WHITEPAPER

BROOKLYN SOLUTIONS

ACCERLATE PRODUCTIVITY & INSIGHT VALUE:

The Challenges of Supplier Consolidation and how to overcome them

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Introduction

In today's corporate landscape services continue to be delivered faster and cheaper than ever before. This commonly results in organisations increasing the number of vendors used for differing and new services affecting how large the supply chain has potentially become. It still remains true that the most commonly outsourced services are either technical (information technology) or financial (accounting services) in nature, but make no mistake the list of services is actively growing year on year.

It is in our experience that supplier and contract consolidation activity and cost containment continues to dominate discussions and is a top of mind issue for most organisations that we speak to.

During what has possibly been one of, or the most turbulent year for businesses in recent living memory impacting for all industries around the globe, with some being impacted more than others global supply chain resiliency has been tested by major events such as BREXIT and the COVID-19 Pandemic. The second has been responsible for a number of supply chain complications and failure in parallel seeing a monumental increase in the numbers of home workers worldwide during the last 12 months causing an already emerging trend to hockey stick. Governing practises need to be updated and digitised to cope with this as it is unlikely to return to what it was previously, meaning new ways of working will need to be adopted.

This increased proliferation of vendors used by an organisation seeking competitive advantage and cost efficiency needs to balance this to ensure they don't suffer from vendor bloat, where there are simply too many vendors to manage effectively and some that offer little value.

High performing CPOs who successfully hit more of their key objectives than there lesser performing counterparts approach this challenge not only by conducting a typical consolidation programme that is run in anger every few years or on a near cyclical basis which is at best an inefficient and concentrated task in itself and at worst the gains achieved don't warrant the cost. But rather by embedding a continuous consolidation approach into the way vendors are reviewed and managed on a day to day basis and in line with their lifecycle and relative importance to the business itself.

78% of CPOs believe that Driving Operational Efficiency is top priority in 2021

1 Deloitte 2021 Global Chief Procurement Officer Survey

In the Deloitte 2021 Global Chief Procurement Officer Survey1 it was noted that leading CPOs have a broader understanding of value and deploy a wider, more sophisticated set of levers to unlock, measure and protect value. They are reported to focus on high quality relationships and influence across functions and supply markets, and they invest in agility by developing talent and accessing capabilities, knowledge and experience leveraging on-demand, hybrid service delivery models (e.g teams augmented with external support services. They utilise configured utility style services not fully customised end to end integrated solutions.

They prioritise data both internal master data and external market intelligence to make fact based decisions leveraging predictive analytics to find any hidden opportunities and emerging risks.

The start of 2021 saw a new top priority emerge for CPOs with 78% thinking that Driving Operational Efficiency is the top priority for the year closely followed by Reducing Costs, 76.4% and Digital Transformation 76% with the largest increase up from 63% in 2019. Innovation with 72% was the only other new entry.
The findings outlined in the Deloitte 2021 Global Chief Procurement Officer Survey will need to play a part in any meaningful vendor consolidation exercise and like any new journey careful consideration should be given to how to approach this and ultimately where you want to end up and by when.

How will your Supplier Consolidation journey start?

Consolidate, why bother?

Consolidating your supplier landscape takes considerable effort and focus that needs to be regularly reviewed, that said there is significant benefit in terms of both cost avoidance and hardline efficiencies that can be traced back to the bottom line. Below are eight examples of why you might consider pursuing a continuous consolidation ethos;

1 Consolidate points of contact for sales, service, and support

Vendor consolidation makes it simple and effective to purchase products, contact a single customer service agent, or get technical support. Your team saves time when there's only one number to dial, one leadership team to negotiate with, and one "neck to wring" or "throat to choke" if you prefer!

2 Save money and time

Suppliers that offer consolidated solutions to customers often provide highly competitive pricing structures. Positioned to provide efficient customer support, they consider the long-term value of the vendor-to-customer relationship. That means a consolidated solutions vendor or Strategic Integrator (SI) is eager to pass along concessions that will secure and retain a valued business partner. In terms of time, managing multiple vendor relationships and more spent developing and nurturing their businesses. Reinvest time you now spend filling out forms for vendors into new activities that will enhance your revenue stream.

3 Reduced Risk Landscape

Managing fewer suppliers means that there is a smaller risk landscape to manage, risk assessments to run and in theory risks to manage. This all equates to less risks that needs to be managed and mitigated and in turn another lot of time saved.

