arkestro + Bel Brands

Bel Brands Leverages AI to Streamline Procurement

Bel Brands knows a thing or two about continuous improvement. Each year, the multinational branded cheese company spends about **$285 million** among **3,500 suppliers**, supporting the procurement needs of the entire company, including direct items, such as raw materials or packaging and indirect items including capital expenditure, as well as subcontracting, marketing expenses, travel, finance expenses.

In order to keep the different corners of its business optimized, Bel Brands routinely challenges the existing lineup of suppliers. That is to say that every couple of years, different suppliers are invited into a bidding event, which is then followed by a consensus selection by the different stakeholders to determine the best partner for the specific service or product in question.

While any good procurement professional will tell you that routine re-evaluation is a great way to stay ahead of the curve, they'd probably also tell you that the main drawback of that approach is that it requires time. A lot of time. For Bel Brands, this is a substantial cost for a multitude of stakeholders. It not only impacts individuals for cross-functional teams, but also the buyer who needs to juggle internal stakeholders, invited suppliers, and ongoing discussions and analysis.

"One of the biggest challenges is our RFP process which can take up to 90 days. Specifically, it is difficult to procure a single view of all the information across multiple vendors," explained Justin Heard, CapEx and industrial procurement manager for Bel Brands USA. "This can be very time-consuming and quite cumbersome."

Industry

Consumer packaged goods (Food and beverage)

Objectives

Optimize procurement operations for speed and accuracy

Improve collaboration and relationships with suppliers

Cost savings of final bid awards

Results

10% cost savings delivered on the final bid

20-25% increase in sourcing velocity

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JUSTIN HEARD
CapEx and industrial procurement manager for Bel Brands USA

Saving time and Speeding Up External Communications

Once the Bel Brands team started using Arkestro for their bidding processes, everyone noticed a change in the velocity of projects. Arkestro is strategic sourcing software that was designed for procurement professionals by procurement professionals. At its core is powerful and transformative artificial intelligence, designed to help procurement teams make more informed decisions, faster.

"Because the bidding is managed by a platform, we don't have to manage every single conversation with each and every supplier," explained Jean-Michel dos Remedios, Head of Procurement, Sourcing, and Supplier Development, Bel Brands USA. "Communications are way faster and easier, and because we now have so much extra time, we can focus on building more valuable strategic relationships."

While scaling the number of suppliers into a particular bidding event is certainly a plus, now with Arkestro, Bel Brands can be incredibly selective as well. Arkestro enlists AI to help Bel Brands reduce their list of suppliers down to only the most relevant per event. This way, if they choose, Bel Brands can focus on working more closely with a select few.

"Overall, Arkestro has helped to modernize the RFP process. For me specifically, it has reduced the time I've spent in Excel doing manual analysis," said Justin. "As we continue to leverage Arkestro, I anticipate anywhere from 2 to 10 hours of time reduction on data analysis alone."

Up Goes Productivity, Down Goes Cost

Jean-Michel echoed Justin's sentiments around speed and efficiency. He stated that the big advantage of using Arkestro is speed as It allows them to make smarter decisions faster. Also, the customer support that they received from day one allowed them to start realizing value from the platform very quickly.

All in all, Bel Brands has been thrilled with the results of using Arkestro to manage their bidding events and supplier relationships. Not only did it meet their expectations of a 10% decrease in pricing, but all the time saved meant that the Bel Brands teams were able to increase their productivity by 25%.

"In the procurement world, time is of the essence," said Jean-Michel. "Arkestro has really helped to kickstart our digital transformation journey by giving us our time back through leveraging data and AI. These innovations make us faster, and the faster we get, the more we can accomplish, and the more successful we can be."

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About Arkestro

Arkestro is the leading Predictive Procurement Orchestration platform built to embed preferred outcomes and instant feedback in any process for a 2-5x lift on savings impact. Top enterprises leverage Arkestro's embedded platform to predict and win faster value in every category of addressable spend. Learn more at **arkestro.com**