

Guided Buying That People Actually Use

Make the right buy the easy buy, and compliance takes care of itself.

Adoption, not policy, decides whether savings hold

Most procurement savings are negotiated once and then lost slowly, one convenient off-contract purchase at a time. The contracts are sound and the policy is clear; what fails is adoption. Buyers route around the sanctioned process whenever it is slower than simply purchasing on their own, and a policy that no one follows saves nothing.

This is why buying behavior — not the strength of the policy — is the real determinant of realized value. Any program that depends on people choosing the harder path in the name of compliance is quietly budgeting for its own erosion.

Compliance follows convenience

The effective lever is not enforcement; it is friction. People are not trying to be non-compliant. They are trying to get their work done, and they take the fastest route available. When the guided path is genuinely the fastest way to buy, they take it without being told to.

Reframed that way, maverick spend stops being a discipline problem and becomes a design problem. The question is no longer how to force people through the approved process, but how to make the approved process the one they would have chosen anyway.

The mechanics of a path people take

A guided path that people actually use has a few common properties. Its catalogs are curated to already reflect the contracts and the policy, so a compliant choice requires no extra thought. It punches out to preferred suppliers, so buyers stay inside familiar storefronts. Approvals route automatically to the right owner rather than stalling in a queue. And exceptions are handled on the side rather than blocking the flow, so the unusual case never becomes the reason to abandon the system.

Each of these removes a reason to route around procurement. Together they make the correct buy the fast buy — which is the only version of a control that survives contact with a deadline.

Measuring what matters

Two numbers tell you whether the design is working: adoption of the guided path and the share of spend that still goes off-contract. Tracked continuously rather than audited after the fact, they show the mechanism at work — as the guided path gets faster and more complete, adoption rises on its own and maverick spend falls, without anyone being forced through friction.

That is the whole thesis in one sentence: make the right buy the easy buy, measure it, and the savings you negotiated actually stay negotiated.

“Compliance follows convenience. Make the right buy the easy buy and the numbers take care of themselves.”

Versatex helps organizations simplify procurement through managed services, supplier coordination, and analytics-driven insight. See more at versatexanalytics.com/viewpoints.