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Use Digital to Improve Healthcare Today While Creating a New Tomorrow

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Improve the existing business and generate future growth. Executing on these two components is a recipe for success but bringing this to life can be easier said than done, especially for healthcare leaders who face today's evolving environment and an uncertain future.

For many years, healthcare organizations have sought to drive out inefficiencies and streamline processes.

By optimizing current capabilities to grow your core business while identifying and building a new business model for the future, healthcare organizations can chart a path forward amid uncertainty. Doing so — with the problems and unmet needs of consumers in mind — can be particularly beneficial in driving growth.

Core business opportunities: Healthcare organizations have a mission of caring for consumers by treating injuries, illnesses and other health conditions. In performing these tasks, there are many opportunities to remove process inefficiencies and eliminate waste. At the same time, consumers need healthcare services, but they want them at a time and place that's most convenient for them. This offers organizations an opportunity to improve the core to better meet customer needs while driving out inefficiencies that often impede growth.

Future business opportunities: Consumers' challenges are key drivers of new business models and opportunities for growth in the future. Consumers don't want to get sick and they don't want to deal with managing ongoing health problems. This challenge, coupled with the push toward value-driven growth, gives healthcare organizations an opportunity to build a new business model for the future where they prevent, rather than just treat, illness.

Digital technologies can play a significant role in enabling organizations to thrive, adapt, innovate and transform both to better optimize their core and future businesses. A governance structure that defines the level of risk an organization is willing to take and acknowledges that some new ideas may not succeed but still offers the opportunity to take risks will be critical for this journey.

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Using Digital to Optimize and Reposition Your Core Business

Technology helps to create a more consumer-centric organization so that you can reposition your organization as one that doesn't just provide quality care but does so at a time and place that's convenient. For many years, healthcare organizations have sought to drive out inefficiencies and streamline processes. While significant strides have been made, digital capabilities can take this one step further.

Digital capabilities allow your organization to:

- **Provide care on patients' terms.** With digital technology, patients can receive care in a way that best fits their lifestyle. With mobile apps and video visits, access to a physician can occur in a matter of seconds.

- **Improve access.** For those in rural areas where there may be a lack of specialty services, telemedicine can connect patients with specialists they would otherwise need to travel to see.

- **Help patients stay well.** Digital tools can manage diseases in a way that minimally disrupts a consumer's daily routines by monitoring data such as steps, heart rate, sleep and automatically shares this health information with their provider.

- **Offer continuous patient engagement.** Portals and apps give patients the opportunity to communicate with their physician, schedule appointments and continually engage with their health provider.

- **Create a better experience.** Technology such as texting apps can reduce stress and improve the overall experience. With this technology, patients can wait in other areas of a hospital or doctor's office for their appointment rather than sitting in a crowded waiting room.

- **Increase efficiencies.** Leverage digital tools to streamline processes and eliminate care variation. Self check-in kiosks allow patients to provide their information in a more seamless fashion. They can shorten the wait time and reduce the number of staff members needed to support the check-in process.

- **Increase staff productivity.** With remote patient monitoring, multiple units can be monitored from one centralized site of care. Automating these structured tasks will free employees to focus on activities that impact or improve the consumer experience.

By implementing digital tools that improve today's operations, healthcare providers can transform the experience for consumers and begin to optimize their businesses for the future.

Digital Transforms Healthcare for the Future

Although there isn't a clear picture of the future, we know that today's healthcare model is not sustainable. By making assumptions about the future, we anticipate that payment models will be more focused on value. Considering consumers' unmet needs (like the fact that they don't want to be sick), we can begin to see an opportunity for future growth. This can fuel transformation by creating a business of keeping people well (prevention), rather than just caring for those who are ill.

Prevention is more than just managing chronic diseases or lowering readmission rates, it involves taking proactive steps to stop illnesses from occurring. This involves not just looking at physical health conditions, but also emotional health and lifestyles factors. These factors holistically create a better picture of barriers that keep an individual from achieving their health goals or failing to set such goals in the first place. In some cases, to help prevent illness, healthcare organization can begin to focus beyond the individual and transform entire communities. For instance, if an organization manages healthcare for a large group of people who want to be more physically active, but don't

have access to a facility to do this, the organization could assess whether building walking trails in that community could lead to better health outcomes.

Just as digital is critical for optimizing and repositioning today's business, it can propel future businesses forward. With digital you can:

- **Leverage data.** Identify and respond to health concerns before they even happen by using medical data, purchases, socioeconomic factors and lifestyle habits to recognize trends and develop predictive models. If data can be aggregated from not just providers, but also insurers and pharmaceutical manufacturers a more robust picture of health can be created.

- **Invest in the Internet of Things.** Connect electronic health records (EHRs), self-reported patient information, data from wearables and lifestyle factors so that preventive actions can occur.

- **Proactively address health problems:** Use analytics and artificial intelligence capabilities to help prevent illnesses and better identify the best course of action for care.

- **Remove barriers to health.** Healthcare organizations can invest in digital capabilities to send reminders to consumers to help them stay on track with their health goals.

With this new model, healthcare organizations will maintain a continuous relationship with consumers — whether they are healthy or ill — and do everything they can to keep them well. This new opportunity gives providers the chance to do things differently and create an entirely new way of providing healthcare.

As your health care organizations attempt to overcome the disruptive force facing the industry, leveraging digital technologies allows you to not only improve the current way business but build a new model for the future.

Be Strategic in Choosing Where to Activate Consumers

Think about ways your organization can be strategic in developing a consumer-centric approach by understanding consumer behavior and where investments in more consumer-centric approaches will drive results. To do so truly understand your market and the unique consumer needs in each segment. Make investments in tools and technologies that will help you understand these needs and deploy technology that will empower consumers and deliver a return on investment. For instance, if there is a high dropout rate for a particular segment of a clinical trial or a high readmission rate for a specific condition, this could be a result of a lack of consumer centricity. Consider if technology, like text message reminders, could keep participants more engaged in a clinical trial or prevent patients from forgetting their medication leading to readmission. A collaborative effort between pharmaceutical companies, research institutions and/or healthcare providers can create this approach, thus increasing protocol compliance or medication adherence, or improving chronic disease management.

Many collaborative efforts bring care outside the four walls of the hospital and clinical trial sites through the use of apps to monitor patient health and online platforms. This gives patients the autonomy to manage their health on their terms, with minimal disruptions to their daily life. Therapeutics can be optimized with patient generated data so they are easier to use and more effectively manage health conditions. For instance, continuous glucose monitoring improves disease management by using patient generated data to optimize medication dosing and remove the burden of insulin testing from patients. Consumers demand more. Organizations that respond to this demand by creating innovative solutions that meet their needs will stay ahead of competition, transform the consumer experience and thrive in the age of consumer choice.

Key Takeaways

To successfully optimize your core while fueling new growth:

Think differently.

Consider ways in which you can improve the consumer experience today and create new business models that address unmet consumer needs.

Plan differently.

Create the space for strategic thinking to identify the capabilities that will be critical for optimizing today and positioning your business for success in the future, and put a plan in place to achieve them.

Act differently.

Use digital technologies to propel success to execute on strategic objectives for both the short term, midterm and long term.

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