

Expense Optimization Turns Partners into Indispensable Assets

Gartner predicts worldwide IT spend will increase by 4.3 percent this year and could surpass \$3 trillion. Yet as companies spend more money on technologies such as the cloud and automation, many are running into unexpected invoicing and management nightmares.

The average enterprise today receives hundreds of bills each month that need to be vetted and paid — a process that is time-consuming and risky. Businesses are overpaying for services and getting blindsided by unexpected charges due to a basic lack of visibility.

While there is no shortage of technology expense management (TEM) solutions on the market right now claiming to streamline billing and inventory, most platforms provide very high-level analytics at best. For example, a standard TEM solution may let you see how much your client is spending on something such as total IP addresses, but it won't drill down much further into metrics including individual static addresses. Basically, you get enough information to identify a problem exists but not enough to make informed decisions that can lead to accurate resolutions.

The trick is to look one step beyond TEM and explore a new strategy called technology expense optimization, say the folks at BCM One. Technology expense optimization, they say, is much more than just a simple software solution.

BCM One, for instance, offers an intelligent, cloud-based management engine called Sophia (their own proprietary solution), which comes backed by the support of a team of seasoned financial industry veterans with decades of auditing experience. With the help of BCM One and Sophia, partners can create a complete, enterprise-wide inventory of all their client's technology assets along with real-time visibility into how they are being billed. BCM One can help end users slash expenses, correct underperforming technologies and inventory specific line items.

"Our unique solution lets channel partners and their clients access a wealth of detailed expense analytics right from a centralized location," explained BCM One founder and co-CEO John Cunningham.

"Sophia lets you slice and dice data any way you choose, which is very helpful when making business decisions."

The strategy is built around five key pillars. BCM One thoroughly researches each client's monthly telecommunications spend; reviews and summarizes all contracts; thoroughly audits client expenses; optimizes under-performing solutions; and even analyzes cloud spend. For partners, the strategy puts them closer to the client's technology expenses than any other agent.

To illustrate this point, Cunningham mentioned an old *Buffetism* about the importance of forming a moat around your business. It's necessary, in other words, to have a solution in place to prevent competitors from encroaching onto your turf. Technology expense optimization protects a partner's business by providing it access to cutting-edge financial insight and services. It transforms partners into indispensable members of the team as opposed to merely technology providers.

As for results, some of BCM One's customers have saved up to 20 percent of their annual technology spend after getting started.

"A few months back while one of our account managers was researching a particular circuit in Sophia, he noticed that there was switched long distance traffic billing at .22 per minute," explained Cunningham. "The account manager called the client's long distance provider and added the lines to the discount plan resulting in a 90 percent savings on the \$6,000 spend. These types of finds are far from uncommon. It builds relationships with clients, where they encourage mining through Sophia to find savings. The tool has a dashboard that tracks savings on an ongoing basis."

BCM One's Technology Expense Optimization tool empowers channel partners by serving as an invaluable asset for their customers. It helps build trust, too, and allows partners to be seen as "true technology advisors" by their clients. □

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