

The Telecom Expense Management (TEM) Industry Has to Change

Part 8: Message to Sellers

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
Part Five: The Buyer & Seller Relationship	November 2022
Part Six: Building a Center of Excellence	November 2022
Part Seven: Message to the Buyers	December 2022
Part Eight: Message to the Sellers	December 2022

Part 8: Message to Sellers

As we bring the Series to a close with Part 8 - Message to the Sellers, we want to wrap it up with a few recommendations to the vendors / sellers. If we are going to change the industry ...

Here are our Top 5 Recommendations for Sellers

1. Create Value Beyond Cost Savings

- Focus on creating value for departments and groups outside of the standard TEM group.
- Document and present five ways you can show non-savings value to groups outside the TEM group – what do these other groups care about?
- Build a value creation document to present every quarter that shows value beyond cost savings. Build a single document grouped by customer department to highlight value to different stakeholders.
- Shout your value from the roof-top to everyone who might possibly listen.

2. Talk About the Challenges with Customers

- Spend more time understanding the customer environment and particularly the challenges.
- Ask why other providers have not succeeded, but keep the conversation based on the customer environment, not the other providers. What challenges in the customer environment played a role in the issues?
- What are the top 5 challenges in the customer environment that would keep the relationship from being successful?
- Focus on a strategy to address each of the challenges and how you will work through them together.

3. Be Real

- Keep it real with what you can do and can't do. Be up front and honest with prospects and customers. They appreciate honesty more than a vendor who says they can do everything.
- Address what reality looks like. What is really going to happen in the relationship? There are many influences, both controllable and non-controllable, that may impact the relationship and positive outcomes. Talk about them.
- Spend more time talking about how to address challenges that are likely to come up and how to eliminate the blame game. You know what comes up in other environments that impedes success. Address them with everyone you speak with.

4. Stop with the “Only One” and Deliver Results

- Stop with the “only one” pitch. You are not the “only one”. There are others doing the same thing.
- You kill your credibility when you pitch that you are the “only one” and the customer just heard from two other vendors that they do the same thing. We see it happen all the time.
- Instead of selling you are the “only one”, which most of the time is not credible, focus on results and outcomes ... beyond cost savings of course.
- Results and outcomes will trump the “only one” pitch every time.

5. Innovate

- A constant focus on innovation is one of the most powerful assets you can bring to the table for your customers.
- Plan the future with your customers. Create and document the ideal environment and then work together to bring it to reality.
- Spend at least 20% of your customer time talking about non-tactical improvement opportunities. Talk value creation. Talk impacts you can jointly make for other groups.
- Create a customer journey map with an end-result in mind ... and recognize there will be detours and bumps in the road ... all of which are much easier to navigate if you keep the end in mind.

Help your customers imagine a different future and draw them into its creation



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.
- **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 business.





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 to sellers across the industry. Here is what they had to say.

1. *Listen first, each customer has unique needs and service requirements.*
2. *Learn to tell your success stories that matter and relate to how you can help.*
3. *Act with integrity and conviction about what can actually be delivered, when and at what price.*
4. *Take responsibility for your commitments beyond the sale and ensure clients are getting what was promised.*
5. *Enjoy in the success of your customers and the advancement of the industry as we deliver change.*

- Dan Hughes, President

dan.hughes@sakon.com | www.sakon.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 sellers across the industry. Here is what they had to say.

We reiterate and reframe the same five recommendations we made to buyers in Part 7, as we believe that fundamentally we should all be focused on the same things:

- 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.*

- Scott Gilbert, CEO

Claire.McAuliffe@calero.com | www.caleromds.com



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 to sellers across the industry. Here is what they had to say.

1. *Integrity is valuable to buyers. Delivering on commitments and SLAs is the easiest way to retain customers but it doesn't appear to be understood across the industry.*
2. *Stick to what's real. Buyers are interested in functionality they can use today, and concepts or roadmap items should be clearly positioned as future enhancements.*
3. *Relationships count. Spend the time to define objectives that target the needs of a customer, and you will be on the way to building a partnership that delivers results instead of simply becoming a vendor.*
4. *Be willing to walk away. Writing bad business can consume a lot of internal resources that impede vendor progress towards their own business goals.*
5. *Transparency is important. Make sure buyers understand what services you outsource and how those relationships work. When a buyer can't interact directly with your partner it can lead to disappointing customer experiences.*

- Mitch Black, Executive Vice President - Device Solutions

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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 to sellers across the industry. Here is what they had to say.

