



# Professional Development Drives Success for ConnXus

How SIG University Helped Increase Employee Satisfaction and Client Retention for Supplier Diversity Startup

As the COO and general manager of ConnXus, Daryl Hammett recognized the importance of not only understanding procurement professionals – his target audience – but also using their feedback, insights and recommendations to guide product development.

ConnXus (acquired by Coupa), a procurement enablement platform, provides a hub for buyers and diverse suppliers to engage, report, track and manage strategic sourcing activity. The platform can also identify businesses that are veteran-, disability- and LGBT-owned to help companies find and connect with diverse suppliers.

# The Challenge

For the startup to be successful, Hammett knew he needed to help elevate his sales, product and program teams' procurement and strategic sourcing knowledge from what he says started out as a two on a scale of one to five. He wanted his teams to be able to speak comfortably with procurement professionals, empathize with their challenges and understand not just what questions they were asking but *why* they were asking them.

Beyond that, he had to find a strong network through which he and the ConnXus team could connect with procurement leaders and industry experts to make sure the software's features and capabilities aligned with their target audience's needs.

Hammett discovered SIG (Sourcing Industry Group), a premier global sourcing association, and their sourcing and procurement professional development arm, SIG University.

# The Solution

SIG University is an inclusive, internationally recognized university with the mission of advancing the sourcing and risk management industries and transforming careers. SIG University offers online certifications focused on implementing sourcing, outsourcing, third party risk, supplier governance and intelligent automation programs.

Hammett completed all four of SIG University's available programs, which are developed by procurement practitioners, academics and subject matter experts:



Certified Sourcing Professional



Certified Supplier Management Professional



Certified Third Party Risk Management Professional



Certified Intelligent Automation Professional

He also made SIG University training available to his product, program and sales management teams. Hammett empowered his employees to choose the programs best suited to their individual roles.



*If [education] helps them do their jobs better, which in turn equates to better incentives, better bonuses and better commissions, they value it more. Otherwise, training just becomes something else they have to do,” Hammett explained.*

The flexibility of SIG University training appealed to the ConnXus team because they could complete their lessons in the evenings or during breaks.

And SIG University’s value went beyond the virtual classroom. Hammett’s team coupled what they learned in their coursework with continued practical application during SIG’s networking sessions and industry summits.

## The Results

After the SIG University learning experience, Hammett rated his team a 4.5 out of five on the strategic sourcing knowledge scale.

ConnXus saw higher renewal rates, greater pipeline growth and, perhaps most importantly, increased employee retention and satisfaction.



*When you invest in your employees’ professional development, you help make them more confident in their roles,” Hammett said. “That confidence changes the way they connect, the way they communicate and the way they work. When you give people an opportunity to learn, retention goes up because they feel valued.”*

After their SIG University training, the ConnXus team:



Responded better to RFPs because they understood the procurement language used



Drove more meaningful product roadmap development because of ongoing feedback they received from the SIG network



Maintained consistent value for their client base because they were more aware of trending procurement needs and challenges

Finally, because of ConnXus' success and the SIG connections Hammett built, he spearheaded Coupa's acquisition of the business in 2020. As part of Coupa, the supplier diversity management platform continues to help procurement professionals drive spend that positively impacts diverse communities.

Hammett, who now serves as the Global Head of Lead Management and Operations for Amazon Web Services (AWS), joined the SIG Advisory Board in 2020.

## See SIG University in Action

Start your seven-day free trial of our learning platform and sample a lesson from each program.

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## Benefits of SIG University for Sales Professionals

Most sales representatives will interact with procurement professionals during their careers. SIG University's advanced sourcing training helps sales teams better understand how procurement:

- ✓ Uses the information they supply
- ✓ Analyzes intent sections of RFPs
- ✓ Vets, evaluates and chooses suppliers