Global health and well-being charitable organization

Visibility and analytics networks to improve access to healthcare

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Opportunity
Across health systems in the developing world, the availability of medicines can be as little as 40 percent. While great strides have been made to improve commodity availability upstream at lower prices, issues with in-country supply chains often result in high stock outages and waste at facilities.

In support of its efforts to improve the supply of high-quality pharmaceutical commodities to public health facilities, the global charitable organization sought to establish a framework to coordinate the activities of multiple stakeholder organizations involved in funding, governing or delivering public health programs.

It recognized an opportunity to develop a blueprint operating model that multiple organizations could use to define their roles in the supply chain activities that are essential to delivering health outcomes.

To this end, the charitable organization aimed to develop a vision and create a core group of professionals across multiple disciplines that would advocate for its adoption across a complex and fragmented global industry. The starting point for this vision was the concept of a centralized supply chain control tower, also known as a visibility and analytics network. The organization was determined to explore the potential for this concept in the developing world, despite initial skepticism that the demand for data capture in remote and poorly connected locations would be a major stumbling block.

Solution
Accenture Development Partnerships mobilized a team from Accenture Strategy to coordinate and facilitate collaboration between over twenty-five stakeholder organizations from international development donors; multilateral agencies; developing country governments; health program implementation partners; NGO’s; software vendors and supply chain leaders in the private sector.

The team started the design process by leveraging an Accenture Strategy methodology called Prime Value Chain Analysis to structure workshops that identified and aligned the group on the most significant and pervasive pain points in the supply chain. Combining this analysis with Accenture Strategy’s experience and understanding of leading supply chain operating models, the team then defined a set of “day in the life” scenarios that would combine improved data visibility with analytical processes to facilitate better decision making and improve medicine availability in “last mile” health facilities. The scenarios defined pre-packaged analytics and KPIs, as well as processes for continuous improvement. They also highlighted the need for different organizations and levels in the supply chain to collaborate to capture data, and then identify tactical and strategic fixes to problems, or to predict and avoid them altogether. The scenarios were brought to life through role play sessions involving the stakeholders themselves and the designs were then updated based on feedback. The scope of the updated designs included focused and feasible minimum data capture requirements as well as data sharing policy pre-requisites to allow health systems to adopt the new, more integrated ways of working.
Managing such a broad range of stakeholders required effective communication, influencing and facilitation approaches to keep the disparate groups on track, while accommodating different perspectives and opinions. Based on its experience in driving complex change programs in multinational organizations, the project team established a robust governance framework for the design work, with a steering committee made up of the most influential international donor agencies to help guide the direction of the project and keep it focused and relevant. Managing a design project with so many contributors was complex, but paid off in the end, because all stakeholders felt some ownership of the final design and no one group could claim proprietary rights that might prevent others from adopting it in their programs.

Results

The project supports the organization’s goal to develop more effective, reliable and efficient public health supply chains that allow quality drugs and vaccines to reach beneficiaries in developing countries. The prime value chain analysis was instrumental in structuring and securing agreement on the key design requirements for the operating model as well as minimizing the proliferation of data requirements. The use of “day in the life” scenarios helped to explain the concept of a control tower and show how this operating model change was more than implementation of performance dashboards, but would provide the means to overcome issues that were often the result of siloed ways of working. By using role play exercises to communicate the activities described in the detailed blueprint design (a document of over 70 pages) the team could share the final concept in an engaging way that fostered genuine buy-in. This was much more memorable and effective in influencing the core group of evangelists than a presentation or document circulation.

The primary deliverable from the project was a blueprint for a supply chain control tower in the public sector, specifically designed for the data-poor context of the developing world. It includes recommendations for country-level organization structures, role descriptions, process flows, policy requirements and IT selection guidelines. In addition, the team created a design for control towers at the global level to improve the visibility and management of the flow of pharmaceutical commodities between their points of manufacture and points of entry into countries’ supply chains. These two deliverables were complemented by a concise “pitch deck” that all stakeholders involved in the process could use to engage other sources of support in their respective countries and global communities. Beyond the written deliverables, the project established a core group of evangelists for change within the industry, and equipped them with a shared, compelling vision for new ways of working.

At the conclusion of the project, both global- and country-level designs were ratified by stakeholders and passed into the custodianship of the project steering committee. This group of international government and donor stakeholders would have the influence to advocate for its adoption in developing countries, and ensure that lessons learned from implementation in one location would be fed back and used to update the blueprint documentation for further use in other settings.
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