4 End to End Digitisation

Suppliers should have a laser-focus on the solutions they sell, that is if they expect to stay in business. If a customer desires a particular workflow that the vendor cannot

5 Save on operational expenses

Does your team spend endless time on invoicing, contracts, payment processing, and other operational tasks? You can eliminate chunks of administrative work by consolidating your suppliers. Working with a single vendor means streamlined invoicing, access to amenities (like a central customer portal), consolidated asset management, and more!

6 Regional footprint

Does your business have more than one location with each office juggling its own set of suppliers? Vendors that can offer consolidation often have a larger regional footprint, giving you more complete, hassle-fee coverage for each of your office locations, and ensuring that you have complete territory coverage for your business. Larger players can help globalise your business reach beyond where it could get to on it own.

Risk Considerations

There is no silver bullet, don't look for one and unfortunately it's not all rainbows and sunshine, there are risks to consider when consolidating which should be documented and mitigated through your standard third party risk management approach.

5 Flexibility or lack of...

Large scale wide impacting agreements are typically covered over many documents that can be quite complex. Given the sums of money sometimes at stake and the heavy negotiation that takes place it can be the case that there isn't much by way of flexibility built into the framework or underlying agreements unless it gets accounted for during the pre contract phase and captured as an actual requirement.

Consolidations can sometimes be akin to a one size fits all approach which is not great nor is a bespoke services offering as it's likely you won't be able to recognise the benefits. However, the optimum lies somewhere between the two ends of the spectrum.

2 Time to negotiate and close

Personally, I have been involved in some really large contract negotiations in the past. Each has been made up of many different types of contractual vehicle from Master Service Agreements, Service Schedules, Statements of Work and Service Level Agreements, the list goes on.

However the point is that sometimes depending on the input and willingness to deal from both organisations a large deal for multiple services might just be too difficult to negotiate to an acceptable position for both parties or take to much time and effort to make it worthwhile.

3 Not all requirements WILL be met

This point considers 'Best of Breed' solutions usually provided by smaller Independent Software Vendors (ISV), think of a tool exactly designed for that one purpose and nothing else versus larger Managed Services Providers (MSP) that provide large scale full suite platforms that extend across the business, think a swiss army knife that you can used for a lot of things but it's just not as effective as a tool designed for the job. According to the Pareto Principle, it will generally be the case (broadly - remember it's a guide, not a scientific certainty), that within any given scenario or system or organisation: 80 percent of results come from 20 percent of efforts. 80 percent of activity will require 20 percent of resources. So if we think that by 20% of your needs being met you get 80% of the result providing you can meet this 20% of functionality with the MSP / swiss army knife solution you have an opportunity for consolidation provided you don't get caught up by the edge cases.

> **"You can please some of the people all of the time, you can please all of the people some of the time, BUT you can't please all of the people all of time the time."**

4 Increased friction in your Supplier relationships

It is true what John Lydgate, a fifteenth-century monk and poet said "You can please some of the people all of the time, you can please all of the people some of the time, but you can't please all of the people all of the time." The same goes for your vendors. If you going to consolidate on a large scale your organisation will need to become much better at working as a partnership and with a level of pragmatism that is well communicated saying that we know some things are not ideal and there may be better alternatives out there but we have made this choice based on commercial viability and considering the wider business, continually berating your MSP or SI about a certain alternative ISV solution you 'COULD' have purchased will wear thin after a while and affect the art of the possible.

5 Disruption, Innovation and Loss Leaders

With such large heavy weight contracts put in place between two potentially enterprise class organisations the ability to be agile and innovative may not be as possible as it once was or as effective when dealing with smaller organisations. This doesn't mean that large companies don't innovate, they do and in droves but you need to ensure that they should have good pedigree in this area and you have access to the capability having not squeezed the life out of any 'value add' in the negotiation stage. It's always a good idea that what you are paying contractually equates to the Supplier making a profit and is sustainable after all we are all in business for this reason. I like a good deal as much as the next person but if your Supplier isn't making money your relationship would never make it to partnership and is destined for failure.

6 Increased Supply Chain Obscurity

In a number of cases organisations who have looked to consolidate their Vendors have engaged with a handful of their largest vendors and formed a partnership where they will split up the existing vendor portfolio over time novating* existing contracts into one of these strategic players where that vendor will either maintain the contract and relationship or migrate it to a lower cost internally provided service. The former 'maintain' approach extends the size of the supply chain resulting in not only increased length of chain but more difficulty in gaining visibility of the said chain. That said this is a valid approach which will be covered more later in this document but you need to ensure that you manage this risk effectively if this approach is used anywhere extensively.

