

EXECUTIVE DECISIONS IN DERMATOLOGY

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2020



Issue Focus: Emerging Technologies

NAVIGATING COVID-19 RECOVERY

INTERACTIVE NEWSLETTER

Aug Sep Oct Nov



Association of Dermatology
Administrators & Managers

EXECUTIVE DECISIONS IN DERMATOLOGY

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2020

inside

Interactive newsletter

Executive Decisions in Dermatology is interactive, getting you to the information you need more efficiently. Navigate the newsletter with ease. Use the Home Icon to bring you back to the table of contents and click all URLs to go to the featured website.

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and How They Continue to Evolve**

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Executive Decisions in Dermatology is a bi-monthly publication of the **Association of Dermatology Administrators & Managers (ADAM)**. ADAM is the only national organization dedicated to dermatology administrative professionals. ADAM offers its members exclusive access to educational opportunities and resources needed to help their practices grow. Our 600 members include administrators, practice managers, attorneys, accountants and physicians in private, group and academic practice.

To join ADAM or for more information, please visit our website at ada-m.org, call 866.480.3573, email ADAMinfo@samiworks.net, fax 800.671.3763 or write Association of Dermatology Administrators & Managers, 5550 Meadowbrook Drive, Suite 210, Rolling Meadows, IL 60008.



Association of Dermatology
Administrators & Managers



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President's Corner

Technology continually shapes the future. Since the advent of computers, the World Wide Web and the ever changing forms of digital communication, the pace of change has accelerated. It can be a challenge just to keep up with all the "new," let alone know what tools to implement and how best to use these innovative resources. Emerging technology can be a powerful asset, but the true value of this evolution is understanding how best to incorporate new technology to improve our practices, our patient experience and the overall dermatology specialty.

In this issue of ***Executive Decisions in Dermatology***, we explore varied facets of emerging technology from clinical advances and communications methods to evolving practice management tools. We also gain insight from our very own ADAM Board members on what new technologies they have incorporated in their practices as they share candid lessons they learned along the way.

Featured articles include:

- **Tomorrow is Today with Tech-Powered HR**
- **Technology Advances Providing Access to Prescription Medication During COVID-19**
- **Three Reasons to Move from Transactional to Strategic**
Nathan Austin with Your IT Partner
- **The Emergence of Wearables and How They Continue to Evolve**
- **Dermatologists Expand Practice and Treatment Offerings by Using Low Dose Surface Radiation Therapy**

If you missed it, ADAM hosted a live webinar where Michele Blum, ADAM President Elect, and myself shared **"My Personal Experience with Navigating a Dermatology Office During COVID-19"**. You can review the recording on-demand. This is the first webinar in the "My Personal Experience" series of interactive discussions via Zoom where the panel and attendees share experiences and advice on various topics and concerns. We

received extremely positive feedback with requests to host more of these discussions soon. Visit ada-m.org to register for future events. We would love to see you there!

Speaking of connecting with our membership, we are looking for ADAM mentors. We are asking our more experienced members to partner with new and early career members to help educate them on the amazing benefits ADAM has to offer. This is a minimal time commitment with a few calls and emails and potentially meeting up in person at the 2021 ADAM Annual Meeting in San Francisco March 15-17. If you are interested in becoming a mentor, please **fill out this short form to sign up**. This is a vastly rewarding experience for both parties. Please consider supporting our newest members to maximize the value of their membership and promote the longevity of our group.

Another way to get more involved in your association is by becoming an ADAM author. You can be published in a future issue of this very member publication. Share your experiences or insights in a 500-800 word article. Upcoming issue themes include "Building Your Team" and "Impactful Communications" — but the world is your oyster; if you have another targeted topic you feel would benefit our membership, please **submit your article here**. All ideas are welcome!

Another easy way to get connected is by doing something you are likely already doing — using social media. Join ADAM's popular member-only Facebook Group. See **page 5** for samples of current conversations. You can ask colleagues questions ranging from how they are handling pandemic recovery to human resource concerns — all within a private community. In this time of social distancing, it's easy to connect virtually with the power of a smartphone — a once emerging technology that has become a mainstream communication device!

▼ *Continued on page 4*



President's Corner - continued

As technology moves us forward, we can stay connected while continuously improving. I encourage you to explore the [ADAM website](#), read the [weekly ADAM Intel](#) email and flip through pages of this digital member publication. Connect and get involved. Let's see where this emerging technology will take us!

Janice Smith

Warm regards,
Janice Smith, ADAM President

*P.S. Offering ongoing educational opportunities is core to the ADAM mission. Expand your skill set by attending the **2020 ASDS Virtual Annual Meeting** on Oct. 9 – 11. For a special low rate of just \$75, ADAM members can attend the Practice Management track with 11 sessions developed in collaboration with and presented by ADAM members. Can't log in live? Access the content on-demand for 30 days. Don't miss topics like dermatology malpractice, reputation management, loyalty programs, reimbursement and more! ■*

ADAM INITIATIVES

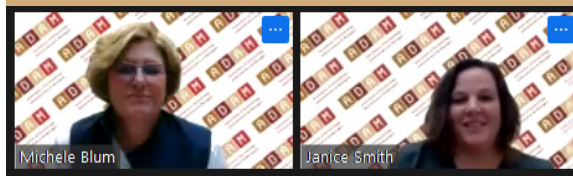
Member Engagement and Recruitment Tops ADAM's Strategic Direction

Two very important strategic initiatives for ADAM in the next year are member engagement and recruitment. Although the call for volunteers on ADAM Committees has closed, there are still many ways ADAM members can get involved:

- **Become a mentor.** This is a small time commitment, beginning with a few phone calls and emails, but vastly rewarding for new ADAM members. **Sign up** to be a valuable resource for a fellow practice manager.
- **Get published.** Share your experiences and insights with peers in a 500-800 word article for Executive Decisions in Dermatology. Upcoming themes include "Building Your Team" and "Impactful Communication." **Submit your article** to be included.
- **Catch up with ADAM Intel.** ADAM news, details on upcoming initiatives and important practice management issues are delivered directly to members' inboxes every Friday in this e-blast. **Archives** are also available on the ADAM website, and article ideas for ADAM Intel can be **emailed** to ADAM Headquarters.
- **Join the private Facebook Group.** The 2019 ADAM Membership Survey ranked social media among the top 10 areas of importance in ADAM offerings. You can easily get connected with peers by joining **ADAM's private Facebook Group**!
- **Post a job.** Advertise – for free! –available opportunities at your practice on ADAM's newly redesigned **Job Board**.

