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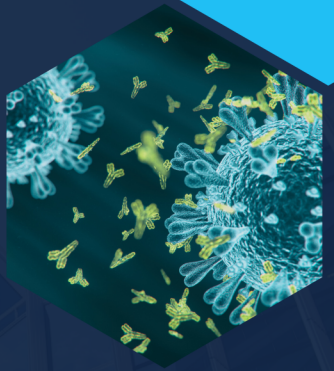
# IS THE HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY SACRIFICING QUALITY IN EXCHANGE FOR SPEED?

# PLAYBOOK

# The industry context

The current global healthcare crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed weaknesses in the system. Especially in the United States. A nation with more than 320 million people. According to government health ministries, the virus has infected more than 96 million civilians. As the country with the most cases of infection, a shortage of material and staff is expected, forcing private and governmental entities to transform their services, processes, and platforms to provide them. The global agenda and the strong generational demand also require healthcare centers to improve the care offered to patients, who have had to sacrifice quality in exchange for speed.



# A complicated scenario for the healthcare sector

The pandemic has required health personnel to double the efforts to efficiently and effectively care for the affected population. Healthcare workers and their organizations face unprecedented demands dealing with out-of-control scenarios. Not to mention the patients that require attention and services that have nothing to do with the pandemic. In regular times, the sector already had strong demand.

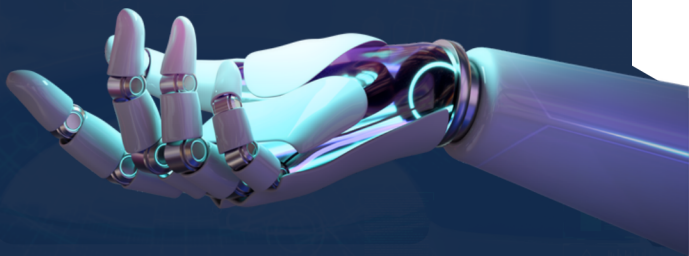
According to McKinsey's latest research, thirty-two percent of registered nurses (RNs) surveyed in the United States in November 2021 said they might leave their current direct-patient-care role. That is an increase of ten percentage points in under ten months. This result presumes a significant problem at the operational level, which brings many consequences for the industry in terms of not being able to retain skilled personnel. Human talent reaches its limit. While much of the pandemic's health conditions fall under the purview of the government, a great deal of responsibility rests in the hands of healthcare leaders.

Companies must provide competent workspaces and tools that ensure optimal performance, which translates into first-rate customer service.


**Source: McKinsey**

# AI function is to assist human talent

Although the following statement is not new, it is vital to reinforce its importance: digitalization is the solution to customer service problems. Artificial intelligence's function is to assist human talent. These solutions allow for administering, managing, processing, classifying, prioritizing, automating, standardizing, satisfying, and organizing the incidents or requests generated daily within medical centers. Solutions that require minimal effort on the part of the staff to fulfill the most basic tasks, allowing them to take care of the service as such.



# Information is power: Not knowing how to leverage data leads to failure

Resistance to digital adoption affects all levels of a company, thus affecting its growth. The multiple departments do not work independently. All areas are interconnected. It is worth going through each point to get a clear idea of why. Here is a breakdown by level, which allows companies to identify how the lack of digitization directly affects medical staff, leaders, and the company itself, making it impossible to offer quality service to patients.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# Where does the problem start?

The industry has one of the most active data collection systems. Attention to the data capture source allows healthcare facilities to start off on the right foot. They should undoubtedly view their databases as products and treat them as one would treat another product, as a study conducted by McKinsey concludes:

**“ We find that when companies instead manage data like a consumer product-be it digital or physical-they can realize near-term value from their data investments and pave the way for quickly getting more value tomorrow. ”**

Just as a company works meticulously in planning and executing a product or service, the leaders must take care of the data from its creation. While the medical industry has the advantage of being a primary need and, therefore, in high demand, it cannot neglect the incoming opportunities. The nature of the business offers a constant flow of opportunities, which mediocre data management misses. Companies must act fast. Adopting digital platforms that manage these records from the front end is vitally important—allowing trained staff to focus on the more vital downstream activities. The use of analog tools gives place to miscommunication and information loss.

