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# Building Great Teams... at Nuffield Hospitals

## network

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"Purcon's network of contacts is probably the most extensive in the UK..."

**When Nuffield Hospitals appointed a new Head of Procurement, his first challenge was to build a strong team of professionals quickly and cost-effectively - so he turned to Purcon.**

"I'd known Matt for some years," says Lucy Harding, Head of Recruitment, Purcon. "When he called, we discussed his requirements to recruit a top-notch team to support Nuffield in procurement. In our experience it's not unusual for healthcare organisations to be playing 'catch up' in terms of applying the latest purchasing and supply chain management disciplines. Matt had been brought in to put corporate deals in place with a strategy behind them – to deliver control." A not-for-profit organisation, effective procurement is a key aspect of Nuffield's commitment to providing "healthcare excellence that is accessible and affordable to as many people as possible."

"The procurement function wasn't resourced to the levels I wanted, and the team didn't have a high enough profile across the organisation in terms of its capabilities," says Matt Oxley, Head of Procurement, Nuffield Hospitals. Previously, individual hospitals had 'done their own thing' in procurement, which meant few strategic agreements were in place; there were also poor levels of stock control.

## Meeting client requirements

A registered charity, Nuffield Hospitals is Britain's longest-standing group of independent hospitals. Established in 1957, it provides high quality services to local communities. With no shareholders, Nuffield re-invests its surplus back into improved healthcare services, which currently includes 39 hospitals in England and one in Scotland plus services such as Nuffield Proactive Health and Vanguard Healthcare.

Matt Oxley wanted six professionals, including people with specialist knowledge of medical areas plus personnel experienced in general corporate services. "We developed targeted advertising, carried out an exhaustive search of our candidates' network, and performed additional research followed by headhunting," says Lucy Harding. As a result, Purcon filled all roles required within client time scales.

## The right matches

"When I wanted to build the team I looked no further than Purcon," Matt Oxley continues. "The reasons were twofold. First, Purcon's network of contacts is probably the most extensive in the UK, guaranteeing an exhaustive search and delivering the quality of procurement professionals you need. Second, the Purcon team delivers excellent client service, and its candidate screening capabilities are

first class. This ensures employees not only have the relevant skills but are also well matched to the client organisation. Working in an exclusive partnership with Purcon, as Nuffield Hospitals do, means you not only get the best people but also the right fit for your team, culture and values. Purcon excels at meeting such challenges." With the help of Purcon, Nuffield's procurement team was in place fast: the entire group was recruited and at work within three months.

### Unique requirements

A specific issue had arisen at Nuffield relating to medical consumables and credibility of procurement, with practitioners including surgeons asking questions relating to the pros and cons of one product, such as a hip replacement joint, as opposed to another. "Matt wanted someone with credibility to support this area," says Lucy Harding. "We researched supplier organisations and identified likely candidates – and found a person who fitted the bill. I took the candidate through competency-based interviews, ensured his commercial skills were sound and carried out a personality profile, as we did with all the candidates. This role was about communicating on an 'emotional' level as well as a sales level. In some cases, procurement people's selling skills can be purely analytical. It's all about matching the right candidate with the client environment, in terms of personality and profile."

Shortly after the initial placements, Matt Oxley came back to Purcon to recruit additional people with broader supply chain and systems implementation experience, to support a major change programme under way.

### Outcomes

Lucy Harding says, "A key measure of success is that Nuffield was able to exceed its savings targets.

In addition, the procurement team's profile has been enhanced massively in terms of how it's perceived by other parts of the business, with knock-on benefits relating to its scope and influence."

Matt Oxley adds, "Purcon helped us attract the best professionals from across sectors including FMCG, retail, engineering, management consultancy and our own key suppliers." By working closely with Nuffield, Purcon was able to understand the organisation's specific needs, which, says Matt Oxley, meant communicating "the vision we've set ourselves. Purcon presented to candidates an exciting and attractive opportunity – its ability to sell Nuffield was key in delivering what is, in my opinion, the best procurement team in healthcare."

In 2006, as well as collecting the award for "Most Improved Purchasing Operation", Nuffield Hospitals also collected the award for the overall winner of the CIPS Supply Management Awards.

### About Purcon

For nearly 30 years Purcon has led the way in permanent recruitment and interim management for Procurement and Supply Chain, with offices in the UK, Belgium, Poland and operations across Europe.  
[www.purcon.co.uk](http://www.purcon.co.uk)

Prospect House,  
Repton Place, Amersham,  
Bucks, UK, HP7 9LP  
Tel: 01494 737300  
[info@purcon.co.uk](mailto:info@purcon.co.uk)

## attract

"Purcon helped us attract the best professionals..."