

There are some slight differences in purchase patterns among the three benefit segments. The Quality segment shows less of a tendency to restrict their purchases to either manufacturers or distributors, favouring instead a combined approach. Major suppliers are used differently, with the Quality segment making a much higher percent of purchases from Beckman. The Quality segment also shows a slightly lesser tendency to have increased laboratory supply purchasing in the last two years and a lesser tendency to expect an increase in purchasing within the next year.

6. Criteria Used in Purchase Decisions

In the aggregate, four criteria were most important in the buying decision process:

Enhancement of quality of care	30%
Cost savings	27%
Enhancement of hospital's image	14%
Structure of operating cost (low vs. initial investment (high)	13%

Manufacturer country of origin (U.S., Canada or Japan) was of little importance.

7. Problems and Opportunities

When asked what factors could simplify and improve their purchase operations, respondents suggested the following: (1) decrease red tape/paperwork, (2) improve relations between sales vendors and staff, (3) improve inventory/accounting system, and (4) more product information from seller.

Broken down by benefit segments, the Image/Cost segment showed most interest in improved inventory, the Quality segment in delivery and price protection, and the Cost segment in improved relations between sales vendors and staff.

Respondents were also asked what advice they would give to new manufacturers for increasing their chance of selling, and the advice was consistent across segments. In summary, the advice was: (1) have a new and better product with competitive prices, (2) have an informative sales approach, and (3) develop a good relationship among vendors, staff, and purchasers. The majority (90%) of the respondents said their advice would not differ if the firm was Canadian.

Private labs preference was on: cost (60%); guaranteed delivery (40%) and a better standardized kit size which corresponds to usage patterns (40%).