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A SINGLE-VENDOR STRATEGY TO STREAMLINE CARDIAC CARE DELIVERY

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CV BUSINESS WHITE PAPER

With Support From:



GE HealthCare

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INTRODUCTION

In today's complex healthcare landscape, cardiovascular care remains at the forefront of medical innovation and patient treatment. As healthcare administrators and medical directors strive to optimize their facilities' performance, the choice of equipment vendors for cardiac procedural and imaging areas has become increasingly critical. This CV business white paper explores the operational, clinical and financial benefits of adopting a single-vendor strategy for cardiac equipment, providing valuable insights for decision-makers in healthcare management.

The cardiovascular diagnostics and procedures market has experienced significant growth in recent years, reflecting the increasing demand for advanced cardiac care. Focusing specifically on the cardiac imaging segment, which includes modalities such as ultrasound, nuclear medicine, PET, computed tomography (CT) and MRI for cardiac applications, recent market analyses reveal a more robust growth trajectory. The global cardiac imaging software market,

a key component of cardiac imaging technology, was valued at \$524.6 million in 2022 and is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8.7% during the forecast period.¹ This growth rate is notably higher than the overall medical imaging market, highlighting the particular dynamism in cardiac imaging.

Furthermore, when examining specific cardiac imaging technologies, we see even more impressive growth rates. For instance, the global cardiac computed tomography (CCT) market, which was valued at \$7,820.73 million in 2023, is expected to reach \$12,623.00 million by 2031, registering a CAGR of 7.26%.² This growth is driven by several factors, including the rising prevalence of cardiovascular diseases, technological advancements in imaging modalities, increasing adoption of minimally invasive cardiac procedures, and the growing need for accurate and early diagnosis of heart conditions.



The rapid advancement in CCT technology, particularly in areas such as photon-counting CT and quantitative plaque imaging, is revolutionizing cardiac diagnostics. These innovations are enabling more precise detection of stenosis, improved visualization of coronary arteries and enhanced risk prediction capabilities.³ Such technological progress coupled with the increasing integration of artificial intelligence in cardiac imaging is not only improving diagnostic accuracy but also streamlining workflows and enhancing clinical decision-making processes.

Specifically focusing on cath lab services, the market demonstrates robust expansion. The global cath lab services market, which encompasses the provision of diagnostic and therapeutic procedures performed in catheterization laboratories, was valued at \$46.0 billion in 2022 and is projected to reach \$78.2 billion by 2032, growing at a CAGR of 5.4% during this period. This market valuation represents the total cost of care for cath lab services, including both diagnostic and therapeutic procedure. The growth is attributed to the increasing prevalence of cardiovascular diseases and the rising demand for minimally invasive procedures.⁴

As the market evolves, healthcare administrators face the challenge of managing a diverse array of equipment, including diagnostic and monitoring devices, therapeutic and surgical devices, and advanced imaging systems. The complexity of

coordinating multiple vendors for these various components can lead to operational inefficiencies, higher costs and potential gaps in patient care.

Recent research has demonstrated that adopting a single-sourcing strategy for medical equipment and software can significantly improve patient care quality. A study from the University of Notre Dame found that when hospitals move closer to a single-sourcing strategy for electronic health records (EHRs), patients receive better, evidence-based care.⁵ This principle can be extended to cardiac equipment for which interoperability and seamless integration are crucial for optimal performance. By centralizing procurement and management through a single vendor, healthcare facilities can potentially enhance their operational efficiency, reduce costs, and improve outcomes in cardiovascular care.

This CV business white paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the benefits of utilizing a single vendor for cardiac procedural and imaging equipment. We will examine how this approach can streamline operations, improve clinical outcomes, and optimize financial performance – key considerations for healthcare administrators in today's competitive and cost-conscious environment. The aim is to equip decision-makers with the knowledge needed to make informed choices about their cardiovascular equipment strategies, ultimately contributing to enhanced patient care and organizational success.

