

# Driving Direct Sourcing Forward

A Road Map For Achieving Internal Stakeholder Buy-In



Helping dozens of companies implement customized direct sourcing programs doesn't come without significant learnings along the way. Recently, a small group of direct sourcing experts at Raise gathered around the whiteboard to capture and rank the most important lessons learned from our roster of direct sourcing implementations. As the team shared stories and reflected on our results with a wide variety of clients, a common theme emerged. **Companies that engaged internal stakeholders early to achieve buy-in from across the organization experienced better traction, faster acceleration, and bigger wins quicker than companies that were slow to garner internal support.**

As we dug deeper into that observation, some key tactics surfaced that play an important role in engaging stakeholders when implementing a direct sourcing program. Knowing that these tips and tricks can go a long way in encouraging internal stakeholders to embrace direct sourcing, we knew we had to share the road map with others who may be starting out on their own direct sourcing journey.

**Do you need a direct sourcing refresher before you dig into our best practices for buy-in? [Check out our Raise Direct Sourcing ebook.](#)**



## MEET THE RAISE DIRECT SOURCING PIT CREW:

With a team of over 400 recruiters and staffing specialists working in the US, Canada, Ghana, India, Peru, and the Philippines, Raise's direct sourcing knowledge runs deep and wide. Get to know the contributors to this article who also lead direct sourcing implementation efforts at Raise.



**The Industry Pioneer:  
Rick Roberts**

**e:** [rroberts@raiserecruiting.com](mailto:rroberts@raiserecruiting.com)

Rick is our VP of Direct Sourcing. He has been providing direct sourcing solutions to clients since 2014 when he introduced North America's first direct sourcing technology. As a direct sourcing pioneer and highly sought-after SME, Rick provides valuable strategic insights and direction to drive lasting results for all our clients.



**The Savvy Strategist:  
Tim Rhodes**

**e:** [trhodes@raiserecruiting.com](mailto:trhodes@raiserecruiting.com)

Tim serves as a Strategic Lead, managing and nurturing key relationships with our clients to drive customer satisfaction, deepen partnerships, and contribute to overall success. Tim has been instrumental during our pre-programming, launch, and optimization for dozens of direct sourcing implementations. He is particularly savvy at guiding enterprise organizations through the change management side of direct sourcing implementation.



**The Insightful Intellect:  
Michael Leacy**

**e:** [mleacy@raiserecruiting.com](mailto:mleacy@raiserecruiting.com)

Michael, our Executive Lead, provides Raise clients with strategic insights regarding their direct sourcing programs. Michael has worked with enterprise companies in the US and Canada, helping them achieve the results they want from our direct sourcing solution.



**The Make-It-Happen Maven:  
Loree Bennett**

**e:** [loree.bennett@raiserecruiting.com](mailto:loree.bennett@raiserecruiting.com)

As our Direct Sourcing Program Implementation Lead, Loree is responsible for the overall success of our direct sourcing implementations. She leads the design, development, configuration, technology integrations, training, and test launching of direct sourcing for Raise clients.



**The Candidate Experience Curator:  
Brooke Hudon**

**e:** [brooke.hudon@raiserecruiting.com](mailto:brooke.hudon@raiserecruiting.com)

Brooke is our Recruitment Delivery Lead, overseeing the delivery strategy for our direct sourcing clients and ensuring what is promised gets delivered from a curation and candidate experience perspective.



## BUY-IN BEST PRACTICE #1:

### Take The Time To Complete A Pre-Trip Inspection

Before setting off on your direct sourcing journey, it's critical for your internal core implementation team to understand direct sourcing and be able to easily communicate your why. That begins with having a very deep understanding of your company's current staffing situation by knowing and specifying:

- ✓ **Who are your current providers?**
- ✓ **What does your current vendor community look like?**
- ✓ **Which vendors are preferred? Which are not?**
- ✓ **How are current vendors performing to KPIs?**



**In addition to helping understand your why, having answers to those questions will be important when you encounter stakeholders whose fear of change may inspire objections**, such as, "Our current system and providers are working great. Why are you trying to fix something that's not broken?"

Implementation teams that invest the time upfront to gather key details about their current staffing solutions can build their business case by addressing objections with facts instead of opinions. Being able to respond with a statement like, "You may be happy with the current provider, but they're actually in the 25th percentile of performance compared to the rest of the supply base. Just think of how much better your candidates could be if we could get that number up?" goes much farther in creating buy-in than "It's just the right thing to do."