**Novation is the process by which the original contract is extinguished and replaced with another, under which a third party takes up rights and obligations duplicating* *those of one of the parties to the original contract. This means that the original party transfers both the benefits and burdens under the contract.*

The Eight Challenges of Supplier Consolidation

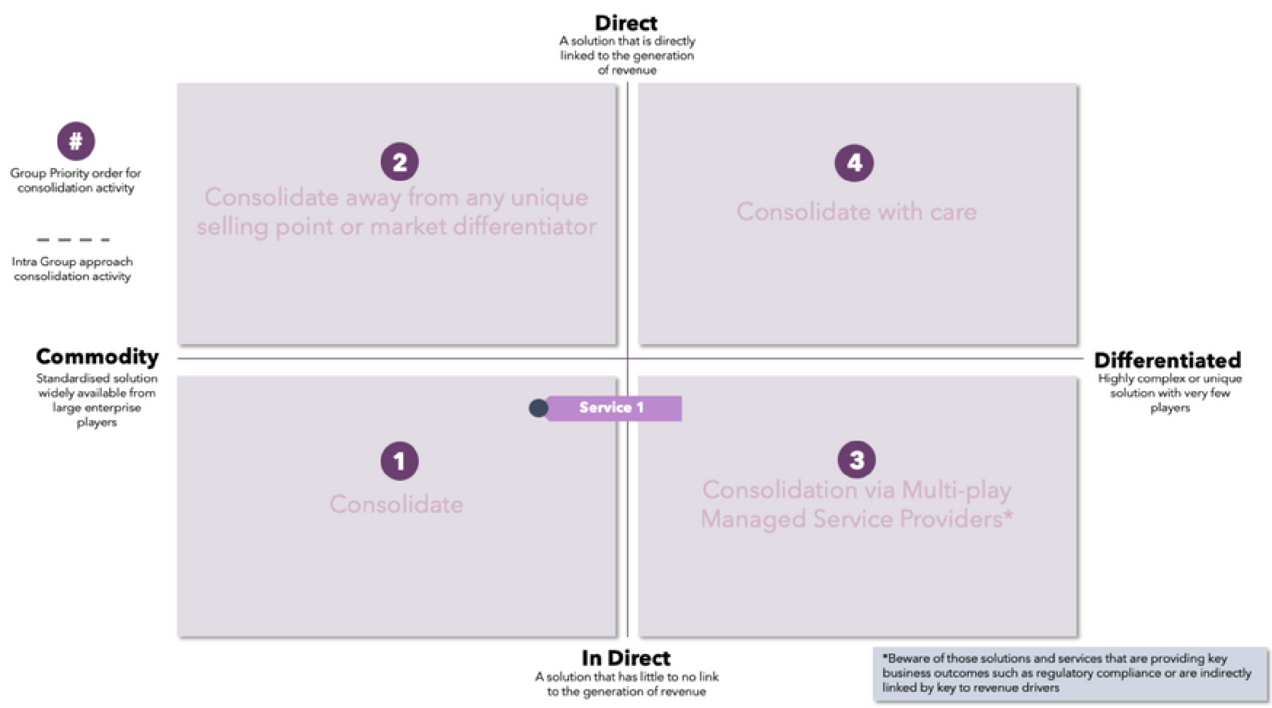
Supplier consolidation isn't any easy task to undertake but it is a necessary and potentially very rewarding one, it can also be much more bearable if the approach pays attention to handling some of the potential challenges and risks that emerge from these...

1 Effective Segmentation and targeting

"Consolidate everything" the CPO demanded. In reality an organisation cant consolidate everything nor should it ever want or try to. So by virtue of it not being everything there needs to be a way of selecting who and what services to target for consolidation. We suggest that this starts with looking at your existing Vendor Management Policy and Segmentation model.

The first step in this would be to consider how you would segment what services and therefore Vendors across your existing landscape you would select as potential candidate for consolidation.

One way might be to consider what of the services you consume are more akin to utility or commodity like thus widely available versus Differentiated typically supplied by niche specialists with very few players included. To compare against this you could then consider what services that Directly, in the truest sense contribute to the revenue your organisation brings in versus those that are Indirect vendors. The visualisation that this builds could look like the image below resulting in ability to demonstrate that there is a well thought out approach to how one could start to break the task down into actionable groupings that are then further analysed in the order of the numbers shown.



