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Ask-the-Expert

Q&A with HIMSS C&BI Community Speaker(s): Dr. Eyal Zimlichman | July 2018
Community event

[Towards a Fast Track in Digital Health Innovation: Setting the Strategy and Infrastructure at Sheba Medical Center | Tel Aviv, Israel](#)

Speaker(s): Eyal Zimlichman, MD, MSc, Chief Medical Officer and Chief Innovation Officer | Sheba Medical Center, Tel Aviv, Israel

Source: [HIMSS C&BI Community](#)

Event Date: July 26, 2018

Download the recording and slide presentation [here](#).

Session Description: Learn how Sheba Medical Center is building on leadership in research and information technology to accelerate innovation in digital health through a new strategy – Accelerate, Redesign and Collaborate (ARC).

Q&A

Q: It is clear your innovation approach depends on collaboration across the ecosystem of stakeholders you are building. All the participants have different cultures toward innovation. How do you harvest the outcomes and integrate the various innovative cultures the participants bring to the table?

A: Up front we look for partners that share similar cultures and vision. We provide direction to startup companies by allowing them to get a taste of the real healthcare world, being able to see the patients and how their products are impacting them. Having continuous interactions with clinicians who provide real world perspectives helps direct them towards the outcomes we are all looking for. In terms of the strategic partners, well, some of them are giants and our

ability to impact them is obviously limited. Still, we find the right partners within the corporate companies, like Google Research for example, and again, allow them to get a taste of the real world and our needs.

Q: How do you measure results of what you are building? Do the measures relate to patient outcomes? Revenue? Other?

A: Well, of course we look at the expected measures like success rate and revenue streams, but I think most interesting is the measure of number of startups that sign up to work within Sheba. This is what my CEO is most interested in. It is important for us for two reasons: first, of course, it means we are able to provide more direction and impact the development process for these startups so that they answer our needs – what our patients ultimately need. But maybe more importantly, we think that having a critical mass of startups join us actually has an impact on organizational culture. It impacts our clinicians by making them more innovative and entrepreneurial. It impacts our researchers by having them think and develop in a more applied fashion. It creates a new organizational buzz, which turns the organization into a more innovative and forward thinking one.

Q: What would you describe as the top challenges to operationalizing the digital health innovations developed at your institution?

A: Apart from sustaining the operations, I would say our biggest challenge is working through regulations – both for data security/privacy and for intellectual property. As a government owned hospital, we need to work according to governmental regulations, which are not all innovation friendly. What we found was that there is an interest on the government level to allow this model to succeed. The ministry of finance, for example, is viewing ARC as a national growth engine and, as such, has been working with us to change some regulations so that we are able to carry out our vision.

Regarding data regulations, which are now becoming stricter in Israel as well, part of the strategy in bringing all the partners into one location – within the medical center – helps with data security because data is handled internally. Further to that, new solutions, such as the MDCClone platform and cloud based solutions, enable exporting data in a fashion that still complies with regulations.

Q: Can you share some thoughts around challenges and your vision on how you will sustain this innovation engine?

A: That is of course a critical issue, and my main concern when developing the ARC strategy. Thus the model was developed to function almost in an autonomic way. Where money is coming in from partners who rent space inside the ARC center, money from strategic partners that pay for innovation grants and challenges, where most of that money goes back to pay the

salaries of the ARC developers (data scientists, computer programmers, app developers, etc.). On top of that, revenue coming in as licensing fees and royalties from companies that work at ARC goes back to sustain and grow innovation. This is a leadership commitment that is critical to make such a model work. So it's really about the external partnerships and the leadership commitments that provide the sustainability of the ARC model.

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