Having a solid understanding of your current program will also **help your team get really clear about the connection between what you're hoping to accomplish by implementing direct sourcing and how that aligns with your organization's vision, values, and goals**. Being able to naturally articulate your why in initial discussions and meetings will help stakeholders see that this isn't just an "initiative of the month."

**Question:** "Our current system and providers are working great. Why are you trying to fix something that's not broken?"

**Answer:** "It's just the right thing to do."

**Answer:** "You may be happy with the current provider, but they're actually in the 25th percentile of performance compared to the rest of the supply base. Just think of how much better your candidates could be if we could get that number up?"

But creating that connection to why shouldn't stop at the higher levels of your organization. During this vital stage of information gathering, it's wise to build out your business case all the way down to the departmental level. Tim Rhodes advises, "Take the time to really think about who your stakeholders are and how you need to involve them before you get too far down the road. In some cases, you will need a department's buy-in as well as their expertise; in others, you may just need to keep them informed and aware of what's going on. Mapping that out early on is key, so you not only understand who you will be talking to but also their purpose, goals, and how they are held accountable and measured. Having that understanding allows your implementation team to showcase the 'what's in it for you' of what's about to happen. **You want to show, not tell, your stakeholders, "Here's your why, here's our why, here's the organizational why, and here's how direct sourcing aligns with ALL of those whys."**

Prepare for your list of impacted stakeholders to be longer than you may have initially expected—direct sourcing's impact ripples throughout an organization. Michael Leacy notes, "One of the benefits of working with Raise is we have done this many times before. Really early on in the process, we'll review your list of internal stakeholders with you and help identify departments that could play an important role in the implementation that you may have overlooked."



ANTICIPATE POTENTIAL ROAD BUMPS

As the direct sourcing implementation team identifies potentially impacted departments, Rick Roberts advises clients to spend some time increasing their understanding of the specific pain points those departments are facing, **"Find out what is scaring people in the business"**. If it's a hiring leader, for example, is it access to talent, getting qualified people, too many steps in the process, or a lack of trust in the program that is keeping them up at night? If it's someone in HR, is there an underlying fear that the move to direct sourcing could make their team obsolete? Understanding those pain points on a departmental level and anticipating those objections will save you time and add to your implementation team's credibility."

Based on Raise's industry-leading experience implementing direct sourcing with dozens of unique clients, common department-specific concerns and pain points to have on your radar include:

Department	Frequently Raised Concerns
Marketing	"We're uncomfortable having a third party representing our brand in the marketplace."
Procurement	"How do we manage the potential disruption to our current supply base and the existing relationships we have with people we enjoy working with?"

Legal	“Advertising roles for contingent work through third-party vendors is a co-employment risk.”
IT	“IT hasn’t approved the technology or curation partner to connect/access our systems.”  “Allowing access is a security risk, and now we must assess them appropriately.”
HR	“You can’t use RPO or permanent hiring strategy for the contingent workforce.”  “It’s always been our job to manage talent attraction.”



**BUY-IN BEST PRACTICE #2:**  
**Take the Show on the Road**



Establishing organizational understanding in the early stages of your direct sourcing implementation can play a huge role in building stakeholder buy-in. Once your implementation team can clearly articulate your big-picture why and has a list of impacted stakeholders and their potential concerns, a solid next step is to create a direct sourcing road show. Whether presented at an existing department meeting or held as stand-alone lunch and learn sessions, it’s important to share what you’re trying to achieve with departments, decision-makers, and end users across the organization. **But don’t just share. Ask for their input, too. Be sure your roadshow deck:**

- ✓ Explains how direct sourcing supports your organization’s values
- ✓ Highlights the potential benefits
- ✓ Acknowledges potential risks and challenges - and asks for audience input on potential issues for their specific department that you may have overlooked
- ✓ Details the metrics you’ll be using to measure success

**PUT HIGH BEAMS ON POTENTIAL BARRIERS**

As you share your plans with internal stakeholders and ask for their input, don’t be surprised if you encounter some employees who aren’t too excited about your plans. In particular, those who tend to be



risk averse, fear change, or prefer the status quo may be all too eager to identify potential reasons why direct sourcing won't work within their department. According to renowned organizational psychologist and bestselling author Adam Grant, there's great value in the opinions of those who dare to challenge new concepts and ideas thoughtfully.

This simple shift in perspective that Grant suggests can make your rollout feel much more collaborative. **Instead of seeing those who raise objections as negative or unhelpful, mine their value as a group of frontline experts** who are happy to expose potential hazards to your direct sourcing program's success.

