



Anchor Hanover streamlines its procurement process through Cloud Marketplace.

Anchor Hanover Group is the largest not-for-profit provider of housing and care for people in later life in England, managing 60,000 homes across more than 1,700 sites and operating in over 85 per cent of local councils. With such a large housing estate, our staff are required to constantly purchase a wide variety of supplies, products and equipment to service and support our customers. To achieve this, we have been using Advanced's Cloud Marketplace procurement platform since 2016.

Past struggles

In the 10 years prior to adopting Advanced's Cloud Marketplace our procurement system was purely text-based with regards to viewing items. The ability to find items to purchase in an efficient manner was something we really used to struggle with. You couldn't use key words to search for a whole list of chairs for example, you had to type in the specific name of each product you wanted, and there were no images to search either. One prime example of the search difficulties in the past were lightbulbs – on the system a text description of a lightbulb had; the code, the wattage, it's fitting type and it had a long text string of 50-60 characters that meant more often than not you had to recall from memory the item that you needed - not very intuitive and very time consuming.

With Cloud Marketplace it is much simpler, if you search for '4W Bulb' you can see exactly what it is you're buying and that makes our life so much easier.

Alex Holdsworth our Category Manager in Business Services, comments: *"This ease of use was one of the primary factors we needed to consider when we made the decision to choose a new solution: Cloud Marketplace is, quite simply, the closest system out there to online shopping. The product was designed with the user (shopper) in mind, and so it mirrors online shopping when it comes to the user experience, like searching with generic keywords, having saved baskets and heading to the checkout as you would when doing any type of online shopping."*

Saving time

Having a nice-looking user interface and an easy-to-use system is one thing, but what was of even greater importance to us was the ability to cut down (or even remove completely) the time it would take to complete common tasks when compared to our old system.



Client >

Anchor Hanover

Sector >

Housing and Care

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Alex Holdsworth
Category Manager in
Business Services
Anchor Hanover

Anchor Hanover trust Advanced

With our previous procurement system our staff were having to spend many hours calling up suppliers to find out prices for products, ask for physical catalogues to browse through, or even seeking confirmation of order numbers for previously placed orders. They could be doing higher value tasks, but it was simply getting in the way.

Alex adds: *"Once we implemented Cloud Marketplace into our organisation the manual tasks were significantly reduced. Cloud Marketplace and the way Advanced manages the product information from suppliers means a much higher quality of data is available for the items in the system which ultimately leads to better order data. However, the time saved in the purchasing process doesn't simply come from higher quality data – there are numerous other aspects that help our users. Additional functionality like 'saved baskets' and 'favourite items' within the Cloud Marketplace enhances the efficiency and reduces the time required for end users to confidently buy what they need."*

eInvoicing

One of the most valuable Cloud Marketplace modules we've implemented is eInvoicing. With eInvoicing a high proportion of all the invoices for our Cloud Marketplace purchases are created within our Finance system. In the past our Purchase Ledger Team were taking 1-2 minutes to process every invoice they received. With eInvoicing this processing time is down to less than 10 seconds per invoice, a reduction of over 90 per cent! This allows the team so much extra time for higher value tasks. Not only that, but firefighting and error checking has significantly reduced too. We no longer spend long hours reviewing and amending invoices due to mistakes such as incorrect order numbers. With Cloud Marketplace the system matches the incoming invoice to our system and rejects it back to the supplier if there is an error before it even gets to our Finance Team. It's these types of job-easing factors which have saved our staff so much time.

Alex comments, *"To put it simply: Not having to manually process an invoice is an absolute Godsend. Without Cloud Marketplace we'd have to very rapidly recruit a lot more processing clerks to our Purchase Ledger Team to make up for the time that would be lost if we didn't have the system!"*



A trusted partner

The ease of using Cloud Marketplace is seen throughout the product, not just on the searching and purchasing side of things. Back in November 2018, when Anchor Trust and Hanover Housing Association merged to form Anchor Hanover Group, there was obviously a lot of things we had to consider. One of these was integrating so many new members of staff under one company banner and unifying internal systems. However, with Cloud Marketplace this was a straightforward task. We set up the new users on the system without needing any support from Advanced, and as the product is so intuitive to use, training for the software was able to be completed in-house by Anchor Trust employees who had already been using the system over the previous years. However, if we did ever need support with anything, the team at Advanced were always happy to help. Their support lines are open throughout the working day, the team are always available and our Account Manager at Advanced is close at hand to make sure we have everything we need.

A recommendation

Alex concludes: *"To sum-up, the system simply works. It is as close to an online shopping experience as you're going to get for businesses thanks to features such as saved baskets, favourite items and great search functionality. The eInvoicing module is something that I would strongly recommend due to the time it saves on processing invoices. The great thing from a supplier perspective about Cloud Marketplace is that it works just as well for large suppliers as small ones – Advanced help with the support of any of the suppliers, meaning that stress is taken away from our staff."*

We know that Cloud Marketplace is a constantly evolving solution and is being developed with the needs of the customer in mind. Thanks to the responsive team at Advanced if there is anything we want added to the solution we know that we can share our ideas with them - a testament to Advanced's willingness to work with their customers and evolve the system over time.

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