2 Prioritising

Once you know how you will segment or group the Supplier Landscape you will need to think about how you not only prioritise the groups themselves, as shown in the previous Effective Segmentation and Targeting section, but the services and vendors that fall into these.

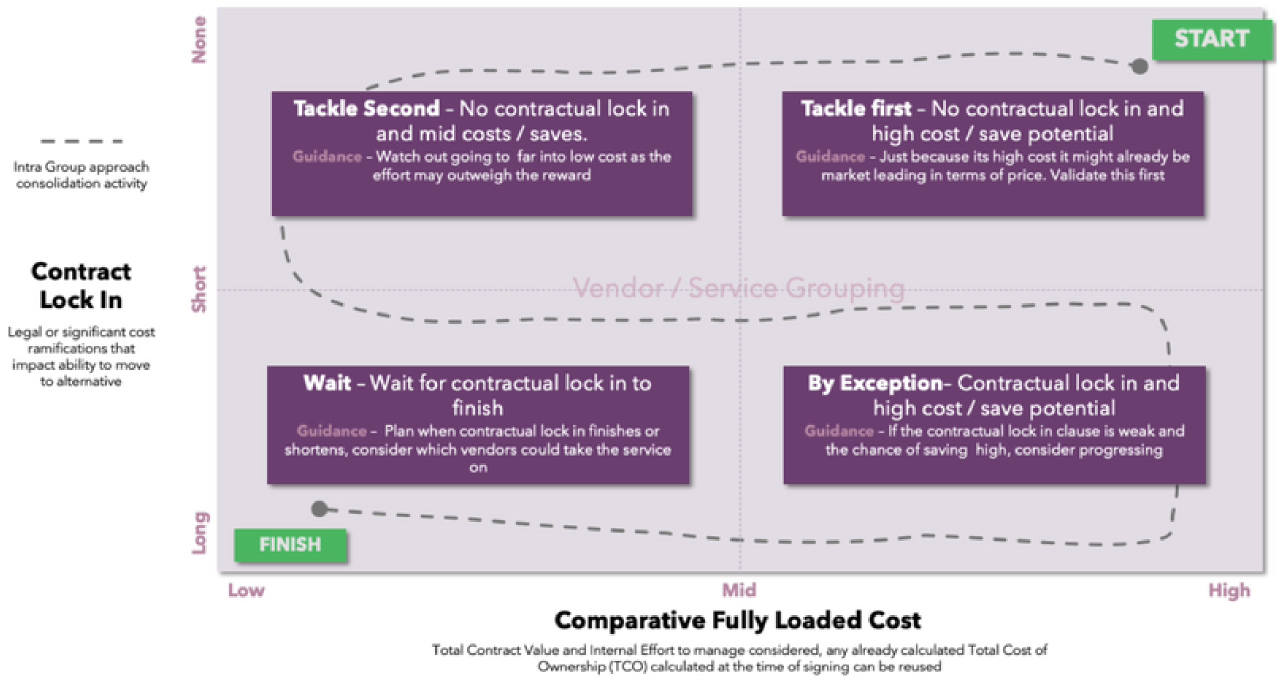
One suggested approach is to do this by considering what services that can be consolidated at that particular point in time based on what was agreed to in the contract such as commitment period or fines for termination. Combine this measure with the fully loaded cost of the service made up from the total contract value plus the internal management costs will result in being able to break each group down in to a four further streams where consolidation activity can start immediately, the third group by exception only leaving the last group alone as its probably not going to be worth the effort even if you wait given the low value.

3 Shadow/ Grey Spend

Arguably one of the most important challenges to address or at least acknowledge when starting a vendor consolidation programme is that of Shadow or Grey Spend, this is typically more associated with Information Technology or Services that are utility centric by design where you only need to complete a transaction or sign a contract and its switched on with no further internal support needed.

These services may have been transacted within the Business units / lines directly and rolled up to Suppliers that might not have been engaged via the proper process or procurement group being taken into account. If this is the case your consolidation programme will miss them and the opportunity they represent.

One suggested way to investigate this is to compare your Accounts Payable data for the last 12 months available from any



finance team with the list of active vendors under management within the procurement of the BU, making sure that this is sorted by the highest cost first.

