

IT Solutions for Outpatient-Specialized Healthcare Organizations



Anthony Sanzo - CEO

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Net Health

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CEOCFO: Mr. Sanzo, what is the concept for Net Health?

Mr. Sanzo: We exist specifically to address what we see as a void in the marketplace, and that is to provide comprehensive IT solutions to outpatient-specialized health care organizations. When we say, “specialized,” we do not mean specialty care, such as orthopedics. We address health care providers whose practices follow a complex workflow. These healthcare professionals are not well served by generic IT solutions. Instead, they require a solution that is perfectly fitted to that practice, that healthcare setting and the needs of that vertical. We came to this strategy in our early days. We were totally focused on providing that end-to-end solution for outpatient wound care centers. By providing that perfectly fitted solution, we captured over 80 percent of the penetrated market and maintained a retention rate in the high 90 percent. When we decided to expand into other market segments, it was natural for us to limit our interest in clinical verticals that, like the outpatient wound care market, were highly specialized in their workflow.

We identified a number of possible specialized markets to consider. Those that we have chosen to invest in, include occupational medicine, urgent care, hospital employee health, workplace health (which is when employers take responsibility for the care of their employees) and therapies (physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech and language pathology.) Each of these clinical markets share the common characteristics of being predominately outpatient based and requiring a complex workflow that must be supported by specialized IT solutions.

CEO CFO: *What are some of the very specific challenges that your solution addresses that might not even be considered with more standard solutions?*

Mr. Sanzo: Challenges may be different for the different provider markets; I will address wound care centers first. The typical chronic wound is healed over several treatments. To appropriately store the multiple clinical treatments and preserve them for effective reporting requires discrete data fields that can be archived for later reporting and analytics. Template based “modules” relying on much free text are not capable of providing appropriate reports.

Occupational medicine providers are tasked with a complex set of payer requirements. Each employer is a separate client and a separate payer. Each employer may also direct a specific clinical workflow for their employees. For example, one of our clients uses over 9,000 separate protocols to meet the needs of its client base. Like Net Health, this client also believes in the right fit and works hard to match a client’s requirements with their workflow. Storing these protocols in a manner that supports clinical documentation in real time requires a content rich and highly flexible solution. This requirement isn’t easily met by generic EMRs simply modified with templates for Occupational Medicine. These two examples illustrate what we mean by specialized care.

CEO CFO: *What is the key to a user -friendly system?*

Mr. Sanzo: The key is matching our electronic workflow to the actual workflow of the client—to enable those providing care, and supporting healthcare professionals’ ability to enter data as simply as is possible. The key is to provide a user interface that looks familiar and is logical to the end user. The goal is to provide a good user experience, and the key to a good user experience is understanding the use cases and the different protocols or scenarios that a caregiver will face during the care process, end to end. The use cases differ among the clinical markets and they differ within the markets between end users. The key to providing a user friendly system is to understand how the user does his or her work. The only way to do this is to employ subject matter experts, great business analysts and provide the time to have them interact and listen to our clients. We are blessed with great business analysts, great subject matter experts and a great team who are eager to listen, learn and respond.

CEO CFO: *As you have branched out from the original group and the wound care, what have you learned as you have approached the newer areas?*

Mr. Sanzo: We learn so much from each new market segment we enter. When we enter a new clinical market, we have done so by first acquiring a knowledge base. The personnel who have come to us via our acquisitions are experts in their fields. We respect this and leverage their knowledge to serve our expanding client base. We also invest to deepen that knowledge and rely heavily on our clients’ generous willingness to share what they know and what they need from their IT provider. We have also benefited from Advisory Boards composed of leaders in their fields, some clients, some not. They serve as our sounding board for ideas and are generous with their time and advice.

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CEOCFO: *How do you stay on top of changing technology and changing regulations?*

Mr. Sanzo: We stay on top of both by having subject matter experts whose jobs are specifically focused on researching the changes proposed or mandated by the appropriate regulatory bodies. We have invested in building product teams that are led by product managers who also research and interact with providers and experts in the fields their products support. This, clearly, has helped us stay abreast of changes. And as I said, we rely on the knowledge of our advisory board members.

CEOCFO: *How do you keep all the pieces together?*

Mr. Sanzo: As the saying goes, “it takes a village.” No single person can keep all the pieces together in a growing, complex organization. We rely on a community of employees and I rely on a team of senior leaders to keep us all moving in a positive direction. I carry the title of CEO but our senior management group functions as a team, and I would not want to try to “keep all the pieces together” without them.

CEOCFO: *Net Health has been recognized as a best place to work for more than one year. Tell us a little bit about the corporate culture and how you have fostered the environment that makes people happy and more productive?*

Mr. Sanzo: The corporate culture was created and nurtured when I was the Chairman but not an employed, full time CEO. That it is not a culture of my making; notwithstanding, I take great pride in its existence. I give props to Patrick Colletti and Chris Hayes, who were probably in their late 20s or early 30s when they started thinking about corporate culture and how to build an environment to which people will want to come to work and contribute. I am the beneficiary of their heavy lifting done years ago.

