provides category managers with knowledge, data, tools, templates, methodology, and coaching to make a bigger impact in the business. **Holistic investments in related initiatives such as talent management, outsourcing, automation, and digitalization are key to effectively shift to a next generation operating model.**

# DIGITAL & INNOVATION

**45% of respondents are not happy with the progress of digitalization.**

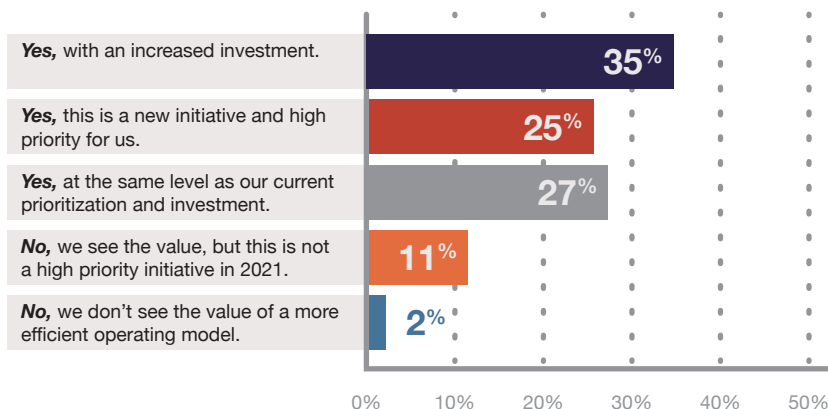
## **CPOs WILL FOCUS ON MAXIMIZING CURRENT DIGITAL INVESTMENTS TO FIX GAPS.**

Survey data shows a **more focused and strategic approach to procurement digitalization** than we have seen in previous years. Procurement has matured, and the global pandemic has heightened the focus on fixing digital gaps. From the findings, we see two specific trends emerging: optimizing current digital investments and focusing on core critical tools to support initiatives with the most business impact. This sharpened focus will increase and expedite the value Procurement can deliver this year and beyond.

**Top digital investment areas are Analytics, Automation, and improvements in P2P Digitalization.** A healthy procurement ecosystem starts with world-class data, information, and intelligence strategies to provide visibility and drive greater efficiency. These, in turn, support better alignment and performance.

## **INSIDE THE DATA: SURVEY RESULTS**

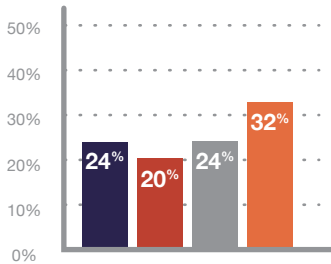
**WILL YOU INVEST IN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN 2021?**





# TOP DIGITAL INVESTMENTS RANKED AS PRIORITY IN 2021

## PLANNED INVESTMENTS FOR ADVANCED ANALYTICS:



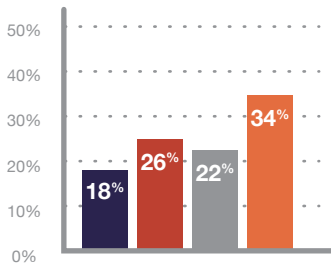
**24%** Yes, at the same level as our current prioritization and investment.

**20%** Yes, with an increased investment.

**24%** Yes, this is a new initiative and high priority for us.

**32%** Other priority ranked higher.

## PLANNED INVESTMENTS FOR AUTOMATION AND RPA:



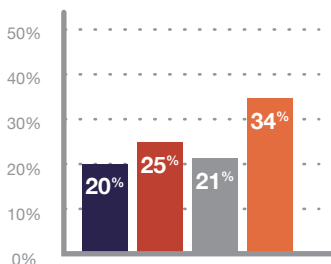
**18%** Yes, at the same level as our current prioritization and investment.

**26%** Yes, with an increased investment.

**22%** Yes, this is a new initiative and high priority for us.

**34%** Other priority ranked higher.

## PLANNED INVESTMENTS FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE:



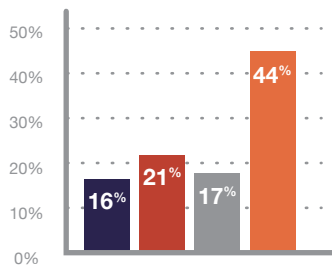
**20%** Yes, at the same level as our current prioritization and investment.

**25%** Yes, with an increased investment.

**21%** Yes, this is a new initiative and high priority for us.

**34%** Other priority ranked higher.

## PLANNED INVESTMENTS FOR TAIL SPEND MANAGEMENT:



**16%** Yes, at the same level as our current prioritization and investment.

**21%** Yes, with an increased investment.

**17%** Yes, this is a new initiative and high priority for us.

**44%** Other priority ranked higher.

**CPOs are investing less in new digital enablers so that they can focus on optimizing and scaling the investments they have already made for digital transformation.** We believe more CPOs will be looking to lead efforts that create less friction and improve business continuity.

