

Medical Treatment Management – Pragmatic Case Study



The client description

Sanford Health is an integrated health system headquartered in the Dakotas and is now the largest rural, not-for-profit health care system in the United States with locations in 126 communities in nine states. In addition, Sanford Health is in the process of developing international clinics in Ghana, Israel and Mexico. Sanford Health includes 39 hospitals, 140 clinic locations and 1,360 physicians in 81 specialty areas of medicine. With more than 26,000 employees, Sanford Health is the largest employer in North and South Dakota.

Profile™ by Sanford® is a comprehensive weight management program designed by Sanford Health physicians and scientists, as a *Simple, Effective & Sustainable* solution. The program makes use of a Profile coach and offers integrated complementary technology to directly connect the coach and the member through their journey. Clinical & Scientific protocols have been designed to assist the coach to implement an individualized plan for each member. Their plan is designed with a focus on *Nutrition, Activity & Lifestyle* adaptations required for short and long-term success.

The Problem

The launch of this program on such a large scale in the nation was welcomed by the general population, as the number of registrations grew by the thousands. As the registrations grew the number of personalized plans as well as the data required to be maintained grew. Maintaining the accuracy and the genuineness of the data had become top level priority. The model adopted by the group to launch this program made it an absolute necessity as many times the coach and the individual were communicating over large distances in the nation. The effectiveness of the programs developed by the experts was purely driven out of quantitative data presented by the participating individuals.

1. **Process** – a wet loss program has been tried by many and the coach as well as the individual participant does not face any communication challenges as in the traditional model there are face to face meetings. Profile Plan differed to a great extent as there were no face to face meetings between the coach and the participant; this created a dependence on a process and discipline which both the coach as well as the individual participant had to

follow to accrue the right results from the programs. The individual participants and the coaches needed to process to be followed as maintaining a track of individual discussions along with the history of each discussion was becoming a challenging task for the coaches. This was directly affecting the service quality, as the adoption levels fell after the great launch of the Profile Plan program.

2. **Data** – the lack an appropriate framework to be used caused a lot of data loss which had started creating confusion for the experts designing the programs for participating individuals. Assessing the correct data at the correct time had become an overly complex task as there was no uniform process followed by the experts in storing data. The response data from the participants was also becoming a challenge to store in the right manner, the individual participants were told by the experts to measure and track some vital signs as well as the numbers shown by the weight scale.
3. **Interface for Users** – the management at the program new that they would need to replace the face to face interaction of the individual participants with their designated coaches as this would make the difference between success and failure. With the ever rapidly changing landscape of technology, it was apparent that the program allowed the individual participants the flexibility to interact with their experts at any given moment in time. Constant engagement with the participant was one of the ingredients that management had decided to use as a differentiator to not only other programs like this but also to break away from the traditional model. Developing this interface within such a short time and making it simple to use was a major hurdle the management of the program was facing.

There were highly experienced people that the group had chosen to lead this initiative across the nation, and these highly motivated experts knew that these problems were going to escalate with drastic effects on the operations of the complete program. The top management at Profile Plan also knew that their only hope in irradiating these problems was technology and the adoption of new technologies that would lead to a better participant experience. The three areas had to be addressed with solutions that would help generate an extremely powerful operations engine.

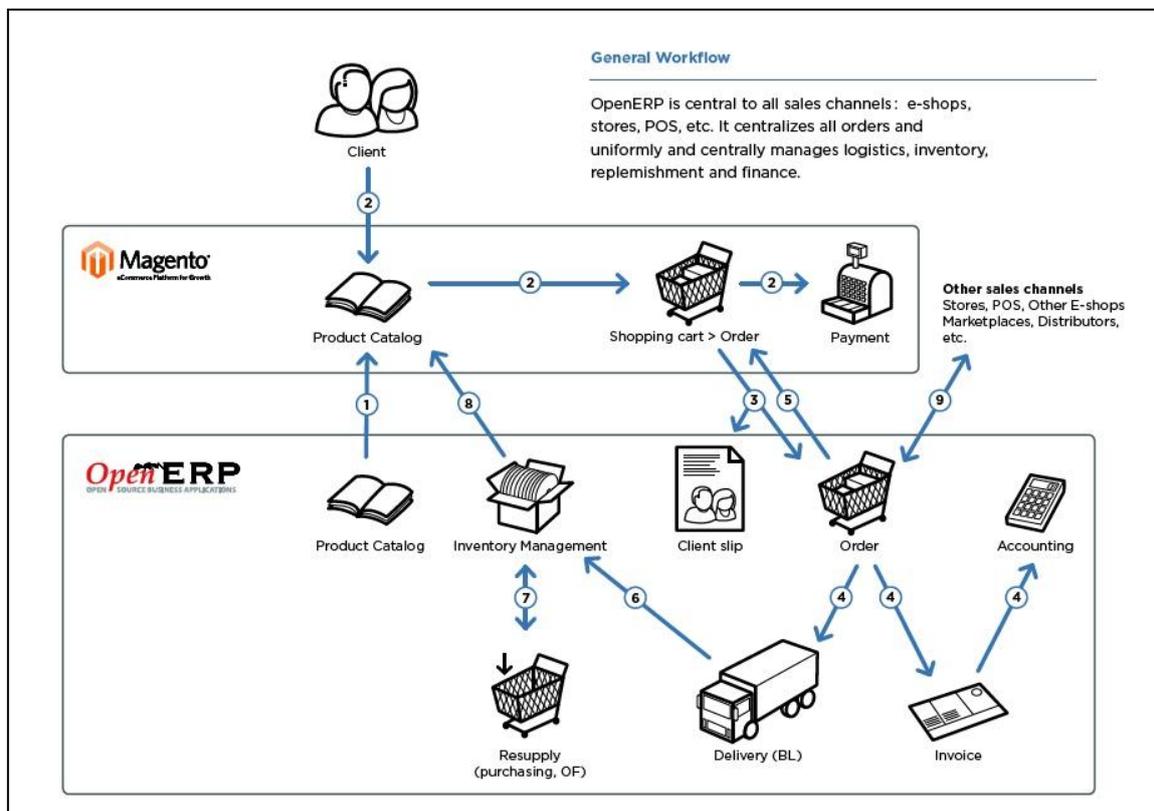
Addition of new individual participants was essential for survival on one hand while on the other maintaining a correct modus operandi was becoming a challenge. The highly experienced management new that they had to inject a new DNA called “technology” to save the complete organization. After about a 2 months of searching the management came across the Pragmatic website through a consultant employed to identify a best of breed solution.