Using this approach you are highly likely going to be able to see those companies that you have paid or are still paying on a regular basis over the last 12 months that might not be on the list of vendors that you are actively managing. The reason that this should be sorted by highest cost first is there will be smaller transaction amounts paid out to random organisations that will not be worth vendor management's time to review and analyse. It's up to you to determine what amount this cut off is represented by £1000, £10,000 or £50,000 perhaps higher.

This same approach can be extended to corporate cards as well if the monthly amount is large enough to warrant the effort to conduct the investigation.

4 Duplication

It's commonplace that organisations, especially large businesses use overlapping services, however a position needs to be drawn on how overlapping a service or solution is before it equates to duplicated capabilities and paying for the same thing twice over thus consolidating be considered as an option.

The first step here is to be able to identify the service groups across your vendor landscape against a common reference framework such as a service or product catalogue that will, when correctly categorised, show up those services and or products that are similar in functionality. Typically an IT department in any large business will have an asset usually referred as the IT service catalogue that could be your starting point, it may need to be it may need to be developed further to cover non IT services or if you have any business architects talk to them about how they define and map business process to services.

In order to go further than this the internal data that you have access to will need to be crossed reference and augmented with some external data to help identify services and products that are duplicated or a potential alternative to one another more about this can be seen in the Market validation section below.

A technology example that i like to use can be seen in the attached graphic, it's not uncommon for large organisations to have competing products that are largely driven by end user preference and in this case Microsoft Office 365 versus Google G-Suite, both are very component productivity tools but that have a significant overlap in capability.

A non technology, resource example
that is commonly seen is in the recruitment space. Large enterprises tend to use too many niche resource suppliers, in some cases there is good reason and a compelling case can be made but in many cases the reason may not warrant the large margin niche and smaller companies attract especially where consulting firms are acting as just body shops with no agreed and contract outcome. These pockets of spend when added up can become significant and possibly much better serviced via one single Managed Service Provider.

In both these examples be careful to take note of and avoid eroding any perceived or real competitive advantage that has been gained by these Business Lines taking this approach. They did it for a reason so find out what it was and cater for it in any migration planning.

5 Unknown Supplier Capabilities

You know your vendors well in the capacity in which you work with them for the services they provide you with, but what about the other capabilities that they can provide you with. Do you really know everything that your Vendors can provide to you, what are the other services they offer and where do they overlap with other Vendors for services that you already use in your organisation elsewhere today. Finding this out will give you an opportunity to see where you might want to extend one Vendor remit thus removing one or more vendors elsewhere.

> **"Do you really know everything that your Suppliers can provide?"**

In order to progress this you don't need to find out this level of detail for all the vendors you use today. Take a look at your vendor landscape to start with and the past performance metrics of your Vendors, decide on a cut off point and split them into two groups, the first will contain the ones that score highly enough on past performance and other key measures for you to want to work with them again and the second list those that you wouldn't really want to increase their scope and remit in the organisation due to lower performance or any other key concern that might have arisen.

On the list of those Vendors that you would work with again look at them objectively and remove all the niche, transactional and very small vendors from this list that would be unable to extend their services beyond their current remit.

Armed with this now curated list of high performing suppliers that potentially have the capability to extend their remit further there are potentially two options;

1. Disclose Additional Capabilities -

Ask each of these vendors to document the standard products and services that you don't consume from them for today making sure that you ask them to capture this in a way that ties back to internal business structure or service catalogue. By doing this you will be able to show existing services that you consume on the same internal framework to spot opportunities for consolidation. This activity will provide you a list of alternative options to review when existing services come up from renewal or out of any contractual tie in.

2. Marketing Replacement Opportunity -

Convert the 2nd list that was curated containing underperforming vendors into a list of the services they provide that you actively consume from them. Publish this list of services directly to the high performing vendors as a list of services that you would be interested in hearing from them which ones they could provide. Make sure you capture the data from subsequent analysis. Here you are looking to consolidate as much of your low performing vendors services into the high performing ones. Take care when doing this with organisations that are large consultancies, Strategic Integrators or Managed Services Providers as they can and will suggest that they can provide and build services for many different requirements. Make sure that these vendors can evidence a good range of case studies in the space to back up and substantiate what they claim to be able do. If not you risk worst case, purchasing something they can't fulfil or best case something that is likely to not be cost effective and defeating the whole purpose of what you set out to achieve.

6 Market Validation

To support the existing internal data as well as the new data that will be amassed about your high performing vendors it's also good practise to mix this will some recognised external data sources to act as an independent perspective on a few different fronts;

Validate Capability and Market Fit -
Using recognised research and review services such as Gartner and Forrester if you have access or software review services like Capterra or G2 Crowd to check that the vendor is recognised in the industry as a provider of the products and resources they claim to be able to provide.

