ProcurePro

Ultimate guide to finding & hiring the best CA/QSs

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Introduction

The construction talent market can be a minefield, with the success of procurement - and therefore projects - laying on the shoulders of just a few team members. Contract Administrators/Quantity Surveyors (CA/QS) play a critical role in achieving profitable outcomes on projects by managing, negotiating and securing great subbies at reasonable costs.

Finding (and importantly, keeping) good talent in construction can be difficult due to the amount of movement between roles. This has resulted in many contractors experiencing retention issues. Coupled with this, is how tricky it is to find and hire good CA/QS talent as well.

Weeding out red flags, low skilled applicants, and an inability to meet increasingly competitive wages are all regular setbacks for contractors striving to hire quality staff.

This guide provides necessary information and tools for finding and hiring the best CA/QSs on the market - and how to spot duds.



What makes a good CA/QS?

Every construction company is different, passing on their own processes and functions to their CA/QSs. Different sectors and projects result in CA/QSs with different skill sets.

For example, CA/QSs working on mega projects with Design & Construction (D&C) and lots of coordination will likely do more administrative work, compared to a CA/QS working on a smaller team with hands-on responsibilities.

While every CA/QS may be different, based on the companies they've experienced, there are a number of key traits that are clear indicators of a talented, dependable CA/QS.

💡 **ProcurePro tip**

Think about the strongest performing CA/QS on your team. What qualities or attributes make them stand out and enable them to succeed? Use this information to identify potential hires who could work well with your existing team.

Organised and diligent

With the nature of their work, CA/QSs are inherently time poor. They have to worry about procurement, engaging subcontractors, managing subbies on-site, assessing payment claims, and putting together variations and administering contracts.

A talented CA/QS can prioritise all of these different moving pieces appropriately, organising tasks as they arise. They should also be able to operate autonomously and hold themselves to their deadlines.

Critical thinking

A strong CA/QS will derive value wherever possible, not taking information at surface level and digging deeper to understand the full situation.

Critical thinking skills play a huge part in the role of a CA/QS, enabling them to solve arising problems, resolve disputes, and negotiate outcomes using creative solutions.

Personable and level-headed

Like much of construction, CA/QSs are incredibly relationship focused. CA/QSs work closely with project teams and subbies to maintain critical relationships and ensure success on both sides.

People who are personable, work well in a team, and are highly influential can be extremely successful as CA/QSs. Experienced CA/QSs will also have favourite subbies, opening up potential employers to a larger network of vendors, supply chains, and materials.

Knowledgeable

CA/QSs equipped with a strong understanding of subcontracts and construction methodologies are able to engineer more value in packages by negotiating strategic terms.

What skills are often overlooked?

While organisation, critical thinking, personability, and knowledge are all important skills for a successful CA/QS, there are also a number of value-driving traits that are often overlooked in the hiring process.

Communication (‘sweet talking’)

Since the role of a CA/QS is so relationship based, the ability to resolve disputes and strategically communicate situations is crucial. The next time you’re hiring, examine whether the candidate you’re considering is good at ‘sweet talking’ - this is a huge strength for CA/QSs.

A strong CA/QS will negotiate in a manner that maintains relationships and ensures everyone involved is satisfied with their outcomes. The **best** CA/QSs can put out fires and make friends with a single conversation.

> 💡 **ProcurePro tip**
>
> While it’s easy to hire the same cut, copy and paste CA/QS, look out for applicants with out of the box experience and attributes that could be indirectly beneficial to the role.

Regulatory and compliance knowledge

A deep understanding and ability to recall regulatory compliance and standards, such as standard AS1428.1 (the standard for accessibility in Australia), is another strong trait for CA/QSs that isn't always considered.

Codes of practice vary based on country, so relevant knowledge is crucial to ensure you're hiring a CA/QS that will uphold standards and shield your company from potential risks.

Tech literacy

CA/QSs proficient in ConTech softwares are a **massive** value to construction companies. The ability to pick up digital tools reduces learning curves and enables CA/QSs to progress much faster.

There are a number of tech tools that CA/QSs should be familiar with, including ERPs and procurement software - like ProcurePro.