The Solution Proposed

The consultant employed by the management at Profile Plan liked the solution proposed by the Pragmatic team. The solution was a combination of niche tools used to address specific needs of users at Profile Plan. The functional consultants at Pragmatic had carved out a combination of OpenERP + Magento + a pHp interface + Talend that were to address the problem areas identified by

the management. OpenERP was to provide the required processes to operate and disseminate information or data as well as digest information or data provided by individual participants. Magento is a popular e-commerce tool that helps in developing and integrating the complete ecosystem of products, customers, payment gateways and inventory. Talend a Open Source Business Intelligence tool was to provide a systematic framework to store as well as access data related to operations or transactions by all the stakeholders at Profile Plan. The php interface was to provide a customized interface for the experts and the participants to interact, the use of php was purposely selected as it interfaces with many mobile based operating systems.

The combination of these four niche tools was to provide the management at Profile Plan a cohesive application that would help them capitalise on their unique position in the market. The auditing capabilities that the application provided the management were especially useful as it helped the management drive the change required to use the application. The added advantage of this application was the simplicity that it incorporated – it was extremely easy for the individual participants to understand and use while the highly trained nutritionist and dieticians were able to attain high fluency levels in using the application to document as well as store.



The technical consultant employed by the management helped them to understand the scalability in the application proposed by the Pragmatic Team. The Profile Plan management awarded to project to the Pragmatic team on the 4th of July 2013 weekend, which helped in quickly mobilizing putting in place the required resources as well as the development environment.

The Implementation of the Solution

The implementation of this mammoth application was mutually decided to be in phases, the first being a small proof of concept. The application was proposed using concepts and wire-frames, hence the management at Profile Plan needed to be sure the fact that something like this could be developed in reality. The POC lasted for a month with the results helping the Pragmatic team to address some of the major concerns the management at Profile Plan had uncovered.

Since Profile Plan had a limited budget to develop the application a single shore model was adopted. There were detailed questionnaires sent by the Pragmatic functional consultants to uncover minute details of the required application. The stakeholders in both the organizations met every 2 days to understand and confirm requirements as well as expectations. The knowledge exchange led to both the organizations understanding and envisioning the ultimate application to be developed and deployed.

Since the Pragmatic team used the agile methodology to develop the application the users were able to test and work with the small parts of the applications being released periodically. This led to another advantage for the Profile Plan team as they began to learn and understand the actual workings of the application from a very nascent stage of development. The development lasted for almost 5 months. The ultimate deliverable met the expectations of the users as they themselves had played a very important part in developing the application.

Since Profile Plan was a first mover in this segment the development has been ongoing even after the initial application deployment. The management at Profile Plan designs and launches new initiatives to not only bridge the gap between coaches and clients but also launches new services and products, this constant innovation is backed by the technological fluency of the Pragmatic team.

The Benefits of the Solution

The application developed by the Pragmatic Team was named by the Profile Plan team as “Pro-Central”. When team was asked to provide feedback about the development and the usage of the application, they complimented the Pragmatic team by saying that ‘Pro-Central has helped them in providing a better service’.

Data Accountability – The use of Talend to access and move data from one application to another helped in adhering to a certain nomenclature which increased the data authenticity. The OpenERP framework provided a central system for all the users to interact as well as retrieve important data related to customer plans. The pHP interface provided the management at Profile Plan a accurate method to store all individual customers as well as prospective customer data appropriately.

Customer Interaction – The application provided the team at Profile Plan a chance to increase customer interactions. The pHP interface along with the use of technology to have online video conversations with the customers provided the team a chance to increase service quality. The

technology platform helped in facilitating the exchange of information between customers and the experts related to the effectiveness of individual plans.

Location wise Tracking – Pro-Central became an effective tool which led to effective inventory management of products like recipes as well as other ingredients used to make food supplements for the customers at Profile Plan.

Flexibility to launch new Revenue streams – The management institutionalised an effective innovation system in developing new services and products. The application developed using OpenERP as a central base helped the management take these new services as products to their customer base in formalised and methodical manner.