



CLIENT

Sumitomo Electric Bordnetze (SEBN)

INDUSTRY

Automotive

COMPANY SIZE

Around 40,000 employees in 14 countries

TOPIC

Procurement & Cost Management
Supplier Partnerships

PROJECT LEAD

Harald Enz, Managing Director
Dominik Steffani, Partner

ENHANCING SUPPLIER PARTNERSHIPS **TO SUPPORT SEBN'S GROWTH**

Through cost improvements and a new supplier partnership model, SEBN established a procurement function well positioned for growth in a challenging market environment.

THE SITUATION

SEBN is on a fundamental transformation journey. As a global Tier-1 supplier of wiring harness systems, the company operates under intense cost pressure, rapid automotive transformation and rising global competition.

At the same time, SEBN pursues an ambitious growth agenda: broadening its customer portfolio, winning highly competitive RFQs and building strategic supplier partnerships.

With a significant share of total costs driven by external spend, procurement became a decisive lever to protect margins, enable growth and strengthen SEBN's position as a resilient Tier-1 partner.

CLIENT CHALLENGE

While the ambition was clear, execution proved demanding. The automotive industry is undergoing a period of profound change and uncertainty, SEBN finds itself in a classic sandwich position – caught between suppliers still above pre-crisis price levels and customers demanding continuous cost reductions.

At the same time, procurement had to fundamentally change its role: from a transactional function to a strategic, performance-driven business partner. This required a reset of supplier relationships – away from broad, heterogeneous cooperation towards focused, transparent and performance-based partnerships.

Pure strategy consulting would not have been sufficient. What SEBN needed was hands-on support, fast alignment across functions, and real negotiation outcomes with top suppliers.

SOLUTION STRATEGY

SEBN partnered with H&Z Management Consulting to deliver exactly that – true to the H&Z motto “From ambition to impact”. The joint SEBN-H&Z team worked side by side, combining strategic clarity with rigorous execution.



1. Communicate

Clear articulation and communication of the new SEBN strategy and supplier partnership model, translated into a compelling and consistent narrative for top suppliers.



2. Execute

Design and execution of a partnership-oriented supplier approach, combining cost discipline with long-term collaboration and transparency.



3. Negotiate

H&Z preparation and support of top supplier negotiations, resulting in significant and immediate P&L effects through price reductions, improved terms, and binding concession agreements.



4. Align

An enhanced cross-functional alignment across suppliers, with procurement, sales, and engineering fully aligned – reinforcing SEBN's credibility and negotiation strength.



5. Strengthen

Strengthening and further developing the procurement organization, strengthening its role as a strategic value driver within SEBN and as a respected counterpart for key suppliers.

IMPACT DELIVERED

COST IMPROVEMENTS AND STRONG SUPPLIER COMMITMENT

The project delivered measurable cost improvements, enhanced cost competitiveness, stronger supplier commitment, and a procurement function well positioned to support SEBN's growth ambitions in a challenging market environment.

- Immediate P&L effects through price reductions, improved terms, and binding concession agreements
- Enhanced cost competitiveness in a challenging market environment
- Focused, transparent and performance-based partnerships with top suppliers

This project demonstrates what defines H&Z: hands-on consulting, strong ownership, and a relentless focus on results. Together with SEBN, we turned strategic intent into concrete outcomes – enabling procurement to become a true enabler of competitiveness, growth, and long-term partnerships.



CLIENT PERSPECTIVE

H&Z combined deep expertise in sustainable transformation with a strong focus on measurable results. Their team worked closely with us, providing hands-on support and strengthening our capabilities throughout the project.

Zeljko Glisin

Executive Officer Procurement & Supply Chain Management

Working with H&Z was a refreshing experience. They delivered on their commitments, supported execution in a very pragmatic way, and helped further improve our team's performance. I would be happy to work with them again.

Claus Nottbrock

Executive Director Business Operations & Strategic Transformation



OUR PERSPECTIVE

Partnership is often confused with being nice to suppliers. True partnership is much more demanding: transparency on performance, tough conversations on cost, and mutual commitments that both sides can be held accountable for.

Dominik Steffani

Partner, H&Z

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OUR CORE SERVICES



Procurement



Operational Excellence



Product Improvement



Sales & Customer Experience



Organisational Efficiency



Corporate Restructuring



Digital & AI



FROM AMBITION TO IMPACT WITH HEAD, HEART AND HAND

We believe that transformation starts with ambition and becomes reality through measurable results. With a clear purpose, we help organisations reduce complexity and turn vision into lasting impact.

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