**"What you need is a challenge network. I think of a challenge network as the group of your most thoughtful critics who are able to hold up a mirror so that you can see your blind spots and then know what you need to rethink."**

— Adam Grant

## ENGAGE THE END USER

Be sure not to overlook the end user as your implementation team rolls out your direct sourcing roadshow across the organization. While they may not be organizational influencers or decision makers, those who ultimately determine the success of your efforts are the people who will decide to use or not use your direct sourcing solution to secure talent.

"One thing we've learned along the way is to really study the pockets of acceptance in an organization. Often, we see the most positive response from end users who had the longest list of complaints with the system they had previously been using. Those "squeaky wheels" also tend to tell people when things are working well. Because people are naturally more likely to adopt changes that save them time or effort and get them better results, **it's not uncommon to see a wave of acceptance circle out from that one early convert,**" says Loree Bennett, adding, "We are here to help you with that. We will mine the data for you to help you predict where those potential pockets of resistance and acceptance are most likely to be."



### BUY-IN BEST PRACTICE #3:

#### Prioritize Smaller Trips Over Epic Journeys

There's some good news for those who may feel daunted by the prospect of rolling out direct sourcing as an enterprise-wide solution. The direct sourcing experts at Raise have seen time again that smaller, more focused efforts can be much more impactful when implementing direct sourcing.



Michael Leacy is a particularly passionate advocate for starting small when it comes to implementing a direct sourcing program, "A big-bang, enterprise roll-out of direct sourcing just doesn't make sense. **Many of our clients have multiple locations. They have dozens, and in some cases even hundreds, of different categories of skillsets that they're trying to fill. For clients like these, it is much more effective to take advantage of data to analyze and point us toward where and how to get started.** That data will lead us to the categories and the locations that make the most sense to bring direct sourcing into first. Then, over time, you can add more categories and locations so that over 12 or 18 months, you naturally scale the program in a way that results in a huge transformation without driving disruption."

**Enbridge's decision to implement direct sourcing by first dipping its toe into the water with a student hiring program offers a compelling proof point to the gradual roll-out approach** that Raise recommends. When Raise developed a comprehensive direct sourcing student hiring solution for Enbridge in 2020, it allowed 125 different hiring managers at Enbridge to see first-hand how direct sourcing was a pathway to hiring better and faster for less. Dean Bergen, Manager of Category Management Professional Services at Enbridge, notes, **"Using Managed Direct Sourcing for the student program got us out of the weeds, and gave us a more strategic view."**

After the initial success of direct sourcing for student hires, Enbridge continued to roll the implementation out across the organization. Brooke Hudon, who worked closely with Enbridge during this phase, notes, **"Once Enbridge saw the impact that direct sourcing had in terms of capturing the essence of their brand with a target audience that was eager to work with them, they were excited about the potential of taking that more thoughtful, consistent approach to their broader candidate marketplace to help take competing energy sector employers out of their recruitment equation."**

Once again, rather than trying to do everything at once, Raise worked closely with the Enbridge team to use historical and real-time data to determine the specific skill sets and locations that were the most ripe to create direct sourcing talent pools for first.



**"Being able to access the organization's historical and current data gives us such an advantage as we build direct sourcing talent pools.** We can see hiring trends around skillsets and locations of specific roles, and we're having regular conversations with our clients about the likelihood of those trends repeating based on what's happening in their business that month. That information plays a central role in the conversations we're having with the talent in the pools of prospective hires we're curating for our clients. Direct sourcing is about being proactive WHILE reacting. Those data-driven conversations like we were having with Enbridge help ensure the talent pools we build reflect actual demand. It's like having a GPS that updates your route based on real-time traffic patterns. You get to your destination so much faster when you can adjust where you're going based on what is actually happening on the roads," adds Brooke.

**"The lesson that other companies can take away from the success that Enbridge and so many of our other clients have experienced with their direct sourcing efforts is, bluntly put, stop talking about it and just do it!"** says Rick Roberts, adding, "When you start at a small scale, your internal stakeholders are going to see successes quite quickly, and those stories get shared in a way that gets you so much more bang for your buck than standing in front of people trying to sell them on the idea with success stories from other companies."

## ARE YOU READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP TOWARD IMPLEMENTING DIRECT SOURCING IN YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Our free [Direct Sourcing Starter Pack](#) contains helpful worksheets designed to set your implementation team up for success. Now is also a great time to schedule a [complimentary discovery call](#) with one of our direct sourcing experts.