Determine performance -
Using the same resources determine what functionality or core services your vendors excel in and to what extent. Strengths and weaknesses should be discoverable to allow you to ensure not only the performance but the right fit for your organisation.

Discover competitors -

Look at alternatives to be aware of what's on offer to help you during your up and a coming potential negation. You may also find that some of your other existing vendors play in this space but didn't disclose this back to you through the enquiry you might have made as indicated above in section 5 unknown vendor capabilities

The last two sections in this **Chapter 5. Unknown Vendor Capabilities** and this section **6. Market Validation** can be re-used or in parallel as part of some innovation ideation. You might need to hone and shape the wording of your request but the mechanics are very similar. Please note that some external data services may have additional costs associated with them.

7 Measuring Success

There are many ways and different types of metric that can be used to track Supplier Consolidation. However we believe the following are the ones that really matter;

Reduction in Management Overhead -
In terms of operational efficiency it would be wise to track the reduction in management overhead. This should be looked at across multiple levels such as total reduction in the overall number of vendors, contracts and service levels. All are relevant, just a reduction in Suppliers might not be a great efficiency increase if the number of contracts and services are the same or increased.

- **Starting Target** - Our recommended starting target in year one should be 5-10% growing to 30%-50% ultimately as quickly as it can be achieved

Reduction in Cost -

In terms of operational efficiency it would be wise to track the reduction in management overhead. This should be looked at across multiple levels such as total reduction in the overall number of vendors, contracts and service levels. All rare relevant, just a reduction in Suppliers might not be a great efficiency increase if the number of contracts and services are the same or increased.

- **Starting Target** - Our recommended starting target in year one should be 5-10% growing to 30%-50% ultimately as quickly as it can be achieved.

Reduction in Risk -

If an organisation consolidates at the supplier, contract and or service level one can expect some kind of reduction in risks to manage or at least the amount of risk assessments to be undertaken thus reducing the output. You may well do a service or product based assessment that would provide some level of output but you would lose the need to run risk assessments and due diligence against the vendors itself, say in the area of financial stability as a business overall will go away as this is already being considered elsewhere.

- **Starting Target** - Our recommended starting target would be to aim for a 10% reduction in risk stock under management that relates to Third Parties.

The Deloitte 2021 Global Chief Procurement Officer Survey2 noted in multiple ways that high performers (CPOs) more commonly get formally measured on a greater breadth of KPIs. So it is akin to this and in line with best practise that when measuring business strategies and the execution thereof it's not uncommon to see a mixture of three types of indicator being deployed. These indicators all have their role to play but breakdown as follows:

Key Performance Indicator

- An indicator which enables an organisation to define its performance targets based on its goals and objectives and to monitor its progress towards achieving these targets. KPIs are used to answer the question: Are we achieving our desired levels of performance?

- KPIs can be financial and non-financial in nature, and leading or lagging. They can be quantitative or qualitative in anture.

"High performers (CPOs) more commonly get formally measured on a greater breadth of KPIs."

2 Deloitte 2021 Global Chief Procurement Officer Survey

Key Risk Indicator

- An indicator which is used by organisations to help define its risk profile and monitor changes in that profile. KRIs are used to answer the question: How is our risk profile changing and is it within our desired tolerance levels?
- Like KPIs, KRIs can be financial and non-financial in nature, and leading or lagging.
- They can be quantitative or qualitative in nature. Where KPIs tell us if we are achieving our targets, KRIs help us to understand the changes in our risk profile and the impact and likelihood of achieving our overall objective. KRIs should inform discussions around the Risk Map and the setting of Impact and Likelihood levels.

