

The Telecom Expense Management (TEM) Industry Has to Change

Part 7: Message to Buyers

Series Overview

AOTMP® is a 19-year-old company that has both vendor and business customers in the telecom, mobility, and IT management industry. We have been consultants and trusted advisors for all customers in the past. We have collected data from our database of over 100,000 emailable industry professionals. We know what works. We know what doesn't. Today, AOTMP® is an information services company supporting telecom, mobility, and IT professionals across the globe through training, certifications, association memberships, events & programs, best practices, publications, resources, and professional development.

We see the great relationships. We see the churn. We hear about the great buyers and the unreasonable buyers. We hear about the effective and the ineffective vendors. We see the buyers who will never have a successful TEM program until they change internally. We see the sellers who will say anything and go beyond reasonable ethics to get a deal. We hear the vendors who say they have never lost a customer, yet we can easily dispute it. We see the enterprise buyers who put 100% of the blame on their vendor, yet the greatest challenge is within their own organization. We see the many happy relationships and we see the many relationships that just exist because it's too painful to change. And we see the major investor wins along with huge investor losses in the tens of millions of dollars. We see it all.

As we watch many other industries become multi-billion-dollar industries, from the CRM industry to the bill payment industry to ITSM with ServiceNow growing to nearly \$6 billion in 20 years, the TEM segment of our telecom, mobility, and IT management industry just continues to struggle. That's concerning given the significant opportunities on both the buyer and seller side, which in turn drives the investor side. There are so many growth opportunities; however, they are offset by so many inhibitors. It all just says, as buyers and sellers, we just haven't yet figured out how to execute. There is no reason we can't work together and have billion-dollar telecom and mobility management vendors serving world-class telecom and mobility management Centers of Excellence, with both sides making a much more significant contribution to overall business results.

So, the question is how do we move the industry forward? How do we move to a new level? Or can we? If not, what happens to the industry? Does the waste and inefficiency just continue, and we live with it? Do we just continue to make marginal improvement? Do we continue in the very fast-moving hamster wheel we live in? After all, we do have a lot of great vendors and a lot of great buyer environments, but not enough to make an industry out of the huge opportunity sitting in front of our eyes.

Given the multi-billion-dollar industry opportunity, offset by the significant growth inhibitors, we had to do something. We had to start. It will be like moving a mountain, but for the good of the industry, we had to take the first step. We started with two articles, the first focused on [vendor recommendations for buyers](#) followed by [buyers' recommendations for vendors](#). Then, in July, we held our first Industry Solution Showcase where we re-imagined how buyers and sellers connect. It was a great success from both sides. Everyone is looking for something different.

Armed with all the insight and experience, and feedback from the first three initiatives, we decided to author this eight-part article series, not to just point out all the challenges, but to bring awareness to all the growth opportunities right in front of us if we can work together to affect change. It must start somewhere, and it starts with one vendor and one buyer, then two vendors and two buyers, and builds from there.

You can follow along with the eight-part series in our AOTMP® Insights publication. And you can be assured there will be more initiatives to follow. It doesn't stop here. Already in planning are initiatives at our annual AOTMP® Engage conference, potential webinars, and promoting Industry Value Challenge submissions we mention and receive throughout the Series. And there will be plenty more.

Given what we have seen in the industry over the years, along with what we see and hear today, we believe the greatest opportunities for growth for both the vendors and the businesses lie in five core areas. You will see this theme throughout the Series.

Articles in the series

Article Title	Publication Date
Part One: The Industry	September 2022
Part Two: Value Beyond Cost Savings	September 2022
Part Three: The Buy & Sell Process	October 2022
Part Four: The Dichotomy of Savings	October 2022
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Part Seven: Message to the Buyers	December 2022
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Part 7: Message to Buyers

As we bring the Series to a close this month with Part 7 - Message to the Buyers and Part 8 - Message to the Sellers, we thought we would use the two articles to make a few recommendations based on what we see from both sides of the market. But first, as a reminder, we have included insights in every article addressing areas we believe have the greatest opportunity for growth for vendors and businesses. Several months later, these opportunities still hold true and we don't see them changing in a significant way anytime soon. Having said that, we have seen a number of businesses and vendors take these to heart in their own organizations and they have begun to change their views.