"My Personal Experience With..." Interactive Webinars

Last week, ADAM President Janice Smith and President Elect Michele Blum kicked off this new complimentary webinar series with a presentation on "My Personal Experience with Navigating a Dermatology Office During COVID-19." These webinars are an interactive discussion and heavily rely on attendees' questions or concerns on the topic. Register for the webinars on ada-m.org.



"This was an excellent Zoom meeting. I would like to see more of these from ADAM. Thank you!!" – Jodi Roos

"Great info ladies!" – Jonathan Bant

"Great!! This needs to be done more often...weekly!!!" – Angel Skinner



ADAM DISCOUNT FOR THE 2020 ASDS VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING

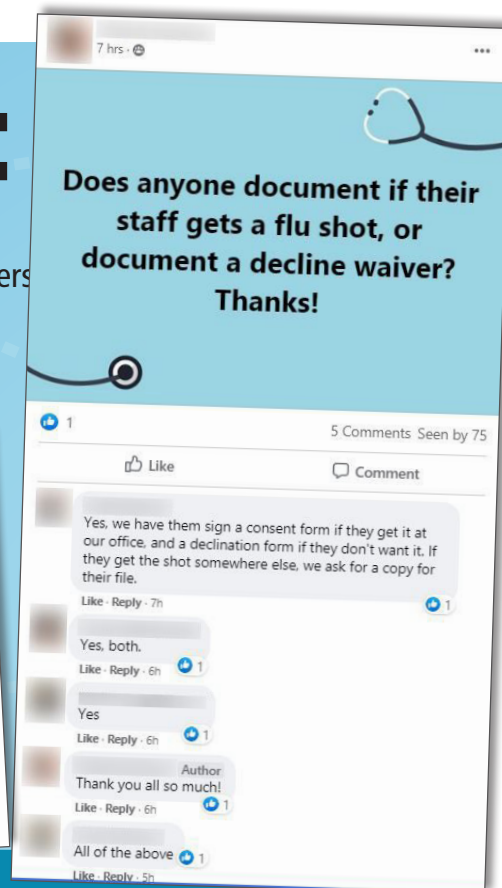
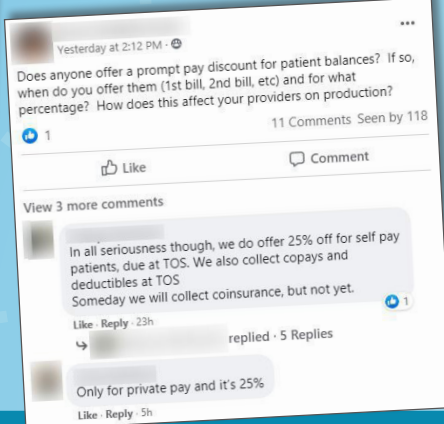
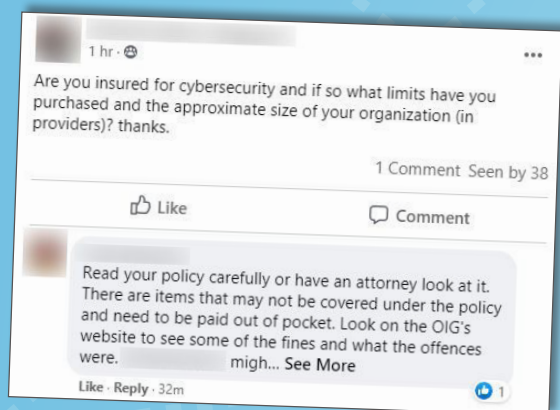
For only \$75 per person, you can attend the 2020 ASDS Virtual Annual Meeting from the comfort of your home or office. There is a Practice Management track designed just for you that has been developed in collaboration with ADAM. There are 11 sessions, so you pay less than \$15 per session. Any missed sessions during the live event can be viewed for an additional 30 days after the meeting. Topics include: Dermatology Malpractice, Reputation Management, Loyalty Programs, Coding and Reimbursement and more! **Register today** to join your peers next weekend!



Get CONNECTED:



ADAM's members-only Facebook group is a trusted place to exchange information, ask questions and get support from peers. ADAM members use this fantastic resource for confidential discussions with peers. Here are some recent conversations:



Join the conversation at

facebook.com/groups/AssociationofDermAdminsandManagers



ADAM

Save the Date

Join your colleagues in the city by the bay.



**29TH ADAM ANNUAL MEETING
MARCH 15-17, 2021**



Board of Directors **INTERVIEW**

What new technology have you incorporated into your practice that has been a major success (or what were the challenges that provided a good learning lesson)?



ADAM President Elect
Michele Blum

Practice Manager
Front Range Dermatology Associates (FRDA)

A new technology we brought in recently was walkie talkies with earpieces for our Mohs days. The units themselves are inexpensive on Amazon, and the quality is pretty good. From one side of our clinic to the other is around 120 feet, so the coverage is adequate for our office size; staff have actually reported that it reaches to the parking lots! They wear the earpiece wires through their clothes, can hear everything others are saying and press a small button to speak. It has provided increased efficiencies by allowing staff to request assistance, suture, another hand or whatever is needed without having to step out of a room. They can indicate that "surgical 3 is closed, doctor is coming out and heading to surgical 8" or ask "can someone flip surgical 4, the next patient is waiting." We're doing all we can to work smarter, not harder, at Front Range Dermatology Associates.



ADAM Secretary/Treasurer
Bill Kenney, MHA, FACHE, CMPE

Chief Executive Officer
Dermatology Consultants, P.A.

The most recent significant technology impact that we, like many practices, have incorporated into our daily routine has been the use of real time teledermatology. Our group utilized Iagnosis — a store and forward teledermatology platform — for the past three years, so our physicians already had experience treating patients remotely. With the stay at home orders and the availability of insurance payment for teledermatology, we developed a plan to respond to this growing method of care. For teledermatology appointments, we now utilize Doxy.me. Our practice was fortunate to have a physician champion who worked with more reluctant physicians as well as the business office. Since we are now offering a number of methods to connect virtually, we have spent time redesigning our webpage to communicate how a patient can access our practice virtually.