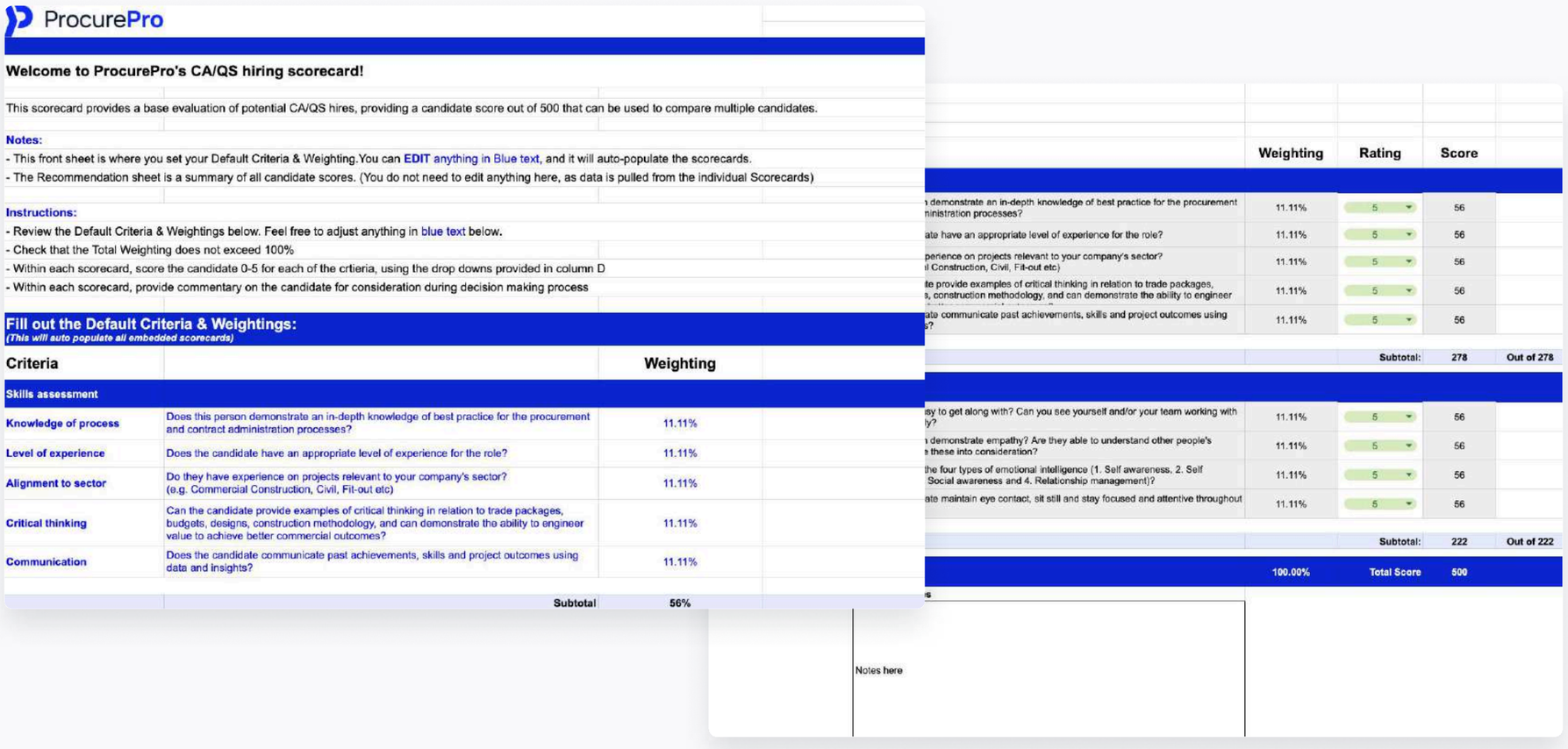
Prioritise CA/QSs that are comfortable with using these digital tools and have a forward-thinking approach to their roles and who embrace technology.



CA/QS hiring scorecard

This scorecard provides a base evaluation of potential CA/QS hires, providing a candidate score out of 500 that can be used to compare multiple candidates.

Download your scorecard


ProcurePro

Welcome to ProcurePro's CA/QS hiring scorecard!

This scorecard provides a base evaluation of potential CA/QS hires, providing a candidate score out of 500 that can be used to compare multiple candidates.

