

Savings and efficiencies achieved at NHS Foundation Trust through improved supplier relationships

The situation

When a new head of procurement started in Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in 2012, he was tasked with delivering substantial savings back to the trust. He knew this task would require more than just cutting deals on line-item product pricing. He planned to approach relationships with suppliers differently and save costs by creating a more efficient business relationship. He needed to accomplish this without investing in large capital purchases or expensive software. He wanted the procurement department to become more than a 'supplies department' and to add greater value to the trust. All of this would require cultural change.

Willing to work

The head of procurement wanted to approach supplier relationships holistically and discover where value could be found in areas other than in line-item product pricing. The procurement team approached suppliers, but many were uninterested in working this way. Cook Medical's Healthcare Business Solutions (HBS) team approaches procurement relationships differently. When Bradford saw that Cook was willing to work in a new way, the foundation for a new relationship was laid.

A methodical approach

The corporate account executive for Cook Medical first wanted to understand Bradford's needs and develop a plan to achieve cost savings. Cook quickly learned that identifying savings opportunities for the Endoscopy department was a high priority. Cook developed a product conversion plan that Bradford accepted. Then Cook methodically introduced products for clinical evaluation, month by month, according to Bradford's priorities. Strict attention was paid to product evaluations at the end of each month, so that Cook could provide necessary product education and training.



Bradford needed suppliers to approach procurement relationships differently in order to reduce spending and create a more efficient business.



Cook and Bradford worked together to ensure clinicians supported the proposed product conversion.



Cook and Bradford's supply chain initiatives created a streamlined business and allowed the trust to devote its resources to other more valuable activities.



Cook's methodical approach led to approximately £40,000 savings and new technology for Bradford's Endoscopy department.

The full evaluation process took more than nine months and included periodic face-to-face discussions between Cook's HBS team, Bradford's clinical team, and Bradford's procurement team. At the end of the evaluation process, Bradford was able to convert to Cook's Endoscopy line of products. The conversion resulted in consolidated inventory and reduced costs for some commodity products. These savings allowed Bradford to purchase some premium technologies without impacting its budget. Patients, clinicians, and the supply chain all benefited from the improved partnership between Cook and Bradford.

Beyond conversion

Although the conversion of the Endoscopy product line saved approximately £40,000, both Cook and Bradford felt that the greatest benefit of the project was the trusting and transparent relationship that they built. The success of the Endoscopy conversion led to similar projects in other clinical departments of the hospital such as Urology.

Cook and Bradford have also initiated several efforts for supply chain improvement. The organisations worked on an e-procurement strategy, through the Global Healthcare Exchange, to cleanse catalogue data and reduce errors in purchasing and invoicing. Now 99.58% of Bradford's orders with Cook are error-free and employees no longer need to spend their time fixing error-filled orders. To continue to create savings, Bradford and Cook are planning future initiatives such as data standards adoption and inventory management.

The results

After four years of approaching their procurement relationship differently, Bradford and Cook agree that doing business together is easier and more productive. Several future clinical and procurement initiatives promise to deliver additional shared cost savings.

Contact us

For more information or to arrange an appointment with one of our Healthcare Business Solutions team members, please e-mail us at info-EMEA@cookmedical.com.



Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS
Foundation Trust

"It was hard to get medical suppliers to buy into this new and unconventional model as it required them to change their working relationships from having multiple local reps who are focused on clinical sales and relationships only to a central account management structure. Cook Medical was the first supplier who embraced this new model and supported the trust with this approach. As a result, BTHFT have been able to improve contract prices, contract compliance and coverage, introduce new innovative products, streamline the order process, reduce carriage charges, and improve carbon footprint impact on the trust."

—Mr. Ali Ali
Head of Procurement
Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS
Foundation Trust



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