1. *Provide your customers with cloud cost optimization tools which are already TEM industry standard and generating revenue for TEMs*
2. *Make sure that you have an answer for the question, “How do you manage cloud spend?”*
3. *Make sure that answer points to a TEM industry standard offering like CloudAdmin*
4. *Pick a cloud cost optimization provider who can fully support your go to market strategy with the tools, training and development necessary to compete in the TEM industry*
5. *Demonstrate your ability to provide tools using resources like CloudAdmin’s “Features Checklist” for cloud cost optimization and management.*

- David Shepard, EVP Sales & Marketing

dave@cloudadmin.io | www.cloudadmin.io



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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 to sellers across the industry. Here is what they had to say.

- 1. Invest in digitization of your workflows. Telecom vendor workflows are still painfully manual and very much stuck in the 1990s. Digitization can significantly improve the experience you offer customers while also improving your own sales efficiency.*
- 2. Share data with customers transparently. Make it easy to get pricing as a customer and share more with them than just price - are you selling a type 2 circuit? If so, with what infrastructure? Any data you can share on install performance? NPS? Network backbone quality? The more information you can transparently and systematically share with customers, the more you will attract the right customers.*
- 3. Improve the service delivery communication process. Service implementations are by far the most painful part of the customer experience in telecom, and communication / project management surrounding them is still terrible. Improvements in this arena can go a long way.*
- 4. Win on customer experience rather than price. Price may win you a deal in the short-term, but a bad install or early customer experience will lose you a customer more quickly than you won them. Setting proper expectations around experience surrounding your service will significantly improve long-run customer LTV.*
- 5. Be *truly* customer-first. Telecom is one of the industries that still prioritizes vendor outcomes over customer experience. Competition is shifting this however, and vendors who obsess over customer needs will win in the long-term.*

- Dennis Thankachan, CEO
214-717-9518 | Lightyear.ai



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 to sellers across the industry. Here is what they had to say.

1. *Be honest about your capabilities. It's ok to say you don't do something. You gain more credibility that way.*
2. *Spend more time with your customers learning their environment. The more time you spend on the front end, the more likely you are to succeed on the back end.*
3. *Ask every customer to be honest with you in what didn't work last time and why. Was it the provider or internal challenges? The more you know about the past challenges, the better.*
4. *Identify the manual tasks of your customers and work with them to determine how to automate as many of those as possible.*
5. *Spend more time selling value rather than cost savings. If we all do that, the industry opportunities will accelerate. Rising tides lift all boats.*

- Carolina Lobos, VP Marketing and Sales Enablement

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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 to sellers across the industry. Here is what they had to say.

- 1. Educate – It is easy to sell/push “savings” but taking the time to properly educate a client on your organization or service goes a long way in establishing a meaningful and trusted relationship.*
- 2. Evolve - Given how fast our industry changes, paired with economic uncertainty, it is imperative to always adapt and change the way you approach and address the market. Having an open mind and being flexible is essential in being a successful seller.*
- 3. Be Honest – Transparency during a sales process almost always fosters a meaningful and long-term relationship after the deal closes. While we all want to get the sale, level setting with a client on appropriate timelines or passing on an opportunity that might not be a fit, is sometimes the best decision.*
- 4. Listen – Commonly we see sellers listening only for an opening to continue speaking to their agenda or “script,” and not actually listening to truly understand what they are being told. Buyers are savvy enough to know when they are simply being pitched a script. If you want a serious buyer...actually talk to them. Do not talk AT them. Truly comprehending and understanding a client’s needs/goals/concerns is the foundation of a successful sales process and client relationship.*
- 5. Be Self-Aware – Too many opportunities are lost simply because a seller is unable to get out of their own way. Never bring an ego into a sales process, and never let your personal agenda take hold of a relationship.*

- Justin Fuller, CEO

jfuller@g2inc.com | 910-475-8115 | www.g2inc.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 to sellers across the industry. Here is what they had to say.

1. *Know Who We Are: Research your client or prospect to understand at a minimum a high-level understanding of our business.*
2. *Be Relevant: Be a solution to a problem, not a solution looking for a problem. Cool and shiny is fun, but we have work to do.*
3. *Business Value: Show us the Total Cost of Ownership we can expect with your solutions or product. If it's quality, speed, market price, etc. How can we make product faster, increase precision, globalize, or increase quality for the business.*
4. *Be Authoritative: Be a trusted advisor in your specialty. If we can rely on you for information you're not necessarily selling, the relationship will drive business to you over time. Trusted advisors will get the big projects/buys because they exude an authoritative voice. Commodity-like vendors will just get the brown-box ship one off buys only.*
5. *Promote stewardship. Not all of us follow good stewardship practices. Help us understand the account from our perspective – promote healthy conversation.*

- Glenn Leatherwood, IT Manager

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Thanks for reading Part 8 of The TEM Industry has to Change

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

Articles in the series

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Part One: The Industry	September 2022
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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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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

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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