Key Control Indicator

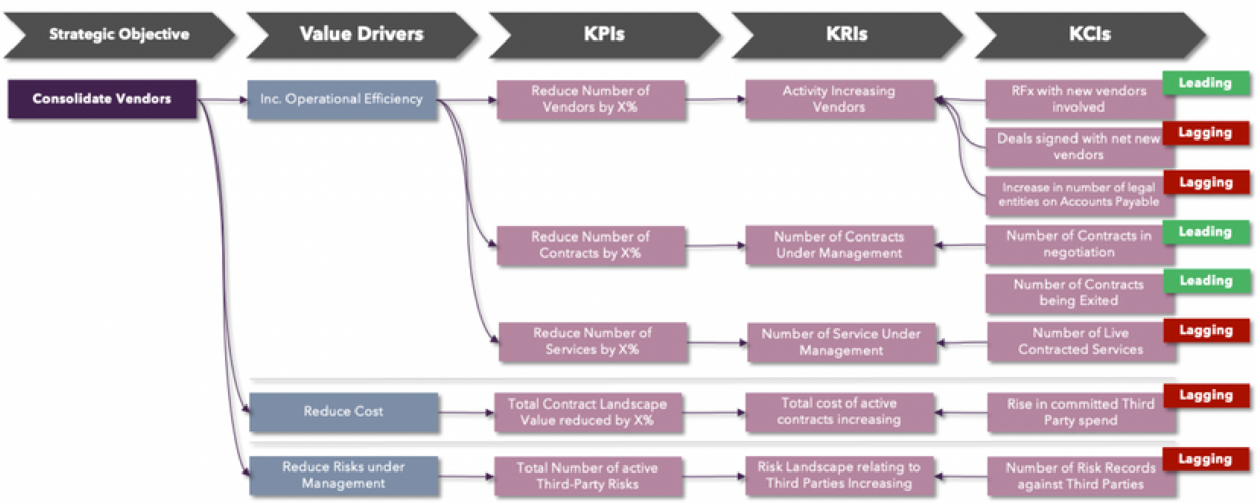
- An indicator which is used by organisations to help define its controls environment and monitor levels of control relative to desired tolerances. KCIs are used to answer the question: Are our organisation's internal controls effective? Are we 'in control'?
- If an organisation isn't seeing any negative movement on its Key Controls it's unlikely that the KRI will be triggered, and the chance of the Risk becoming an issue.
- If it does happen it potentially means that a new Key Control needs to be identified and measured to avoid a repeat situation.

As a suggested starting point the below measures are a few examples that might get you thinking along the right lines for your own supplier consolidation program. The framework is included purely because it's an easy, repeatable and useful way to create these metrics that i have now used for a number of years. As an added bonus it also makes it relatively easy to present in this format as well. I encourage you to use this or create something similar to facilitate your Supplier Consolidation Programme as well as other initiatives.

8 Leadership, Support and forming an Alliance

If, and not surprisingly after all this you feel more confused than when you started, it's likely you may need some help. It's not uncommon for organisations that have never undertaken such an exercise as this or who have previously outsourced their indirect services to such an extent that the kind of capability needed to undertake this activity just doesn't exist internally anymore or perhaps never did. In these situations there are a number of very experienced consultancies out there that can do this kind of work, who have a great track records and case studies to look at, that's if you have a budget set aside for such an agreement, ironically possibly increasing the number of vendors that you have, hopefully for only a short period anyway.

An alternative to this and one that I have seen deployed to great effect in the past is to take the list of high performing vendors that was recommended be created in



section **5. Unknown Vendor Capabilities** and look at the highest performing vendors in your organisation that are large enterprises themselves and typically referred to as 'Strategic Integrations' (SIs). These kind of companies are well versed in helping their customers consolidate vendors and have been known to advise existing customers on such activities.

