

Trend 4

FRICITIONLESS BUSINESS

Built to Partner at Scale

Now more than ever, strategic partnerships are essential to business growth for healthcare organizations.

As lines between industries blur, unexpected partners are collaborating in nontraditional ways and creating experiences that bridge worlds. Those leading the industry worldwide show that technology is now at the root of partnerships.

Partnerships that are technology-based allow networks to grow faster and into more ecosystems than ever before. However, healthcare legacy systems weren't built to

support this kind of rapid and robust expansion. Soon enough, these legacy systems will become major hindrances to future growth.

Healthcare organizations must rethink how to make technology-based partnerships work to position themselves for sustainable differentiation and growth. Two technologies have the potential to solve these challenges: microservices and blockchain.

NEW TECHNOLOGY TO HELP SUPPORT TECHNOLOGY-BASED PARTNERSHIPS:



Microservices break applications down to their simplest component functions. Each function is treated as a separate service with its own API.



Blockchain information is replicated across a network of nodes delivering information and transactions that are secure, unalterable, and verifiable.

Microservices is not a single piece of technology, but rather an approach to architecture. A microservices approach will foster agility as applications become more modular, enabling rapid integration with many new partners. Such collaboration has become increasingly important for businesses to differentiate and grow in a [world of ecosystem power plays](#). And as a healthcare organization's portfolio of partnerships grows, the ways in which businesses transact with each other becomes more complex. Blockchain is a distributed ledger system that stores groups of transactions. The technology helps create, scale and manage those

relationships through its ability to hold partners accountable without the need to first build trust.

Healthcare entities that adopt microservices architectures, use blockchain and store self-executing smart contracts on the blockchain will build a strong foundation for technology-based partnerships to support future differentiation and growth. Those that invest in these changes today will redefine how businesses transact in the future.



Breaking down the parts to build up partnerships

Microservices allow a business to transcend industry boundaries, collaborating with other third parties to bring solutions faster to market. In health, microservices make it easier for organizations to adapt quickly to changing customer experience expectations. It uses a suite of tools such as application programming interfaces (APIs), containers and the cloud to break applications into simple, discrete services. Every feature becomes its own service versus being combined into a single monolithic application.

A microservices architecture provides a foundation for companies to forge partnerships quickly and easily, seamlessly integrating services while minimizing friction for partners or customers.

Consider the US pharmacy, [Walgreens](#). The company rebuilt its “healthy choice” rewards program with a goal of expanding partnerships via microservices. The APIs built during their microservices transformation were shared with [third-party developers](#), who could integrate Walgreens’ rewards into their own apps, [offering points to customers for activities like running, testing blood pressure, and even quitting tobacco](#).¹ Walgreens reports that building these partnerships now takes only a few hours, as opposed to the months-long process of the past. They now work with more than 275 partners, and [their prescription API fills one prescription per second](#).²

While 88 percent of healthcare executives expect their organization’s use of microservices to increase over the next year, it is still a nascent approach to technology architecture among providers and health plans. However, a small group of luminaries is leading the pack, actively pursuing microservices architectures as part of their strategies. Some healthcare enterprises are using third-party integration layers that sit on top of systems of record to extract information for use by systems of engagement. Companies like [Sansoro Health](#) are advancing microservices adoption, offering solutions that simplify API integration across multiple EMR platforms. Third-party applications connect into the platform for secure, seamless data exchange to swiftly scale, reduce integration efforts and deliver value rapidly.³

Industry leaders are using an API layer to minimize the integration complexity across multiple core administration systems. The microservices architecture helps enable them to adapt to new systems of engagement such as smartphones, wearable devices and voice-activated speakers. [They are building Alexa skills](#),⁴ and developing mobile apps that quickly integrate among partners to deliver a unified experience for members.

¹Walgreens, BalanceRewardsforHealthyChoices—Walgreens.(n.d.)

