

## 1 Be Careful What You Wish For

The dipping' financial performance figures were putting a damper on the usual festive spirits amongst Xmas Global's board members. The CEO in his red coat and white fluffy beard was glowering at his Procurement Director and drumming his fingers on the polished wood. Other members were shuffling their chairs to put some distance between themselves and the elderly elf who was the CFO.

"*Explanations??*" the CEO roared.

The CFO piped-up in his reedy voice: "*After last Christmas we decided that the procurement department was growing out of all proportion and sucking up elves from packaging and distribution. The cost of managing our thousands of supply contracts was out of control.*"

The Procurement Director gave the CFO a sour look and took up the tale. "*I decided to 'persuade' two of our major suppliers to manage all the rest. We thought we could lose all the headaches, reduce our overheads and by stimulating a little competition between the two, we'd get an efficient, effective and low-cost operation.*"

"*But it didn't work out like that!*" yelled the Director of Operations, a young, exuberant, over-promoted elf. "*Instead, I need more people than ever to sort out the problems from both our squabbling Tier 1 suppliers and all the quality issues from the confused Tier 2 suppliers.*"

"*What's more,*" muttered the Commercial Director gloomily "*I suspect this is all a smokescreen and they are really colluding to put up the prices.*"

There was a small explosion from the head of the table.



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