ADAM Board Member
Jessica Pape-Selim

Practice Administrator
Chicago Dermatology

One thing we developed this year was to transition our typical in-house patient events to virtual specials instead. Our next upcoming event, **Day of Beauty**, is October 15 and is typically our highest grossing event of the year. We trialed this originally in June when we had our annual Defy Aging event, and the receivables were nearly 2½ times our "in person" event compared to the year prior. This allowed more flexibility for patients to attend virtually, and we extended the time from the typical few hours to an all-day event. Less overhead costs, a little more ingenuity and increased sales is always a win-win for us, especially in times of COVID!





ADAM Board Member
Troy Starling, CPC

*Director, Health Care Admin.
University of Florida Dept. of Dermatology*

Our department brought in Confocal technology within the past ten months. For those unfamiliar with Confocal technology, it is technically a laser that can help reduce the need for a biopsy especially if considering doing a biopsy in a cosmetically sensitive area (i.e. face). The technology is impressive, but the biggest challenge we have faced is getting it reimbursed. After our purchase, there was a change by most Florida insurance companies which classified it as experimental. It is no surprise that we have not been successful asking patients to pay out of pocket. Recently we received information that it will no longer be classified as experimental, and we can possibly be reimbursed.



ADAM Board Member
Wendy Stoehr

*Practice Administrator
Advanced Dermatology & Skin Surgery, PLLC*

There are two technology programs that stand out as successful and challenging for our practice:

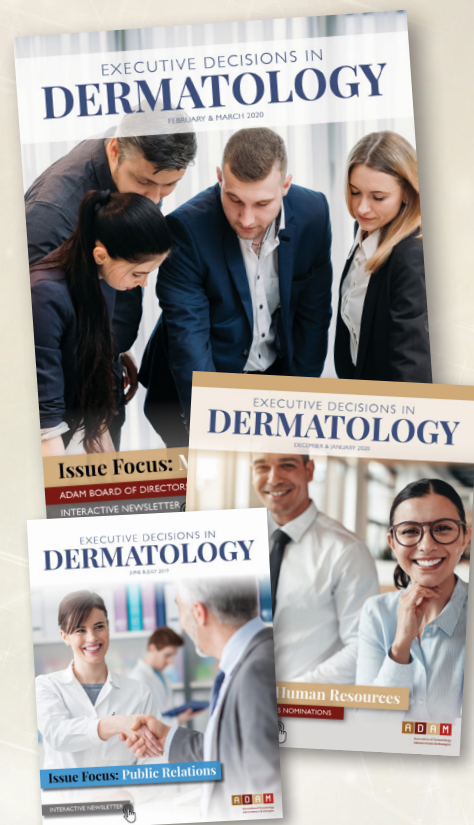
getsling.com — Sling is an easy way to schedule and communicate with clinical staff regarding their schedule, which location they are at each day and with which provider they will be working. It has a lot of features we don't use, so check it out! The best part, it's FREE!

dermpro.com — DermPro is a hosted e-commerce and marketing platform designed specifically for the aesthetics services industry. We paid a one-time setup fee to get our custom, branded store built and running on a commercial grade platform, and the e-commerce monthly support fee is \$249, which includes hosting, maintenance, product and service changes (additions, removing items from store, price changes, order or tax issues etc.) They also offer a monthly promotions plan that includes a custom email template, promotion planning and design, store configuration to ensure proper pricing / discounting and reporting. We pay 3% in service charges for processing online payments through Blue Pay. The store also has many features we don't use such as shipping, Membership Programs, Reward Points, e-Gift cards. By using DermPro, we are able to extend our hours of operation (24 x 7) rather than patients having to wait until our office is open to purchase over the phone or ask for information on services we offer. It also helps alleviate large amounts of patient phone calls, especially during events.



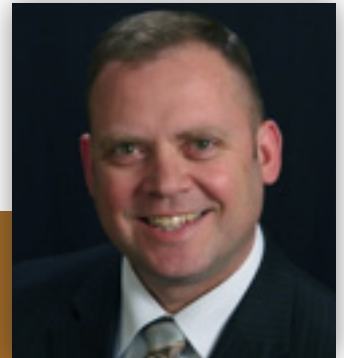
INSIGHT

Obtain even more insights from ADAM's past Board Members in previous issues of *Executive Decisions*, located in the members-only section of ada-m.org!



Get to Know New ADAM Board Members: **Troy Starling**

Director, University of Florida Department of Dermatology
Gainesville, FL



Can you describe the practice you lead?

Our practice is composed of 13 dermatologists and dermatopathologists along with five physician assistants in our Gainesville and Jacksonville offices. Our services include medical dermatology, surgical dermatology, including Mohs, cosmetic dermatology and dermatopathology. As a teaching institution, we have 12 residents, a MSDO (Mohs) fellow, dermatopathology fellow and complex dermatology fellow.

What do you see as the ideal skill set necessary in managing a dermatology practice?

The ability to problem-solve issues so they meet the needs of the practice along with the needs of the physicians. Now more than ever, the ability to quickly resolve issues plays a big part of my day. It is a balancing act, and you need everybody moving in the same direction for the practice to get where you want it to go.

How were you able to acquire those skills over your career?

Partly, it was through trial and error, but more importantly, I had the pleasure to work for some great physicians who were not only my supervisors but also mentors. Each supervisor dealt with issues and situations very differently, allowing me to learn what worked best in certain situations. Some were direct in how the situation was resolved, while others took a different approach.

When did you first become involved with ADAM?

I have been a member of ADAM since August 2012. I was recruiting a physician, and I was fairly new; he suggested I join ADAM since his administrator was an ADAM member. He praised the growth of his administrator through the resources of ADAM, and I remember him telling me it will help me gain the knowledge for this new roll.

Can you describe the opportunities ADAM has provided you both as a member as well as a Board Member?

It is such a great network; you can learn from those that face the same challenges and rewards each day. Due to unfortunate

circumstances, this year's annual meeting was canceled, but previously the annual meeting was what drove me to be more involved. The lectures are highly resourceful, and I come away from each meeting with new ideas and new ways to do something. In addition to the lectures, the networking is what really makes the meeting so successful. That is the time when you can share ideas and thoughts in a receptive and supportive environment.

What advice would you offer to managers in this field?