**Key Takeaway:** A strong digitalization strategy and roadmap needs to include non-technology elements such as process, talent, and organizational structure as success does not rely on the tools themselves. Procurement leaders are **digitalizing with a purpose and committing to results this year**. CPOs should invest early and participate in two critical components: **setting the right objectives and vision and acquiring or developing talent that will ensure success**. While digitalization is a critical initiative for many organizations, it's important to note that the talent pool will be more limited than most anticipate. So, organizations will need to move fast and be creative with building a team that supports digital transformation. Overall, the most efficacious procurement leaders know that **digital is not a strategy; it is an enabler**.



# EXPANDING BUSINESS VALUE

**More than 2/3 of CPOs will prioritize Supplier Management and other broader value generating initiatives in 2021.**

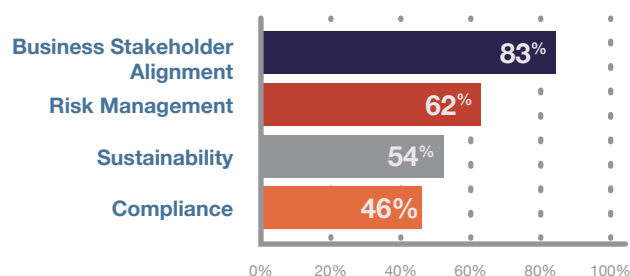
## CPOs WILL EVOLVE PROCUREMENT'S PROMISE TO THE BUSINESS.

Curating a broader value proposition for Procurement is not a new concept. However, the global pandemic has created new opportunities and imperatives. This is not the first time CPOs have worked hard to handle economic disruption for their organizations. Many Procurement practitioners can recall the recession of 2008 when Procurement went into rescue mode. At that time, CPOs focused mainly on savings and business continuity to help their organization make it through the global recession.

Today, procurement is acting swiftly and applying lessons learned to be seen as the bridge to maintaining operations. More CPOs are proactively working on innovative supplier collaborations, risk mitigation, and ensuring continuity of supply. Additionally, many global brands have a renewed focus on environmental sustainability, diversity, and inclusion.

## NEW MANDATES AND NEW IMPERATIVES

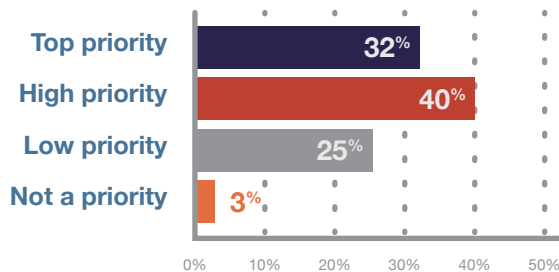
**CPOs WHO RANK SUPPLIER MANAGEMENT AS A TOP PRIORITY, ALSO PRIORITIZE THE FOLLOWING ABOVE COST REDUCTION:**



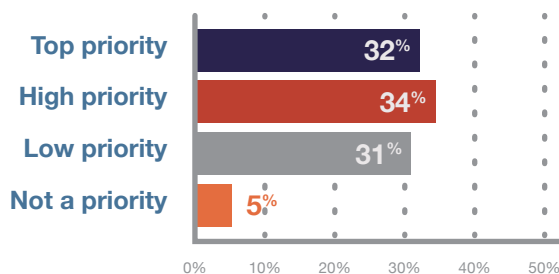
**68%**  
of CPOs say  
**SUSTAINABILITY**  
is a High or TOP  
Priority.

# BUSINESS IMPACT PRIORITIES FOR 2021

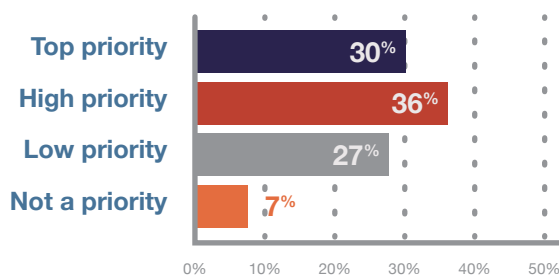
## RISK MANAGEMENT:



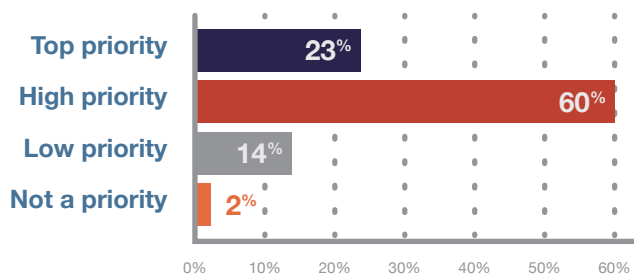
## SUSTAINABILITY:



## SUPPLIER MANAGEMENT:



## COMPLIANCE:



**Key Takeaway:** Delivering broader value is an outcome of strategic alignment and resourcing. Organizations that strive to go beyond cost cutting invest in building better operations and implementing strategic supplier management tools and programs. Supplier programs (SIM, SRM, SPM, and beyond) are notoriously resource intensive and difficult to implement. Organizations looking to make a significant impact through supplier initiatives need to plan the resource and financial investments commensurate with their expected outcomes. Freeing up strategic resources to focus on supplier management initiatives like risk management, sustainability, diversity, innovation, etc. will be difficult with many competing priorities. Aligning investments in other top priority areas like operating model improvement, automation and digitalization will allow a shift in resource allocation.

# CONCLUSION: A RENEWED PURPOSE FOR ALIGNMENT AND IMPACT

Many CPOs agree that 2020 was a year of **resilience** for Procurement. Leaders pivoted to **implement fully remote working** in a matter of weeks – or even days – to ensure the safety of our people while serving the rapidly evolving needs of the business. Procurement teams adjusted pipelines and priorities to **meet new demands**. Procurement saw the impact of true collaboration with our stakeholders and suppliers, and we re-evaluated our digital transformation needs. **In the end, we emerged stronger and nimbler.**

In 2021, consider what you and your team need to fully **seize the new opportunities this year brings**. Your business stakeholders are relying on you – procurement is perfectly positioned to **build a stronger and more resilient ecosystem for the entire organization**. To be successful in the coming years, nurture your passion and excitement for the work that you do as a Procurement leader. We hope that the key themes of this paper validate and support your work and help you build a stronger business case for your team and your future investments.

1. Focus on the **right priorities** that will make the biggest impact for **your** organization – “everything” can’t be a top priority. Pause and focus on prioritizing impactful work first.
2. Seek **support for critical execution work** that will allow your team to focus on strategic projects that increase total business value for cost, risk, innovation, user experience, supply assurance, time-to-market, compliance, whichever are your chosen priorities.
3. Link the core elements of your **ecosystem to realize your highest potential**.
4. Focus on the **most impactful investments** and priorities that are closely aligned with your business objectives and stakeholder requirements. Ensure everything your team does will help procurement build more trust in the organization.
5. Develop a **realistic plan for the future** that creates space for agility and flexibility – you should continue to expect the unexpected.

## Tips & Templates for Achieving Your Goals in 2021

- ☐ [Watch the Procurement Pro-Tip Series on YouTube](#)
- ☐ [Read our Harvard Business Review article about the Procurement Ecosystem](#)
- ☐ [Listen to our podcast about building a unique roadmap for your digital transformation ...](#)
- ☐ [Download the Design Thinking handbook for advice and frameworks to better work with your stakeholders and drive innovation at your organization](#)
- ☐ [Review the Storytelling for Procurement handbook to learn how you can better tell your story and customer promise to the organization](#)

## ABOUT WNS DENALI

Outcome-driven companies partner with WNS Denali to operationalize their Procurement function and improve financial performance and efficiency. We work alongside our clients to co-create, implement, and execute next-generation Procurement operating models tailored to their specific needs and designed to increase the strategic impact of Procurement for their business. WNS Denali's experts provide a range of advisory and managed services, along with enabling technology and support, to help our clients build an integrated Procurement Ecosystem that empowers them to outperform the market.

Contact WNS Denali to learn how we help our clients create greater business value by operationalizing Procurement. For more information, visit [wnsdenali.com](http://wnsdenali.com).

## ABOUT WNS

WNS (Holdings) Limited (NYSE: WNS), is a leading Business Process Management (BPM) company. We combine our deep industry knowledge with technology and analytics expertise to co-create innovative, digital-led transformational solutions with clients across 10 industries. We enable businesses in Travel, Insurance, Banking and Financial Services, Manufacturing, Retail and Consumer Packaged Goods, Shipping and Logistics, Healthcare, and Utilities to re-imagine their digital future and transform their outcomes with operational excellence.

We deliver an entire spectrum of BPM services in finance and accounting, procurement, customer interaction services and human resources leveraging collaborative models that are tailored to address the unique business challenges of each client. We co-create and execute the future vision of 375+ clients with the help of our 42,000+ employees. Our global footprint spans 16 countries with 60 delivery centers worldwide including in China, Costa Rica, India, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States. For more information, visit [wns.com](http://wns.com).