- **Improving the buy and sell process.** Agree to open and transparent communications throughout the process, regardless of the issue.
- **Developing stronger vendor - customer partnerships.** Problems are going to happen; commit to focusing on solutions, not penalizing each other.
- **Focusing on value beyond cost savings.** Help each other identify, quantify, and realize value beyond cost savings.
- **Building world class telecom and mobility management Centers of Excellence.** Work together to build environments that contribute to overall strategic business results.
- **Accelerating buyer and seller growth opportunities.** Help each other identify opportunities for growth in their respective businesses.

To take it one step further, if we are going to change the industry, we recommend the buyers / businesses focus on the following:

1. Focus on Inventory / Data Accuracy & Integrity

- If you don't have an accurate inventory of invoices, contracts, assets, licenses, etc., it negatively impacts so many areas of the business and will keep you from ever reaching peak efficiency or having a Center of Excellence.
- Not integrating changes in your environment into the inventory drives a high level of inefficiency. We can't even begin to tell you how many environments we see that don't have a MACD process integrated into their inventory. And they wonder why their inventory is never accurate or why they get garbage reports.
- Where is your source of truth if you don't have an accurate inventory? Something must be the book of record or source of truth. Where is it in your company? Get one as fast as possible.
- How do you make informed decisions without an accurate set of data? Enough said.
- If you don't have a 90% confidence rating in your inventory, you are not there yet.

2. Find New Success Factors & Performance Measurements Beyond Cost Savings

- What do the CEO and CIO care about and what measurements show value to their initiatives?
- What does IT group leadership care about and what measurements show value to their initiatives?
- If your success factors and measurements are mostly what the TEM group cares about, you are far from where you need to be.
- Are savings really the best you can do in terms of showing value? Definitely not. Step up your value creation game and show it everywhere you can.
- What are your top 3 to 5 success factors and measurements for each group in your organization?

3. Change the Buying Process

- Get procurement out of the early part of the process. They don't belong there, and it has a negative impact on the likelihood of long-term vendor / business success. Bring them in at the time when they can best show their value.
- The more time you spend on the front end of the relationship, before contract signing, the greater the chances of success overall. Little time up-front most often translates into little success. This is not the time and place to hurry, hurry, hurry.
- Be upfront and honest with the vendors. Don't make them jump through so many hoops when you are not prepared to make a decision. Having a vendor answer a 300 question RFP in a short timeline, only to not make or significantly delay a decision is not even professional. You should be embarrassed to even do it.
- You have heard of location, location, and location in real estate. In our industry we need to start with communicate, communicate, and communicate. Don't go dark on the vendors. Be straight with them, good news or bad. Just be honest, and direct and always set the right expectations. Be transparent.

4. Treat the Vendors as Partners

- Work together with vendors on your greatest challenges.
- Don't treat the vendors just as vendors. Treat them as your partner. They really can help you solve your greatest challenges.
- Get rid of your standard QBRs as most of us know them. Use a majority of the time as a working session to solve challenges and anticipate needs.
- What happens with your partnership when you hide things or are not fully transparent with your spouse or significant other? Same thing here. It's common sense and yet we don't do well practicing it in this industry.
- The strongest relationships with vendors begin with you looking in the mirror first and identifying your own internal challenges. Then be open and transparent. You will be surprised what that change will make.

5. Expand Focus on the Value Provided to the Entire Organization (Beyond the TEM Group)

- Forget the TEM group. They should be your last priority.
- Like we stated in #2 above, what does the C-Suite care about? Your entire team should know the five most important initiatives to the CEO, the CIO, Finance, Operations, and the revenue generating leader.
- Go through an exercise with your team where you map the contributions you can make to the top five initiatives of each group. You will be surprised with what your team comes up with.
- Create a format and plan to show your value to those groups on a monthly or certainly a quarterly basis.
- Get rid of all your daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly reports if people don't read them or don't take action based on them. You will find half of your reports can be eliminated and replaced with proactive reports that have meaning to the readers.

Continue reading the article with the thoughts and commitments of the Industry Growth Partners on the following pages. Industry Growth Partners include both the buy side (business customers) and sell side (industry vendors).



The following organizations are committed to industry growth by “moving the needle” in one or more of the following areas. You will see their stated thoughts and commitments below and throughout the article series. Click on any logo to view their web site. They are committed to:

- **Improving the buy and sell process.**
Agree to open and transparent communications throughout the process, regardless of the issue.
- **Developing stronger vendor - customer partnerships.**
Problems are going to happen; commit to focusing on solutions, not penalizing each other.
- **Focusing on creating or realizing value beyond cost savings.**
Help each other identify, quantify, and realize value beyond cost savings.
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CloudAdmin



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In thinking about the entire article series and how the industry needs to change, we asked CloudAdmin to provide five messages they would send the buyers across the industry. Here is what they had to say.