Dermatology is so unique and every day is different than the next. That is probably what I like the best, which is that I do not know what my day will hold. My advice is when you leave for the day, you should truly leave for the day. There will be times that you have things that have to get done, and you will be working in the evenings, but the majority of time you should plan to leave work at work. Use the time outside of work to enjoy those things that are important to you. I feel this allows me to be ready to take on the challenges that I will face the next day. ■





Federal Fodder

Majority of Physicians Report Reservations About Quality of Care Provided via Telemedicine

The use of telemedicine services has soared in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. A recent **survey** highlighted in **Fierce Healthcare** revealed that as of July 2020, 80% of physicians had provided telemedicine services in the previous three months. This is up from 39% in April 2020 and 9% in early March 2020 — numbers similar to 2019 levels.

While close to 60% of physicians expressed some continued concerns about telemedicine, slightly more than half of respondents who are currently using telemedicine said they plan to continue to offer telemedicine services once pandemic mitigation measures are lifted. Physicians who have not provided telemedicine services in the last three months cited the potential for a diminished quality of care as their top reason.

Questions about this policy or other practice affairs concerns can be emailed to advocacy@samiworks.net. ■

Disclaimer: The materials presented here are for informational purposes only and not for the purpose of providing legal advice. You should contact your attorney to obtain advice with respect to any particular issue or potential risk.

Demand for Telemedicine Services Expected to Grow and Other Key Survey Findings

The recently released **Doximity 2020 State of Telemedicine Report** revealed a major increase in the use of telemedicine services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and estimates that over 20% of all medical visits in the U.S. this year will be conducted via telemedicine. Other key findings include:

- The number of Americans who have participated in at least one telemedicine visit since the pandemic began has increased by 57%, and 23% say they plan to use telemedicine once the pandemic ends.
- When compared to an in-person visit, 28% feel they receive the same or better quality of care via a telemedicine visit.
- Physicians on the East Coast and in larger metro areas are using telemedicine the most.

SAMI SOLUTIONS
FOR ASSOCIATION
MANAGEMENT, INC.

The SAMI Advocacy and Practice Affairs Team is dedicated to education and advocacy on behalf of dermatology practice managers and their patients.



OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2020



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TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES

Providing Access to Prescription Medication During COVID-19

Look for Partners, Not Competitors!

By Toan Huynh

The global pandemic of 2020 has forced all of us to change the way we live, work and socialize. Responding to these great changes, new technologies have emerged to expand physician and patient access to medications. Some of these are direct-to-consumer platforms, while others service physician practices directly. But ask yourself: when your office chooses to partner with one of them, are you protected against the risk of having these “partners” steal your patients?



Telemedicine and novel options to access prescription medication saw an explosion in demand as physical access to offices was limited during the pandemic. Direct-to-consumer platforms were eager to capitalize. While they appear convenient and innovative, what has been their effect on dermatology nationwide? Unfortunately, it has been perceived by many as a negative. From a clinical perspective, they do not always use medical dermatology specialists to assess dermatology patients. They focus on maximizing patient volumes and minimizing costs instead of quality of care. These platforms are direct competitors to dermatology practices nationwide.

But they are not alone. Much more insidious dermatology competitors are websites claiming to help patients access prescription medication (through access to coupons and local pharmacy searches) at “affordable” prices. Some of these companies have huge marketing budgets, are very well-known and openly appeal to physicians and providers as a “friendly” way to help patients save money. Beware!

The reality is that these companies have two massive flaws. First, they are sometimes dependent on insurance coverage for patients to get their medications. As it is commonly known, insurance coverage of dermatology drugs is inadequate (due to limited formularies and high co-pays) and getting worse every year. Their second flaw is even more disturbing. These companies really are competitors – and not even in disguise! Some of their websites openly advertise at the top of their home pages that they now offer telemedicine visits for all specialties. Physicians relying on these sites as an easy and “consumer-friendly” way to get their patients medication are quite literally referring their patients to websites that openly seek to poach the doctor-patient relationship away from them. Dermatology practices should be extremely concerned about this, as some

of these companies are extremely well-financed and are investing to pursue growth at all costs. These are wolves who no longer bother wearing sheep’s clothing.

Physicians and practice administrators need to ask themselves what superior alternatives they have to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is true that offices specializing in dermatology have made successful pivots into telemedicine visits of their own, as well as continuing to offer the invaluable benefits of in-person visits (with social distancing in place). But the ultimate result of most successful medical dermatology visits is a prescription for medication. It is vital that this final step in the chain of treatment, the one that actually gives the patient his/her results, be as successful as possible.

Dermatology offices should look for partners that support their prescription writing and make their practice better. There are many ways to do so. FDA Registered 503B Outsourcing Facilities offer a newer channel with many unique advantages for treating patients instead of traditional brands or generics. Outsourcing facilities offer highly affordable cash pay medications and very broad customized formularies. When working with an FDA Registered 503B Outsourcing Facility, in-office dispensing of medication becomes an excellent way to build practice revenues and branding while improving patient satisfaction and cutting costs (by eliminating prior authorizations and pharmacy callbacks).

For those offices looking to continue doing traditional pharmacy dispensing, FDA Registered 503B Outsourcing Facilities can be a huge help. It is possible for physicians to write patients prescriptions directly through their electronic medical records (EMRs), and even to collect payment in-office at the time of the visit (with many unique benefits). Patients receive their first script with free UPS

2-day shipping. All of this can be supported by robust technology platforms, such as PC Direct and PC Delivers offered by Prescriber’s Choice, to maximize office productivity and satisfaction.

The challenges of COVID-19 have been stupendous, and the competitive environment in a digital world is always getting tougher. Dermatology offices do not have to be left behind and simply submit to the demands of insurance companies and powerful West Coast technology companies. New technologies are there to help. Keep that in mind as you design your practice with an eye for the present and the future! ■



Toan Huynh is Chief Information Officer of Prescriber’s Choice / Sincerus Pharmaceuticals. He holds a BS

(concentrating in Software Development) and an MS (concentrating in Security) in Information Technology. He has 20+ years’ experience in Information Technology, supporting everything from small offices to large corporations with 1,000+ employees. Toan served in the Marine Corps and is currently enlisted in the Navy Reserves as an IT Specialist. He was recently recalled to active duty and is serving in Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Africa.



