

New Goals After 15 Years in Healthcare IT



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After 15 years in Healthcare IT, what is your focus or next goal now?

Fifteen years! It's a long time.

All this time I have had the opportunity to work in my passion, Health IT and eHealth. I have had a range of intense experiences: the full digital hospital experience as a CIO, regional government for strategy on eHealth, founder and entrepreneur of some initiatives, Vice President of eHealth Innovation in a global second opinion company. Now I'm back at a big university hospital as CIO.

I've had the privilege of seeing lot of healthcare challenges from different angles and have always pushed to optimise and automate workflows and increase the possibilities of what IT can bring into healthcare. There have been many advances in the past 15 years ago but, honestly, I feel a bit frustrated to see that the implementation of technology is really slow if we compare with other industries. Yes, healthcare is a big consumer of advanced technology for diagnosis and medical research but, when we talk about information systems, the reality is a bit hard.

We have seen lots of crazy ideas and revolutions in some markets that are consolidated and established with a traditional solution. Airbnb, Uber, WhatsApp and Tripadvisor have changed the industries they belong to. In healthcare the steps are slow. Yes, we can argue that healthcare is different and there is a security and patient data issue to deal with but is this really true? I am having several doubts right now. There are hundreds of processes that could be automated to benefit the patient experience within their healthcare system. Many processes would be really simple to automate and, even the patient is asking questions like, "why can't I chat with my hospital to ask for a visit as I do in the rest of things?"

So now I feel more committed to trying to change some workflows that can have impact on the patient experience. I am not interested in changing how healthcare works but in consolidating some minimum scenarios that should be different.

There are cultural barriers to break - both in the patient side and in the clinical and administrative teams but everyone agrees that something else could be done. I can book a plane ticket and get my boarding card all with my mobile phone but I can't easily exchange my medical images with other institutions. This also goes for receiving tests and information through my computer. Is it a technology problem? It seems clear that not. Is it an investment problem? It could be. Is it a cultural change issue? Definitely. Is it due the paternalism of "system"?

I really think the patient should drive the change and should claim for healthcare to really change the way processes are executed. Companies like Airbnb and Uber came from the bottom - from users having a need and thus they are a success.

I think patients should also start claiming ownership of their data in order to easily share and interact with a doctor remotely as well as have an online visit and manage administrative and clinical processes with a mobile phone.

It's not solely a technology problem. All this can happen but we all, patients and the medical ecosystem, need to believe in can happen.

Zoom On

What is your top management tip?

Have Emotional Intelligence

What would you single out as a career highlight?

Being an innovative and disruptive spirit.

If you had not chosen this career path you would have become a...?

Medical doctor.

What are your personal interests outside of work?

Fishing and enjoying the Mediterranean sea.

Your favourite quote?

"If you want to live a happy life, tie it to a goal, not to people or objects" Albert Einstein

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