1. Require that your TEM vendor provide cloud expense management and optimization as part of their standard offering
2. Choose a TEM vendor that can integrate wider across your business processes, which include your telecom, technology, and cloud investments.
3. Choose a TEM vendor that can manage and optimize allocations across the enterprise, including CRM, HR and Cloud.
4. Require that your TEM vendor can provide actionable intelligence for managing your organization's data across platforms and business processes.
5. Choose a TEM vendor that can provide actionable recommendations that can be taken from your TEM provider's portal at the click of a button.

- Pawel Gieniec, CEO & Founder

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Lightyear is committed to industry growth by “moving the needle” in one or more of the following areas:

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In thinking about the entire article series and how the industry needs to change, we asked Lightyear to provide five messages they would send the buyers across the industry. Here is what they had to say.

- 1. Procurement and TEM are different and should be evaluated separately. TEM services excel at invoice review, consolidated billing, and device inventories, but don't offer / are bad at service procurement. Given how TEMs are priced, they may be at odds with your organization's goals when helping you with telecom service procurement. We recommend evaluating partners for telecom procurement (Lightyear, agents, aggregators, etc.) separately from TEM providers and keeping these functions separate but partnered with each other.*
- 2. Organization in telecom has material ROI. Keeping an up-to-date inventory of services with an understanding of renewal timelines and clauses takes a ton of effort but can save you a ton of money and pain in the long-run.*
- 3. Workflow automation will benefit you. Changing processes as an enterprise is hard, but there are solutions out there, like what we offer at Lightyear, that can help you document and automate the most tedious of telecom processes. This can significantly improve the output and capacity of your telecom or IT organization.*
- 4. Telecom industry dynamics allow for continuous optimization, it just takes effort. Telecom service costs deflate every year, so simply revisiting contracts up for renewal is almost guaranteed to save you money or improve your service profile. Utilizing software to aid you in this process can make it materially less painful.*
- 5. The industry is more competitive than you think. Telecom gets more competitive every single year, and vendors will do more than you'd think to win your business when they know you're conducting a proper RFP. Utilize this competition to your advantage!*

- Dennis Thankachan, CEO
214-717-9518 | [Lightyear.ai](https://lightyear.ai)



Motus is committed to industry growth by “moving the needle” in one or more of the following areas:

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In thinking about the entire article series and how the industry needs to change, we asked Motus to provide five messages they would send the buyers across the industry. Here is what they had to say.

- 1. A quality vendor will always act as an extension of your organization. They should be a sounding board for your ideas and a collaborative advocate for your goals. Never settle for anything less. You work too hard to switch vendors every contract cycle.*
- 2. Using boilerplate RFPs will limit your success. What seems like today's time-saver is actually tomorrow's headache. Successful buyers identify and ask the right questions to ensure goal alignment with potential partners.*
- 3. If you seek a new MMS or TEM provider, low-price leaders often outsource key support and logistics functions, leading to decreased service quality and customer satisfaction. This is not the case with a single-source provider. If there are vendors that outsource, be sure to vet those third-party providers. A great vendor creates a cohesive and exceptional experience for employees across the lifecycle of a device. Don't miss out on increased employee satisfaction and retention for the sake of securing the lowest-cost option.*
- 4. Initiate open and direct communication with vendors early on to improve the buying process. This will help you identify the providers with the most extensive experience and understanding of the MMS industry's nuances. Describing your environment, objectives, and concerns in detail will allow a vendor to better serve your business's unique needs, as there is NO one-size-fits-all solution.*
- 5. Look for a provider whose solution embeds itself well into your IT organization's work streams. Solutions existing on an island inevitably create bottlenecks, leaving customers feeling dissatisfied.*

- Mitch Black, Executive Vice President - Device Solutions

Info@motus.com | 888-312-0788 | <https://www.motus.com>

Calero-MDSL is committed to industry growth by “moving the needle” in one or more of the following areas:

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In thinking about the entire article series and how the industry needs to change, we asked Calero-MDSL to provide five messages they would send the buyers across the industry. Here is what they had to say.

