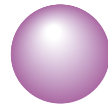


About HBS Consulting

HBS Consulting is an international consulting firm which aims to maximise return on investment on strategic initiatives and marketing expenditure – working in partnership with corporate strategy and marketing teams exclusively in the medical device, diagnostics and lifescience industries.

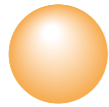
HBS Consulting provides client solutions through four industry operating groups, each offering eight service lines. These provide specialist insight and market knowledge to take advantage of today's opportunities.

Operating Groups Functional Expertise



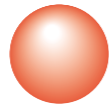
MedSurg

Medical Devices
Surgical Equipment
Patient Care



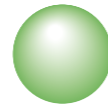
IMIS

Medical Imaging
Patient Monitoring
Information Systems



Diagnostics

Clinical
Laboratory
Point of Care



Life Sciences

Pharmaceuticals
Drug Discovery
Biotechnology



Services

- Market Entry Strategy
- Market and Product Positioning
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- Investment Appraisal and Product Valuation
- Mergers and Acquisitions, Licensing, Due Diligence
- Leveraging Strategic Partnerships and Alliances
- Customer Relationships



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HBS-INFO

HBS Consulting's insight on business strategy
for the healthcare industry.

Issue November/December 2008



Dear Reader,

Patient Privacy versus vital information in case of emergency. These are the pros and cons when talking about the Electronic Health Record (EHR). In this issue of HBS-Info we want to have a closer look at this topic.

Customer satisfaction is one of the most important factors of a company's success and it directly affects the benefits. That's why HBS Consulting has conducted a study on her own behalf. Read more in our HBS- Info.

Seasonal Greetings

Andrew Stuart-Houghton

Covidien Surgical

"I have been working with HBS Consulting for the past 5 years in different sectors of medical device market space – implantable, endo-mechanical, diagnostic imaging and capital equipment. HBS Consulting has demonstrated great strengths in understanding my business issues and delivering actionable results at significant and consistent cost savings. Their learning ability for challenging technology platforms in the device industry and responsiveness has continued to make them one of my most preferred vendors."

Tia Xie
Director, Global Marketing Research,
Covidien Surgical



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Patient Privacy – a thorn in the side of England's EHR

Although the merits of development in IT in healthcare are self-evident it seems to be suffering from endless growth pains. According to HIMSS, healthcare IT worldwide lags far behind the technological capabilities of other global businesses. By Nico Basson

HBS Consulting, a leading Medical Devices, Diagnostics and Pharmaceutical business development consultancy recently took an in-depth look at how the electronic health record system is coming along in England.

Internationally, England shows perhaps the greatest willingness to invest in IT for healthcare, but at the same time also faces some of the toughest issues in implementing the EHR (Electronic Health Record) which falls under the National Programme for IT. Going from an initial budget of £6.0 billion in 2003 over 10 years, some officials have recently been quoted in papers, estimating the figure to be close to £20.0 billion. It now remains to be seen if the program will fall victim to cut backs by the treasury because of billions spent on bail outs in the banking industry, although the high costs of cancelling contracts with IT suppliers might prevent that.

Apart from technical complications, contractor fall-outs, management problems, ever continuing delays, the level of public confidence, and even that of some physicians also seem to be questionable. It is feared by those in favour of an EHR that low public confidence could undermine the optimal efficiency of the system. The main concern with patients and many physicians alike is patient privacy. While paper records could also be snooped at or get lost, the fear is that with digital files this could happen in unprecedented volumes. At the same time it is asked if millions of patient files would be made available to third parties for commercial research without the patient's consent, and how anonymous these files really would be.

One of the services included by the EHR's Care Record Service (CRS), Summary Care Records (SCR) deals with the patient data such as date of birth, address, details of allergies, current prescriptions and so on. This will be an invaluable tool for doctors when patients needs emergency care because it can be accessed quickly from anywhere at any time. Connecting for Health (CfH) has announced a change in its previous plan for the SCR to operate on an assumed consent model. Patients will now have to give permission for clinicians and other healthcare workers to look at their electronic health records. Nevertheless, patient advocacy groups fear that patient privacy may be at risk of not only unauthorised individuals having access to the records, but that the Spine where these records are kept might be breached by hackers, or that records could be lost or corrupted.