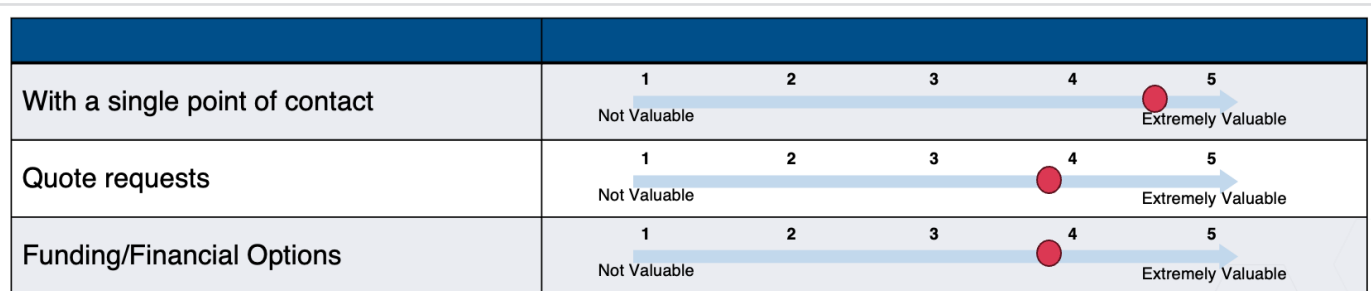


METHODOLOGY

To develop this publication, we employed a comprehensive methodology that included conducting voice of the customer interviews with 32 key stakeholders and performed an in-person site visit to gain firsthand insights into operational practices and challenges. These approaches allowed us to capture qualitative and quantitative data, ensuring that the subsequent analysis and recommendations are grounded in real-world experiences and aligned with industry needs.

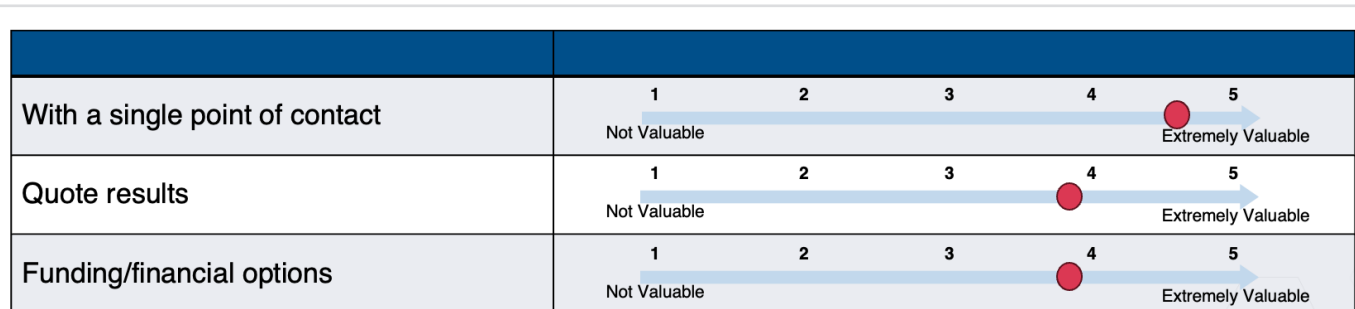
The findings highlighted in the graphics below showcase high-level stakeholder perspectives on the benefits of single-vendor solutions from an integrated system standpoint, while the second explores the potential efficiencies of leveraging a single platform across data, EHR integration and IT workflows (**Figures 1 and 2**).

Figure 1: Effect of Vendor Quotes/Single Point of Contact on Competitive Pricing



Summary of findings: Some reported that single-vendor quotes may prohibit competitive pricing. It is important to include service contracts in this, which can be a big win if done correctly. Many like the idea of a single point of contact. A common pain point is having to contact multiple people in the same organization who don't talk to each other (organizational silos).

Figure 2: The Value of a Single Platform



Summary of findings: This would be ideal; however, many sites have gotten used to having to work within multiple platforms that it has become the accepted standard.



OPERATIONAL BENEFITS

Adoption of a single-vendor strategy for cardiac procedural and imaging equipment offers operational advantages for healthcare facilities. In the complex landscape of cardiac care where a multitude of specialized equipment is required, this approach streamlines processes, enhances integration, and provides comprehensive support, ultimately leading to improved effectiveness and patient care.