1. *The time is now. Technology is changing. Don't fall behind. Put a plan in place to ensure you're agile and proactively evolving.*
2. *Optimize your spend. Simplify workflows and analysis by managing all your TEM in one place.*
3. *Prioritize partnership. Transparency and communication are key to not only a successful TEM program, but a successful business venture.*
4. *Put people first. A successful TEM program optimizes enterprise spend, freeing up dollars to be reapplied to other initiatives. Empower your employees to maximize their potential.*
5. *Dare to innovate. Leverage a true TEM partner with deep roots and a visionary approach to unlock the future of technology with innovative purpose-built solutions.*

- Andrew Taylor, President and CRO

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G2, Inc. is committed to industry growth by “moving the needle” in one or more of the following areas:

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In thinking about the entire article series and how the industry needs to change, we asked G2 Inc. to provide five messages they would send the buyers across the industry. Here is what they had to say.

1. *Stop buying on pricing alone. Selecting the “low-cost leader” will without a doubt cost exponentially more by the time the engagement/project is completed.*
2. *Going hand in hand with point #1 above; do not assume all companies are the same, and do not assume all will deliver the same result/experience. Doing so is essentially an easy way out when competitively assessing companies and will falsely validate buying decisions being made on pricing alone.*
3. *Communicate your goals and objectives from the onset of the sales process and keep them at the forefront of all sales discussions. A good partner will work to ensure their solution is tailored to your unique business needs. Do not let a company get away with jamming a square peg into a round hole.*
4. *Set realistic and attainable goals for projects/engagements. If the goals or objectives evolve during the engagement, ensure they are communicated appropriately and frequently.*
5. *Once past the initial introductory/exploratory conversations, and real interest exists, appropriately set expectations of internal stakeholders and additional internal buy-in that may be needed to ultimately execute on an engagement.*

- Justin Fuller, CEO

jfuller@g2inc.com | 910-475-8115 | www.g2inc.com



Sakon is committed to industry growth by “moving the needle” in one or more of the following areas:

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In thinking about the entire article series and how the industry needs to change, we asked Sakon to provide five messages they would send the buyers across the industry. Here is what they had to say.

- 1. Technology is important, but people and mature processes play a critical role as well. Ask potential vendors to share their SLA's, implementation approach and playbooks during the evaluation process.*
- 2. Take the time to speak to references where the TEM provider solved similar challenges.*
- 3. Ask to meet the team that will be assigned to implement and deliver the service. This will ensure that everyone understands what is expected from each party and that there is cultural alignment.*
- 4. Select a vendor that can deliver what you require today but has an aligned vision for your future. There are lots of great opportunities to apply the technology and processes to IaaS, UCaaS and SaaS expense management. In addition, if ServiceNow is a key corporate strategy, include it as part of the decision-making process.*
- 5. Choose a vendor that best aligns with your goals and objectives over price. You are embarking on a long-term partnership that will thrive based on mutual success.*

- Rob Whitmore, VP Global Solutions

rob.whitmore@sakon.com | www.sakon.com

Valmont Industries, Inc. is committed to industry growth by “moving the needle” in one or more of the following areas:

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In thinking about the entire article series and how the industry needs to change, we asked Valmont to provide five messages they would send the buyers across the industry. Here is what they had to say.

1. *Know What You Want: Have a clear understanding of your requirements, a problem statement, or a strategy you're trying to implement. If you don't have all of the context, at a minimum identify what you do and DO NOT know about your problem.*
2. *Be Timely: If you are window shopping, tell them. If it's real and in budget, tell them. Setting an expectation of when and how big the bread box will move the sales cycle along much faster.*
3. *Business Value: Focus on the Total Cost of Ownership you need with the solution or product. If it's quality, speed, market price, etc. Tie this to #1 above with quantitative and qualitative information. How can we make product faster, increase precision, globalize, or increase quality for the business.*
4. *Focus and Communicate: Vendors spend time proposing a solution, be a good partner and if it's not a fit, at least communicate why they won or lost the business.*
5. *Be Transparent (within reason). Communicate clearly what is or is not working. The only way a partnership will survive is to ensure you are receiving value from what you are buying and you can show how it ties to the business' bottom line.*

- Glenn Leatherwood, IT Manager

Glenn.Leatherwood@valmont.com | +1.402.359.6960 | www.valmont.com



Asignet is committed to industry growth by “moving the needle” in one or more of the following areas:

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In thinking about the entire article series and how the industry needs to change, we asked Asignet to provide five messages they would send the buyers across the industry. Here is what they had to say.