Now, what kind of inbound management is needed? The health industry needs to attack the root problem, which is the data capture source. For example, healthcare facilities with self-service kiosks allow patients to enter their data without assistance. While this action allows staff to tare more Sensitive issues, an erroneous capture will bring more workload in the short and long term. It is common for patients through these machines to share inaccurate information. Whether it is a typographical error or a lack of knowledge of their personal information, this is where data validation takes place.


The culture of clean data ensures that artificial assistance fulfills its role, taking full advantage of all its functions. If data enters erroneously, it must be corrected instantly in the cloud. If this is not done, there is a risk that staff will miss appointments and not keep precise track of the day's activities. There is also a risk of making mistakes by not knowing a patient's entire file.

In addition, the categories of the data required by clinics are broad—types such as demographics, contact, and clinical history. Clinical records have extensive information. These are alive and constantly being updated. As time passes, new data should enter, and old data should leave. The problem at this point is not the impossibility of generating records in the business but rather the standardization of data in real-time and on an ongoing basis.

# Data standardization ensures that medical institutions have valuable and easily linkable data.

This standardized data is manageable to use. Medical language is an open system, and as such, it acquires and discards words according to the evolution of biomedical knowledge. Nevertheless, it requires specific terminologies which overcome language barriers. It requires a platform that takes the data as it is captured and makes it match.

Standardization can have a long list of benefits. It involves adjusting medical values measured on different scales to a standard scale. This option leads to rapid data management, which, within this industry, is urgently required in cases of emergency. Although this is a complex task, today, clever solutions are available that facilitate data standardization. Artificial intelligence allows industries to acquire a more significant benefit for little effort, whether a few records or bulk data. Companies that see this benefit beyond its complexity now enjoy hybrid systems that allow them to distribute workforce efforts well.

Ultimately, companies can only obtain consistent results with proper standardization and subsequent uniformity in their databases.

# Siloed data: enemies of a unified service

Hospitals and healthcare facilities connect their departments through data. Doctors, nurses, administrators, finance, human resources, and other departments need different information to perform their roles. What may be relevant to a physician may not apply to a floor manager. Much of the information on a floor may stay there, even though this concerns the entire organization. Many of the companies within the industry are still operating under siloed data. Siloed data is not healthy data. Data is beneficial when it is accessible and easily understood throughout the company.

Siloed data does not just affect a company at a functional level. It also becomes complicated for leaders to view the company's status fully. Bad data affects every department, including patients and customers, as they pay for not receiving immediate and accurate care.

Despite the inconvenience, it is inevitable to have data silos within a company over time. These reflect structural evolution. As each department collects and stores its data for individual purposes, it creates its data silo. The issue is maintaining a company's growth, as internal change will always be a constant, especially when looking to update processes. But neither should take much effort from human talent. Here is where the adoption of data management solutions comes into play. Companies eliminate incompatible data by letting AI (Artificial Intelligence) do the job. This data does not add value to analytics and decision-making processes. Even these skew the results. A medical organization that digitizes without breaking down data silos will not access the full benefits of digital transformation. So, the efforts will be in vain. Companies need to provide a 360-degree view of the data that is relevant.

End-to-end. Optimal data capture, regardless of origin, eliminates and merges duplicates, standardizes, and validates, enabling healthcare facilities and staff to manage reliable and ready-to-use data. If this data is also given consistent qualities so that all internal departments can understand it, it allows the company to establish common goals and objectives.

# Insufficient data leads to failure

The bases are clear: the optimal capture of data, the importance of keeping a company well communicated internally, and how the digitization of processes makes these two points possible. Now it is time to delve into how this technology enables companies in the healthcare sector to offer quality service, leaving aside the partial and fragmented solutions of the platforms.