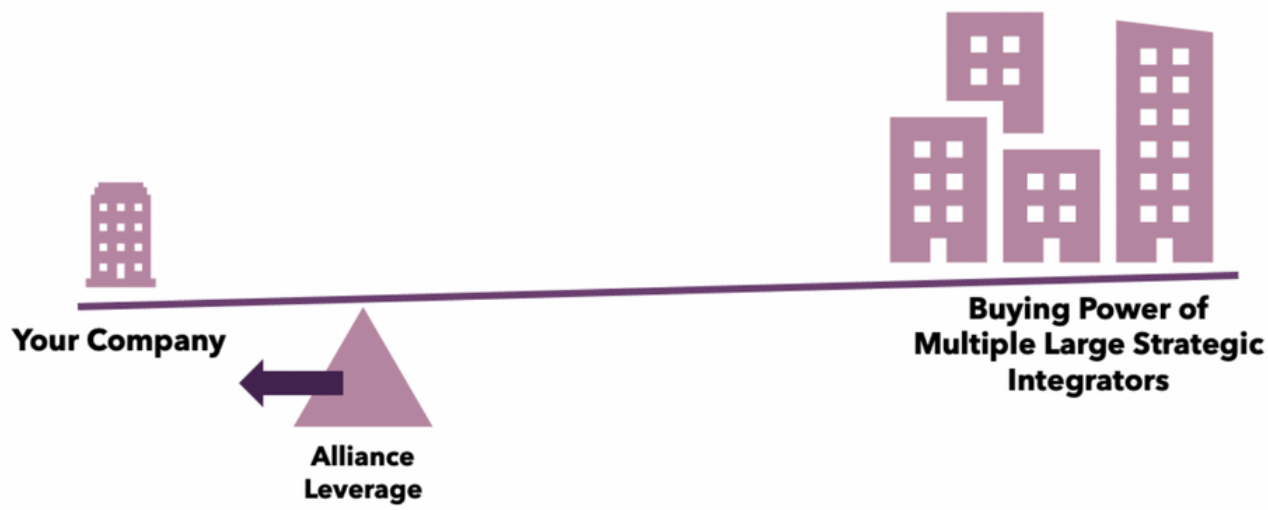
You might even want to take it a step further and decide that you want to form an Alliance (A union or association formed for mutual benefit, especially between countries or organisations) with one or more these top performing SI vendors working together to see how you could carve up your existing vendor landscape in to groups and see what current vendor contracts could be 'novated' to the SI. The aim being that overtime the SI could, and contractual commit to , actively reduce the run cost of the novated solutions simply by moving to an internal alternative they might have already or a preferred provider that is cheaper based on the economies of scale the SI can offer.

Although this is a very real option and one that's proven to work you will need to mitigate and accept that risk **No 6. Increased Supply Chain Obscurity** outlined in **Risk Considerations section** will crystallise to some degree so will need to be managed carefully.

Summary

And so it is after 6 reasons covering why to bother with consolidation at all, 6 risks to watch out for and 8 challenges including some suggested ideas of how to address them we are finally able to summarise what this means. In short a Supplier consolidation programme is by no means for the faint hearted or for those looking for a straight forward initiative. It is however advisable for those who are bold and want to really make a difference impacting the things that are currently closest to a CPOs heart such as Operational Efficiency, Cost Reduction / Containment, Digital transformation and Innovation. It is a programme that should really be a multi year, if not an ongoing exercise, that is intertwined with the standard processes your Vendor Management teams use to work with and coordinate with existing partners in the post contract signing sense.

It will need a well curated set of internal data points collated and maintained on an ongoing basis and the same skills needed to run multiple RFx processes in a pre contract sense at the same time. Following the above 8 points or ones like them you will be able to organise your Vendor landscape into discrete groups that can then be used to help drive your activity in the logical way



prioritised based on value and the likelihood of being successful in the process.

Given the nature of vendor engagements that are now always based on a underpinning contractual vehicle that is usually time-bound to secure the best deal and thus what the concept of continuous consolidation is based in on aiming to reduce the size of the vendor landscape via attrition and when it would be most cost effective to do so.

A Supplier consolidation programme needs to be a joint initiative with shared responsibility between the procurement team and those from the business lines working collaboratively with the support of a dedicated function be it an existing internal Vendor Management capability or from another trusted entity as highlighted in section 8. Leadership, Support and forming an Alliance.

What more convincing do you need, why wait anymore, the quicker that you can get started with planning you own vendor consolidation programme the quicker you can begin to optimise you Supplier Landscape, and not only that the data you will obtain along the journey will provide valuable to you for months if not years to come so make sure you have somewhere fit for purpose to store and manage it from. Good luck.

The Solution

Our Brooklyn Vendor Assurance (BVA) SaaS platform is built on ensuring businesses stay ahead of the curve when it comes to all things Vendor Management and consolidating vendors is one of those things. Brooklyn can store, organise and segment groups of vendors effectively and store all associated data in a well structured manner that can be easily recalled and reported on.

Our existing customers make use of Brooklyn to help automate and operationalise the best practice required to ensure they can not only meet there vendor management needs but to also iteratively increase the effectiveness in which they do whilst being able to ensure consistent governance which can be easily adapted to the ever-changing requirements from their respective businesses and industry.

Accompanying this is the ability to automate processes related to Contract, Performance, Risk, Relationship Management and Compliance ensuring that the supply chain is evaluated and assessed regularly, against the needs of the business and always fit for purpose.

Get Started

If you would like to know more about Post-contract Customer-Supplier Management, please get involved through the comments or just like, share and subscribe via the details included to ensure that you don't miss out on any future content.

To speak to someone from the Brooklyn team about the solutions that we offer, **request a demo**.