

Fighting Stagnosis: *Achieving Greater Profits and Efficiency in Health Today*



By: Denny Phillips

Can you see through fog while driving down a highway? Can you look into murky water and see the bottom? Have you ever wondered what is around the next corner as you are walking down the street? Do you have the ability to look into a magical glass ball and see the future? Peering into the future would enable you to predict and take action for your business to be successful. You would instantly know how to reduce your cost, increase your revenue and lower business risks.

Believe it or not there is a business intelligence application specifically designed to work with your PACS and RIS which can allow you to see your business in a totally different view presenting the true reality of your future. This application is designed to enable you to forecast revenue, cost and predict risk and liabilities. This business application seizes the rarest business management asset out there: *clarity*.

EXPONENTIAL GROWTH IN DATA

Following Moore's law, as computing power doubles every two years, so does the ability to collect and process greater amounts of data in every field. However, as decision makers are presented with such varied information, a key challenge remains in presenting the information. Health care professionals continually try to improve their report formats, using charts and graphs to provide a user-friendly interface to data and information. Their greatest challenge today is to make sense of the mass of printed reports, spreadsheets, manual-entry reporting, and other data sources. The inability to comprehend the complexity of a business decision based on excessive, disorganized or inadequate data is called *stagnosis*. This is literally stagnant decision making assets which lead to ambiguity and data that does not *inform*. To counter this *stagnosis* of health care management is the offshoot innovation of the *dashboard*. Defined as *business intelligence* the adopted dashboard concept of displaying data is similar to how a driver of an automobile sees a collection of gauges and meters. Thus, the central problem of *stagnosis* is solved by the *executive dashboard*.

ENTERPRISE BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

As with an MS Excel spreadsheet there are built in configuration enhancements of charts and graphs. With *executive dashboards*, there is no middle configuration. There is total clarity to all your business management data instantly and in some cases in real time as the data changes. To health care managers this competitive advantage is known as *clarified mapping*. It can instantly provide revenue data, cost data and risks data about the business. This is the visual interpretation of disparate data sources into a comprehensible whole that can be associated with business goals and translated into clear managerial action steps.

Basically, an executive dashboard tracks a businesses' changing operations over time so that users can act on selected outcomes, assess impact over time, make adjustments to strategies or tactics to meet the organizations objectives all of which is in easy viewable format and displayed for rapid consumption for decision-makers.

Everyone seems to be talking about dashboards of one kind or another. Most service providers claim to have dashboards. Salesforce.com® touts its sales dashboards. American Express® provides customers with a dashboard to manage their credit card expenses. Phone companies provide dashboards to help their customers monitor bills and minutes used. Dashboards have become a craze as the preferred user interface for presenting information. However, unlike many other passing

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technology fads, dashboards are here to stay. Dashboards can positively change the way we view, disperse and work with information. By definition, a dashboard is a visual display of the most important information needed to achieve one or more objectives, consolidated and arranged on a single screen so the information can be monitored at a glance.

DASHBOARDS IN HEALTH CARE

There are few industries as vast, varied, and complex as health care. The size and diversity of the health care industry resonates best at the annual HIMSS (Health Care Information and Management Systems Society) conference. This event, held at a gargantuan conference facility, draws over 25,000 attendees and over 700 vendors.

Health care organizations leverage dashboards to ensure that diverse, key objectives are monitored. Dashboards provide at-a-glance view of the **key performance indicators** (KPIs) saving hours of digging through reports. Dashboard displays can include tables, charts, maps and other innovative visual cues such as thermometer, traffic lights, speedometer, etc. Such a dashboards may also contain lines to other pertinent information, important summaries and highlights, and personalized information.

