



Industry: Funeral, cremation and cemetery services

Geographies: US

Challenges:

- Lack of spend visibility across the business
- Insufficient and unreliable upgrade process
- Time consuming and manual PO processes

Solutions:

- Coupa Procure
- Coupa Invoice
- Coupa Expense
- Coupa Source

Results:

- 90% visibility across \$2 billion in spend
- Seamless upgrades and integrations into enterprise systems
- 3X reduction in requisition cycle time from 6 hours to 2 hours

SCI gains competitive advantage and 90% visibility of its \$2 billion annual spend with Coupa

Service Corporation International (SCI) ¹ is North America's leading provider of funeral, cremation and cemetery services as well as final-arrangement planning in advance. The company's Dignity Memorial® brand serves over 450,000 families each year.

In 2012, the company was growing rapidly through acquisitions; however, it lacked some of the data it needed to improve renegotiation of contracts, get more favorable deals with suppliers, and access better products. At the time, the company did not have a purchase order (PO) system or consistent processes for procuring products and services. It relied on Excel for approving and recording transactions and used postal mail for some processes, which created concerns around data accuracy and limited visibility of up-to-date company spend for senior management. Additionally the data they did have was usually outdated, so senior procurement leaders could not use it to make informed business decisions.

So in 2012 SCI chose to standardize its business spend management processes with Coupa for greater spend visibility and process consistency. It was a natural progression for a company with a long track record of early technology adoption. In fact, not only was SCI an early user of Salesforce, Workday Cloud, and Oracle Cloud Financials, but it was Coupa's first invoice customer. And now through Coupa's integrated Business Spend Management (BSM) platform, SCI has 90% spend visibility in real-time – allowing senior leaders to make informed decisions that improve competitiveness. It also gives the procurement team leverage to negotiate better terms with suppliers while cutting down the time needed to process requisitions and invoices. And even more importantly, automating processes gives staff more time to fulfill their mission of serving families during their greatest time of need.

Easy integration and standardized processes facilitate M&A strategy

Simple, consistent business processes are crucial, especially for a company like SCI. Most of its acquisitions in the past seven years have been smaller funeral homes, so it needs enterprise systems that are easy to learn and simple to use. When SCI acquires a new funeral home, it moves all employees to SCI's enterprise systems – often within a few weeks. A funeral home director doesn't have several weeks to learn a new platform, so Coupa's simple interface and usability was a key reason SCI chose the Coupa BSM platform.

"We wanted a platform that was as easy to use as Amazon.com, and Coupa certainly fit the bill," said Brian Pellegrin, AVP Cloud Applications & Support. "If you can fill your shopping cart on Amazon, you can fill your shopping cart on Coupa. That's exactly what we needed in a business like ours where acquired companies need to learn our systems quickly."

SCI also needed a platform that would integrate easily and quickly with the company's existing systems, like Oracle and Workday. While the Procurement team briefly considered SAP Ariba, it was too expensive and difficult to integrate. "Coupa was the clear choice because it integrated well with our systems," Brian said. "It was so easy to extract data seamlessly between enterprise systems." Coupa even integrates fully with SCI's point of sales (POS) system, which makes it possible to automate merchandise purchase orders with vendors – a must in an industry where seconds matter. And similarly, Coupa's platform makes it easy for SCI to maintain a consistent purchasing process, while offering customized products by region. Funeral customs vary widely across the US and Canada, so efficiency in accessing products specific to their region is important. In addition, SCI now has the ability to onboard new employees to the Coupa platform on demand and can easily scale up resources without needing additional server bandwidth or physical infrastructure.

Coupa provides seamless upgrades with no downtime

When it comes to Coupa system upgrades, the SCI IT team was blown away by the minimal business disruption. Brian explained, "SCI has 2,000 people logged into Coupa every day. We will do several upgrades in a row, and not have one help desk call. You just can't get that type of a seamless upgrade with any other system."

Before Coupa, the IT team met resistance when it needed to upgrade finance systems. "Staff used to be so concerned about upgrades because it meant going offline for hours," Brian said. "That's why we've been so impressed with Coupa. System upgrades happen seamlessly behind the scenes without impacting our facility or preventing staff from doing their important work - serving families. I've rarely seen a company that can deliver upgrades like that consistently, and it's helped us earn greater trust from our own staff."

SCI achieves 90% spend visibility and faster PO cycle times

SCI now has 90% visibility of its \$2 billion annual spend. The procurement team can give real-time data to the company's senior procurement leaders and supply chain partners to help them make informed, strategic decisions. And its buying teams can use real time data to negotiate better contract terms with suppliers.

The accounts payable (AP) team is also more efficient, thanks to standardized and automated processes.



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– **Brian Pellegrin**,
AVP Cloud Application
Support at SCI

Coupa's digital tools also make it easy for staff to track expenses and stay compliant. Mobile adoption is strong and growing with 2,500 users accessing Coupa via the mobile app – enabling them to snap a photo and submit receipts for reimbursement quickly. Plus, the AP team has real-time visibility of all upcoming commitments so they can accurately track spend.

Staff members can also create invoices instantly. This has reduced requisition cycle time by three times, down from six hours to just two. It takes employees less than 10 minutes to create a PO, which is crucial in the funeral industry. "If I'm ordering a casket, that casket has to be here tomorrow," Brian said. "And if I'm going to get it tomorrow, it has to be approved now."

"Coupa streamlines the purchasing process so we can give customers the service they deserve. We can spend less time on tactical and inefficient processes and more on serving and supporting families during difficult times."

What's next?

SCI achieved 90% spend visibility and consistent processes using the Coupa BSM platform. It's not easy to create that level of consistency across the board with staff and suppliers, especially with an aggressive M&A strategy. "We are proud of how much we've been able to accomplish with Coupa," Brian said, "It has set a powerful precedent, and we're continually evaluating what other parts of the business we can modernize and push up to the cloud to reduce our footprint on-premises." Let Coupa help you get the transparency and control you need for the ultimate competitive advantage.

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