



**K**athleen Hayden is a senior procurement specialist at the British Columbia Liquor Commission (BCLC). Her responsibilities include:

- facilitating complex bid processes;
- negotiating contracts;
- identifying and implementing opportunities, processes, best practices; ensuring constant improvement within the team;
- maintaining excellent working relationships with both internal and external stakeholders;
- mentoring other buyers as well as stakeholders to develop their understanding of all procurement functions; and
- liaising with all internal departments including legal, corporate communications, government relations.

Her introduction to public procurement is a result of what she says is, “being in the right place at the right time.”

Kathleen said, “I was happily working in the accounting department at Robin Hood Multifoods in Toronto, Ontario (a bakery mix plant), and was pursuing my CMA (I was in level 3). The purchasing agent approached me one day about a job vacancy, adding he thought I’d be good for the position. So I jumped ship and never looked back! I remember the plant manager later commending me for making “a smart move.” He said that, in purchasing, you get to know everything and everyone in the company you work for – all the different departments, the products, services, problems and politics. He was right! It was while I was at Robin Hood that I decided to pursue my CPP designation.

“After six years with Robin Hood, I went onto the TDL Group (Tim Hortons) in Oakville, Ontario as an equipment buyer. This was an interesting job, as I worked to equip new stores, buying everything from the corporate signage to the spoon with which one stirs their coffee.

“After a few years, I went on to Casino Niagara in Niagara Falls, Ontario. I was hired as a food and beverage buyer and was part of the pre-opening team, which was a lot of hard work but an exciting experience. I worked with all the chefs, food and beverage staff, warehouse and receiving staff, and managed my vendors very carefully. To this day I say that if you can buy food, you can buy anything!

“I stayed with Casino Niagara for six years, before leaving to expand my career and acquire more corporate experience in RFP processes,

contract negotiations, and managing contracts. I took a position as a procurement specialist with the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG) in Toronto, Ontario, which totally fulfilled my desire to learn and more. OLG provided me with the support to continue developing myself, and it was while at OLG that I completed my CPP.

“While at OLG, I discovered that I really enjoyed working on contracts and found legal language very interesting. I had continually upgraded my education with leadership and business courses, and decided to enrol in a legal assistant’s program as well. After a few years at OLG, I was promoted to manager of contract management.

“After six years at OLG (see a trend here?), my desire to live in Western Canada could no longer be suppressed. The mountains were calling me. I took a position as a senior procurement specialist with BCLC in May 2007, and absolutely love it. The work is challenging, the people are terrific, and the work/life balance is rewarding – not to mention no more commuting!

“When I look back over my career so far I feel fortunate to have experienced both the private and public sectors within some very interesting industries, and some amazing people with whom I still keep in touch. You never know where the road may take you if you are open to expanding your career.”

Kathleen is married and has two sons, and is grateful for their unconditional support. She likes sewing, hiking, camping, skiing, exploring, travelling, spending time with her family and walking her dog Newman. Kathleen describes

herself as a person who is always up for a challenge, and believes strongly in trying to remain positive at all times. She says she has, “a high respect for nature; I don’t take anything for granted, and am grateful for what I have.”

With that in mind, Kathleen describes her top three challenges/issues for today and the future as:

- “Keeping ahead of the game with respect to the ever-changing issues and cases around bid processes. In public procurement I find that as a procurement specialist, you have to be constantly in tune and very knowledgeable with all legal aspects and know where you stand at all times. You have to be very creative in balancing the needs of the business while minimizing risk.
- I find that after all of these years, there are still vendors that don’t put the effort into writing a good proposal, and this can make for a slim selection sometimes. There’s almost always a vendor who still misses the submission closing time, challenging the process. It’s unfortunate, as they don’t realize it hurts us just as much as it hurts them!
- Finding those rare procurement seminars or conferences to go to where you actually leave feeling like you have learned something new.” 