

A Blueprint for Success

In creating a centralized, business intelligence database, there are three key concepts for successful execution of the business plan:

- ❖ Understanding previous failures in order to set project scope
- ❖ Building the runway before putting the plane in flight
- ❖ Allocating the appropriate resources for the appropriate needs

Understanding previous failures in order to set project scope

Six distinct efforts in creating a centralized database have all demonstrated the same notable principle in their failures: a lack of business knowledge from the developers. Unfortunately, most consultants and employees in the field of IT are sequestered when it comes to business knowledge and operating practices of the company they work for (even though they are likely very well versed in their technical skill sets). This one and often overlooked principle is the primary driver behind the failures HealthSpring has experienced over the last eight years. In other words, database designs do not coalesce with operational needs.

Furthermore, the most knowledgeable people in the business and operating practices are typically less sophisticated with their technical skill sets. The disconnect between business knowledge and technical skills has historically created a barrier in the creation of a usable, centralized, business intelligence database. While segregation of IT and business knowledge is typical in most businesses (and done so with great success), the field of healthcare is somewhat of an anomaly due to the sheer volume of complexities and intricacies that exist in the business model.

HealthSpring staffs approximately 60 analysts and 127 IT employees across all markets. Due to the nature of these positions being skill set driven, very few of these employees are knowledgeable in all four of the following categories: (1) hardware, (2) programming, (3) the healthcare business model, (4) HealthSpring's business model. Knowledge in all four categories is critical for successful creation of a centralized business intelligence database. Removing the HealthSpring veil reveals even less favorable odds in the search for a third party solution. Therefore, utilizing the company's internal talent with the required skill sets is the primary key to success.

Building the runway before putting the plane in flight

Much like a house should not be built without a foundation, a plane should not be built while in flight. In fact, a plane should not even be built until a runway has been paved from which it can take off and land. This analogy of "paving the runway" should be used as the basis for a successful blueprint. Current healthcare business practices already dictate a