Another one of the three services included in EHR's Care Record Service, called SUS (Secondary Uses Service) is causing debate amongst lobbyists and patients ranging from calculated concern to outrage.

According to the NHS, SUS is designed to provide anonymous patient-based data for purposes other than direct clinical care such as healthcare planning, commissioning, public health, clinical audit and governance, benchmarking, performance improvement, medical research and national policy development. While the Department of Health claims that the majority of records which would be made available to third parties for these purposes, will be made anonymous through a process they call pseudonymisation, they admit that patient identifiable data could also be passed on if it was deemed to be more useful, or when the public good is deemed to be of greater importance than confidentiality.

Connecting for Health says that the only organisation outside the NHS which receives patient-identifiable records from the SUS database is the Dr Foster Unit, which is not an NHS organisation, but an academic unit within the Division of Epidemiology Public Health and Primary Care. The Unit operates under the strictest of security measures to deliver work which is done in the interest of medical research and public health care. Professor Thick, chief clinical officer for CfH (Connecting for Health) has said that stories of data leaks had made issues of data use and confidentiality an extremely sensitive matter. Public concern should be taken very seriously as it is clear that maintaining the security of patient records is a significant challenge. A lot will need to be done to show the benefits of EHR, and that issues surrounding patient privacy are not being ignored. If this is not given the urgent attention that it deserves, patients and a significant number of physicians are unlikely to buy into the system, which could affect its efficiency. At the same time a healthy balance should be kept between patient privacy and the possibilities of what an EHR could do, not only for healthcare in general, but also for patients individually, and collectively.

IT in healthcare has become unimaginable, and so are EHR systems. It is also unimaginable that ethics in medicine will ever stop being an issue, as it has always been, and legitimately so. HBS Consulting continuously keeps a finger on the pulse of a variety of topics in the medical, and health industry.

HBS Customer Satisfaction Study

Customer satisfaction is one of the most important factors of a company's success and it directly affects the benefits. A company can develop and strengthen its market position thanks to its satisfied customers' loyalty. In October HBS Consulting conducted a customer satisfaction survey among their clients. Several managers who took part in it were asked to fill in an anonymous online survey. By Iwona Sydor

The majority of the respondents said that HBS Consulting's services in the field of research projects are reasonably priced. Asked about the company's key values, the customers pointed at the great knowledge of the medical devices market and long time experience.

Generally, the opinions of HBS Consulting regarding it's consulting and research services, customer service, understanding customers' needs, keeping to the budget and time schedule, were positive or very positive.

The respondents' opinions regarding quality of research results as well as quality of HBS Consulting's products delivered in a form of data presentations, studies, strategies etc. were also mostly positive. All respondents agreed that the visual aids (graphs, diagrams) were helpful and that the deliverables were accurate, clear and useful.

Evaluating the whole package of services offered by HBS Consulting, including customer service, products' quality and cost, the customers showed a very high level of satisfaction. Also, comparing the company to other research-consulting agencies, half of the respondents rated HBS Consulting as much better or somewhat better.

It was also interesting to learn what customers use the research results for, and what influence those results have on their products. As the study showed, in most cases the customers found them very reliable and trustworthy. Very often their strategic decisions, e.g. regarding product development, resources allocation or entering new markets, are based on HBS Consulting's research outcomes.

Especially the customers who were not fully satisfied with some aspects of cooperation with HBS Consulting brought a lot of valuable comments. They showed which areas the company needs to work on. That just confirmed the general rule saying, that it's the discontented customers who have the information that a company needs. Understanding why some customers are dissatisfied may help introduce some changes in order to keep the existing clients and gain new ones.

Customer satisfaction level is definitely worth monitoring as the results provide some very valuable information regarding customers' attitude, preferences and potential problems with the company's products or services. Yet one should always remember that conducting a customer satisfaction survey only makes sense if the company undertakes some action in order to solve problems shown by the study. Only then can the results be used for improving the company's competitiveness and financial result.

