

## Why Having an On Call Compliance Services is a Smart Idea (Part I)

Richard P. Kusserow | February 2025

### Key Points:

- **No cost unless you use them**
- **16 factors for consideration**

Having an “On Call” contract with a firm possessing a wide range of capabilities is something that every Compliance Officer should consider. From time to time, every compliance program needs more time, effort, and expertise than may be currently available. This can arise for a variety of reasons, including (a) someone leaving, creating a temporary staffing gap; (b) a need for subject matter expertise that’s not available internally; (c) an unexpected event or incident occurs (e.g., data breach, serious payment issues, etc.) requiring extra time and effort; and (d) new projects or tasks need to be addressed that would distract staff from other duties. Leaning on the expertise of consulting firms can bring invaluable resources, providing industry-leading experience and outside perspectives. Consultants cost more owing to their high level of expertise and years of experience. However, their expertise reduces time and effort in addressing a task or project, as well as being paid only for time and effort. Advantages of on-call contracts include quick mobilization of professional services as needed, pre-negotiated terms for flexibility, the ability to access specialized skills rapidly, cost-efficiency by only paying for services when used, being able to resolve issues promptly with the right resources, and using consultants whose work brings high expert credibility. All this essentially allows the Compliance Officer to scale services only when needed, without commitment. The benefits of having an on-call contract in place include:

- **Flexibility.** Provide services when needed, especially useful for smaller specialized projects.
- **Support Transitions.** Provide support during periods of staffing gaps and transition.
- **Define Positions.** Help define what is needed for hiring a permanent replacement.
- **Rapid Response.** Having readily available consultants to promptly address urgent issues.
- **Quick Approval.** Pre-approval accelerates procurement and authorization.
- **Pricing.** Pre-negotiated rates ensure transparency and avoid unexpected costs.
- **Cost Control.** You pay only for the time and effort needed.
- **Low Risk/High Reward.** Experts can hit the ground running and add immediate value.
- **Access to Experts.** Needed expertise was immediately available, avoiding costly staff time.
- **Added Capability.** Consultants can expand compliance services and capabilities.
- **Scalability.** Can easily adjust levels of service based on fluctuating demands.

- **Reduced Overhead.** Overhead costs can be reduced by using pre-qualified consultants.
- **Independent objectivity.** Results of work by outside experts are unaffected by internal bias.
- **Outside Perspective.** Gain insight and experience from those with wide exposure.
- **Enhanced Credibility.** Outside experts enhance the credibility of the resulting work products.
- **Expertise and Experience.** This can equate to cost-efficient and highly credible results.

An upcoming blog will provide tips and suggestions for the process of engaging an on-call contractor. In the meantime, any questions on this topic can be addressed to [Richard Kusserow](mailto:rkusserow@strategicm.com) ([rkusserow@strategicm.com](mailto:rkusserow@strategicm.com)).



#### **About the Author**

Richard P. Kusserow established Strategic Management Services, LLC, after retiring from being the DHHS Inspector General, and has assisted over 2,000 health care organizations and entities in developing, implementing and assessing compliance programs.