The Low Touch Economy: Leveraging Technology in Your Dermatology Practice

By Krisanne Fieldhouse

If 2020 has taught us anything at all, it's really brought to light the need to adapt swiftly and efficiently while minimizing the risk of potential exposure to COVID-19 for staff and patients. The impact COVID-19 has had is truly unfathomable, but it has taught us valuable lessons, one of which is how technological tools can be leveraged to help multiple aspects of your dermatology practice. As all of us have had to change the way we live life, here are 10 tips to help recalibrate your dermatology practice.

1. Offer More Ways to Pay –

Look for a payment processing system that integrates with your practice management software. As more financial responsibility and out-of-pocket costs are falling on patients, it's important to provide multiple patient payment options that are convenient and as contactless as possible. Options for text-to-pay, contactless payments, online quick pay, automated payment plans and patient portal payments can all help expedite collections.

2. Transition to a Virtual Practice –

Tools such as patient self-scheduling, a patient portal and telehealth can be used to help your practice operate efficiently and empower patients with virtual tools. It encourages patients to take charge of their healthcare while helping to reduce staff time spent on time-consuming tasks such as scheduling appointments or resending lab results.

3. Make the Move to Mobile –

Mobile devices can help patients access care on-the-go through a mobile patient portal and even telehealth apps. It can help limit device sharing among practice staff as well. Plus, using an iPad-based EHR system can help both staff and patients feel more comfortable as they can more easily maintain social distancing in the exam room. Think of how the technology you use can help make patients and staff feel more at ease.



4. Get the Word Out –

Utilizing tech tools such as patient reminders, on-demand messaging and personalized emails can help reduce the burden on your staff and keep patients informed of new office hours, services and protocols. Staying top of mind and marketing your practice is key to keeping current clients and attracting new ones.

5. Check in With Your Patients –

It's important to take the pulse of your patient both literally and figuratively. How do your patients feel about the changes you've made at your practice? Sending out a patient survey can help you better understand what's working and what needs improvement. You can help turn patients into advocates and use their feedback to improve upon office operations. Positive reviews can (with permission of your patients to use their feedback) also help in marketing your practice to new patients.

6. Connect Your Front and Back Office –

Look for an all-in-one solution — one that offers integrated EHR and practice management systems. Having a single login and the ability to access all of your data in one place can help streamline intra-office communications, patient check-in and payment collection. Plus, if you need help on troubleshooting, you'll be able to turn to one vendor that knows both its EHR and PM systems, instead of going to multiple contacts at multiple companies which can help save time and avoid unnecessary frustrations.

7. Make Data-Driven Decisions –

Structured, meaningful data can be a powerful ally in changing times. Instead of wondering where you stand, with the help of an integrated analytics solution you can get a bird's-eye view of your business and track KPIs and practice trends when it comes to the clinical, operational and financial facets of running your dermatology practice.

8. Give Your Practice an Added Boost –

If you choose a vendor that provides revenue cycle management services, they can help address aspects of your business operations, from billing to payment collection to account reconciliation — so you can focus even more on your patients.

9. Opt for Software That's Smart, Like You –

Look for an EHR that comes preloaded with built-in dermatology-specific medical information and uses adaptive learning to automatically suggest the diagnoses, treatments and procedures you use most, based on your clinical documentation. Each medical specialty's workflow is unique and your EHR should reflect that.

10. Make Sure Your Specialty-Specific Software is up to the Task –

All-in-one software brings the clinical, operational and financial aspects of your business together seamlessly. Plus, as noted earlier, having one unified system versus disparate ones can help streamline and bring added efficiencies to your practice.

If there's one seed of wisdom you walk away with from reading this article, it's to understand that technology should be your friend, and it can have a tremendously positive impact on your practice, healthcare providers and patients. Technology can bring an elevated level of convenience and tech adoption. COVID-19 has certainly caused us to reevaluate the status quo and perhaps some of these changes will be for the better! ■



Krisanne Fieldhouse, Vice President of Product Management at Modernizing Medicine®, has

been with the organization for over 15 years with a primary focus on practice management and operations. She currently leads strategic efforts to further develop Modernizing Medicine's Practice Management and Analytics solutions to help bring operational improvements to the specialty healthcare markets. Krisanne's past experience includes managing EHR implementation teams. She previously served as the product manager of Modernizing Medicine Gastroenterology's (formerly gMed®) Practice Management solution.



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ENABLING BRIGHT OUTCOMES

BARCO

SHARE THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT ADAM

The ADAM Membership Committee is actively reaching out to non-member dermatology practices to become ADAM members. If you know of a practice that isn't a member, please send the practice name, address, phone and **email** to ADAM headquarters — all referrals are confidential and incredibly valuable. From education to networking opportunities, ensure your colleagues continued success by becoming members today!

Get Published!

Submit an article to
Executive Decisions in Dermatology

ADAM invites members to submit a 500-800 word article for this bi-monthly newsletter. The publication's goals are to:

1. Provide a diverse set of voices sharing their expertise in the field of practice management.
2. Disseminate member knowledge to the entire association.
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Dermatologists Expand Practice and Treatment Offering By Using Low Dose Surface Radiation Therapy

By Richard Shaffer

New Technology Provides Both Electronic Brachytherapy and Superficial Radiation Therapy in One Treatment Device

Skin cancer incident rates are growing as the global population ages. For non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC) specifically, Mohs surgery continues to be the standard of care, delivering highly effective cure rates. There are of course always potential downsides to surgery, especially for patients with other comorbidities, such as those having medical conditions requiring blood thinners, patients with diabetes and individuals taking an immunosuppressive agent. For these reasons and others, many dermatologists are now looking to other treatment options to diversify their treatment armamentarium for NMSC.

According to a study done by the University of Toronto, more than 19% of patients treated for NMSC would be good candidates for radiation therapy. However, only about 1% of the patients in the study were treated with any kind of radiation. This retrospective multi-disciplinary study was completed in 2011, analyzing patients treated between January 2004 and January 2008 — well before many of the more modern technology advances we now see in surface radiation, especially the development of low-dose, superficial office-based treatment devices. This data suggests the percentage of patients who are suitable for treatment with radiation could even be higher given the current technology landscape.

For dermatologists who are considering expanding their in-office treatment options for NMSC, and also keloids, new devices that combined both electronic brachytherapy (eBt) and superficial radiation therapy (SRT) are now approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as a treatment option for select patients. Patients have responded very favorably to low-dose radiation therapy across many treatment sites including the nose and face, scalp, hands, ears and lower legs.

