How to Find the Right IT Partner for Your Telemedicine Solution

It's 2022 and public health is undergoing an unprecedented digital transformation. It's a road already taken before Covid-19, but during the first quarter of 2020 in the U.S. telehealth visits increased by 154% (CDC, 2020).

If you are in a business in the healthcare industry, you probably feel the pressure to provide or use technology that works flawlessly, starting immediately. That is why choosing the right IT partner for such a project is of paramount importance, or else you risk having huge losses in finances and what's worse – in human lives.

In this article, we offer some handy tips on how to select the right IT partner for your telemedicine project to ensure a smooth, fast and professional implementation. Before we jump into that, however, let's dive a bit deeper into the importance of telemedicine.

Telemedicine provides more accessible and accurate medical care

Telemedicine platforms provide the infrastructure for securing private and high-quality remote medical assistance. Healthcare providers of all types across the globe are now using such platforms to interact with their patients more quickly and efficiently. Patients, on the other hand, can now easily track and analyse their health status of all stages – and take timely measures.

"Store-and-forward", for example, is a technique that allows patients to send medical images or biosignals to their doctor. This practice is already common in the fields of dermatology, radiology and pathology. It saves key time and allows practitioners to base their observations on history reports.

Thanks to real-time interactive services, individuals from distant and rural areas, who have no means of transportation, or such who are alone and are too sick to drive, can now easily be in contact with their doctors. They can see each other via video conferencing and discuss medications and symptoms. That helps them cure their conditions more precisely and on time. What's more, it makes them feel calmer and more cared for.

"Among older people at high cardiovascular risk, the addition of telehealth strategies using remote support by phone calls over a period of 3 months resulted in small but significant improvements of cardiovascular risk factors, body composition, anxiety, and depression which are maintained long-term" ~ a study by Global Heart

Remote monitoring (self-testing), on another hand, enables patients to track their health and identify clinical signs, particularly in cases related to chronic diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and asthma.

Also, via telemedicine, practitioners collect and analyse data more accurately. Needless to say, data is of immense benefit to both doctors and patients as it helps improve diagnosis and treatment in all stages of disease prevention.

Are you convinced of the importance of telemedicine already? We hope you are. Let's now talk about the development of your telemedicine platform, and more specifically – how to choose the best IT partner for your project.

Identify the right IT partner for your telemedicine platform

We advise you to focus on three main pillars when choosing the right partner for your telemedicine project:

- Narrow down your search to field experts with experience in healthcare and compliance

- Choose a team of critical thinkers as innovation lies at its core and is based on out-of-the-box thinkers

- Make sure you choose a trustworthy team that openly communicates with you on new ideas, challenges, resolutions, etc.

Your IT partner must have a profound understanding of the healthcare industry

Partners developing solutions and products for the healthcare industry need to be equally competent in both medical and technology matters. Here's what you need to watch for:

1. Whether they have experience and routine in the adoption of compliance and regulatory frameworks as the healthcare sector is subject to EU, US and UK regulations that are more than strict.

2. Whether they understand the motivations of all stakeholders involved in the potential new product: For instance, will the telemedicine project be equally convenient to doctors and patients? Does it have enough features to cover all medical needs? Are there enough training and support resources for its smooth adoption and ongoing use? Is it customizable?

3. Whether they are flexible: For example, a particular clinic may need a monitoring and self-testing tool for its patients. If another feature is added, however, such as telepharma and prescriptions adjustments, your IT partner must be able to adapt to the specific needs of the products' stakeholders.

"For us healthcare is an industry where we can make an impact and frankly, save lives. You see visible results. When we create a telehealth application, we know that we are giving someone in a very remote area the ability to access medical information or speak to a doctor. And that is our biggest motivation to keep getting better at what we do" ~ Valeria Kozareva, Head of Business Development and Strategic Partnerships, Dreamix.eu.

Your IT partner must demonstrate outstanding product management skills

The team of your IT partner should be able to consult, if not to manage, the majority of the following product management features:

- Product definition, market segmentation, software architecture, engineering and testing: Your IT partners are most efficient when they can provide a complete end-to-end solution development service and ongoing support. Try to test their competence in the field of product management and be persistent in understanding what the roles and responsibilities of the company's team members are. If they have product owners/managers, business analysts, engineers and testers, then this is a good indication that they can do the full job!

- Customer feedback, data analysis, product innovation and roadmaps: Needless to say, you need to define the users of your new telemedicine platform well. You also need to be able to analyse the new product's innovation and niche and structure the whole thing into a neat product roadmap. You do not need to worry about lacking the resources for that internally. It is even better to expect it from your IT partner.

- Consistent communication and progress to goals: If your product management is outsourced, then you definitely need to track the progress to goal with the full-fledged assistance from your partner's team. Try to see if their leaders are communicating proactively and ask for their routines in product management with their clients.

- Regular demos: Demos are key to the success of a new product, as they can be an effective identification instrument for insufficiencies. They can also help you find user experience deficiencies and other crucial elements that must definitely be resolved prior to the release.

Final thoughts

Companies in the healthcare industry are now burdened with loads of new expectations to provide and use more flexible and accessible medical care. That may include enabling doctors to communicate more seamlessly with pharma companies and patients, streamlining workflows and procedures, innovating for patients' treatments and engagement remotely, and so much more. If you want to be aboard with the latest pharma trends, then your healthcare organisation most probably needs to adopt an effective telemedicine solution or upgrade an existing one. IT partners that provide digital healthcare solutions can do more than just coding now. Picking a competent IT company will help you define your product successfully, and build it in a compliant and efficient way.