



VERVE™

SUPPLIER GUIDE

2023





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1. Purpose of this Guide

The purpose of this *Supplier Guide* is to provide a high-level overview of **VERVE**, define roles & responsibilities, and set expectations for business partners participating in VERVE. This document also outlines mandatory actions and recommended best practices. The ultimate goal of the document is to ensure thorough and accurate representation of your goods and services while providing a compelling user experience to promote adoption and growth.

Audience for the Guide

This audience for this Guide is the E&I business partner primary point of contact and the team leading the business relationship. The Guide will also be of interest to eProcurement resources responsible for providing and maintaining punchout catalogs, as well as business partner resources responsible for responding to Request for Quote (RFQs) and Request for Information (RFIs).

The Guide will also be helpful to potential business partners interested in learning more about VERVE during the E&I RFP solicitation process.

2. Who is E&I?

E&I Cooperative Services is the only member-owned, non-profit sourcing cooperative focused exclusively on serving the education community. And because it's our sole focus, we are uniquely equipped with the knowledge, experience, and passion to meet the specialized needs of educational procurement.

We help our more than 5,800 member institutions make informed, analytics-driven decisions to capture more spend and optimize their education dollars.

We do this by delivering unsurpassed value and an exceptional experience through a broad portfolio of competitively solicited contracts with industry-leading suppliers, as well as innovative sourcing solutions such as Strategic Spend Assessments and a range of eProcurement offerings.

3. Why eProcurement?

All schools need to optimize their supply chain operation and spend under management. eProcurement creates the easiest path to purchase for all users. E&I offers a range of eProcurement solutions and complementary services that fit the needs of different institutions based on your budget, resources, and level of integration requirements.

Although many institutions recognize the value of eProcurement, it can too often seem out of reach. That is often due to common barriers, including cost, lack of resources, and perceived complexity, among other factors.



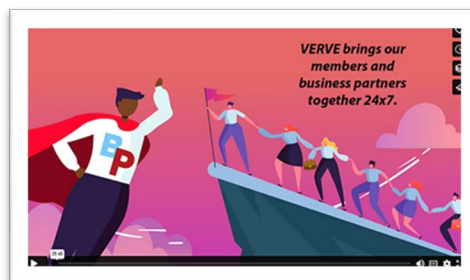
To mitigate these issues, E&I has focused on bringing an eProcurement software as a service (SaaS) to market. That service is **VERVE** and is included at **no cost** to E&I members as part of their membership. E&I manages the entire service behind the scenes so that the member does not have to incur administrative burden.

4. What is VERVE?

VERVE, from E&I, is an online service that delivers an intuitive, strategic eProcurement experience across a member's entire campus. Provided at no cost as part of E&I membership, VERVE offers one-stop shopping for users who can buy with p-cards or purchase orders (POs) for a convenient, efficient, and cohesive shopping experience, while enabling their institution to drive cost savings and improve spend management. VERVE helps users connect with E&I suppliers and contracts 24x7, in a secure, controlled web environment using their own unique username and password.

Key Highlights:

- **Ease-of-Use:** E&I sets up VERVE and enables members to get quick and easy access to suppliers.
- **Comprehensive Portfolio Focused on Education:** With contracts developed specifically for education, VERVE becomes the go-to destination for all users; they can search for everything they need, from technology and MRO to office supplies, scientific equipment, and more.
- **Great Pricing, Terms, and Conditions:** All enabled E&I contracts include pre-established pricing, terms, and conditions. Plus, members can add their own member-specific E&I supplier contracts.
- **Easy Ordering:** Shoppers love VERVE – it's faster, easier, and more rewarding to purchase through a one-stop eProcurement solution and it helps members track purchases in one place.
- **Cross-Catalog Search:** With full federated search capabilities across supplier catalogs, users can find exactly what they need, when they need it.
- **Ordering Flexibility:** Purchases can be made with p-cards or purchase orders and can also be initiated through quote requests and RFIs.
- **Integration and Control:** Members have basic administrative rights to manage approval workflows and can punchout from existing ERP or eProcurement systems at low or no cost.
- **Branding:** Institutions can add their school logo and a customized welcome message to their instance of VERVE.



[Play](#)



5. Who is EqualLevel?

EqualLevel is E&I's solution provider for VERVE and is the sole developer of all underpinning technology. EqualLevel was founded in 2010 with the goal of creating a straightforward procurement solution that helps public sector organizations streamline operations and optimize spending. EqualLevel was “born in the cloud,” developed on a single code base, and is 100% SaaS-based.

