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## *Vintage Voice*

### Top 5 reasons why healthcare supply chain is essential

By Rick Dana Barlow

SCHAUMBURG, IL (April 7, 2025) – As healthcare supply chain bobs and weaves, drops and fakes, slithers and twists through these “tariffic” times, one thing should be considered respectfully quotidian.

Healthcare supply chain is essential. Here are five reasons to uplink to the back of your mind to remember when crises and disasters detonate and complicate what you do to the point that you start questioning your expertise, your judgment, your worth.



Don't.

Only question what to do, not who you are and what you feel.

**Without you, the organization in which your clinical and administrative colleagues deliver care would be empty.** Or at the very least, overleveraged and hemorrhaging funds because few, if any, outside of supply chain has the expertise to make astute, cost-effective and cost-efficient. buying, contracting, distribution and logistical decisions.

**You oversee considerable assets.** Yes, that's right. You may represent a department or function that is held accountable for and responsible for expense management in balance-sheet-based "accountingspeak." But from a holistic and logical standpoint you are charged with procuring products, equipment and services that clinicians and administrators use to provide care for patients and help to visitors. It doesn't matter if or when you "take title" to said products, equipment and services. Healthcare is a service-based product that depends on what you bring in to deliver. Payment eventually is made for that service-based product.

**You provide product- and service-related expertise that no one else likely has or wants.** Clinicians want to deliver care, heal patients, practice medicine. Administrators want to keep the doors open, manage processes, raise funding and support. Everything else just needs to be there in a way that doesn't get in the way of what everyone else does and wants to do. Remove any one of the three legs in this stool and you upset the balance of operations and power.

**You are supposed to know how everything works, why everything works, where everything is, when everything will be available and what everyone needs.** Or at least you know someone who may know component parts of this equation and you can pull them all together for a comprehensive vantage point. You may not have all the answers but you know how to get them. No one else in an organization marshals such informational influence and power. That's what makes you so important.

**You know the difference between leadership, management and supervision – specifically when each is needed in front of the other two.** The steady hand, the expressive smile, the approving nod sends the signal of confidence that others need to see when clinicians and administrators succumb to the external and internal pressures poking through convenience and continuity. You may not have a seat in the C-suite (not that you really need it anyway), but if you exude confidence and control without being abrasive and domineering, but approachable and servant-minded, you'll be the go-to person the organization and those working within needs to maintain course.

When you're burrowed in the mire, muck and weeds of day-to-day operations, it can be difficult to see how, where and why you're making progress. You may not fully recognize it until you call your career a day. But rest assured, you're making a difference.

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