

## PlastikCity Blog – Maintaining Your Supply Chain in our New Isolated Economy



**Many plastic sector companies have now begun the process of ramping up their production. As businesses 'turn on the taps', they will have to find new ways of connecting with their supply chain.**

In the short term, suppliers of vital equipment and raw material may still have a significantly reduced capacity, particularly if their own manufacturing facilities are overseas. This might mean that you will need to find alternative solutions, but if you need assistance in specifying the best solution, technical support staff may be working from home and unable to visit your site.

This situation will be made more difficult by:

- The need to protect your workforce from site visitors that aren't aware of your new safety protocols
- Your procurement team may be at a reduced level, so an increased workload will be difficult to manage
- Finding new suppliers that meet your required standards will be challenging

Almost by accident, **PlastikCity's 'Find a Supplier'** service has provided a solution to many of these problems. The site was developed to simplify the procurement process and make our sector more efficient. This was achieved by:

- Covering every possible requirement of a modern UK plastic processing company
- Offering an efficient way to find UK manufacturers of plastic components



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- Restricting the number of suppliers in each site category, and making sure that they meet strict criteria
- Developing easy to use forms that allowed equipment or material to be correctly specified **without the need for a site visit**, and then get comparative quotes from selected suppliers

During the COVID crisis, site traffic levels have increased sharply, so it looks like this model has already proved to be useful under the current conditions.

### **But what about longer-term effects of the current crisis?**

In the longer term, people may see unnecessary travel as both inefficient and harmful to the environment. They have learned to rely on digital forms of communication, whether emails or video conferencing, so many now see this as a more efficient way of conducting business. They have also seen significant improvements to the environment, pollution levels dropping dramatically in a few short weeks.

Several studies have shown that the crisis has significantly and permanently changed consumer behaviour, and this should still apply at an industrial level. Imagine a scenario where a company needs quotes for material and equipment to support a potential project. It may be that they are one of four injection moulding companies that are tendering for components required for a new car model that is due for launch in two years. They need quotes for moulding machines, ancillary equipment, and raw material, as well as additional site services. In the past, they may have contacted at least three potential suppliers for each item needed and asked for a site visit.

*4 companies tendering for work x 5 items of production equipment or material needed x 3 supplier quotes for each item = **60 site visits in total.***

Each site visit involves several manhours and many miles on a motorway, whereas submitting requirements through the [PlastikCity site](#) could have achieved the same result with no travel and in a couple of hours at most. If and when the project materialised, they could then organise an onsite meeting with their shortlisted suppliers.

COVID-19 is a considerable challenge, and maintaining both a healthy workforce and supply chain will be of paramount importance. It is also safe to conclude that the way we do business will be permanently changed, although not necessarily in a negative way. If we can work more efficiently and also protect our environment, then something very positive could emerge from the current turmoil!

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### **About PlastikCity:**

PlastikCity is a web-based procurement and marketing facility, serving the UK plastics industry. This includes a facility to acquire and compare quotes from the UK's leading suppliers, across a comprehensive range of products and services. All suppliers are vetted to have a strong UK base and excellent service. PlastikCity also has a facility to trade used and surplus equipment and material, and a plastics jobs section, which includes an area for employers to advertise their vacancies, and for candidates to advertise their profiles. Additionally, the website has a range of online industry calculators and useful documents.



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PlastikCity also has a sister website, PlastikMedia ([www.plastikmedia.co.uk](http://www.plastikmedia.co.uk)). PlastikMedia publishes the latest news from leading companies in the plastics industry.