

“The rising appreciation of Social Value”

2 years ago



Anna McChesney-Gordon, Director of Consultancy at Social Value Portal says interest in, and engagement with, Social Value is still on the rise.

Social Value has been a core part of business strategy for organisations bidding for public sector contracts since the [Social Value Act](#) came into force ten years ago, reinforced more recently by [Procurement Policy Note 06/20](#).

The driver was clear: if you want to put yourself in the best position to win public sector business, you need to consider your Social Value and think carefully about how to articulate what you will deliver over and above business as usual. Yes, having a thoroughly thought through Social Value strategy will help you win contracts, but it will do so much more.

Recruiting talent

I have had meetings recently with all types of businesses that say during the interview process for new hires, significant time needs to be given over for questions on the organisation's Social Value approach, culture and track record. Young people especially are not asking about pension contributions (although they ought to be, but that's a separate issue) but instead they want to know about volunteering opportunities, EDI strategies and what the business is doing to reduce its impact on the environment.

Embedding Social Value into your own procurement

The opportunity to embed Social Value into your own procurement process is huge. Organisations can choose suppliers that will deliver a good service at the right price, but that are also aligned to their own values around Social Value. I have been heartened to see some companies change the way even fairly basic purchasing decisions are made. For example, ask yourself, could you buy your meeting room coffee

and biscuits from organisations like [Redemption Roasters](#) and [Half the Story](#) instead of the usual mass suppliers? It costs the same, probably tastes better and definitely has more of a positive impact.

Marketing

We are also having more and more conversations with marketing and comms teams about Social Value. There's a real desire to enhance the messaging around what organisations are doing and the impact they are having.

Social Value is all about moving the mindset from compliance and mitigating risk (i.e. ESG) to taking proactive steps to drive long-term positive social, economic and environmental outcomes. What's not to like for a marketing team?

It all comes down to accountability and transparency. It's crucial that statements and claims can be backed up with evidence that a robust methodology has been followed. Even so, it's disappointing to hear that some organisations are choosing a "green hushing" approach due to growing concern that publicising climate targets and progress against those targets will come under fire for greenwashing, even if positive steps have been taken and good work is happening.

The success factors of Social Value

There is undoubtedly a rising appreciation of Social Value in all areas of business but, outside of work winning and bid teams, so many organisations we speak to say they don't think they're doing enough yet.

In fact, we recently conducted a survey of 700+ stakeholders across the public and private sector on the present and future of Social Value. Although 82% of respondents expect their organisations to spend more time supporting Social Value over the next three years, 59% were only somewhat or not confident in developing an effective Social Value strategy using existing resources.

Whether this lack of confidence is in how they shout (or don't shout) about all the good things they're doing, how they choose who to build charitable partnerships with or how they incorporate Social Value into purchasing decisions, it's clear work needs to be done to help organisations to maximise their Social Value strategy.

The good news is that there is a lot of information available to organisations today, no matter where they are on the Social Value journey so it's never been a better time to commit to Social Value.

Anna will be hosting a webinar on Social Value Success Factors on Thursday 28 September at 2pm. Alongside colleagues and associates, the session will talk participants through a Success Factors Model, case study examples and a Q&A session.

[Book your spot here.](#)