One such technology, RADiant by Xstrahl, offers a compact, lightweight device featuring both eBt and SRT capability in one device, giving dermatologists the ability to choose which modality is best for their patients in any given treatment situation. Many patients appreciate having fast, comfortable treatments without surgical-related risks, such as scarring and functional deficits.

With the adoption of any new technology, it is always important to consider the implementation process, potential learning curve and also the payor dynamics. For dermatologists who may not have a lot of experience using radiation therapy, RADiant provides an intuitive clinical interface that makes it easy to create treatment plans and manage patient data. It is easy to define eBt or SRT treatment parameters successfully and deliver target treatment to the skin surface while minimizing the dose to healthy tissues.

In addition, the compact footprint also makes the device easy to move, with minimal to no shielding required and little to no upfront investment. The RADiant procedure is typically

reimbursed by Medicare and most private insurers. Many patients have also requested surface radiotherapy during the COVID-19 threat, to avoid prolonged face-to-face contact in the office or surgical procedure resulting in an open wound.

RADiant is produced by Xstrahl, an ADAM corporate member and trusted medical technology company that has been developing superficial radiation therapy devices for more than 25 years. Xstrahl systems are used by more than 700 centers worldwide to treat non-melanoma skin cancer and other diseases, providing a level of confidence in treatment adoption and utilization. To find out more about this emerging technology, visit radiant-therapy.com. ■



Richard Shaffer, FRCR, is the medical director of Xstrahl, a leading supplier of superficial radiation therapy and research systems for cancer. Dr. Shaffer currently serves as a clinical consulting oncologist for GenesisCare UK, BMIHealthcare and Cromwell Hospital. He has more than 20 years of experience using radiation therapy for brain tumors, prostate and bladder cancer, and skin cancer as well as for benign conditions.





Ask the **LAWYER**

Q&A with Michael J. Sacopulos, JD
Medical Risk Institute

Moving Up the IT Power Curve

Question: What should practice managers lookout for/take into consideration when researching new business operations or IT related technology?

Answer: I am not sure if your question should be read with a sense of anxiety and dread, or not. Perhaps it is just me. Whenever it is time to discuss IT operations and new technology, I become anxious. I have that fear that there is always a question that I did not know to ask or some better alternative that I will find out about too late. There is so much riding on IT that there are no small mistakes. All this makes me want to reach out to an expert to help us through your question.

Daniel Livschutz is a recognized national expert in the field of healthcare IT. His firm, ProMedical IT, has performed thousands of installations and supports dermatology, aesthetic medicine and ENT practices nationwide. "Most practices typically get stuck in the status quo with their current IT provider. This means they have not progressed forward with technology," says Livschutz.

This makes me think of the adage, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." This is the wrong mentality. Livschutz is correct when he says we need to consistently reexamine technology. Things that were appropriate years ago, may no longer be sufficient. One example of this is if you have a server located in the practice or co-located facility. Maintaining and updating server infrastructure properly is often beyond the IT budget of a practice and/or may no longer be necessary. Livschutz recommends a cloud-based approach to your technology needs as well as a mobile first approach, when possible. These approaches typically provide better security, accessibility and high availability of medical records and business data. So, your entry level question should be whether your system is based on a server in the office or cloud based.

Technology should also be able to assist with the patient's experience. "Patients today are getting wiser. They want to have a nice automated experience," says Livschutz. I think we can all agree with those statements. Your IT system should be able to facilitate patient reminders, access to medical records and the ability for patients to message the practice or their provider. This technology is not extraordinarily expensive. In fact, many practices have already purchased pieces to this puzzle.





Livschutz estimates that most of the practices that he interacts with initially utilize only about 25% of the technology that they have purchased or licensed. The trick is to identify these assets and incorporate them into your practice's everyday activities. Often when I look at my iPhone, I think of all the things it is capable of doing that I am not. Your office may have this same situation. A proper review by a competent IT professional may turn up capabilities of your system, you did not even recognize that were there. I get your desire to "research new business operations and IT technologies." I simply point out that you may have assets already available to you that are not being utilized.

This brings us to management of software. Your IT vendor should be assisting you with this area. You do not need any licenses or software expiring with protected health information on it or no corresponding business

associate agreement. Through this management process, hopefully new capabilities of your software will be identified.

Your question asked for new IT related technology. One of the new areas identified by Livschutz relates to patient loyalty points program. Think of it like frequent flyer points for your patients. There is new technology that helps establish these type of loyalty programs for your practice. However, I caution you that these only can be used for cash pay practices. You do not want to compensate referral sources for new patients. This gets us into the area of Stark Laws. While there is great new technology, be judicious how it is to be deployed.

I recommend a third-party review of your IT system. This can be conducted in conjunction with a Security Risk Analysis. You need a thorough review of your IT system, not only for security sake but also for functionality.

It is key to understand where you are before you know where you want to go next. Once you have found an IT vendor to perform review your system, get the agreement in writing. You want to understand the full scope of what they are going to do to your system. You should also request a business associate agreement be signed.

I wish you much success as you move forward with your IT endeavors. ■

Michael J. Sacopulos is the CEO of Medical Risk Institute (MRI). Medical Risk Institute provides proactive counsel to the healthcare community to identify where liability risks originate, and to reduce or remove these risks. He is the author of "Tweets, Likes, & Liabilities". He is a frequent national speaker and has written for Wall Street Journal, Forbes, Bloomberg and many publications for the medical profession. He may be reached at msacopulos@medriskinstitute.com.



The Emergence of Wearables and How They Continue to Evolve



By Chad Schiffman

In the United States and throughout the world, the many uses of wearable technologies continue to evolve. In the healthcare industry, some of the obvious uses of wearable technology applications include prevention of diseases, like type 2 diabetes and monitoring and managing health information such as weight, sleep activity, heart rates and physical activities.

The Internet of Things (IoT), including devices and applications that can connect to medical information systems, are promising. Consider the following numbers:

- 56% of Americans own **wearable** technology.
- 88% of physicians would like to monitor their patients' health data while at home.
- 35% of employers use medical wearable technology for **wellness programs**, lower insurance costs, etc.
- Using wearable technology is projected to **decrease** medical costs by 16% over a five year period.

Sensors and Wearables

In the healthcare industry, **sensors** are becoming increasingly important. Not only are sensors effective and safe, but they are also easy to operate. Data from sensors in healthcare are being used to gather patient information. This information can then be used for preventative care, to help with diagnoses, and to analyze treatment results.

