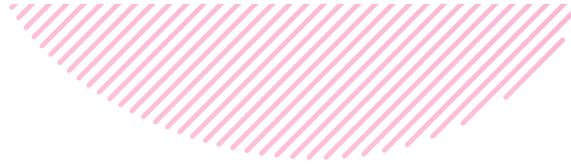




# 4 Critical Steps to Winning Business Through Social Value

A guide for construction  
contractors





## Introduction

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Social Value in construction is in its 'awkward teenager' phase. Although the concept isn't new, the enactment of the UK Public Services (Social Value) Act in 2013, combined with an increased acceptance of the need for businesses to act sustainably has seen a rapid development in this area in recent years.

The industry is seeing increasing scrutiny on social value credentials, and this is only set to continue with new government procurement rules setting a 10% minimum on social value criteria from January 21. So, with the % contribution from social value in tender submission often now 15%-20%+, and financial penalties being introduced for not delivering on commitments, capturing and conveying the social value you deliver has moved from a 'nice to have' to a 'must have' for winning new business.

Yet the landscape is still a confused one – a number of different 'frameworks' for measuring social value have emerged; public sector clients are demanding a myriad of differing approaches; and many Tier 1 contractors have now themselves put additional pressure on the supply chain to contribute. This all runs alongside the clamour from some opponents who still question whether social enterprises and wider society is actually benefiting at all.

Without industry consensus, it is time for many contractors to take control of their own Social Value approach. To empower themselves to be able to succinctly 'tell their story' in bid submissions; to feel proud to report back on achievements to clients during project meetings; and to derive overall business success from properly engaging their staff, supply chain and community partners.



## What Is Your Strategy?

To maximise your business and community value, don't go off 'half cocked'. Your message to employees, supply chain and clients must be clear and coherent, and aligned to your business values.



## Engagement & Communication

Do your employees and supply chain understand why they are contributing? Do you instil a sense of pride in them by letting them know how their individual activities make a difference to society?



## Data Capture & Reporting

Put in place the necessary processes and tools to ensure you capture ALL of the activities you commit to. Develop how you 'tell your story' to different internal and external stakeholders. If you can't articulate the value you have delivered, you may as well not have bothered.



## Win More Business!

With the necessary strategy, comms and data reporting tools in place, demonstrating the quality and values of your business should be easy! This could be the difference between getting full marks in tender submissions and being an 'also ran'.

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4



## What Is Your Strategy?

Key questions...

1. Your Clients may be demanding different social contributions on different types of projects, but is there a common thread to these?
2. What are your core social and environmental values as an organisation that you'd like to convey?



Combine your answers to these questions to define 3 – 5 'pillars' to your CSR & Social Value Strategy. Typical examples are:

- ✓ Employment and skills
- ✓ Community and volunteering
- ✓ Local economic benefit
- ✓ Environment
- ✓ Health & Wellbeing

Once you've set your pillars, decide what are the outcomes (or 'metrics') you will need to accurately track and report on in order to monitor and report on your social and environmental activities. The most common examples we see include:

- ✓ Graduate placements
- ✓ Apprenticeship weeks
- ✓ Community donations
- ✓ Community days volunteering
- ✓ Local SME spend under 10,20,30,40 miles
- ✓ Spend with social enterprise
- ✓ Waste diverted from landfill
- ✓ Construction waste produced

Have 3-5 core outcomes per 'pillar' – these 10-20 are your core outcomes that you can track for every project and that you can rely on to accurately track and confidently demonstrate your company's social and environmental contribution.

You can then layer in additional metrics demanded by your client for individual projects.

*Note: Some of your outcomes/metrics will need a 'proxy value' to convert from units measured (e.g. apprentice weeks worked) to a social value in £. Proxy values can be obtained from a number of freely available public sources (a good consultant will be able to advise) or from one of the many commercially available frameworks).*



## Engagement & Communication

There's no point in your senior team devising the perfect strategy, if you don't get buy-in from your supply chain and employees who will be executing and recording your social and environmental contributions on-the-ground at a project level.