More than ever, quality in the medical service is receiving increasing attention worldwide due to recent events and the fact that it is the essence of all human activity. For this reason, there has been an urgent pressure to convert and develop health services towards better levels of quality and competitiveness, in which the physician must gain the complete confidence of the patient. The search for service quality represents a challenge or a strategic priority for health professionals in the new millennium.

Possession of bad data is the main reason medical centers offer poor service. Even if the clinic in question has trained and motivated staff, not being able to use the data collected causes doctors and nurses to make mistakes. This industry cannot afford to make mistakes since human lives are at stake. Advanced technology is required to promote timeliness. Just as medical centers invest in state-of-the-art machinery and laboratories, they must invest in complete data storage platforms.

# Deduplication

The most common EHR (electronic health record) problem is duplication, i.e., duplicate records for the same patient. The patient's information is everywhere across different records, and each needs to provide an overall view of the patient's history. A single patient is contacted via telephone by multiple collaborators. Customers do not trust organizations that cannot even communicate well internally. They might even receive unsolicited mailings, already-paid invoices, and incomplete results. Patients have neither the time nor the energy to pay attention to trifles. All they require is to be contacted by medical staff for real issues and on time.

As if that were not enough, patients, anxiously waiting for their results or wishing to speak to their primary care physician, must wait hours to be seen. A mediocre database acts like a snowball. A mistake in the day's schedule and erroneous information can result in long waiting lines. Companies must avoid this as much as possible by having thorough digital platforms that allow the public to request medical attention and consult their results without contacting the clinic in general situations.

# World-class customer service

In case of medical emergencies, things become even more complicated. The staff uses the patient's medical record to review the patient's history to make quick decisions. When data is fragmented, efficiency and effectiveness are compromised. Teams inevitably make mistakes or take longer to treat as they must dig through the system for missing information, creating bottlenecks. There are many options out there. If they have the privilege to choose, poorly received and served patients are unlikely to set foot in the same center again. Poor service can also generate traumatic experiences for the patient. The clinical history goes hand in hand with the service offered and cannot be separated.


# A data-driven industry

Digitization should support growth, not hold it back. "Teams using data products don't have to waste time searching for data, processing it into the right format, and building bespoke data sets and data pipelines-an effort that ultimately creates an architectural mess and governance challenges." [1]. Companies within the healthcare sector that refuse to see the need to move into the digital age now make the conscious decision to embrace failure. This adoption demands the acquisition of comprehensive and competent platforms. There is no time to skimp. There are plenty of applications and platforms. However, it is the responsibility of industry leaders to be informed enough to know how to distinguish between partial and complete solutions.

[1] McKinsey & Company,2022: How to unlock the full value of data? Manage it like a product

A complete solution offers answers to all aspects of the data problem. A solution that can be used by all departments, favoring the integration of these and their databases. No link in the chain is left out. None of the factors can operate in isolation. Give contact centers and physicians a 360-degree view of the patient instead of jumping between multiple systems they usually go through to make appointments, provide service, and maintain periodic monitoring.

Siloed data is no longer part of the day-to-day. In addition to captured records, databases reflect reliable data. The family clinic has the same patient information as the emergency department, the organ transplant units, and other centers. Patients are confident that staff at the various specialized departments know their cases, thus knowing who needs care first and what service to provide. This system conveys security and even improves the quality of life of those facing a challenging time. It works for the common good and the future of an entire generation.

# Endless benefits

Managers and floor managers can achieve better results in their companies by working with native solutions which speak the same language as the platforms they already use. Solutions that are compatible with the used technical language, for example. Thus facilitating deduplication and data transfer. If the company acquires ownership of one or more clinics, it will be necessary to migrate data from one space to another. AI can undoubtedly meet this challenge equally well.

The benefits are inexhaustible, but the time is not. The healthcare industry must make decisions here and now. The consequences of not embracing digitalization already have adverse effects and will not stop. A company with a competent digital system will be able to retain and keep staff and patients happy, thus achieving optimal results.

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