Key Highlights:

- Innovative procure-to-pay compliance platform that guides employees to all approved contracts to ensure they never overpay.
- Enables shoppers to punchout to multiple suppliers in a single punchout session, and issue purchase orders to suppliers.
- EqualLevel Go Store – a fully-featured eCommerce store specifically designed to support punchout commerce.
- With federated search, shoppers can find the same products from different suppliers and choose based on best value.
- Unique patent pending technology (EqualLevel Savings Advisor or ‘ELSA’) facilitates best value purchase decisions – prior to purchase being completed.
- An API connector enables real time product search and price checks.
- Purchase requisitions are automatically converted to electronic orders and electronically transmitted to the supplier via cXML.
- E&I partners with EqualLevel to onboard suppliers.
- Flexibility to customize and avail of additional functionality.

6. How does VERVE Benefit our Business Partners?

If you're an E&I business partner reading this Guide, there's a good chance you already have a presence in VERVE. That's great! We believe that VERVE enables members to actualize the full buying potential of their campus by creating the path of least resistance - so that end users can easily find and purchase your products and services. In a nutshell, VERVE serves as a conduit to bring our members and business partners together 24x7 in an integrated online platform pre-loaded with E&I contracts. That's a powerful proposition!

VERVE is offered to our members and suppliers at NO COST. More importantly, this new service is available beyond procurement, to departmental buyers and end users. This gives your contract *much* wider visibility across campus communities and empowers those users to buy directly off your E&I contract.

How Does VERVE Work for Business Partners?

VERVE features an easy-to-use and intuitive interface that is similar to how we all shop at home today. Its powerful search functionalities allow shoppers to search across *all* contracts, and just like our own everyday shopping experiences, members can flag their favorite items from your contract – making recurring purchases fast, intuitive, and easy. Members can use p-cards immediately, and can access additional functionality such as purchase orders, requests for quote (RFQ), basic approvals, and simple account administrative controls, if desired – all *still at no cost!*

There are many additional benefits that VERVE brings to our business partners, including:

- *All suppliers* will have their own unique profile, regardless of their level of ecommerce capability, and are also able to build a strong branded presence.
- Because VERVE primarily serves our small and mid-sized colleges and universities, you will be reaching a group of our members that may have been traditionally underserved. This opens new channels that may have been previously untapped for your organization – and enables you to develop new relationships with a large number of these institutions.
- Another major advantage for business partners is that your company’s exposure to our national membership will grow exponentially. Think of what this means in terms of sales reach. Your sales teams may not traditionally have had the time or resources to reach these institutions or their end users en masse. VERVE becomes a “go-to” destination for members, exposing your brand, products, and services to shoppers – possibly for the first time – so they can shop your offerings seamlessly, and at any time, 24x7.
- E&I guides you through the supplier enablement process and ensures that your success in VERVE is truly maximized.



[Learn More](#)

7. What does E&I Expect of its Suppliers?

All suppliers can have their own unique profile in VERVE, regardless of their level of ecommerce capability. Suppliers should participate based upon their current e-commerce capabilities, such as punchout catalog or base e-commerce (request for quote). Participating suppliers may have the following features in VERVE (depending upon e-commerce capabilities):

- VERVE Content
 - Contract profile
 - Contract search by keyword
 - Brochures, videos, and other relevant assets
- Transaction Functionality
 - Catalog
 - Request for quote or information
 - Custom request form
 - Self-initiated quote
 - Receive electronic orders

Benefits of VERVE Content and Transaction Functionality include:

- a. **Search Terms and Keywords:** Including keywords within a supplier's contract profile enables shoppers to leverage VERVE's rich search functionalities, including searching product catalogs, as well as contract profiles. All suppliers benefit from keywords, even those without catalogs. Any time a shopper enters a search word or phrase, the search returns catalog items from supplier catalogs, as well as the supplier's contract profile. There is no limit to the number of keywords or phrases a supplier may include in its contract profile. Typically, it would be a supplier's categories, subcategories, or product types.
- b. **Request for Quote (RFQ):** A VERVE user who's looking to solicit the best price from multiple suppliers for the purchase of specific products or services can use RFQ. With a single click, the quote is sent to the selected suppliers.
- c. **Request for Information (RFI):** A member looking to gather information on potential suppliers of a good or service can submit a request for information to one or multiple suppliers. RFIs can be very useful in situations where an organization has little knowledge on possible suppliers and wants to reduce the time and cost of evaluation.

