

5 advantages category experts bring to your indirect spend

By Blaine Douglas, SVP/GM



Strategic partnerships that add category depth can save you millions

Indirect spend accounts for 20% to 25% of your health system's total budget. From elevator maintenance to security services, each category operates under different market dynamics, vendor capabilities and performance benchmarks. Yet most health systems manage these categories with generalist procurement teams that lack the depth to extract full value.

This expertise gap costs you millions.

Your procurement team excels at process management and vendor coordination. But category depth matters when markets shift and technologies evolve.

Generalist teams negotiate terms. Specialists optimize outcomes. That distinction determines whether you're paying market rates or subsidizing vendor margins. Explore how category specialists can be the difference maker in your organization and how you can achieve 15% savings without building costly internal teams.

1

Offer deep market knowledge

Specialists stay continuously immersed in their categories and understand what's been successful at other health systems. They deliver real-time market intelligence and bring pattern recognition from engagements across the industry.

2

Maintain unmatched vendor relationships

Specialists' extensive market knowledge creates credibility with suppliers, and they maintain vendor relationships that generalists can't replicate. That dynamic changes negotiating leverage and accelerates resolution when performance issues emerge.

3

Solve the contract timing problem

Strategic partnerships with specialists during contract renewal allow you to unlock the value that expertise brings without having the full-time headcount that sits idle between renewal cycles.



4 Take the guesswork out of negotiation

Specialists understand vendor capabilities, pricing structures and contractual norms. They've studied hundreds of category contracts to discover which terms protect your interests and which create future constraints.



5 Deliver value beyond price negotiation

Beyond reduced costs, specialists help you avoid selecting vendors whose capabilities don't match requirements, accepting specifications that create constraints and missing contractual protections that become critical during disputes.

Access category expertise without building teams

You don't need to hire specialists for every category. Leading health systems access expertise through strategic partnerships that provide category specialists on demand without fixed overhead.

With more than 200 category specialists, Vizient can serve this exact purpose.

Health systems leverage our expertise across IT, facilities, construction, food services, security and dozens of other non-clinical categories. Our specialists engage during critical decision points such as contract renewals, competitive solicitations and vendor transitions, then step back as implementation proceeds.

Specialists maintain continuous engagement across hundreds of health systems, accumulating pattern recognition that individual organizations can't replicate. The model scales efficiently. Small health systems access the same specialist expertise available to large academic medical centers.

Category expertise isn't optional for health systems serious about margin improvement. Specialists multiply your procurement capabilities with market intelligence that transforms routine renewals into competitive advantages.

Author



Blaine Douglas, SVP/GM

Indirect Spend and Purchased Services

Blaine Douglas brings more than 30 years of experience in the healthcare industry. His areas of expertise and professional skills include healthcare operations, principally focused on operational efficiencies and expense control. Douglas leads the non-clinical consulting practice at Vizient, which includes the purchased services, supply chain, construction and facilities, and capital and equipment planning consulting service areas



To learn more about Vizient category experts, contact your Vizient representative or purchased.services@vizientinc.com.

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