The Computerworld Honors Program

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Final Copy of Case Study

LOCATION:
Kansas City, MO, US

ORGANIZATION:
Cerner

YEAR:
2011

ORGANIZATION URL:
http://www.cerner.com

STATUS:
Laureate

PROJECT NAME:
uCern

CATEGORY:
Collaboration

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Healthcare is a highly complex, constantly changing business that is delivered differently in every country. Cerner, a global leader in providing healthcare technologies and services, is transforming healthcare by eliminating error, variance and waste for healthcare providers and consumers around the world. With a diverse global client base, Cerner and its clients would meet face-to-face throughout the year to exchange ideas and information about healthcare issues. Between these meetings, information critical to improving healthcare practices didn't continue to flow; it was locked down in disparate systems or lying fallow in the minds of innovators. Information was shared inefficiently through email, documentation took weeks to update, the same questions were logged by different clients repeatedly to the Help Desk, and clients couldn't easily share their knowledge directly with other clients. Cerner wanted to turn the crank faster on the ability to surface clinical innovations, gather information and requirements, and enable healthcare professionals to leverage new clinical practices and technology faster. The big idea: go social to leverage mass collaboration to innovate and reduce time between discovery and adoption. To meet its strategic challenges, Cerner executives stepped back and asked themselves: what do we need as an industry and what do we need as a company? How can Cerner not only improve its business outcomes but the outcomes of its clients? Short answer: a social collaboration platform called uCern™ that transcends Cerner's extended enterprise to include not only Cerner associates but clients, partners, and researchers and industry experts—who all make critical contributions to the healthcare industry as a whole. Cerner partnered with Jive Software, Atlassian, and Ooyala to deliver the core components that make up uCern. Given the uniqueness of Cerner's vision to combine multiple audiences on the platform, Cerner staffed a team of engineers and worked with Jive to customize a solution to meet the security and accessibility needs of its associates and clients. Within four weeks from signing the contract with Jive, uCern was live and available to Cerner associates. Six months later, uCern was unveiled to Cerner clients and partners. Technology wasn't the only enabler; behavior change was

necessary as well. Cerner associates and clients needed to feel comfortable sharing more transparently. Through successful adoption and education campaigns, to date 82% of associates and 42% of clients have contributed knowledge on uCern. Today, uCern connects more than 2,400 organizations including 32,000 clinicians, IT professionals, administrators and Cerner associates across the globe to provide: * Internal collaboration (Cerner to Cerner) * External collaboration (Cerner to Clients/Partners) * External collaboration (Clients/Partners to Clients/Partners) Throughout uCern, clinicians are talking to clinicians on workflow, system administrators are sharing best practices on maintaining their systems, end users of Cerner's solutions are finding answers to the questions they encounter, and Cerner associates are getting more and faster feedback on product designs leading to better product development, all on a secure, easily accessible platform. All of this collaboration is occurring in real time, significantly enhancing the speed to value for these members.

SOCIETAL BENEFITS

Successful health outcomes depend on information getting to the right people at the right time. When healthcare providers and professionals receive answers and advice from thousands similar to them, the delivery of healthcare will improve. When delivery improves, those who receive healthcare services at those collaborating facilities benefit greatly.

PROJECT BENEFIT EXAMPLE

Clients are Logging Fewer Service Requests: When our clients have access to questions other clients are asking, and most importantly the answers to those questions, there is less of a need to log formal service requests to Cerner support teams (Appendix 1). More importantly, many client questions are answered by other clients and sometimes faster than the Cerner support teams may have been able to respond. Likewise, time not spent by Cerner support on non-critical issues means time dedicated to resolving critical issues faster instead. Members of uCern, who had access to these support forums, logged 13% fewer support request than those clients who were not in uCern. For the first time in years, the number of support issues logged year over year on Cerner solutions declined. Cerner Associates are Getting Answers to HR Questions: Similarly, Cerner is using the power of collaboration internally by providing answers to questions that came into Cerner's Benefits team faster than ever before. In fact, Cerner's HR department saw a 70% decrease in the number of service requests logged over the prior year. Requests that sometimes took days to address, can be answered online and by other associates who know the answers. Most importantly, the questions and answers are preserved online for the next person who has the same question. Better Feedback on Software Design: Cerner's core business is the development of software. The faster it can develop software and the better that software meets client requirements, the quicker the solution can make it to market and be adopted by clients. Instead of one-off conference calls, Cerner has switched to using uCern to gather feedback on software requirements and design by engaging more clients simultaneously (Appendix 2). "We can post initial requirements for feedback, follow concurrent discussions with multiple clients asynchronously, make iterative changes, and post mockups of screenshots for validation. uCern improves the quality of design in our product development cycle." Scott Ackerson, Director, Cerner Personal Health IP Faster, More Complete Updates to Software Documentation: Technical documentation used to be exclusively managed by a handful of documentation developers and subject matter experts. Any suggested improvements by clients or associates were logged as service requests and reviewed. Cerner wanted to tap into the wisdom of the crowd to keep this documentation more accurate and up to date by allowing anyone to edit it. By moving the technical documentation for Cerner software into the uCern Wiki, our approval-publish cycles have

decreased from the range of 2-6 weeks to a number of hours or days (Appendix 3). How do Cerner Clients feel about uCern? "We are definitely early adopters of uCern and many of us use it daily. When we have new questions, the first thing someone here will say is: 'Did you put it out on uCern?' In contrast to the old List Serve, this is a life-saver for us. We have gotten many great ideas and answers from other Cerner clients. Safe to say, we love it." Gail Fannin, RN, BSN, Florida Hospital.

IS THIS PROJECT AN INNOVATION, BEST PRACTICE? Yes

ADDITIONAL PROJECT INFORMATION

After 20 months of uCern going live with Cerner clients, the membership within uCern has grown to more than 32,000 members. Less than one-third is Cerner associates. More than 2,400 organizations involved in healthcare are represented by our membership. Not only do we continue to expand at more than 1,000 members per month, but the amount of collaboration occurring in the platform continues to grow steadily. Members are not joining and sitting on the sidelines, they want to contribute to the systemic improvement in healthcare and the care we deliver to our patients, whether that means discussing Cerner software in our support forums, role-based clinical workflows in our communities of practice, or healthcare policy in our Meaningful Use communities. More than 82% of Cerner associates and 42% of clients have contributed content, content that is being viewed and consumed at nearly one million page views per month. The more work that moves into uCern, the more the collective pool of knowledge and shared tools grows. By making uCern freely available and allowing anyone from our client organizations to become members, Cerner has encouraged clients to integrate uCern into more of their daily work as well. Some of the specific examples we've helped clients realize: *Using uCern as a hub for CPOE go-live support for physicians, including announcements, discussions, documentation, and videos *On boarding new hires into a support organization by making uCern integral to the training program, including storing training materials and linking to shared uCern resources and videos * Reducing the number of regularly occurring face-to-face meetings by discussing decisions and collaborating on documents online where more people can interact without the need to coordinate schedules to get everyone in a conference room in person "uCern is the most powerful tool I have. The ability to collaborate and network with other Cerner clients is invaluable. I've been able to work through issues in both design and build thanks to input from other clients and I've been able to help others as well. I am extremely happy that Cerner has provided this tool to their clients." Justine Gehrett, Catholic Healthcare Initiatives.