

# Smarter strategies for procedural optimization: Improving operating room performance and profitability

Five essential focus areas for perioperative supply chain transformation





## Introduction: The case for procedural optimization

**Hospitals across the country face a tightening vise: escalating procedural costs, inconsistent workflows and growing pressure to deliver value-based care amid workforce shortages.**

In the operating room (OR)—where up to **40% of a hospital's costs originate**—these challenges are especially acute.

Despite ongoing efforts to improve perioperative performance, many health systems are hamstrung by fragmented data, outdated processes and persistent variability in clinical practice. Supply chain leaders often know the problems exist, but lack the transparency, tools and alignment needed to fix them.

It's time for a smarter, more connected approach. Procedural optimization brings together data-driven insights, clinical alignment and workflow

automation to tackle cost, quality and performance at the procedural level. By using advanced analytics, keeping preference cards accurate, automating implant workflows and aligning stakeholders across departments, organizations can unlock significant savings and operational efficiencies—without compromising clinical outcomes.

Here are five essential focus areas to build a more resilient, value-driven perioperative supply chain.

# 1. Leverage data to drive decisions

## Reducing the variation in high-cost supplies

Variation in physician practice is inevitable. However, unmanaged variation in implants and surgical supplies can drive unnecessary expense and introduce quality risk. In procedures such as total joints or spinal fusions, costs can vary dramatically based on a surgeon's preferences, even when outcomes are similar.

**Vizient Procedural Analytics** enables leaders to identify these outliers, benchmark performance and create meaningful peer-to-peer conversations rooted in data. One system identified a 10–20% savings opportunity simply by comparing implant usage across its orthopedic team.

With supply data, case costs and clinical outcomes in one view, organizations can empower surgeons to make aligned, evidence-based decisions.

### Key takeaway:

Transparency breeds trust. Data creates a foundation for standardization that works for surgeons, patients and the bottom line.

### Solution:

Procedural analytics pinpoints outliers, supports peer benchmarking and aligns decisions with outcomes.

# 2. Maintain accurate preference cards

## Uncovering waste hiding in plain sight

A small inconsistency on a preference card can create waste and ripple effects across inventory and billing. Unfortunately, these issues are hard to detect without a systematic way to audit cards at scale.

With automated card audits via tools like PrefTech, organizations can continuously compare planned vs.

actual usage and flag anomalies in real time. In one example, a surgeon unknowingly continued to request a costly rotating-head stapler that was no longer needed. This oversight added up to thousands of dollars in avoidable expenses.

**Card standardization** not only reduces waste, but improves setup accuracy and surgeon satisfaction.

### Key takeaway:

Outdated preference cards aren't just inefficient, they're expensive. Regular review and automation turn hidden waste into visible savings.

### Solution:

Use technology to streamline and optimize preference cards.

# 3. Automate the bill-only process

## Improving implant workflow accuracy

Manual workflows for bill-only implants are vulnerable to pricing errors, documentation gaps and compliance risk. Without automated processes, organizations face delays, mismatched purchase orders and even unapproved implants entering the OR.

Automated bill-only solutions streamline implant workflows, from

scheduling and vendor coordination to post-op documentation and billing. One hospital discovered a non-compliant implant was being used because the physician lacked visibility into contract pricing. This triggered a costly compliance review.

Automation closes the loop between clinical decisions and contract terms. This ensures accuracy from the point of scheduling through reimbursement.

### Key takeaway:

The traditional bill-only process is manual and error-prone.

### Solution:

Automation delivers cost transparency and enhanced compliance while reducing administrative burden.





## 4. Engage stakeholders across disciplines

### Breaking silos to improve decisions

Clinical, financial and supply chain teams often operate in parallel but not in sync. When visibility is limited to departmental silos, costly decisions go unchecked and opportunities for collaboration are missed.

A unified view, using shared dashboards and cross-functional tools, helps teams align around common

goals. At one Pennsylvania health system, leadership discovered stark cost variation in total knees and surgical togas versus hoods. The driver? A lack of cross-functional visibility.

When clinical, supply chain and finance leaders collaborate, they uncover solutions no one could see alone.

### Key takeaway:

Procedural optimization isn't just a supply chain issue. It's a team sport. Success depends on shared data and aligned priorities.

### Solution:

Integrated tools and shared dashboards build alignment.

## 5. Build for long-term sustainability

### A blueprint for ongoing improvement

Quick wins are important, but lasting change requires structure, accountability and iteration. Without a long-term plan, gains fade, processes revert and costs creep back in.

To build procedural optimization into the fabric of the organization, leaders must define key performance indicators (KPI), track performance

over time and continuously engage clinicians in feedback loops. Organizations using integrated platforms have reported more strategic capital planning, improved life-cycle management and stronger clinician engagement.

Sustainability means more than just maintaining gains, it's about continuously evolving them.

### Key takeaway:

Procedural optimization is a journey, not a project. Build systems that can adapt, improve and scale with you.

### Solution:

Track metrics over time, establish a governance structure to sustain performance improvements and facilitate feedback loops with clinicians.

# Self-assessment: Is your perioperative supply chain ready?

Use this quick self-assessment to evaluate your organization's readiness and identify where to focus next.

## Leverage data to drive decisions

- Do you use supply usage and cost data to guide standardization?
- Are your physicians actively using procedural data in decision-making?

## Maintain accurate preference cards

- Are cards routinely reviewed, cleaned and standardized?
- Is automation used to track updates and reduce waste?

## Automate the bill-only process

- Is the workflow integrated with contracting and inventory systems?
- Are purchase order errors and payment delays being monitored and addressed accordingly?

## Engage stakeholders across disciplines

- Do your clinical, supply chain and finance professionals regularly collaborate?
- Is there physician buy-in and feedback collection?

## Build for long-term sustainability

- Are OR supply KPIs tracked consistently over time?
- Is there a plan for training, system updates and continuous improvement?
- Does your organization have a governance structure in place to balance clinical supply decision-making?



Not sure where to start? Connect with our team by scanning this QR code or email [dawn.perryman@vizientinc.com](mailto:dawn.perryman@vizientinc.com). We'll walk through your results and help map a path forward—tailored to your organization's needs, challenges and goals.

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