The benefits of a single-vendor strategy extend across various aspects of healthcare operations, from procurement to daily clinical practice. This approach aligns with the growing trend in healthcare towards vendor consolidation, which has been shown to improve overall efficiency and outcomes. A recent study published in *Decision Sciences* demonstrates the positive impact of single-sourcing strategies in healthcare. The researchers found that as hospitals moved closer to single-sourcing for EHR systems, there was a significant improvement in conformance quality, which measures how frequently hospitals comply with evidence-based practices.⁵

In the cardiac care setting, the operational advantages of a single-vendor strategy are particularly evident. Seamless integration between diagnostic imaging equipment (such as CT scanners, MRI machines and echocardiography systems) and procedural equipment (like catheterization lab systems) is critical. This synchronization enhances not only the workflow for healthcare professionals but also the quality and consistency of care. Moreover, this approach addresses the challenge of “vendor

proliferation” that many healthcare organizations face. Healthcare facilities often accumulate a wide array of equipment and software systems from multiple vendors over time. This diversity can lead to increased complexity in managing and integrating these various technologies. Healthcare organizations can significantly reduce this complexity by adopting a single-vendor, making it easier to manage and maintain the various pieces of equipment and software. Equipment from the same vendor is typically designed to seamlessly work together, ensuring interconnection and communication between systems. This streamlined approach can ensure smooth operations and reduce technical issues to elevate patient care.

The comprehensive support of a single vendor contributes to improved operational efficiency. With one point of contact for all equipment-related issues, healthcare facilities can expect faster resolution of technical problems, more efficient training programs, and more effective preventive maintenance schedules. This can lead to reduced equipment downtime, which is essential in the high stakes of cardiac procedures.

The operational benefits of a single-vendor strategy translate into better patient care. By reducing administrative burdens, integrating equipment and streamlining support processes, healthcare professionals can focus more on patient care and less on managing technology. This shift in focus combined with the improved data flow and interoperability of integrated systems can lead to improved clinical decision-making and outcomes.

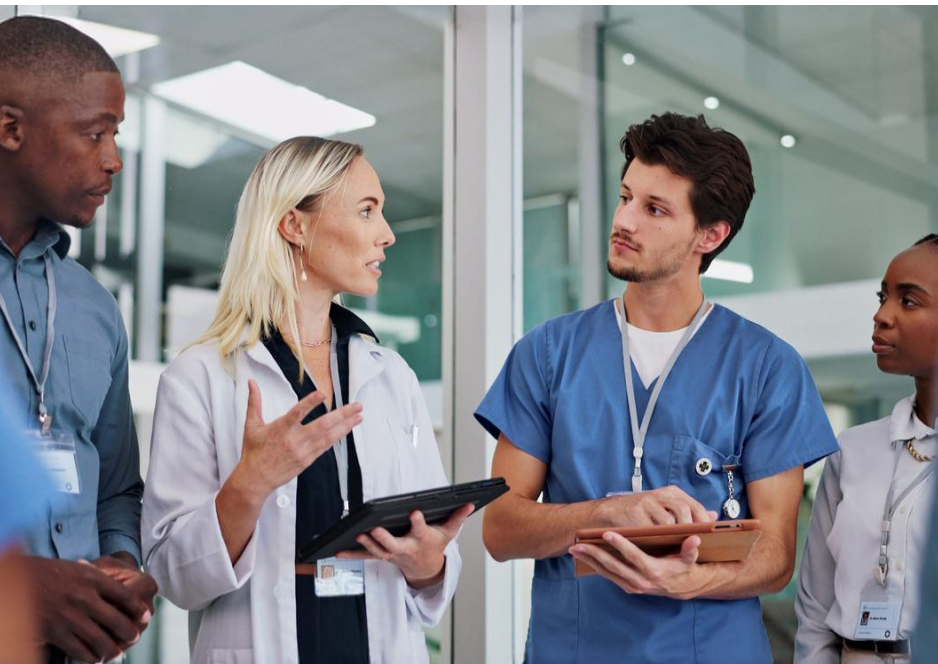


STREAMLINED PROCUREMENT PROCESSES

One of the primary operational benefits of utilizing a single vendor is the simplification of procurement processes. A study published in the *Journal of Medical Systems* found that healthcare facilities using integrated systems from a single vendor experienced a 34% reduction in interoperability issues compared to those using multi-vendor solutions.⁶ This streamlining effect is achieved through:

- **Simplifying Vendor Management:** Work with a single vendor to reduce the complexity of managing multiple supplier relationships, contracts and points of contact.
- **Reducing Administrative Burden:** Healthcare administrators can focus on core operations rather than juggling multiple contracts and procurement processes. A study in the *International Journal of Health Policy and Management* found that strategic purchasing approaches, including vendor consolidation, can significantly improve the efficiency of health spending and resource allocation.⁷
- **Improving Negotiation Power:** Consolidate purchases with one vendor for better pricing and terms. A comprehensive review in *Health Policy and Planning* demonstrated that strategic purchasing, including single-vendor approaches, can amplify a healthcare organization's bargaining power and lead to more cost-effective procurement.⁸

By leveraging operational benefits, healthcare organizations can create a more efficient, integrated and responsive cardiac care environment, advancing the quality of patient care, resource utilization and cost management.



BENEFITS OF ENHANCED EQUIPMENT INTEGRATION

A single-vendor approach improves equipment integration and interoperability through:

- ✓ **Improved Interoperability.**
- ✓ **Standardized User Interfaces:** Consistent interfaces across devices can reduce training time and minimize the risk of user errors.
- ✓ **Seamless Data Flow:** Integrated systems from a single vendor facilitate smoother data transfer between devices, enhancing clinical decision-making and patient care coordination.

SPECIALIZED VENDOR EXPERIENCE AND SUPPORT

Several operational advantages of partnering with one vendor include:

- ✓ **Comprehensive Support:** A single point of contact for all equipment-related issues streamlines problem-solving and reduces downtime.
- ✓ **Tailored Training Programs:** Vendors can offer customized training programs that cover their entire product range, ensuring staff proficiency across all equipment.
- ✓ **Proactive Maintenance:** Vendors with intimate knowledge of the healthcare facility's entire cardiac equipment ecosystem can provide more effective preventive maintenance, reducing the likelihood of unexpected failures.

FINANCIAL BENEFITS

The financial benefits of a single-vendor strategy extend beyond simple cost reductions. They encompass a range of advantages, including improved negotiating power, reduced administrative overhead, and more efficient resource use. This approach enables healthcare organizations to invest in scalable and future-proof technologies, leading to long-term financial sustainability.

Healthcare organizations face ever-present financial pressures, and the need for cost-effective care delivery is paramount. The single-vendor approach allows healthcare organizations to optimize their financial resources while maintaining or even improving the quality of patient care.

Investment in Future-Proof Technology

Cath labs and cardiovascular diagnostic imaging areas can achieve long-term savings through investment in scalable and upgradeable technologies from a single vendor. Healthcare facilities can future proof their equipment investments while maintaining consistency across their imaging systems.



COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF USING ONE VENDOR

This approach can support:

- ✓ Bulk purchasing discounts with volume-based pricing and preferred customer rates.
- ✓ Streamlined procurement process with reduced administrative costs and simplified contract management.
- ✓ Standardized equipment across facilities with lower training costs and reduced need for multiple equipment models.
- ✓ Consolidated maintenance contracts with a potential for lower overall maintenance fees and simplified scheduling and management of maintenance.
- ✓ Improved negotiating power with better leverage for long-term agreements and potential for additional value-added services.
- ✓ Lower implementation costs with reduced integration expenses and streamlined installation processes.
- ✓ Decreased software licensing fees with a potential for an enterprise-wide licensing agreement and simplified license management.
- ✓ Reduced IT support costs and streamlined IT infrastructure through fewer systems to maintain and troubleshoot.
- ✓ Lower training expenses with consistent user interfaces across the equipment and a simplified staff cross-training model.
- ✓ Economies of scale in upgrades and replacements (i.e., coordinated upgrade schedules and potential for trade-in or loyalty programs).

CLINICAL BENEFITS

This solution offers clinical advantages through diagnostic accuracy, workflow efficiency and the implementation of advanced procedures. Consistent use of imaging equipment minimizes variation that often arises when multiple vendors are involved, allowing healthcare teams to refine and optimize their skills through use of the same equipment. As a result, healthcare providers can maintain consistent quality and performance through better coordination between clinical teams. Additionally, the single-vendor strategy can support cutting-edge procedures and centralize data management, enhancing decision-making and patient outcomes.

CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS

While a single-vendor strategy for cardiovascular procedures and diagnostic imaging offers numerous benefits, it also presents several challenges and considerations that healthcare organizations must carefully evaluate.

Initial Investment and Transition Costs

Transitioning to a single-vendor model often requires significant upfront investment and can incur substantial transition costs. Healthcare organizations should consider:

- The cost of new equipment acquisition.
- Potential downtime during installation and staff training.
- Expenses related to data migration and system integration.
- Costs associated with contract termination or renegotiation with existing vendors.

A thorough cost-benefit analysis to ensure that the long-term savings outweigh the initial investment and transition costs is recommended.

Improved Diagnostic Accuracy and Patient Care

- ✓ Using a unified system ensures consistent quality and performance across all equipment, leading to accurate diagnostics and improved patient care.
- ✓ An integrated platform enhances the ability to perform comprehensive diagnostics, enabling clinicians to make informed decisions based on consistent and high-quality imaging results.

Enhanced Clinical Workflow

Benefits in this area include:

- ✓ Streamlined processes can reduce the time from diagnosis to treatment, minimizing delays and improving patient outcomes.
- ✓ Standardized equipment supports better coordination among clinical teams, facilitating smooth collaboration and efficient patient management.

Support for Advanced Procedures

- ✓ Through integrated systems, programs can implement cutting-edge procedures that rely on precise, coordinated equipment and imaging, such as minimally invasive surgeries.
- ✓ A single-vendor approach ensures compatibility and the ability to execute complex procedures effectively.

Enhanced Data Management and Decision Support

- ✓ A single platform enables centralized data management and supports clinical decision-making with advanced analytics and real-time insights, making it easier for clinical teams to operate efficiently.

Simplified Maintenance and Upgrades

- ✓ A single vendor offers standardized maintenance and upgrade pathways, ensuring that clinical teams have access to the latest technology with minimal disruption to patient care.



Vendor Lock-In Risks

One of the primary concerns includes the risk of vendor lock-in, which can limit an organization's flexibility and potentially lead to increased costs over time. A critical aspect of mitigating vendor lock-in risks is the implementation of strategic purchasing practices. This approach emphasizes the importance of careful vendor selection and skillful contract negotiation to maintain flexibility and protect the organization's interests over the long term.

Key considerations include:

- Ensuring contract terms allow for flexibility and periodic renegotiation.
- Maintaining in-house expertise to reduce dependency on vendor support.
- Establishing clear exit strategies and data portability clauses in contracts.

To maintain negotiating power, healthcare organizations should consider:

- Regular market assessments to stay informed about competitive offerings.
- Establishing performance benchmarks and including them in vendor agreements.
- Cultivating relationships with alternative vendors to maintain competitive pressure.

Customization and Flexibility

Healthcare organizations must ensure the chosen vendor can meet specific institutional needs and adapt to future technological advancements

Healthcare organizations should consider:

- The vendor's track record in adopting to new technologies and regulatory requirements.
- The level of customization available for workflows and reporting.
- The vendor's roadmap for future developments and their alignment with the organization's strategic goals.

Implementation Strategies

Transitioning to a single-vendor model for cardiovascular procedures and diagnostic imaging requires careful planning, stakeholder engagement and ongoing evaluation.

Assessment and Planning

The initial step in the transition is a comprehensive assessment of current equipment and vendor relationships, including:

1. Inventory of existing equipment and technologies.
2. Evaluation of current vendor contracts and performance.
3. Assessment of staff satisfaction with current equipment and vendors.
4. Analysis of maintenance costs and equipment downtime.

Developing a strategic plan for the transition should involve:

1. Setting clear objectives and timelines.
2. Identifying potential vendors and evaluating their offerings.
3. Conducting a cost-benefit analysis of the transition.
4. Planning for staff training and workflow adjustments.



Stakeholder Engagement

Involving key stakeholders in the decision-making process is important for ensuring alignment and support when transitioning to a single-vendor approach for cardiovascular procedures and diagnostic imaging. This process should be comprehensive and inclusive, considering the diverse perspectives within a healthcare organization.