So, how do we describe our culture? It is one that promotes growth. We mince no words here, we are here to grow. When we think about growth, we think about growth on a holistic basis. We are here to grow as a company, as individuals, as professionals, and in our communities.

How do we foster a productive and happy work place? We promote involvement, new experiences, and intelligent risk taking. We believe in strength finding, allowing individuals to play to their strengths and to support their (our) weaknesses with others who have complementary strengths. We believe—strongly—in employee engagement. We try to communicate frequently. We want our employees to know our strategic plan and how they and what they do contribute to Net Health’s realizing our goals. We encourage people to take chances and we do not penalize individuals for calculated risks. We understand, just as in life, you cannot learn to walk without falling. We want people to have those experiences, because in those experiences we find growth. Bringing it full circle, growth, holistic growth is the foundation of our culture.

CEOCFO: *Why do your employees believe that the organization means it and it is not just words?*

Mr. Sanzo: I don’t think anybody believes it until they experience it, and I certainly do not blame anyone for being skeptical. We live our culture or at least we try to live, daily. Being part of it is believing.

If your question is focusing on our encouraging calculated risks, it’s important that I make the difference between poor performance and calculated, intelligent risks clear. We hold people accountable for their performance, and accountability is part of our culture. Being a consistent

underperformer is very different than taking calculated risks and learning from those risks.

CEOCFO: *How do you reach out to your customers? Are the newer segments aware there is something for them as specific as what you have developed?*

Mr. Sanzo: We reach out to our clients in many ways. First, we're fortunate in that most of our clients are licensing applications we host. Some refer to this as SaaS or "software as a service." This enables our clients to communicate with us, real time, via a private network incorporated in the software. These "feedbacks" offer advice or suggestions for enhancements.

Second, Net Health has a legacy of connecting with our client base via client conferences. The professional associations supporting the professionals who work in our various market segments produce educational conferences at least annually. Given the number of our clients who participate in their industry professional conferences as a means of continuing their education, it is natural for Net Health to organize a client conference immediately following the associations' meetings. We use our conference as a forum wherein we exchange ideas and discuss the challenges our clients may be facing. We also share our product roadmap as a means of vetting priorities and getting our clients' views on features that may be most meaningful to them.

A third way we reach our clients is more personally. More than a few times per year, I will hit the road and visit several clients over the course of a few days. This is, personally, most gratifying because we enjoy "one-on-one" time with our clients in their own clinical settings. We are able to observe their workflow and discuss how our applications support them, what changes they might suggest and any other way we can be better vendors. These visits are a team effort and will always include Patrick Colletti, Chris Hayes and sometimes both of them. Chris, Patrick and I have worked together for many years. Patrick is the company's President and Chief Revenue Officer. Chris is our Chief Technology Officer. They both have a deep understanding of our clients' needs and a passion to exceed their expectations. And, as I said before, no one can succeed alone. I'm proud to call these two young professionals as my partners in leading Net Health.

CEOCFO: *What is something you learned from where you then made a change?*

Mr. Sanzo: I remember one trip to visit a client who asked for help in addressing the quality of the photographs they take to document the healing progression of chronic wounds. To make a very long story short, we entered into an exclusive contract with a company who had developed a method for enhancing image quality in a manner that creates the consistency needed when reviewing images taken over several weeks. We integrated this technology into our software solution and now offer the WoundExpert IRIS Module, a tool that is accessible to every one of our wound center clients.

CEOCFO: *What might be different a year down the road at Net Health?*

Mr. Sanzo: Net Health will continue to grow, but growth for the sake of growth is not our goal. We will grow responsibly and in focused manner and we will do so by meeting the expanding demands of our clients.

A year from now, if not sooner, our integration of three companies will have been completed. Our Therapies based products will have expanded to include ReDoc 360, a consulting service to help our clients achieve their goals via analytic and operating support. Our clients who have been asking us to offer an inpatient therapy application will have the opportunity to license that module. Our Net Health Specialty Care Registry, a qualified CMS registry, allows wound care providers to seamlessly extract and report PQRS data. After growing the market's largest solution for wound care providers, we'll expand the registry measures to support our Therapy clients—another large PQRS reporting base.

A year from now, Urgent Care and Occupational Medicine clients will benefit from our growing Revenue Cycle Management options and will be using new software modules I'm not at liberty to disclose at this time. Essentially, a year from now, Net Health will continue doing what we have done for over a decade—meeting the needs of our clients.

CEOFO: *Why is Net Health noteworthy?*

Mr. Sanzo: We are noteworthy because we care enough to be flexible in our design and implementation. We are committed to providing that perfectly fitted solution for the medical specialties in which we operate. We are focused on growing our own organization by supporting the missions of the clients who use our products and services. We are noteworthy because we have created an environment where people want to work and can make a difference. We are noteworthy because we understand that the notions of growth and quality—quality of products and services for our clients and quality of work and life for our employees—are inextricably intertwined.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOFO Magazine