1. *Before buying any solution, we would recommend you document the top 5 processes you would like to improve and make sure you understand how any new or existing solution can assist in improvement.*
2. *Look at every manual task you are doing in your group and which 5 of those are consuming the most time. Then document those for your selection process as a requirement.*
3. *Be transparent with your vendors as what has worked in the past and what has not and what inhibitors in your own organization can impede success.*

- Carolina Lobos, VP Marketing and Sales Enablement

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Thanks for reading Part 6 of The TEM Industry has to Change

Don't miss the remaining articles in this 8-part series.

Articles in the series

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Part 8: Message to Sellers

- AOTMP®'s top five recommendations to sellers.
- Quotes, recommendations, or commitments from our Industry Growth Partners.

Watch for future initiatives related to this series from AOTMP®

- **A New eBook: The CEO & CIO Blueprint for Extracting More Business Value from Telecom, Mobility & IT Management in 2023.** *Expected Publication - January 2023*
- **Building a Business Case Series – Helping organizations make informed decisions with greater confidence for solutions that support more than 25 telecom, mobility, and IT management work streams.**
- **Best Practice Series - Telecom, Mobility & IT Management Best Practices in 2023: Principles, Actions & Results.** *A 25 plus book collection of best practices with peer use cases and recommendations that address more than 25 essential telecom, mobility, and IT management work streams.*

AOTMP® is a global organization, empowering professionals in the dynamic \$4+ trillion telecom, mobility, and IT management industry. AOTMP® delivers value through training, certifications, association memberships, events & programs, best practices, publications, resources, and professional development. Learn more at www.aotmp.com.

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So, the question is how do we move the industry forward? How do we move to a new level? Or can we? If not, what happens to the industry? Does the waste and inefficiency just continue, and we live with it? Do we just continue to make marginal improvement? Do we continue in the very fast-moving hamster wheel we live in? After all, we do have a lot of great vendors and a lot of great buyer environments, but not enough to make an industry out of the huge opportunity sitting in front of our eyes.

Given the multi-billion-dollar industry opportunity, offset by the significant growth inhibitors, we had to do something. We had to start. It will be like moving a mountain, but for the good of the industry, we had to take the first step. We started with two articles, the first focused on [vendor recommendations for buyers](#) followed by [buyers' recommendations for vendors](#). Then, in July, we held our first Industry Solution Showcase where we re-imagined how buyers and sellers connect. Now we are going to take it a step further and explore the industry, the challenges, and the opportunities, all in an eight-part series to be published in [AOTMP® Insights](#).



Tim Lybrook
Chief Executive Officer, AOTMP®



Timothy C. Colwell
Executive Vice President, AOTMP®

Get Involved & Support Industry Growth



Can your business or vendor organization contribute towards industry growth by “moving the needle” in one or more of the following areas?

Improving the buy and sell process

Agree to open and transparent communications throughout the process, regardless of the issue.

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Focus on creating or realizing value beyond cost savings

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If so, show your commitment to your internal and external stakeholders, and to the industry, by becoming an AOTMP® Industry Growth Partner

Recognition as an AOTMP® Industry Growth Partner

- Be listed and promoted as an AOTMP® Industry Growth Partner of the entire series - the overview document and 8 publications – from the point of your involvement and going forward.
- Each AOTMP® Industry Growth Partner will be recognized as such on stage at the AOTMP® Engage 2023 conference awards and recognition luncheon on May 3, 2023.

Receive a digital credential to display on your web site, in marketing materials or as appropriate

AOTMP® Industry Growth Partner designation.

Article Contributions

- Provide comment in the form of two bullets on each go-forward article topic to be included in a page dedicated to your organization.
- Provide your company “commitment” in the form of a quote for each go-forward article.

Article Recognition

Your logo and link to your web site will be included on each go-forward article.

Distribution Copy

Receive a copy to the final PDF and a link to the online article in AOTMP® Insights to use in your marketing and promotional efforts. Both include your logo linked to your web site. The distribution PDF and article link will include all growth partners.

Promotion

- The Series, including the Overview and all articles, will be promoted in AOTMP® Insights, which is distributed to more than 80,000 industry professionals through a weekly digest and monthly emails. It will also be promoted on social media and in numerous email campaigns.
- The Series is expected to be released over five months and will remain on the AOTMP® Insights web site and in the AOTMP® Member Community through the end of 2023.
- Each publication will have links back to the previously published series articles and the overview.

For more information or to get involved contact your AOTMP® representative or email info@aotmp.com