

# The Next Generation Supply Chain

## Premier's Bruce Radcliff and David Reitzel on why AI and partnership models are transforming healthcare.

As healthcare organizations face mounting pressure to improve resilience, reduce costs and navigate ongoing disruption, Premier is making a bold bet on the future of the supply chain. The company recently unveiled a sweeping, multi-year technology investment aimed at building an AI-powered platform designed to unify data, deliver real-time insights and ultimately reshape how health systems make decisions.

For Bruce Radcliff, President of Supply Chain Services, the timing is no coincidence. Rapid advances in artificial intelligence over the past 12 to 18 months have converged with intensifying financial pressures, workforce strain and long-standing gaps in data integration.

"The call to action has never been greater," he said, pointing to an industry at a critical inflection point.

In interviews with Radcliff and David Reitzel, Chief Solutions Officer, a clear picture emerges: The traditional healthcare supply chain model — built on siloed systems, retrospective analytics and fragmented decision-making — is no longer sufficient for the complexity of today's environment.

### A Model Built for a Different Era

Historically, health systems have relied on point solutions tailored to specific functions, such as procurement, quality or finance.

"The traditional model was well-intended," Radcliff said. "We needed to be in that model to get to the next one."

But those systems were inherently linear, while real-world decision-making is anything but. Health system leaders must weigh cost, quality, outcomes, resiliency and operational realities simultaneously. In the legacy model, those considerations were handled in isolation, often producing conflicting signals.

"You'd have one vertical telling you to go left, another to go right and another to stay straight," Radcliff said. "The real answer is somewhere in the middle."

That fragmentation has become increasingly problematic as pressures mount. Rising expenses, declining reimbursement and growing operational complexity have exposed the limitations of siloed thinking.

## The Data Dilemma

For Reitzel, the core issue is not a lack of data but the inability to use it effectively.

“What’s broken is all the siloed data and the inability for people to consume it,” he said. “We can’t continue to run our businesses in Excel.”

Many health systems have invested heavily in analytics dashboards, but those tools were never designed to drive decisions. “Dashboards were designed to identify what happened,” Reitzel said. “That’s not a decision-making platform.”

Radcliff echoed that sentiment, comparing current analytics environments to trying to bake without having ingredients prepared in advance. Data exists across multiple systems — ERP platforms, electronic health records and procurement tools — but remains scattered and difficult to unify.

“The scorecards are built on ingredients that are sitting in different places,” he said. “It’s too hard to bring them together into a unified product.”

The result is a persistent gap between insight and execution.

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**David Reitzel**

Senior Vice President and Chief Solutions Officer  
Premier

## Bridging Insight and Action

Both leaders point to workflow integration as the missing link. Traditional analytics are often static and lagging, limiting their usefulness in real-time decision-making.

“You have something that’s historical and dated,” Radcliff said. “That’s not a great platform for execution.”

Instead, the goal is to embed intelligence directly into workflows, influencing decisions before they are made rather than analyzing them after the fact. Radcliff likens the approach to online retail recommendations.

“If you’re about to make a decision, you should have information that helps guide you in that moment,” he said. “That’s what’s missing today.”

Reitzel added that empowering frontline teams is critical. While executives may have access to insights, the real opportunity lies in equipping staff and mid-level leaders with actionable data at the point of work.

“That’s the golden process,” he said. “Connecting data to the point of transaction and making it usable in real time.”

## The Rise of the Intelligence Layer

At the center of Premier's strategy is what both leaders describe as an "intelligence layer" — a unified platform that integrates disparate data sources and applies advanced analytics to uncover patterns and guide decisions.

For Radcliff, the value lies in reducing bias and expanding perspective.

"If you're a finance person, you think in financial terms. If you're a clinician, you think clinically," he said.

"The platform helps uncover what you might be missing."

This approach challenges long-held assumptions, including the idea that any single data source — such as invoices — can serve as the ultimate source of truth.

"Knowing what you spend is very different than knowing how you spend it and what outcomes you get," Radcliff said.

Reitzel emphasized that the intelligence layer extends beyond technology. It requires organizational change, new workflows and a shift in how decisions are made.

"It's not just about more data," he said. "It's about how data, people and processes come together to create better decisions."

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**Bruce Radcliff**  
President of Supply Chain Services  
Premier

## Why Partnership Matters

As some health systems explore building their own AI capabilities, both executives argue that scale and collaboration are essential.

Reitzel noted that providers are already stretched thin, focused on delivering care and managing daily operations. Strategic partners can bring specialized expertise, scalable technology and a focus on measurable outcomes.

"It's not about selling products anymore," he said. "It's about delivering outcomes."

Radcliff pointed to the importance of data scale in training effective AI models.

Individual organizations, he said, may lack the breadth of data needed to generate meaningful insights.

"The more information you can feed the system, the more value you can create," he said. "Scale matters."

## From Whiteboards to Platforms

Today, many health systems still rely on manual processes to connect insights across systems — what Radcliff describes as a "CSI-style" approach of piecing together data points on a metaphorical whiteboard.

The future, he said, replaces that manual effort with automated, dynamic platforms that continuously integrate and analyze data. "The platform becomes that whiteboard," he said. "But it's doing the work for you."

This shift has the potential to significantly reduce the time required to move from data to decision, freeing up leaders to focus on strategy and execution rather than data gathering.

## A Widening Divide

Looking ahead, both leaders expect a growing gap between organizations that successfully adopt these capabilities and those that do not.

Health systems that embrace integrated platforms and data-driven decision-making will be better equipped to navigate uncertainty, from financial pressures to unforeseen disruptions. “They’ll have the framework and the vocabulary to handle whatever comes next,” Radcliff said.

Reitzel believes speed will be the defining factor. “Success will come down to who can make better decisions faster,” he said.

In an environment defined by constant change, organizations that fail to evolve risk being overtaken by external pressures — whether economic, regulatory or operational.

Instead, he encourages health systems to take proactive steps, even if the path forward is not perfect.

“You can learn and pivot,” he said. “But doing nothing means the industry will decide for you.”

## From Vendors to Value Partners

As healthcare supply chains evolve, so too must the role of suppliers. According to Radcliff, suppliers are increasingly being asked to move beyond price-driven conversations and demonstrate broader value across the care continuum.

“It isn’t just about economics anymore,” he said. “Value is cost, quality, outcomes, resiliency, transparency and how something is operationalized.”

That shift reflects a growing alignment between providers and suppliers around a shared goal: improving patient care while maintaining sustainable business models. Suppliers are now looking for ways to better articulate their impact — not just in terms of cost savings, but in how their products and services contribute to overall system performance.

Reitzel added that deeper collaboration and data sharing will be essential. By working within integrated platforms and validating data more consistently, suppliers and health systems can create a more transparent and efficient ecosystem.

The result, he said, could be a fundamental shift in relationships. “It’s moving from vendors to true partners,” Reitzel said — where success is defined not by transactions but by shared outcomes.

### About Premier Inc.

Premier, Inc. is a leading technology-driven healthcare improvement company. Playing a critical role in the rapidly evolving health care industry, Premier unites providers, suppliers and payers to make health care better with national scale, smarter with actionable intelligence and faster with novel technologies. Headquartered in Charlotte, N.C., Premier offers integrated data and analytics, collaboratives, supply chain solutions, advisory services and other solutions in service of our mission to improve the health of communities. Please visit Premier's news on [www.premierinc.com](http://www.premierinc.com), as well as [X](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#) and [Premier's blog](#) for more information about the company.