Wearables continue to evolve and are used for analytics to measure physical status, sleep patterns, medication reminders and more. Some of the most recent advances in wearable technology have led to devices capable of delivering real-time medical information to providers. For example, **wearables** can now make conformal contact with epidermal, ocular, intracochlear and dental interfaces to collect biochemical or electrophysiological signals.

Sensors and Wearables in Dermatology

In dermatology, studies are underway on wearable sensors that are being developed that will be able to provide real-time information about skin conditions. For example, **Leo Pharma and Epicore Biosystems** are developing a wearable Discovery patch that will assess inflammatory biomarkers found in sweat and interstitial fluids in individuals with atopic dermatitis.

Philips and other vendors have introduced innovations for dermatology, such as **Actigraphy Motion Biosensor** wearable devices, that can detect nocturnal scratching event measurement to evaluate the impact of a particular therapy or medication pertaining to Atopic Dermatitis.

Interoperability and the Future

In the healthcare industry, interoperability is essential. Wearables provide diagnostic and assistance devices such as the iTBra patches, which detect metabolic changes in heat that may indicate breast tumor cellular activity, and L'Oréal's UV sensor, to name a few. These devices' ability to provide important information to healthcare providers is beneficial for discovering correlations between medical conditions, which help with managing patient care and providing a treatment plan.

Compliance Considerations

Just this year, Garmin, a GPS navigation and wearable technology manufacturer, experienced a ransomware attack and had to shut down its internal network. In doing so, they shut down their Garmin Connect app, an app that is used to sync data, including fitness and health activity, to Garmin servers. Ultimately, there was no compromise of any customer health information but had Garmin not had strong security protocols in place, there could have been a major compromise.

According to a report by the **Office of the National Coordinator (ONC)**, health technology used by a covered entity, such as a healthcare provider, that collects, stores or uses individually identifiable health information, is protected by the HIPAA Rules. This means making sure safeguards such as encryption, secure logins to apps and secure file transfers are in place.

In Summary

The emergency and evolution of wearable technology and sensors in dermatology is promising. These devices are generally safe, and as long as they are set up correctly and sync data with proper safeguards in place, healthcare providers and their patients should benefit from their many uses. ■



Chad Schiffman joined Healthcare Compliance Pros (HCP) in 2014 as the Director of Compliance.

Chad's seasoned background includes over 20 years combined experience in healthcare, information technology and compliance consulting services. Chad is primarily involved in consulting with healthcare clients about their HIPAA and HIPAA HITECH-related issues including breach determination, breach mitigation and corporate OIG and CMS compliance. Chad is also a main contributor to HCP's weekly healthcare forum where he shares his expert knowledge related to industry topics, trending compliance news and new regulation requirements. Chad holds undergraduate degrees in the areas of Medical Specialties and Healthcare Administration and a master's degree in Healthcare Informatics.





Three Reasons to Move from Transactional to Strategic with Your IT Partner



Nathan Austin brings 20 years of IT business management experience to his current position as Vice President

of Business Development. After co-founding **Mytech Partners** in 2000, he has focused on helping clients achieve 4x more value and productivity from their IT investments through implementing a proven IT strategy that is aligned with client goals. Mytech serves the small and medium business community as a Managed Services, Security and Consulting Provider and strives to “Make IT Easy” for the respective clients they serve. Additionally, he is the author of the upcoming book: *“Capitalism & Community: a partnership for a better tomorrow”*.

By Nathan Austin

Technology is about more than the equipment you own – especially in a highly-regulated field like medicine. In these days of high-speed Internet and sophisticated threats, your organization needs more than a transactional mindset, where you simply buy computers yourself and only seek an IT vendor when something breaks. The transactional, reactionary approach leaves you open to both malicious and accidental disasters, but a more strategic relationship can mitigate these risks.

As an owner of a managed services and consulting firm for over 20 years, I’ve learned a few lessons about the difference between a transactional relationship vs. a strategic one when it comes to an IT partner – and why the strategic approach offers far more security, productivity and peace of mind.

Finding the Right Fit

The success of any relationship is based on quality communication, a shared belief system and being there through good & tough times — and the relationship you build with your IT partner is no different. Every managed services provider (MSP) operates a little differently based on how they have chosen to structure their business and core competencies. There really isn’t a “best” IT partner out there: it’s more important that you find the best **fit** for your organization.



As you weigh your IT options, identify what you need and watch for whether or not an IT organization can address those needs. The medical field requires a high degree of education and specialization, and the same is true for (most) IT organizations. You and your IT partner each have respective areas of expertise, so working together requires practicing both confidence AND humility. Be willing to do your part – and find an IT Partner that is willing to do theirs – so you can make informed technology investments to achieve your short- and long-term organizational goals.

There is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all IT partner. Just like in medicine, the technology industry offers thousands of solutions, and no organization can be an expert in all of them. Each MSP needs to narrow their focus for product selection, tool set, training, professional development and more. This means that each potential IT partner will have slightly different ways to solve a problem, each of which may or may not be a good fit. The solution is not necessarily right or wrong, just one way or another, and your organization may need to show flexibility in your preferences: Dell vs. Lenovo computers and Cisco vs. HP switches are two common examples. Aligning with your IT partner's solution set helps them deploy their greatest competency and corresponding ability – and that means better service for you.

Your organization must be able to hold your IT partner accountable to results, and taking their recommendations will set you both up for success. However, it's important to consider all of their recommendations, so you can be certain they've done everything they can. When you follow the advice of your IT partner, you are in a much better position to hold them accountable when something breaks or goes wrong — because with technology, something always does. If your IT partner owns the problem and the solution, that's an IT partner worth keeping.

Owning Risk

The ownership of risk is an executive-level responsibility. This may seem obvious, but many organizations neglect to include an executive-level decision maker in IT discussions — thereby exposing the organization to significant liability. Often, this happens because the executive doesn't feel comfortable in an IT conversation: they aren't tech experts, and the acronyms are all unfamiliar. Conversely, the IT personnel are often inexperienced with business-based conversations. You must bridge this gap between the business and IT sides if you want to get the most out of your tech decisions. The right IT partner won't leave you to fend for yourself; they'll help you navigate these critical conversations.

