

## "Fireside Chat With CEOs"

# The Challenges of Moving From X to 10X – Can Digital Accelerate the Journey?

10-MIN SUMMARY



**SHARON CUNNINGHAM**  
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**REGINALD SEETO**  
President & Chief Business  
Officer, CareDx, Inc.



**SUBHASIS BANERJI**  
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CEO – North America,  
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**MODERATOR**

**JAMIE PECK**  
VP, Indegene

There has been pressure to scale up digital transformation, but this does not sit well in a highly regulated industry like pharma, which traditionally takes a cautious approach. **Abhay Gandhi** notes that while companies like Google and Amazon can launch prototypes, pharma does not have that luxury. It has to consider the entire regulatory environment, HIPAA compliance, data security, and others before it acts. However, he sees opportunities for pharma to learn lessons from how the wider world is adapting under Covid-19. He cautions against making decisions when emotions are at their peak and also against following the herd mentality but recommends taking positive and negative learnings from other businesses, in pharma and other sectors, as they navigate the crisis. This knowledge will help each company chart its own course.

*"Moving to digital enabled us to put together the largest transplant data registry in the world."*

- Reginald Seeto

**Subhasis Banerji** says his wearables business is founded on digital data. He has seen the extent to which chronic patients can drive their own recovery, outside of supervised therapy sessions, when they have access to real-time data showing how their actions are supporting or hampering recovery of cognition and mobility. That fact helped during the crisis, when 70% of sessions with the wearables were unsupervised. Another valuable insight is that patients can adapt and adopt new methods when left with no other choices. Outcomes can still be measured, even when there are almost no physical touchpoints between therapists and patients. He explains

that optimization planning around outcomes is being done internally but, for everything else, they are looking to outsource the processes and development to digital partners.

*"We are working a lot smarter and asking ourselves continually what's truly worth pursuing... Digital is a delivery system that enables what we want to do."*

**- Sharon Cunningham**

One innovative idea implemented has been the introduction of the clinical staff to Python and data visualizations. This initiative is to enable these employees to speak the same language to the data scientists and also to help fine-tune data-driven outcomes from the front lines.

He stresses the importance of conducting a persona match when partnering patients with Healthcare Professionals. It is not just about matching a medical condition with a medical qualification, as there is a need for a personal connection between the two. This is becoming particularly significant in long-term care.

He believes that unless fundamental shifts are implemented in new digital processes, the acceleration of scaling will only progress in fits and starts.

**Reginald Seeto's** transplant-focused company uses the latest technology, such as gene expression profiling in heart transplant and

validated transplant Artificial Intelligence algorithms. Alongside clinical innovation, it is dedicated to the patient journey and incorporating digital into that patient journey. He stresses the need to understand not just the clinical interventions and thoughts of the clinical decision makers as they intervene on the journey but also the behaviors of the patients. The enterprise has a deliberate strategy to become more digital and, as a result, acquired 2 digital companies. One actively manages patients' pre transplant; the other has an electronic medical record (EMR) interface with more than 60 transplant centers in the US. He says the business is now exceeding pre-Covid projections. He asserts: "Those investments have accelerated our business because of our absolute focus on the patient journey."

*"Watch out for signals of stickiness. What new learnings will remain when the situation normalizes? Take learnings good and bad from not just our own industry, but others."*

**- Abhay Gandhi**

Moving to digital enabled them to put together "the largest transplant data registry in the world." He explains that having closeness to the patients and understanding them is vital. This knowledge enabled the creation and rapid deployment of a very patient-specific program within 4 days of lockdown, as they knew patients were feeling vulnerable. The program was designed to address patients' concerns about going into transplant centers for monitoring and blood tests and their worries about attending specimen

collection centers. The company sees the value of operating across the patient journey, covering pre-transplant and post-transplant, plus going beyond that into the community setting. As a result, they have hired over 50 more field patient care managers who interact with patients directly, and they are reinforcing these connections with digital solutions.

**Sharon Cunningham's** pre-launch stage business has always operated virtually, with employees in different countries, but it has had to adapt and move away from face-to-face meetings to online interactions. She sees digital as an enabler and video conferencing as an effective networking tool, saving money and time. She asserts that the crisis will bring about positive change in terms of the more effective use of technology.

Several panelists agree that digital is not an end in itself, but a delivery system to enable what is necessary for the business. **Abhay Gandhi** says pharma should look at digital developments in the education sector, for example. Could pharma adapt what they are doing and adopt global

digital training platforms that remove the need for face-to-face interaction?

*"Patients adapt and adopt... Once they do that, we can continue to demonstrate outcomes in spite of nearly zero physical touchpoints between therapist and patients."*

- Subhasis Banerji

Going forward, consumer behavior will impact design more than ever before. Innovations will come more from a "health" than a "disease" standpoint, particularly in the area of non-communicable diseases. It is important to observe what technologies patients are already using and leverage their existing digital habits to build around them.

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