



OPEN STANDARDS AND CERTIFIED PRODUCTS

Purchasing Preference for Certified Products

Members of The Open Group are well aware of the benefits of buying IT products that are certified as conformant to open standards. However, the key points in this message are also important to the many people who make IT purchasing decisions.

Key Benefits of Standards

Using standards-based products:

- Improves the ability to interoperate with other standards-based products
- Reduces procurement complexity
- Simplifies bid analysis
- Reduces integration time and costs
- Reduces or removes the need for conformance testing
- Provides an IT system that is ready for expansion and migration with new certified products

So we encourage customers of IT products to adopt a policy of giving preference to buying products that are based on open standards.

Why Standards are not Enough

Claims by a supplier that their product conforms to a standard are good. However, this gives the customer no real power of enforcement or redress if conformance problems arise, other than the goodwill they have with their supplier.

Certified Products

A product that is certified by a reputable, independent, third-party authority provides verification to back the vendor's claims that it conforms to the applicable standard(s).

It also enables suppliers to assert and substantiate claims that their certified product does conform to the applicable standard(s).

Certification by The Open Group

The Open Group operates the world's premier IT certification service. It is backed by a legally binding vendor warranty of conformance. This warranty ensures that:

- The Certified Product conforms to the applicable standard
- The Certified Product will remain conformant throughout its life
- If a non-conformance issue arises, the vendor guarantees that the product will be fixed in a timely manner

For further information, including test suite development and our existing certification customer base, see

www.opengroup.org/certification.

Customer Pull-Through

Supplier commitment to investing in the certification of their products is dependent on their customers buying certified products.

Customer procurement pull-through is vital to growing the availability of Certified Products.

Suppliers will invest in obtaining certification for their products sooner if customers make this a condition of their procurements.

How?

Make it your policy to demand Certified Products. Include in your procurements:

“Our Procurement Policy is to give preference to products which are certified as conforming to the applicable standards.”

Share this message with your purchasing operations managers and decision-makers.

EXAMPLES

Statement of Intent

To make certification a part of your future procurement, make it known by issuing a Statement of Intent. This statement lets product vendors know your intentions, assuring them that certification of their products is a key requirement and allowing them time to ensure that their products comply. As a result, you will have a wider range of products from which to choose, each conforming to an open standard.

Content

A Statement of Intent is a non-binding summary of the major requirements of your future acquisitions. So it should include the following components:

- General description of your operating environment, including any known constraints
- Requirement for Certified Products; if appropriate, highlight requirements and options that are most important
- Contact points should further clarification be necessary

Benefits

Statements of Intent have the potential to greatly influence product and application vendors and, therefore, better satisfy your needs.

Procurement benefits include:

- Early availability of products delivering the benefits of certification to your business
- Shorter procurement cycles
- A simpler procurement process – reduces the complexity of your procurement document, simplifies your bid analysis and reduces – or even eliminates – the need for product testing
- Precisely defined Product Standard – takes the unknown out of what the product is and does
- Guarantee - products certified by The Open Group are subject to a legal agreement with the vendor in which they guarantee that their product conforms and will remain conformant during the lifetime that the product is registered
- Interoperability Program – gives buyers recourse to address interoperability problems between multiple suppliers' Certified Products – suppliers who have certified their products through The Open Group have committed to work together with The Open Group to deliver a speedy solution to any interoperability problems

Endorsements

Let it be publicly known that you support procurement of Certified Products, by issuing an endorsement that we and you can use. Contact us at cs@opengroup.org for details.

Procurement Statements

Experience has shown that the more structured your communication vehicle, the easier it will be to evaluate the bids you receive from potential suppliers.

Defining a standard format and numbering system for the requirements is very useful. For example, you may list your operating systems requirements, followed by your communications requirements, etc.

In addition to the functionality requirements, your procurement document should communicate key background issues to help the suppliers bid their most appropriate products. Background issues include:

- Your business objectives in undertaking the procurement
- How the procurement fits into your overall information architecture
- Corporate policies and constraints that may influence the IT decision – is use of Certified Products your policy?

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