Create a simple comms plan around this. Key attributes of this are:

- ✓ Explaining why the business is delivering on social and environmental commitments
- ✓ Clearly explaining the specific role each person plays, what tasks they will be expected to complete, and how they will record what they've done
- ✓ Describing clearly to individuals how their contribution will make a difference to the bigger picture – to society, to the business and ultimately back to their job satisfaction and security
- ✓ Reward and recognise achievements – even if it's a simple 'thank you'

Other key things to consider are:

- ✓ What are the key messages you want to convey about your business values? Continually reinforce these.
- ✓ What channels do you use to convey these messages – email, intranet, one-to-one? Only you know your demographic.
- ✓ How frequently do you reinforce the message? Also look out for key dates or events in the year e.g. national apprenticeship week.
- ✓ Are there incentives for hitting targets?
- ✓ How will you report back performance to individuals, both on their own performance and the overall company performance?



Description	Frequency	Method	Audience	Owner
Name of Communication	How often will it happen	Method of Communication	Who will receive the communication	Who is responsible
Project team meeting	Daily	Meeting	Project team	Project manager
Stakeholder update	Quarterly	E-mail newsletter	Stakeholders/ interested parties	Administrator/ project manager
Board meeting	Monthly	Meeting	Board members	Project manager
Company newsletter	Monthly	Printed newsletter	Internal Staff	Administrator
Social media	As required	Various social media platforms	Wider public audience	Administrator/ project manager
Briefing	Quarterly	Update for business development and bid roles	Internal staff	Project manager



## Data Capture & Reporting

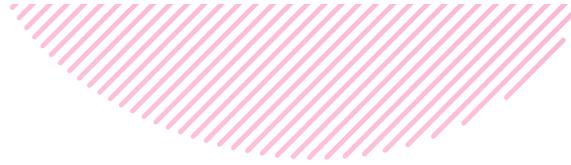
### Capture

One of the biggest challenges contractors face is accurately and comprehensively capturing data, stories and images of the social and community activities they have committed to as part of an individual project or as a business as a whole.

It's the nature of the beast – head office needs the information, but the on-the-ground activities take place across a disparate set of project locations and often individual pieces of information are 'owned' by an even greater number of individual employees and suppliers.

First up, from pre-construction stage, have a clear plan on what you are aiming to achieve and who owns the data.





Then, think about how your 'data collectors' are going to supply information to a central point within the business. Options are:

- ✓ Spreadsheets/google sheets – cheap but prone to inaccuracy and duplication and no way of prompting staff and suppliers to input data
- ✓ Database system – more structured data handling and reporting but tracking won't be in real-time and no way of prompting staff and suppliers to input data
- ✓ Specialist software – look for a solution that has flexibility on how your metrics and 'pillars' are set up, can explain to staff why the information is being collected, can prompt staff when it is time to submit info, and can store all auditable evidence of your activity



## Reporting

Who are your stakeholders and how do they want information presented? We've already highlighted the need to convey information back to staff and suppliers as a 'motivator' but how do your clients need information reported?

Reporting by Construction Framework, Client, Project are all important during the construction phase of a project but you'll also need to be able to easily pull out overall performance for bid submissions.

Also, your reporting should be a combination of **Quantitative** (providing data/statistics) and **Qualitative** (capturing case studies and imagery of your activities).



Again, modern, specialist software is best to avoid your team wasting huge amounts of time compiling reports in different formats and, importantly, to have all of your data 'at your fingertips' for bid submissions and client meetings.

## Win Business!

Many contracts now have 15-20% of the marking regime attributable to social value. At this level, can you afford not to have a clear social value strategy and demonstrable outcomes?

You should be thinking of this as an opportunity to differentiate your business. In a competitive market, what is your USP; what sets you apart?

For example, do you have a great relationship with particular charity partners? Do you invest significantly in staff training and development? Do you have market leading environmental credentials? Can you use existing frameworks to turn this activity into a £ benefit you bring to society?

It is becoming harder and harder to differentiate on price, experience, health and safety etc. But, with some planning and some investment in better tracking, calculation and reporting, your social value commitments and business values can really make you stand out in a crowded marketplace!

*Learn More About How Thrive Can Help Your Business Win More Bids*

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