Key stakeholders in this context may include healthcare administrators, physicians, nurses, clinical professionals, finance team members, purchasing/procurement officers, IT staff, quality assurance personnel, risk management officers and patient representatives. Each of these groups brings unique insights and concerns to the table, making their involvement essential for a successful transition.

Engaging these stakeholders can lead to several benefits:

1. **Higher Success Rates in Project Implementation.**
2. **Better Alignment With Practical Needs:** Involving end-users often results in solutions that better meet real-world requirements and improve user satisfaction.
3. **Improved Trust and Expectation Management:** Regular communication with stakeholders helps manage expectations and build trust during the transition period.
4. **Reduced Implementation Errors.**
5. **Increased Support for Change:** Stakeholders who feel involved in the process are more likely to support the change and actively contribute to its success.

To effectively engage stakeholders, healthcare organizations can implement several best practices:

- Establish a cross-functional committee with diverse representation from various stakeholder groups.
- Conduct regular meetings to gather feedback and address concerns throughout the transition process.
- Utilize tools like surveys and interviews to assess stakeholder needs and expectations.
- Provide training and resources to help stakeholders understand the new systems and processes.
- Communicate transparently about timelines, challenges and successes throughout the project.

By prioritizing stakeholder engagement, healthcare organizations can create a more inclusive decision-making process, leading to better-informed choices, smoother implementation and a more successful transition to a single-vendor model for cardiovascular care.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Establishing metrics for success and regularly reviewing performance against goals verifies the effectiveness of the single-vendor approach.

Key aspects of monitoring and evaluation include:

- Establishing baseline metrics for equipment performance, cost and clinical outcomes.
- Implementing regular data collection and analysis processes.
- Conducting periodic stakeholder surveys to assess satisfaction and identify areas for development.
- Regularly reviewing and adjusting the implementation strategy based on performance data.



CASE STUDY: LEHIGH VALLEY HEART AND VASCULAR INSTITUTE

An example of a successful healthcare institution that improved its clinical outcomes through single-vendor integration illustrates the tangible impact this strategy can have on patient care and operational efficiency. Lehigh Valley Heart and Vascular Institute (LVHVI) has experienced significant benefits when using one vendor across cardiology departments for imaging needs.

Benefits of Single-Vendor Standardization at LVHVI

- 1. Improved Staff Efficiency and Competency:**
 - ✓ Consistent user interfaces reduce learning curves and training time.
 - ✓ Staff can rotate between different sites seamlessly, improving flexibility and coverage.
 - ✓ Maintaining competency is easier with standardized equipment.
- 2. Enhanced Service and Support:**
 - ✓ GE HealthCare has provided excellent service with quick response times for repairs.
 - ✓ LVHVI hired a retired GE HealthCare service representative, further improving in-house support capabilities.
 - ✓ Standardization allows for more efficient troubleshooting by clinical engineering teams.
- 3. Streamlined Operations:**
 - ✓ Consistent protocols across all equipment improve workflow efficiency.
 - ✓ Setting up new equipment is more straightforward with a single applications specialist familiar with all systems.
- 4. Quality and Consistency:**
 - ✓ Standardization contributes to maintaining high-quality standards across all procedures.
 - ✓ Physicians benefit from consistent image quality and familiar interfaces.
- 5. Partnership Approach:**
 - ✓ GE HealthCare is viewed as a partner throughout the entire process, from contract to installation.
 - ✓ This partnership approach has led to better long-term support and collaboration.



Challenges and Considerations

While the benefits of single-vendor standardization are clear, LVHVI has identified several areas where GE HealthCare's solutions can further enhance cardiac care delivery:

1. **Seamless Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS) Integration:** GE HealthCare offers advanced integration capabilities between their cath lab equipment and the PACS, ensuring efficient image and viewing management. LVHVI recommends that customers work with GE HealthCare and their PACS vendor to create a seamless process for integration of image archiving.
2. **Comprehensive Radiation Monitoring:** GE HealthCare's DoseWatch solution offers an integrated radiation monitoring, eliminating the need for third-party solutions. This advanced tool provides real-time dose tracking and reporting, enhancing patient safety and regulatory compliance.
3. **Streamlined Software Updates:** Maintaining current software versions across all equipment can be challenging and costly.

