Case Study
South Staffordshire College

South Staffordshire College has an annual turnover of £30 million. Its IT team supports over 20,000 students and 850 staff based on four campuses, including the college's new state-of-the-art Cannock campus.

The Challenge

Looking to obtain the best price possible on all IT purchases, validate every IT investment and maximise budget to deliver a new 'digital by default' campus. As a further education institution, South Staffordshire has ambitions to be 'best in sector' and strives to provide students and staff with the highest standards of learning environment possible.

With budgets contracting in education, the college is increasingly under pressure to justify every investment it makes. When the college needed to kit out a new campus, fit for the digital age with the highest specification IT equipment and infrastructure, it had to find a way to ensure it achieved the best value on each and every purchase.

Jamie Smith, Director for Strategy & Infrastructure, said: *"South Staffordshire is a pioneering college, and the pace of change is formidable. The Chief Executive wants us to be in the vanguard of development across all areas. - The learner experience, the campus buildings, and procurement. To be this progressive when budgets are contracting, you need to be innovative as there is pressure to deliver the best possible return on every pound."*

The Solution

South Staffordshire adopted KnowledgeBus, a CIPS process-accredited online application that automates benchmarking of purchases against daily trade guide prices and stock levels on over 150,000 'live' products from over 2,500 manufacturers.

Users input supplier product lists or conduct spot checks to see what margin their supplier is proposing. A range of spend analysis tools also help users identify, track and forecast market developments for more strategic procurement.

KnowledgeBus empowers IT buyers with market knowledge to rapidly negotiate better deals with preferred suppliers to unlock more from budgets.

It saves users time consistently achieving best value.

"KnowledgeBus is a no-brainer, and it paid for itself within the first month"

Jamie Smith, *Director for Strategy & Infrastructure. South Staffordshire College*

KnowledgeBus has enabled the team to save tens of thousands of pounds by better understanding the historical reseller margins they were paying and negotiating better deals.

Jamie Smith explains: *"With the information KnowledgeBus provided, we have been able to negotiate supplier margins down from 30.9% to less than the best practice of 3%. For the new Cannock Campus, this has translated into more or better IT for a better learning environment.*

KnowledgeBus is a no-brainer. It paid for itself within the first month. When we ran our historical data through this application, we found we had been paying average margins of 30.9% - we now pay less than 3%, and in some
cases, it is closer to cost plus 1.5%.

For example, we recently required seven laptops, which would normally have cost about £900 each from major suppliers. We bought them for £420 each and saved almost £2,000 on that purchase alone."

Further to reducing margins, the college has been able to make additional savings on IT procurement by using KnowledgeBus management and spend analysis tools to forecast seasonal price trends and variations.

This foresight has seen the college adjust its purchasing behaviour to ensure it pays the lowest prices possible over the course of the year.

Smith said: *"We have fundamentally become more strategic. Powerful big data functionality allows us to view historical stock and pricing levels to spot and analyse trends. We have set alerts to provide early warnings on any fluctuations, which can be dramatic.*

These insights have led us to delay and bring forward purchases."

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Jamie Smith, *Director for Strategy & Infrastructure. South Staffordshire College*

The UK's only fully Certified IT Price Benchmarking Solution – Find out more at **www.knowledgebus.co.uk**

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