Your owner of organizational risk is the only one with the information and tools available to make an informed decision, especially when HIPAA compliance is involved. The most expensive solution might not address the top priority, and the least expensive option is very rarely the best choice — because when security is concerned, should it really go to the lowest bidder? Your tech-focused team members are experienced in their field, but they often don't know the organization's highest-level needs and risks. Even though technology plays a considerable role in security, finding the right solution at the right price that effectively mitigates your organization's risk is not truly an IT decision.

Getting all the necessary information to the right decision maker is no small task, but it's absolutely critical if you want to mitigate high-level security risks. Of course, executives often have limited time available, so optimizing those meetings is important as well. Not everyone needs to participate in EVERY technology conversation, and that's where an effective strategic IT plan comes into play.

Plan for the Future

Long-term planning may seem cumbersome, but the risk it mitigates is well worth your time! Technology is not perfect, and you'll still experience outages even with the best

safeguards in place, but the differences are still astonishing. When you build and execute an effective strategic IT roadmap, you will experience fewer outages, and return to operations faster when they do occur. If your organization is tired of unexpected downtime and costs, you are ready to engage an IT Partner who can help you with a long-term strategic IT roadmap.

Building a plan with regular check-ins will help both you and your IT partner. It empowers your IT partner to provide a budget and execute your plan whenever you aren't in the room, minimizing the day-to-day burden on your executives' time. And because some transitions (cloud solutions, for example) take multiple years due to equipment lifecycles, building a long-term plan allows for smooth transitions while maximizing the return on your existing investment. This strategic IT roadmap will also help you navigate conversations about performance, connectivity, security, and disaster recovery.

A strategic IT roadmap has numerous benefits, but the main one is ensuring alignment. When everyone involved knows your needs and goals, you can be confident that your priorities are aligned with and help you achieve your organizational goals of increased growth, security, team member satisfaction and bottom line performance.

Invest in Your Success

Finding the right IT partner, getting the right people in the room to manage risk and building a strategic IT roadmap are the top three steps we recommend to transform your IT relationship from transactional to strategic. Not every MSP will be able to deliver proactive, strategic guidance to your organization — and it's important to note that an MSP that has matured to that operational level will require a larger investment of time and money.

The benefit, however, is far more significant: less operational downtime, faster recovery, improved scalability, greater budget visibility and dramatically reduced organizational risk. ■



Tomorrow Is Today With Tech-Powered HR



As a leader in payroll and HR technology, Oklahoma City-based Paycom redefines the human capital management industry by allowing companies to effectively navigate a rapidly changing business environment. Its cloud-based software solution is based on a core system of record maintained in a single database for all human capital management functions, providing the functionality that businesses need to manage the complete employment lifecycle, from recruitment to retirement. As one of the leading human capital management providers, Paycom serves clients in all 50 states from offices across the country. Learn more at paycomonline.com.

New developments in the field of HR software, along with studies showing the cost of late adoption, show data-driven processes are the future of human resources. The benefits of a tech-based HR strategy are easy to see and easier to achieve for organizations willing to make the transition.



User Experience: Where It All Begins

Americans are online an average of seven hours per day — using mobile devices to communicate, order coffee, check bank balances and more, according to 2019 Global Digital reports. Thanks to ever-changing technology, we've come to expect direct access to our personal data and important information in all areas of our daily lives.

Then we go to work, where tech is catching up, but the user experience of some HR platforms still lags behind the slick experience of consumer technology. This unfortunate reality has a detrimental effect on engaging employees, attracting top talent and driving performance in businesses.

Workers are frustrated because they can't easily retrieve or manage their personal information in the same way they do outside the office, and HR is mired in manual administrative tasks with hidden costs that drive down productivity and actually consume valuable resources.

What's the solution?

The emergence of technology that puts control of HR data into the hands of our employees is redefining the employee experience and the role of the HR professional. It's important for the C-suite to see the digital writing on the wall because this transformation isn't in the future — it's already happening.

Benefits of Employee Usage

Research from Adobe revealed that more than 80% of workers say technology is the most important factor in being happy on the job, and that includes HR tech.

Employee self-service systems give personnel 24/7 access to their personal data. Instead of using HR to duplicate simple processes like updating direct-deposit information, enrolling in benefits or submitting expenses, employees should be able to initiate and complete these tasks on their own. This can significantly reduce data-entry errors while giving your workforce what they want: individual control and leading technology.

Additionally, self-service software can facilitate a host of other administrative duties, including onboarding, training, time tracking, employee surveys and performance management, just to name a few.

When these processes are automated, positive results ripple through an organization. HR is liberated to focus on high-level drivers of business growth instead of repetitive data entry. Employees have a better HR experience, which has been shown to increase engagement and productivity, according to the Society for Human Resource Management.

How much does a lack of tech impact the bottom line?

Cost of Manual Processes

High turnover and disengaged employees are expensive. Gallup estimates they cost businesses billions of dollars each year. Manual processes contribute to employee dissatisfaction, and they too come with a high price tag.

A recent Ernst & Young study found that, on average, a single HR task or entry of data without self-service functionality costs a company \$4.51.

This might sound insignificant since it's about the same price as a latte, but when multiplied by hundreds of employees and thousands of changes across an HRIS, that number quickly accumulates in a big way.

So how do practice administrators truly analyze and, more importantly, report on the current cost of their dated HR processes or how better use of their technology can positively impact profitability?

Results of Self-Service Technology

Employers are beginning to implement tools like Paycom's Direct Data Exchange (DDX) to get real-time status of metrics like employee usage rates, labor and productivity. When these data-rich tools are used to their full potential, practices can get a clear view of exactly how their HR tech is performing as they offer greater engagement to their workforce and liberate their administrative staff from mountains of repetitive work.

For the first time, HR can see any and all changes made in the system and whether or not the adjustment was made by the employee through a **self-service** utility or at the client administrator or manager level. These insights are especially useful when looking at high-activity periods, like open enrollment and year-end.

Applications like Paycom's industry-first product, Direct Data Exchange, are transforming the way HR operates by providing a clear look into the efficiencies or gaps within an employee usage strategy and how that affects the company's profitability. Additionally, HR can definitively demonstrate how engaged employees are in the HRIS technology provided to them.

Keeping employees happy, being a strategic business partner and leading a digital transformation simultaneously is no easy feat. However, new HR technologies arming you with quantitative data and proving the value of your investment can put you on the path to success. ■





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