

PHYSICIANS: MOBILE ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS

The Background

Desktop workstations require physicians to detour from their clinical rounds to input data into the electronic health record (EHR). In the early days of smartphones, a company developed a mobile application that linked to their EHR system to enable efficient workflow at the bedside.

The Challenge

At the time, mobile was a revolution. Returning bedside access to the physician – as they once had with paper charts – had the potential to streamline workflow and improve clinical efficiency.

The Request

“We want to communicate the ‘anywhere, anytime’ value of a mobile app, and we want it in a tone that’s approachable and accessible.” This app had the potential to change the workflow within the hospital ward, capitalizing on a device that was already in the doctor’s pocket.



The First Step

I had worked with other healthcare IT companies and knew where the marketplace stood in terms of EHR solutions.

At the time, the market was about five years into the paper-to-EHR transition, and approximately three years and 62 million users into the smartphone revolution. Apps were growing in popularity, but were still more the domain of Angry Birds than secure online transactions.

Working closely with the project manager, we identified the pain points for the clinician:

- Public hallway workstations interrupted workflow and put the physician in distracting situations between patients.
- Physicians didn’t always have the patient’s full information, test results and trending data at the bedside.



What Changed?

- Introduced the concept of a secure healthcare app for physicians.
- Positioned the app as a powerful decision-making tool in their pockets. Because they already knew the device and the desktop software, the learning curve would be short.
- Demonstrated how improved workflow could reduce costs, enhance the clinical experience, and improve the quality of patient care.
- Focused on the clinical and economic benefits of its robust feature set.

The Company

Revenue: \$520 million

Employees: 2,800

Industry: Healthcare IT

Image courtesy Marc-Andre Julien via Unsplash.com.

The Process

While it seems obvious today, the benefits of an app weren't as well known at the time. We took the time to make it clear that the app would not only improve the physician's work experience, but also reduce costs while improving the quality of patient care and clinical outcomes.

The app would not require physicians to carry additional devices; they could make use of the smartphone that many already had in their pocket.

We emphasized that the app had the same robust functionality as the desktop version of the EHR system, delivering test results, patient summaries, medications, allergies and other key information at their fingertips. It also offered the ability to immediately notify physicians when test results were ready.

In turn, physicians could access secure messaging to communicate with other clinicians, and click-to-dial contact information for patients' family or caregivers.

The Result

While the majority of the documentation focused on the benefits of mobile app adoption from a clinical perspective, I also made sure to emphasize the economic benefits for the hospital as a whole.

Workflow improvements increase efficiency and reduce costs while simultaneously improving patient care. These concepts were on the leading edge of the current emphasis on clinical outcomes and reduced readmissions.