Notes:
- This front sheet is where you set your Default Criteria & Weighting.You can **EDIT** anything in Blue text, and it will auto-populate the scorecards.
- The Recommendation sheet is a summary of all candidate scores. (You do not need to edit anything here, as data is pulled from the individual Scorecards)

Instructions:
- Review the Default Criteria & Weightings below. Feel free to adjust anything in blue text below.
- Check that the Total Weighting does not exceed 100%
- Within each scorecard, score the candidate 0-5 for each of the crtieria, using the drop downs provided in column D
- Within each scorecard, provide commentary on the candidate for consideration during decision making process

Fill out the Default Criteria & Weightings:
(This will auto populate all embedded scorecards)

Criteria		Weighting
Skills assessment		
Knowledge of process	Does this person demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of best practice for the procurement and contract administration processes?	11.11%
Level of experience	Does the candidate have an appropriate level of experience for the role?	11.11%
Alignment to sector	Do they have experience on projects relevant to your company's sector? (e.g. Commercial Construction, Civil, Fit-out etc)	11.11%
Critical thinking	Can the candidate provide examples of critical thinking in relation to trade packages, budgets, designs, construction methodology, and can demonstrate the ability to engineer value to achieve better commercial outcomes?	11.11%
Communication	Does the candidate communicate past achievements, skills and project outcomes using data and insights?	11.11%
	Subtotal	**56%**

	Weighting	Rating	Score	
demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of best practice for the procurement inistration processes?	11.11%	5	56	
ate have an appropriate level of experience for the role?	11.11%	5	56	
perience on projects relevant to your company's sector? l Construction, Civil, Fit-out etc)	11.11%	5	56	
te provide examples of critical thinking in relation to trade packages, s, construction methodology, and can demonstrate the ability to engineer	11.11%	5	56	
ate communicate past achievements, skills and project outcomes using s?	11.11%	5	56	
		Subtotal:	**278**	**Out of 278**
sy to get along with? Can you see yourself and/or your team working with ly?	11.11%	5	56	
demonstrate empathy? Are they able to understand other people's these into consideration?	11.11%	5	56	
the four types of emotional intelligence (1. Self awareness, 2. Self Social awareness and 4. Relationship management)?	11.11%	5	56	
ate maintain eye contact, sit still and stay focused and attentive throughout	11.11%	5	56	
		Subtotal:	**222**	**Out of 222**
	100.00%	**Total Score**	**500**	

Notes here

Finding good talent

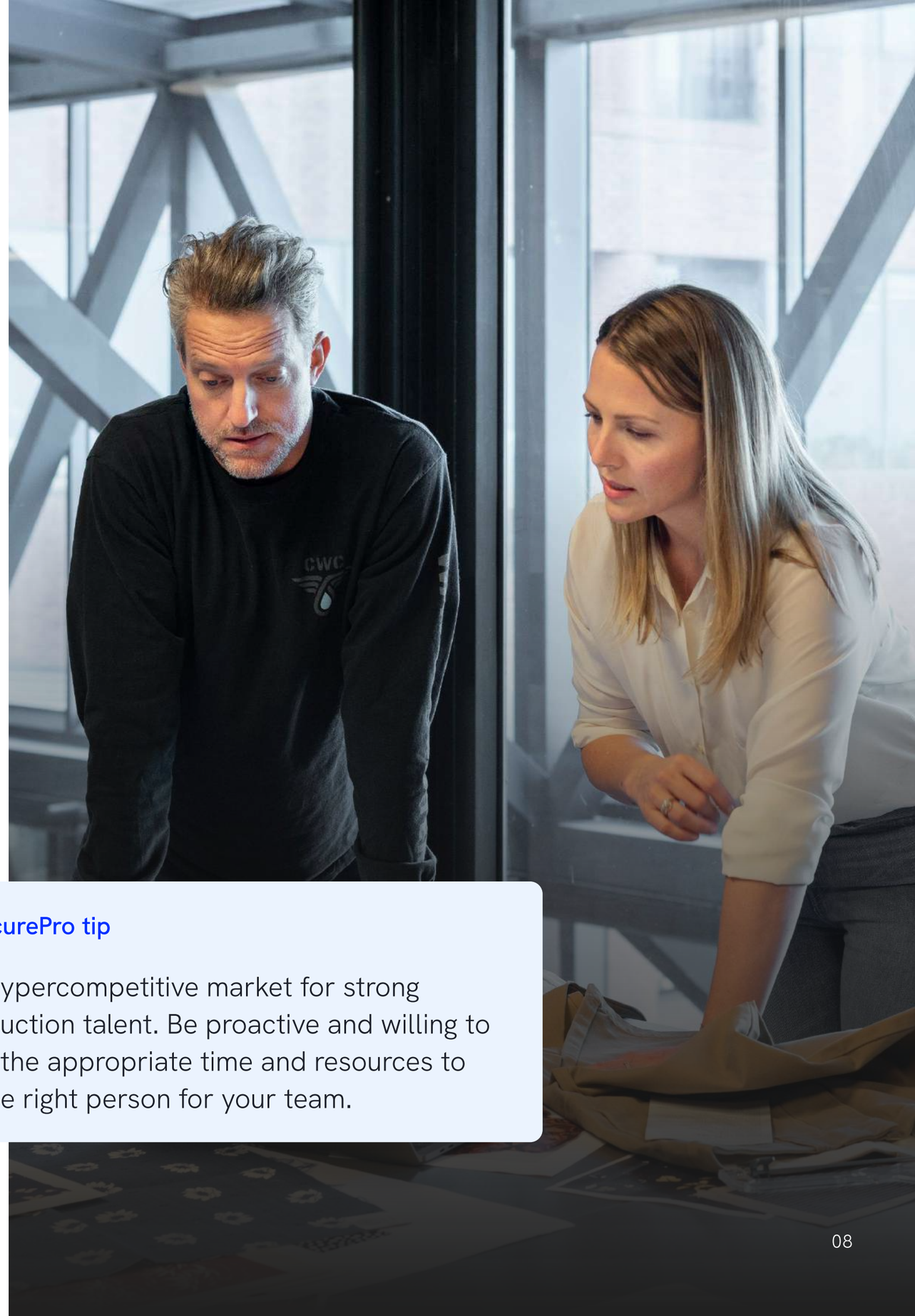
When looking for new talent, multiple avenues should be explored to increase the likelihood of finding someone great (and who is worth the investment).

