UP AND RUNNING
HELPS FDB IMPROVE
THE LIVES OF PATIENTS AND
THE EFFICIENCY OF DOCTORS

Overview

FDB (First Databank, Inc.), part of the Hearst Health network, is an industry leader with over three decades' experience in creating and delivering drug knowledge.

Among other projects, Up and Running (UAR) has played a key role in the development of its suite of applications covering the entire lifecycle of patient medication management, including contributing to work approved by Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) audits.

The Physician is a Techie

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"I was a bit of a techie all my life, and as I started my practice I became frustrated with the technology that was available to physicians. Most of the software simply did not think and work the way doctors think and work, so I decided to jump into the field," remembered Dewey Howell, MD, commenting on the decision that took him from practicing clinician, to software developer, to entrepreneur, and finally his current position. Howell is now vice president of clinical applications at FDB.

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After building a variety of software packages for use in his own practice, Howell founded Design Clinicals, Inc. in 2005. His goal was to provide a user-friendly, physician-designed software platform that would offer innovative, intuitive solutions. Howell wanted software that would enhance communications and help improve workflow, patient safety, and regulatory compliance, and he wanted it to integrate smoothly with existing hospital information systems.

Design Clinicals was challenged by the hospital where Howell worked to develop a system that would be compliant with The Joint Commission's (formerly JCAHO) mandate on medication reconciliation. Howell created the first iteration—from the back of a napkin to prototype in 16 months—of what would become MedsTracker, a comprehensive medication reconciliation software solution that integrates with an institution's current computerized physician order entry (CPOE), pharmacy, and electronic medical record (EMR) systems.

In August of 2013, while seeking the partnership that would expand their impact, Design Clinicals was acquired by FDB. At the time of the acquisition, FDB was seeking to transform itself through the development of web services and end user applications. Howell had in fact used FDB's drug knowledge when creating MedsTracker®, so the union made sense for both parties' visions.

Howell joined FDB after the acquisition and now leads product development for an expanded platform of solutions that now includes FDB MedsTracker® MedRec (http://www.fdbhealth.com/fdb-medstracker/) and FDB MedsTracker® eRx (http://www.fdbhealth.com/solutions/fdb-medstracker-erx/).

The UAR Collaboration

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During the early stages of the evolution of Design Clinicals, Howell knew he had reached the point where he could no longer serve as the sole developer for what lay ahead. He began to assemble a small development team within the startup, an approach that would suffice for a time. However, "as we got more and more requests for new functionality and to expand the platform, I knew we were going to have to expand our talented development team to bring both skill and scalability to the challenges we faced. UAR was a perfect fit for that," explained Howell.

"After searching for the right firm and auditioning several, at the end of the day UAR had the suite of talent, the leadership in Pete Hanson and Ian McKilligan, and the organizational alignment with what we were trying to do which made my decision an easy one," he recounted. "And, it's been a great partnership since 2011."

Just as Howell chose to join FDB after the acquisition, Howell opted to keep UAR to continue to augment their resources, helping FDB to enhance the platform as well as build new products. "Their ability to quickly scale to match our needs when we have a new product or enhancement is exactly what we need. They have a core group that understands our platform really well and can adjust resource allocation in a way we could not if all our developers were in-house," Howell noted of a common flexible scaling conundrum to which UAR is often the answer.

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The UAR Takeaway

"This is serious software; it prevents errors to save lives very directly, and the software team that's on this is very proud of that as they should be. Further, it has enabled our expansion into the health care market and our ability to serve similar clients in the future," shared Ian McKilligan, CEO of UAR.

Teaming with Dr. Howell has expanded horizons for UAR as well, allowing it to reach even further into the health care industry and to contribute to the development of software that meets or leads the field with the most stringent industry and government-mandated standards, including those from the aforementioned The Joint Commission, FDA, DEA, as well as the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology's (ONC) Health IT Certification Program.

"Our relationship with Dr. Howell has been mutually beneficial. We have provided FDB with full development workflow assistance, from prototyping through to QA. They, in turn, have provided our development members with extensive training and knowledge that is specific to the world of the US health care market and associated requirements. It has been a rewarding project in which to participate as the value to the patient is tangible. This is serious software; it prevents errors to save lives very directly, and the software team that's on this is very proud of that as they should be. Further, it has enabled our expansion into the health care market and our ability to serve similar clients in the future," shared Ian McKilligan, CEO of UAR who is also a former Epic employee who worked on the Kaiser Permanente-Epic implementation project. "We're very grateful to FDB for allowing us to contribute and impact the lives of patients in one of our nation's most important market sectors."

The Bottom Line

Writing in an October 2016 blog post, Howell explained his vision. "As a physician, it has always been my vision—my passion actually—to build a system that makes the prescribing process easier for clinicians, as I believe that is the only way that e-prescribing can really take off and realize its vast potential." The UAR team is honored to have contributed to the fulfillment of that vision.

About Up and Running

We partner with clients to solve important technical problems by building, implementing, and servicing complex software solutions for customers of any size in any industry.

Started in 1995 while founder Pete Hanson was a sophomore in high school, Up and Running Software began as a technical services firm and evolved into a developer of custom software solutions. Customer happiness and open communication have been the focus since day one, plain and simple, resulting in long-term relationships with any type of client, from non-profits to startups to the Fortune 10. Thanks to this mindset, Up and Running is fortunate to have served an impressive array of clients, including giants such as General Electric (GE), Henry Schein, Sanofi, and Hearst, as well as venture-backed startups at every phase, from formation to growth.

Its over two decades of custom software development, legacy system support, and migrations drive the engines of solutions that thousands of businesses and millions of people rely on daily. That experience has resulted in hands-on depth in most software development stacks, from the command line systems in the back office to ones that gracefully handle any screen size worldwide. A commitment to QA and process improvement drives scalable results, producing long-term software assets with high ROI. Up and Running's work passes FDA & DEA audits, rolls up global treasury data, manages nuclear assets and railroads, delivers vaccines, and enables neuroscientists and researchers.

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