²“Walgreens: Expanding Customer Loyalty with Microservices,” CIO, May 5, 2017

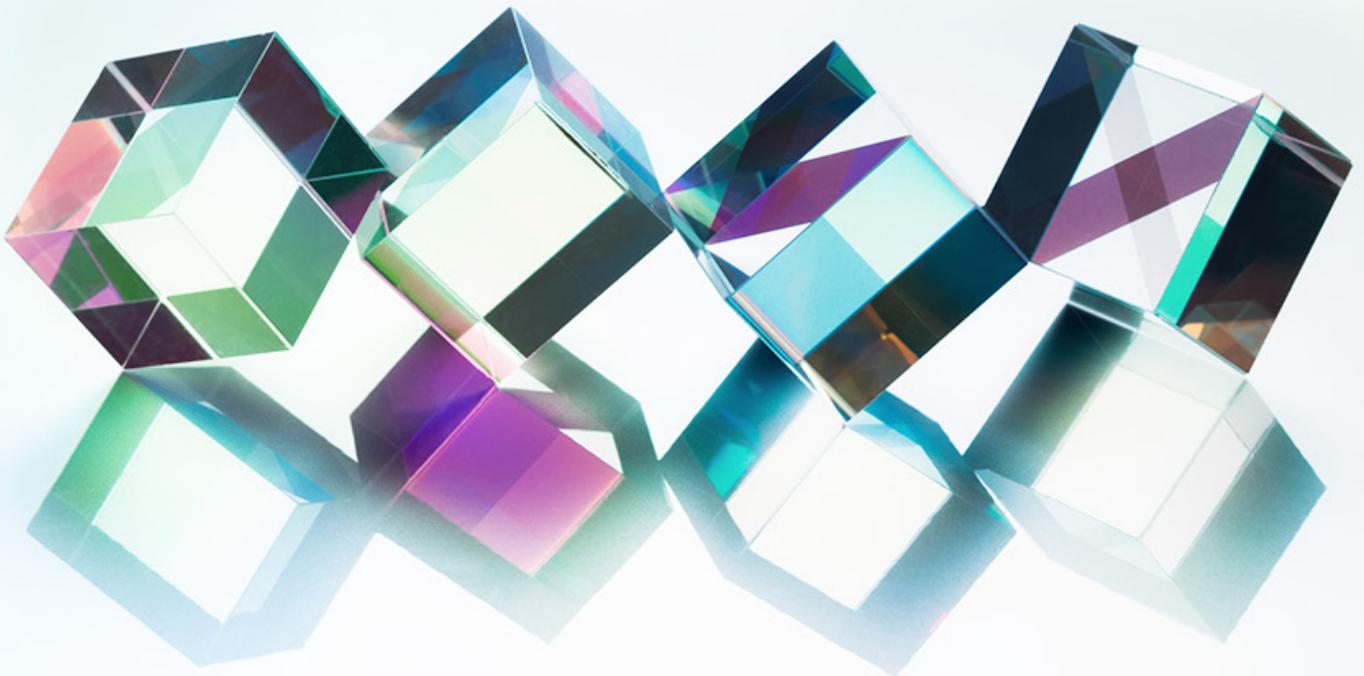
³Sansoro website, <https://www.sansorohealth.com>

⁴Modern Healthcare, “Virtual Assistants like Amazon’s Alexa Could Change the Way Care is Delivered,” July 31, 2017

Managing partners though blockchain

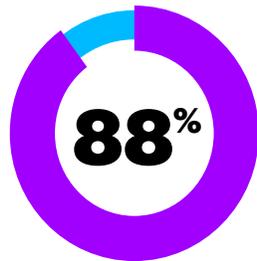
Healthcare organizations grappling with managing a wide network of partners can look to blockchain to simplify their collection and reconciliation of disparate healthcare and financial data. Imagine the magnitude of disconnected data from providers, hospitals, health plans and other partners. Blockchain provides the potential to connect these highly segmented data silos, adding a layer of trust through cryptographic proofs of the data's provenance. No single organization owns the blockchain, therefore all participants have equal access to the information they have permission to interact with.

Delegating trust to a blockchain means that businesses can pursue broader networks, onboard new partners or enter new ecosystems with ease. With blockchain-based smart contracts, businesses can capture computable terms of a given relationship, and automatically trigger transactions for any partner meeting those terms. Most health executives (78 percent) agree that smart contracts will dramatically evolve our transactional methods and enable digital trust.

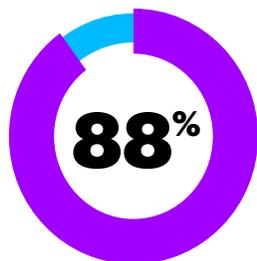


Healthcare is in an early experimentation phase with blockchain trailing industry sectors like financial services. Still, executives are recognizing its [potential](#).⁵ When asked, “When do you expect that blockchain will be integrated into your organization’s systems?” 32 percent of healthcare providers and 48 percent of health plans said one to two years.

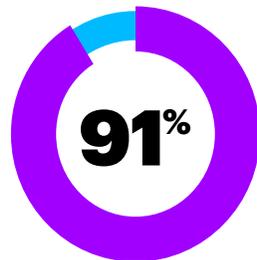
The future is becoming abundantly clear as partnerships take hold: If microservices and APIs are the keys to scaling and integrating partnerships, blockchain will be critical to creating trust in the authenticity and accuracy of what is being shared.



88% of health executives anticipate the volume of data exchanged with ecosystem partners will increase over the next two years.



88% of health executives agree that microservices are critical for scaling and integrating ecosystem partnerships.



91% of health executives believe blockchain and smart contracts will be critical for their organization over the next three years.

⁵LinkedIn, Blockchain: Transformational Technology for Health Care, August 8, 2016

A PLATFORM FOR BETTER HEALTH ENGAGEMENT

[Anthem](#), in partnership with [Castlight Health](#), launched Engage, a next-generation health engagement platform and digital experience designed to drive better health for consumers—and better healthcare decisions. The new platform establishes a single hub for an employer’s health and wellness programs and will drive all of the capabilities together, personalizing the programs offered to each user. It also uses a microservices layer to seamlessly connect to data from third-party health and wellness apps as well as health plan tools such as telehealth services, virtual nursing and fitness tracker-powered wellness programs. For example, the platform alerts a condition management nurse to connect with a user based on their medical or lifestyle needs and can help users follow their doctors’ plan of care, flagging missed lab tests and providing additional educational resources.

“Engage is enabled using the microservices and event-driven architecture that helps with easy transfer of data and actions when needed. The use of microservices and APIs for Anthem Engage and other internal apps creates a seamless integration pattern,” says Anil Bhatt, vice president of digital technologies.

More on this topic

[Investing in Healthcare Innovation](#)

[Blockchain: The Key to Healthcare Trust and Security?](#)

[Find Out What Our Health Leaders Think](#)

FOR MORE INFORMATION



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