8. Supplier Enablement Functionality & Best Practice

Depending on your needs, capabilities, and requirements, there are options to best suit your organization. Whether you're using VERVE to offer a dynamic punchout catalog, receive and respond to RFQs, or just simply to expose VERVE users to your brand, profile, assets, and offerings, VERVE serves as a conduit to bring our members and business partners together 24x7 in an integrated online platform.

I. EqualLevel Go Store

The **GO Store** is a full-featured e-commerce store designed specifically to support punchout commerce. GO Store connects seamlessly with cXML eProcurement systems including EqualLevel, Coupa, Ariba, JAGGAER, Peoplesoft, Oracle, Workday, and SAP. GO is available at no charge to E&I suppliers who do not already have a punchout-enabled e-commerce store.

Suppliers who participate with a punchout catalog in VERVE are automatically provided with a Go Store account by EqualLevel. If you have a punchout to your ecommerce site from VERVE, the GO Store will be configured by your company to forward all orders to your order system.

NOTE: There would be no need to log into the GO Store once order forwarding is set up.

If EqualLevel will be used to set up a Punchout in a Go Store, it becomes your central e-commerce repository for order management, quote review and response, and order and shipping confirmation. The Go Store is also where you will upload your catalog file.

Go Store Catalog Best Practice

- a. Include the VERVE logo and member logo on your landing page so shoppers know they are getting the pricing and protection of using E&I contracts when they punchout to your site.
- b. Customized landing page using some of the HTML capabilities of the Go Store as well as descriptive categories are recommended, at a minimum, to present the search items so shoppers know the depth of the catalog offering.
- c. Review [Go Store Training Videos](#) for additional best practices and guidance.

II. Punchout Catalogs

There are two scenarios to set up a punchout catalog:

- **E-commerce site that is punchout capable.** Using Standard cXML Punchout and Order Delivery methods, you can check out the [EqualLevel documentation](#) to better understand the process. You navigate a punchout like you would any other e-commerce website. When a shopper has completed building a shopping cart, the shopper transfers their cart back to VERVE to create a requisition.
- **E-commerce site or unable to provide punchout experience.** Business Partners in this category can utilize the EqualLevel GO Store and set up their own punchout. See the [documentation for EqualLevel GO](#) (punchout is offered at no cost for E&I Business Partners). All that is needed is an Excel file and images to upload to present to shoppers in VERVE. Create a custom landing page and homepage with automatic search enabled in VERVE. For dynamic prices or frequent product changes, you may want to explore automated file imports.



Catalog Best Practice

Go Store punchout suppliers should also check out these guides for information on how to set up their landing page.

<https://documentation.equallevel.com/kb/display/eqlgoadmin/Customize+your+Home+Page>

<https://documentation.equallevel.com/kb/display/eqlgoadmin/Create+a+Custom+Homepage+for+a+Connection>

[Catalog Imports](#)

[Catalog Data Quality Best Practices](#)

III. Base E-commerce (Request for Quote)

EqualLevel will setup a Go Store account for quotes and order management. Suppliers without catalog capabilities may still participate with Request for Quote (RFQ) functionality.

Best Practice

When a quote request is received, it's best to reply to the quote from directly within the VERVE environment. Expected response time is one-two business days. Faster is always better!

There are several reasons to reply within VERVE, including:

1. The member has a copy they can easily refer to.
2. The member can take the quote and add it directly to their cart for ease and speed of creating an order.

Minimum Requirements

At a minimum, an email address or distribution list is needed to receive the Request for Quote.

IV. No Catalog (Best Practice for Enhancing your VERVE Presence)

In cases where a catalog offering isn't an option, we recommend (at a minimum) that a PDF catalog, brochures, and related specifications should be uploaded to your profile so that members can access a copy.

9. FAQs

<https://www.eandi.org/verve/#faqs>

10. Supplier Resources

E&I

- eProcurement Solutions for E&I Suppliers: <https://www.eandi.org/suppliers/eprocurement/>
- Training Resources for E&I Suppliers: <https://www.eandi.org/suppliers/training-resources/>

EqualLevel

- [EqualLevel Supplier Resources](#)
- EqualLevel Supplier Support Team at suppliers@equallevel.com. All requests to suppliers@equallevel.com get captured as support tickets and tracked to closure.
- EqualLevel Go Store Training: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeAPUKPLIF4DyberU2KVkNq9OM-fXYnnz>
- Punchout & Order Delivery Samples: <https://documentation.equallevel.com/kb/display/suppliers/PunchOut>

Note: You may need to be logged in to your Go Store account to access these Supplier resources.

For help with VERVE or any additional questions, please contact the VERVE Administrator at:

VERVEadmin@eandi.org



Learn More
About VERVE