



## How a Procurement Whiz Reduced Costs by 30% and Realized Over \$1 Million in Savings



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*“Where I came from, if you lose a million dollars on a bad advertising spend, all you’ve done is lost a million dollars. You lose a million dollars in the education field, that’s the sort of loss that can quickly shutter down a school.”*

— Damon Norris, Director of School Operations & Development, Arizona Charter Schools Association



### **The Move From Corporate America to Education Management**

In 2013, [Damon Norris](#) – a seasoned business leader who, in various capacities, worked at a string of Fortune 500 companies – took a decision that would take his career into places he had never imagined. Until that year, Damon had held a high-ranking, not to mention lucrative, position at Nestle Purina. By early 2014, however, he had taken a rare opportunity to work in education and, with it, a pay cut.

Damon, a newly appointed purchasing manager at a charter school in Phoenix, had found a new mission: to make a real impact in the field of education.



Damon desired a *real* impact; he wanted to see tangible improvements in how schools would be able to serve students. And with his solid credentials in Procurement, Finance and Operations, he was perfectly positioned to help schools where it really mattered – their finances and their ability to manage their money.

Damon wanted to leverage his deep knowledge as a procurement expert and his hard-won skills as a negotiator to improve the purchasing process at schools. He wanted to see money “flow back into classrooms rather than places that it shouldn’t be going.”

And by all accounts, he succeeded. Six months into the job, he was nominated as the Business Person of the Year. Since then, he’s taken on more responsibilities and tried to extend his

expertise across a vast spectrum of charter schools in Arizona. As the Director of School Operations & Development at Arizona Charter Schools, he has helped realize over \$1 Million in savings. What’s more, Damon has also helped grow one of Arizona’s charter school networks to double their number of students across 12 campuses.

## **Here’s his account on how he found success:**

### **Bad Spending Decisions Can Lead To Bigger Consequences**

“Working in a big company is like being on a big cargo ship – you make a decision, and the ship follows. Whereas schools, specifically charter schools, are different; it’s like being on a speedboat – you have to make decisions quick, and if you don’t get it right the first time, you invite trouble. And if you don’t make a decision, you’ll hit that levy soon.”



### **Manual Processes Involving Paper P.Os Slowed Processes Down**

“I’ve worked for companies where it would take between six to eight weeks to get a purchase order approved. The process was manual, and involved a lot of paper shoveling. Many charter schools require that every single purchase be signed off by the CFO – this slowed down processes entirely, as it caused a bottleneck when the CFO was not in the office.”

### **Lack of Spend Visibility Invited Fraud and Non-Compliant Purchases**

“When I first started working for Charter Schools, there was no visibility into who was purchasing what and why. It was extremely hard to match invoices to P.Os, and there was no easy way to determine why something was purchased. There were duplicate orders and fake invoices that were paid, which led to these organizations losing over \$50,000.”



## How Damon Increased Procurement Compliance for Schools Through Procurify

### Approval Routing for Strengthened Internal Controls

“In many schools, it is hard to find out who is purchasing what and why something was purchased. The only internal controls established were that every purchase needed to be personally signed off by the CFO.”

*“Procurify offers you the flexibility to implement a custom approval routing process that only allows certain purchases to be approved*

*by certain people based on the respective dollar amount that they are authorized to approve. This way, for bigger purchases, more people have visibility into what is being purchased – this helps schools catch procurement fraud, non-compliant spend, or duplicate orders before they happen.”*

### Mobile Approvals Allowed for Increased Compliance and Accessibility

“I’m no longer [tied to my office](#). I could be in the field or a factory or the school and I can be issuing purchase orders, purchase requisitions or anything that I need from that location – I’m



not tied to a location. I can get digital signatures from my boss who's sitting on a beach in San Diego; I can get his approval on purchases without having to wait for him to get back."

*"With [Procurify](#), the approval process has become dramatically easier. You get a purchase request, and everything can be [approved within 30 minutes](#) with Procurify – instead of 6-8 weeks, which is typically the timeline for more traditional processes."*

### **Centralized Spend Data Made Vendor Negotiations Easy**

One of the biggest advantages in using Procurify's platform was its ability to assist in negotiations with vendors.

*"Because I am able to see all my past purchase orders and the amount of purchases I made with a vendor, I can now go into vendor negotiations with confidence. I can say "hey -- here's the data, backed by Procurify's reports", and this capability allowed me to reduce costs across the board for our school by over 30%."*



*“I definitely attribute part of my success in my career to Procurify. Partnering and working with Procurify has allowed me to have the confidence and tools to negotiate better with vendors, help schools cut costs, create airtight controls and implement a more effective overall procurement process. I will, forever, be Procurify’s biggest advocate, and continue to share my knowledge with the entire education industry.”*

– Damon Norris, Director of School Operations & Development, Arizona Charter Schools Association



## Discover Ridiculously Easy Ways To Strengthen Controls and Boost Compliance in Your Organization's Purchasing Process

Procurify has worked with a wide range of educational organizations including Icahn Charter School, International Charter School of New York, Saint George's University Limited, Constellation Schools LLC, The Equity Project Charter School, Trinity Charter Schools [and more](#).



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