Construction is a close-knit industry that is based heavily on relationship building and networking, so requires a different approach than other industries.

Refer a friend

Harnessing your existing employee's networks is one of the best ways to reach new, pre-vetted candidates. Mates who already know each other will be more likely to enjoy working together, so it's a good idea to build on existing relationships.

Set up a referral program that incentivises - usually financially - existing employees to refer their friends in the industry. This is a low cost, high reward approach that has low barriers to implementation.



💡 ProcurePro tip

It's a hypercompetitive market for strong construction talent. Be proactive and willing to invest the appropriate time and resources to find the right person for your team.

Consider prior applicants

With such a small pool to work with, tapping into previously unsuccessful candidates is a great way to secure your next hire. Individuals may have missed out on an initial job for a variety of reasons, so maintaining relationships and being able to reach out down the track is extremely important.

If you can, maintain relationships with people who aren't successful for roles so that you're able to reach out easily in the future.

Read more about tapping into old contacts with Conecta.

Recruiters

Industry recruiters are another avenue worth exploring, although considerations must be made. Recruiters come at a high cost, but provide the convenience of sourcing and vetting candidates for you.

To ensure you're connecting with quality recruiters, speak to other colleagues in the industry to validate which recruiters are worth investing in. Negotiate costs with recruiters at the beginning of your discussions to properly evaluate whether their costs are viable.

ProcurePro's hiring principles

There are a lot of similarities in values and required skills between start-ups and construction companies. Both are fast-paced, high input, growth industries. Here are the hiring principles that ProcurePro takes into account when considering job applicants.

1. Are they smart? Demonstrate high intelligence, general intelligence + EQ
2. Do they get things done? Autonomous, bias to moving fast to get things done, stellar work ethic
3. Are they kind? No ego, respect other people
4. Are they passionate? Passionate for what we do for the construction industry/start-ups/tech
5. Are they committed? Have they shown stayed at companies for longer than 2 years before

Key interview questions to ask a CA/QS

Interview questions

Describe a time when you were working on a high stress project - how did you meet deadlines, demand while managing stress?

What software systems are you familiar with using?

Tell me about the best project you worked on - how did you ensure it was the best?

Things to watch out for

- Communication skills
- Body language
- Ability to re-frame difficult situations and demonstrate they have learned something from the issue
- Positive, well-maintained relationships with former employers and how they solved problems



Developing CA/QSs to a high standard

The cost of finding and hiring new staff can be immense, so developing existing CA/QSs can be another strategy for increasing workforce productivity and value.

Career progression

Provide clear pathways for development, including support and resources, to motivate your CA/QSs to continually progress.

