

Banner Health transforms its digital patient journey

Move to managed services creates an environment that drives success

Banner Health is one of the largest non-profit healthcare systems in the country, committed to ensuring all its locations are safe places for care. Headquartered in Phoenix, Banner Health owns and operates 30 acute-care hospitals and an array of other services, including Banner Imaging, Banner Telehealth, and Banner Urgent Care. Its mission is to make healthcare easier so life can be better.

From building hospitals to new acquisitions, driving growth is important to Banner Health. In addition to expanding its infrastructure, it also recognizes the need to grow digitally. For the past three years, it focused on a digital front-door project. Much like the front door of a hospital, Banner Health created a great digital patient experience. From online scheduling to finding urgent care, digital solutions made it easy for patients to access everything they needed.

The next goal was to create digital access channels so patients could click in, walk in, or call in and have an equally seamless and engaged experience.

Overview

Client: Banner Health

Region: North America

Industry: Healthcare

Challenges: Banner Health is dedicated to making healthcare easier and wanted to expand its digital patient experience to improve access to care.

Solution: The company engaged Sogeti to implement a managed-services strategy to improve processes and reposition its application-development for transformation so Banner Health could quickly expand capabilities to meet demand.

Benefits:

- Less downtime on the 15 public sites Banner Health operates thanks to tools like AppDynamics and Azure Monitor
- Expanding its digital front door into a full digital-access journey
- More applications can be added without an increase in ticket volumes



Creating a transformation environment

Five years ago, the application-development lifecycle at Banner Health was still evolving. The workflow consisted of a limited number of people responsible for reviewing the business requirements, documentation, building, testing, and deploying the application and then supporting it once it was in production. The result did not move the process forward.

Banner Health engaged Sogeti to implement a strategy to improve processes, but that involved more than revamping the application-development lifecycle framework. Banner Health understood it needed to reposition for digital transformation. Instead of being highly focused around providing day-to-day support for internal applications, it needed significant investments to the website and mobile systems to drive real change.

"Sogeti did a great job in working with us to identify requirements and key skill sets and understand how to define roles such as product owners and architects so we had the right resources on the Banner Health side of the house to ensure we are providing the right level of guidance and partnership to the Sogeti team, so they could deliver what we needed," says Bryce Carder, Vice President, IT Business Services, Banner Health.

Bringing in a product owner team from Banner Health created focus and enabled the communication of requirements to the Sogeti development team. An operational support function, created by the Sogeti managed services team expanded Banner Health's capacity to actually transform application management and take on more work.



"Banner Health has a culture where everyone is part of the team and supports our goal of patient care, regardless if you are a Banner Team member or Sogeti employee. By creating this culture, we have a really strong foundation for ensuring our team stays focused on solving problems to make it even better for our patients and customers."

Bryce Carder

Vice President, IT Business Services
Banner Health

Building a more successful team

"We broke functions down into distinct roles and disciplines within our organization and then started to build out those practices, so we could fine tune our agile processes and develop operations functions," says Elevis Delgadillo, Senior Director of Digital Business Technology, Banner Health. "It really allowed us to start looking at things like our ticketing systems and where we were performing, and identify log jams and where we needed to invest in specific resources and areas to make the most valuable improvements."

"Bringing the operations team in has probably been the best thing that we have done, in addition to increasing the amount our development team can deliver," says Carder. "I can rest at night knowing that if there is an incident, it will be handled. I only get a call if needed. All of our incidents are handled in a consistent, standardized way. When you are in IT, incidents happen all day, every day. But it is about how we respond that provides our customer with the best experience. It means we do not have to spend the day firefighting issues."

It meant rationalization, sun-setting applications that were not needed, and ensuring Banner Health remains focused on the patient.

The changes implemented by Banner leadership and the operations team from Sogeti means more applications can be added to the portfolio without an increase in ticket volumes. The Banner Health team can now absorb the new work, because ticket volumes on existing applications are down. This can create job satisfaction for IT employees because they may get new and more exciting work more often.

"The decision to have a proficient, stable, quality operations organization has been essential to Banner Health being successful in not only the solutions that we build but being able to keep that cycle of new product solution enhancement moving in a very efficient manner," says Carder.

Managing growth and expansion

In partnership with Banner, the Sogeti team also allows Banner Health to quickly expand capabilities to meet demand, so it can step up and provide services quickly.

"I absolutely recommend the managed-service approach," says Carder. "I believe it is what stabilized our team's ability to really focus on our customer needs and enabled us to get better. What I really appreciate is it has made everyone around the applications teams better. When we have our managed-service team running an incident, there is an expectation that we are going to get to the root cause and fix the problem."

For example, Banner Health operates 15 public sites and when one of the sites went down, the first 30 minutes used to be spent on a triage call. Now, integrating tools such as AppDynamics or Azure Monitor cuts down these triage times. And Banner Health has automated certain activities that bring a system back online faster.

Banner Health is now building a knowledge base using its outage documentation. It means when an issue does happen, documents and articles are available for troubleshooting for faster response. And it helps the company push work out to their first-level support desk and improve first-call resolution.

"We are a healthcare organization delivering clinical solutions for our patients," says Delgado. "We aren't just a technology company, but our focus on our application-development management programs and selecting the right personnel and partners has allowed us to ensure that whether you are a business analyst, solution architect, developer, or QA engineer, you feel that all aspects of the work are being done at a high level and are being done right."

Adapting to the pandemic

Then the country went into lockdown to try to manage COVID-19, and the need to be digital increased.

"The pandemic meant we have to adapt and provide healthcare in different ways more quickly," says Carder. "For example, telehealth was a priority before but now we can deliver it at scale with speed. COVID-19 meant we had one mission so we got everyone aligned and we focused so we could execute at light speed."

Banner Health was exploring telehealth in certain communities for the last year, and when the pandemic made in-person visits a safety concern the team set up online services in a matter of five weeks. The team effort to expedite the launch included an engaged physician population.

The company expects that services like telehealth will continue after the pandemic because it is convenient for patients; they do not have to leave home to see a doctor, they can get an appointment sooner, and they do not have to worry about other sick people in the waiting room.

"We are looking at ways we can make telehealth even better and more integrated into our digital capabilities and our digital-access journey," says Carder. "At Banner, we refer to our patients as Sofia and our job is to make Sofia's life easier and, in turn, healthcare easier."



Refining the patient journey

Banner Health is now expanding its digital front door into a full digital-access journey. It wants to determine what patients are doing once they come in through the front door and how to keep them on the digital journey.

“Banner Health is committed to digital transformation,” says Delgadillo. “Our ability to understand the types of solutions that our business and customers need makes the difference. We have the ability to make in-house decisions on whether we will purchase a SaaS solution, build a platform ourselves, or secure outside services to help with a specific development. It means we can apply the right type of resource to the right type of project to achieve the right outcome.”

“We still have different venues of care that we need to interconnect,” says Carder. “The second phase of our digital journey is actually about to start: another three-year initiative to build upon the front door capability and really focus on Sofia’s journey.”

With the business and IT connected, Banner Health continues to grow both physically and digitally to continue to offer its patients the best healthcare journey possible.



“These types of transformations are incredibly risky because they impact not only personnel but the operating systems of the company. It is really important that your partner is willing to share the risk and not act so much like a partner but as part of the same team, knowing they have just as much on the line as you do when you start these kinds of projects.”

Elevis Delgadillo

Senior Director of
Digital Business Technology
Banner Health

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