

# Bridging the gap between medicine and technology – role of healthcare companies

Roberto Ascione | CEO  
June 2015



*The exponential progress of technology has revolutionized industries such as music, travel, retail, and now the healthcare sector is ripe for disruption. How can healthcare companies help bridge the gap between medicine and technology?*

## Bridging the gap between medicine and technology – role of healthcare companies

As Lucien Engelen, director of the REshape Center for Innovation, [predicts](#) “in 50 years from now, more than 50% of the revenue in healthcare will come from rising and new digital health start-ups”. Why is this so? Well, the healthcare models of yesteryear are inadequate to satisfy the ever burgeoning industry and consumer expectations – with rising patient empowerment being the perfect storm for healthcare. Today, there is still a great delta between the possibilities of technology in this field versus the current model of healthcare delivery. Therefore lean and innovative digital health start-ups will find themselves running away with the prize.

In this **New Health Economy**, digitally-enabled care is no longer a nice-to-have, but a fundamental business imperative. New care models are required and after years of dating, it is time for medicine and technology to marry – and healthcare companies have a significant matchmaking role to play here.

Listed below are some considerations on how healthcare companies should approach and embrace this wave of disruption. But first and foremost, they really need to start building care delivery models with the patient at the center. Patients can no longer be regarded as mere participants in the healthcare spectrum but the ultimate consumer.

### Shape your digital strategies based on digital tools that provide the most value to consumers and physicians.

Physicians and patients tend to be on the same page when it comes to the benefits of digital; likewise, caregivers are also becoming more involved as part of the care team through digital technologies. As an example, it is not surprising that a fair share of physicians today are prescribing apps so that patients can self-manage and monitor their chronic conditions.

This is a very promising area where healthcare companies can provide them guidance in recommending or creating apps that provide real value to patients. Some key factors include how well the app gathers data from disparate sources, whether it integrates well with other digital health tools, measures outcomes, generates automated health recommendations based on the outcomes and reinforces good health behaviors.

It is key to identify which digital interventions make the most sense along points of care. In order to be effective and sustainable, digital interventions should be targeted rather than broad-based.

### Dig deeper into what motivates patients and caregivers to adopt and continue to use digital technologies.

Develop comprehensive patient support programs. Consumers will never fully embrace promising technology unless healthcare companies have a holistic program that facilitates, educates, supports and hand-holds individuals to embrace the desired behavior. Incentivise patients to use your digital

tools. While having access to one's health information may already be an incentive in itself, leverage gamification principles to increase the engagement level and encourage desired behaviors.

## Leverage data analytics to generate meaningful and actionable insights for more guided investments and better results.

With big data regarded as one of the most prominent digital approaches, make use of analytics platforms to manage the large volume of data to predict consumer health patterns such as adherence, hospital admission and readmission rates. Population health tools are and will continue to grow in demand as we enter into the era of preventive and anticipatory healthcare.

Being able to couple available data on prior health records with a patient's genetic, environmental and other social factors will also result in the possibility to tailor a personalized care pathway for each and every individual and inform which digital interventions will work most effectively for him or her.

## On an enterprise level, rethinking workflows and the workforce in line with the digital journey will result in better ROI in digital health investments.

New workflows need to be designed at the start and not as an afterthought. Otherwise the teams will be left to figure out how to force-fit new tools into old workflows. Healthcare companies need to design new processes for the care team alongside technology implementation. For example, those that have chosen to embrace mobile health apps need to have staff and processes in place to receive and respond to the influx of data apps generate and know when to report adverse events.

Industry experts concur that the health sector needs to completely rethink staffing in this New Health Economy. Health companies should staff based on the growing demand to synthesize information and coordinate care for patients. Entirely new roles will emerge as a result. The siloed approach of each business unit working on their own objectives can no longer exist. Cross-disciplinary teams need to work together and share common goals throughout the digital transformation journey.

Some technologies and their applications will also generate entirely new business models, which might not fit with traditional enterprise structures or usual relationships among the various stakeholders. To pursue this opportunity, companies will need to embrace new organizational models and business tools, which have been typically adopted by digital companies in the last 10 to 15 years. This will present a unique challenge for long established and successful company cultures and will likely be a key factor in their long-term success or even existence.

## Conclusions

To survive in this new exponential era that requires technologies to support measurable and value-based care, pharmacos should help patients, caregivers and physicians make effective use of digital tools to **democratize healthcare** and **bridge the gap of time, cost and distance** between themselves and consumers. If they choose to stick to their current *modus operandi*, then sooner rather than later, they will find themselves in no position to compete with new industry entrants that continue to gain traction.

## About the Author

**Roberto Ascione**

CEO

[roberto.ascione@healthwareinternational.com](mailto:roberto.ascione@healthwareinternational.com)

[www.healthwareinternational.com](http://www.healthwareinternational.com)



[@RobertoAscione](https://twitter.com/RobertoAscione)



[linkedin.com/in/robertoascione](https://www.linkedin.com/in/robertoascione)

Roberto is a serial entrepreneur and global thought leader in digital health. With 20 years of experience he has been focusing on marketing and communications, business transformation and innovation in health and wellness.

Passionate for medicine, computer science, and human-technology interactions he believes strongly that digital innovations and technologies will be the most impactful drivers of change in the healthcare industry. He nurtures this vision by speaking at a number of conferences, as well as contributing to several research organizations and start-up accelerators.

Born and raised in Italy, Roberto transverses the globe. He enjoys the mash-up of different cultures along the way. Roberto's education is in medical science and he holds a degree in marketing and communications.