Set clear expectations and goals with your CA/QSs, with the incentive of career progression, to make the most out of your existing staff's capabilities and build up a well trained workforce.

Promote initiative and autonomy

Provide your CA/QSs with the opportunity to prove themselves and to solve their own problems - or at least attempt to. Since CA/QSs have a huge level of responsibility to a project's success, many people may feel under pressure to make decisions themselves.

Empowering your CA/QSs to take initiative through encouragement, career opportunities, and mentoring, to develop them to their highest potential.

Increase job satisfaction

Retaining CA/QSs can be difficult in today's market, with job movement accepted as the norm. Improve working conditions for your CA/QSs to increase job satisfaction and decrease the likelihood of them moving companies.

Reducing stress is integral to retaining CA/QSs, since it is such a high stress role. Implement Initiatives like work life balance, increased flexibility, open communication, and positive culture fostering to increase job satisfaction.

Providing CA/QSs with systems, like ProcurePro, also decreases work-related stresses by taking away mundane administration so they can spend more time on meaningful, value generating tasks.

ConTech empowers CA/QSs

The job of a CA/QS is time and effort intensive. It's critical for employers to arm their teams with the tools and software that help them thrive.

To put it into context, if a tradesman was looking for a new employer and they had to choose between two employees where all factors were the same bar one:

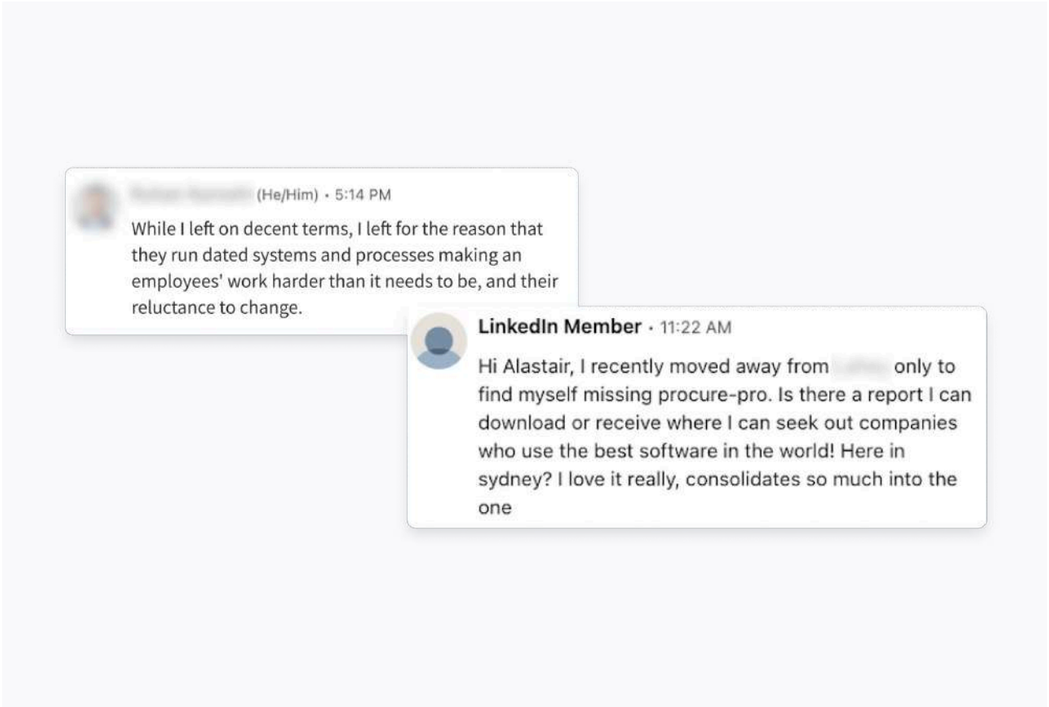
Employer A - Provides a set of screwdrivers
Employer B - Provides a cordless drill set with all attachments

Which do you think they would choose?

Commercial construction talent also expect the best in terms of 'tools'.

Excel spreadsheets, fragmented systems and processes duck taped together that are hard to navigate and understand no longer cut it.

Talented CA/QSs are on the lookout for modern intuitive software that reduces admin, enables more efficient and valuable work and frees up their time.



ProcurePro

ProcurePro is construction’s #1 procurement software for head contractors, setting a new standard of innovation for the built world.

See it in action: Book a demo

Email: info@procurepro.co