GE HealthCare's commitment to continuous improvement is evident in the proactive approach to software updates. Their remote update capabilities and comprehensive service agreements ensure that equipment remains current with minimal disruption to clinical workflows.

4. **Continuous Innovation and Competitive Pricing:** Some team members noted that having a second vendor could help keep the primary vendor "on their toes" regarding pricing and updates. GE HealthCare's dedication to innovation and customer satisfaction drives them to consistently deliver cutting-edge technology and competitive pricing. Their long-term partnerships foster collaborative development, ensuring that solutions evolve to meet changing needs.

Single-Vendor Strategy Best Practices

LVHVI's experience with GE HealthCare has yielded significant benefits, demonstrating the value of a single-vendor approach. The following are positive learnings and best practices that LVHVI implemented successfully:

1. **Involve Key Stakeholders:** Ensure frontline staff and physicians are involved in equipment decision-making processes. LVHVI actively engaged frontline staff and physicians in the decision-making process, resulting in higher user satisfaction and adoption rates.
2. **Comprehensive Evaluation:** When considering new equipment, request image samples or arrange day-long demonstrations to assess capabilities fully from each vendor you are assessing. The facility conducted comprehensive assessments of the equipment ensuring that the chosen solutions met their specific needs.
3. **Strategic Negotiations:** By collaborating closely with purchasing departments, LVHVI secured optimal pricing and beneficial long-term service agreements.
4. **Plan for Future Needs:** During initial negotiations, LVHVI addressed potential future software upgrades and integration requirements to minimize unexpected costs and ensure scalability.
5. **Balanced Approach:** While embracing standardization, LVHVI remained open to new technologies that could significantly enhance patient care or operational efficiency.

LVHVI's experience with GE HealthCare as their primary cath lab vendor demonstrates the significant benefits of a single-vendor approach and led to several positive outcomes:

- **Improved Staff Efficiency:** Consistency in equipment across departments enhanced staff proficiency and workflows.
- **Enhanced Service Support:** A single point of contact for all equipment-related issues streamlined problem-solving and reduced downtime.
- **Maintained High-Quality Standards:** Standardized equipment ensured consistent performance and image quality across all departments.

While some challenges persist, particularly in the areas of integration and software updates, the overall impact on operational efficiency and quality of care has been overwhelmingly positive. By carefully managing its relationship with GE HealthCare and remaining open to strategic investments in new technologies, LVHVI has successfully positioned itself to continue delivering excellent cardiovascular care while maximizing the benefits of equipment standardization.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, adopting a single-vendor strategy for cardiac procedural and imaging equipment presents a compelling opportunity for healthcare administrators to optimize their facilities' performance. This approach offers operational, clinical and financial benefits that align closely with the goals of modern healthcare management. By streamlining procurement processes, enhancing equipment integration, and providing comprehensive vendor support, healthcare organizations can improve efficiency, reduce costs, and ultimately deliver better patient care.

The financial advantages of a single-vendor strategy extend beyond immediate cost savings, encompassing long-term benefits, such as improved negotiating power, reduced administrative overhead and more efficient resource utilization. Clinically, this approach leads to improved diagnostic accuracy, enhanced workflow efficiency and better support for advanced procedures. These benefits collectively contribute to higher-quality patient care and improved outcomes in cardiovascular treatment. However, it is crucial for healthcare administrators to carefully consider potential challenges, such as initial investment costs, vendor lock-in risks and the need for customization when implementing this strategy.

Looking ahead, the future of healthcare technology and vendor partnerships will likely continue to evolve, emphasizing interoperability, artificial intelligence integration and personalized medicine. Healthcare organizations that adopt a strategic single-vendor approach now will be well-positioned to navigate these future trends, leveraging their strong vendor relationships to stay at the forefront of cardiac care innovation. By carefully weighing the benefits and considerations outlined in this CV business white paper, healthcare administrators can make informed decisions that will drive their organizations towards greater efficiency, improved patient outcomes and long-term success in the competitive healthcare landscape.



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