MANAGING THROUGH METRICS

Effective management requires developing appropriate metrics to measure performance relative to objective. It requires effective monitoring and measurement. Therefore, creating metrics and aligning them with organizational objectives is instrumental in establishing an effective monitoring system. For example, if any two or more charts within a dashboard share a common X-axis data they will interact with each other when the user interacts with one of them. This draws the eye to common data throughout the dashboard helping the end user get a deeper understanding of the story being told by the data. This is called **interactive intelligence**. It is common to expect that different user groups within your organization will require different sets of metrics and dashboards. And since dashboards are configured with synchronize pivots; all pivots in the dashboards will change to the same value when you select a value in one. Again, this synchronous behavior in the dashboard allows the end-user to view common data amongst various charts. Scorecard is a popular term for describing such a monitoring system, and mapping it to individual responsibilities. Dashboards are quite effective in delivering a Scorecard to a wide audience. Creation of a diverse and rich collection of key performance indicators makes dashboards and essential driver for change and positive transformation.

DASHBOARD USERS

Dashboards are not ONLY for top-level executives; though it's the traditional perception of dashboards. Dashboards are increasingly becoming a tool for Tactical and Operational levels within the organization besides the Strategic level. Administrators, nurses, doctors, finance and accounting managers, IT personnel, and HR managers will find dashboards helpful. However, each department must see the metrics relevant to itself, and individuals within the department get access to the metrics they own.

Dashboards must therefore be deployed within a framework of relevance, roles, privileges and security. Simply put, each user with a dashboard access must see metrics that she/he owns and must not be able to look up information that is unauthorized for that individual.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DASHBOARDS AND REPORTS

There is a common notion that a dashboard is a collection of reports on a single screen. Put together a collection of spreadsheets with some charts in the mix, and it becomes a dashboard. Yes, such a presentation may meet a very basic definition of a dashboard, but it fails in delivering the essence of a metrics dashboard. Dashboards can be utilized as a

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very effective means of communicating information for which spreadsheets or reports are ill-equipped. Reports may be effective at presenting raw data, but fail to deliver a dynamic insight into the data. With recent advances in data visualization, new forms of conveying information are available that are far more effective. A well-designed dashboard uses color and graphical symbols to create a whole new paradigm of information portrayal, next to which the reporting paradigm pales. Such dashboards require very little user training and have a much higher adoption rate. They engage the user in an interactive and media-rich interface, and deliver information empowerment to business users.

Moreover, dashboards provide drill down into details, enabling root-cause analysis. Such ready access to accurate and in-depth information for out-performs the reporting paradigm to which we have, until now, been accustomed.

EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

With a clear definition of key performance indicators, health care organizations are empowering employees to optimize across various organizational objectives. Visibility of performance through the dashboard allows everything to be out in the open, with employees working toward the same goals as management. Towards this goal, live dashboards may be displayed on LCD monitors in key areas such as Physician lounge, lobby, surgical centers, conference rooms and executive suites.

NovaDash is a user-friendly and cost effective enterprise dashboards software solution that provides an alternative to complex and expensive business intelligence software. **Novarad South** helps radiologists and hospital administrators drive their practices by providing insight and access to critical data, key performance indicators (KPIs), and metrics. With its low cost of ownership, ease of use, cutting edge technology, and real-time access to data, **Novarad South** has become the “go-to” advisors in radiological health care management.

ABOUT NOVARAD SOUTH

Novarad South is a leading strategic advisement firm serving over 125 clients throughout the southern United States. Since 1998, Novarad South has helped health care providers manage costs, increase productivity, and drive sustainable growth and profitability. We specialize in medical workflow analysis, business model revitalization, and maximizing revenue capture opportunities. Novarad South is uniquely qualified to provide strategic and tactical advice that will produce measureable value and prolonged results that are consistent with client expectations and goals. We are focused on assisting providers in successfully navigating their toughest issues and providing them with the tools they need to thrive.

Denny Phillips is the president of Novarad South. He has over 20 years experience in assisting clients in their achievement of maximum ROI on their investment in technology delivery systems. Since 1998, he has specialized in the challenges confronting health care and how technology can be best integrated within this industry to enhance profitability, efficiency, and provide better quality care.