

Pharmaceutical Partnering:- Creating Partnerships that add value and improve patient outcomes.

The title sounds almost too good to be true, but working with Foundation Trusts, Primary Care Trusts and Pharmaceutical companies in partnership can make it a reality. Within this article we explore the context and highlight the how.

Context

Within the National Health Service a number of key drivers are evident. These frame, direct and influence the decisions being made. They will also ultimately frame any partnership that you develop.

	Drivers
Government	Patient led, but within a tight budgetary, regulatory and target based environment
Primary Care Trust	Service Commissioning:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More for less • Same for Less • More for the Same
Foundation Trust	Service Delivery:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same services for Less • More services for the same • More services for less

So faced with these drivers the partnership is firmly focused on efficiency and effectiveness.

What do we mean when we discuss partnerships within the NHS context?

- Where two parties come together to create value that one can't realise on their own.
- Working in partnership to create lasting mutual value for both sides.
- Working with other suppliers in partnership around Healthcare solutions.

Why do we need to develop partnerships?

You may not! As a foundation trust, pharmaceutical company or PCT you may have the resources, focus, expertise and relationships to achieve efficiency and effectiveness improvements on you own.

From our experience it isn't always the case and if it was really easy you would already be doing it!

What are we aiming to do?

- Provide a complete Healthcare solution
- Engage both Primary and Secondary care within the solution.
- As a Healthcare Partnership improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the solution provision
- Enhance patient outcomes

- Enhance Foundation Trust regional position for solution provision
- Gear up the Foundation Trust's marketing approach ahead of the government requirements.

We are reading an increasing amount in the national and trade press concerning partnership development and the encouragement of a more collaborative approach to healthcare provision. However, once you dig beneath the self or corporate promotion there is little about the how! So.....here's the how.

How

We have broken the approach into three easy to follow and understand stages:-

1. Investigate:-

1.1. Initially in this stage you focus internally

Why are we doing it ~ opportunity assessment?

What does the partnership have the potential to deliver if successful. What are the healthcare solutions we are trying to address? Will working within an alliance provide additional capability, resources, elements of our proposition or ability to CRAMM.

Is everyone clear why?

Do all the internal stakeholders share the same view about the opportunities the partnership has the potential to deliver. If not, why not

Is everyone on board?

As a project or business opportunity do all the internal stakeholders support the initiative? We need to ensure everyone is aligned and support

Ensuring we can do it

Do we have the internal capability and resources to do it? If not can we develop them or access them through a third party?

1.2. We then focus externally

Partner selection

Who offers us the potential within the market place to realise the opportunities we have identified. Are they tactical or strategic? Do we already have relationships with any of our target partners and at what level, stage are they?

Do they want to do it?

Surprisingly, not everyone may share your view around the solution or its potential. They may have a vested interest as your portfolio's overlap in certain areas. At an early stage within the process it is key you gain an understanding of partner commitment to the solution development, concept and investment required. Failure can often occur downstream within the process, when a key partner pulls out citing they never really wanted to be involved.

Can they do it?

You will need to run the ruler over the capability and competencies of your potential partners. Some partners may be extremely enthusiastic, but when you actually come to implement the solution they fall short of expectations and their own press.

It really is important that you have clarity around the limitations of the partners, try and work on the 'no surprises' premise.

2. Creation:-

Within the section it is important the partners within the solution start to come together to identify where the value exists and how the partnership will work together.

2.1. We then focus on working together

Value Identification

Isn't it funny, value means different things to different people? We apply a simple process to ensure the partnership has a common sense of purpose and where the opportunities exist. This allows all the partners within the relationship to establish what value means to them within the partnership context. Within this part of the process the value creation potential is translated into a road map. This covers:- the burning platforms, quick wins, big prizes and strategic initiatives. This forms the foundation of the partnership and route to value creation for all the parties concerned.

Partnership expectations

All the parties will approach the partnership with differing views on what they hope to get out of it. This will have been developed from the initial discussion phase, trade press, discussions with others, etc. It is really important that everyone goes into the partnership with their eyes wide open and a shared set of realistic expectations. Failure to do this at this stage will have a negative impact upon the partnership's success going forward. This is one of the most commonly cited reasons for partnership collapse (see: <why partnerships fail> <http://www.springboardcs.com/2007/newthinking.php>)

Barriers

Here we need to inject a little theory:-

The 7's and force field analysis.

Why?

The partnership operates virtually, pulling on resources, infrastructure and information from the partners that make up the partnership. The individual company's all have their own strategy, structure, shared values, systems, style, skills, staff and internal power bases.

In this way you can understand what you are likely to face and work out how to overcome or work around them.

How will we work differently?

Not easy!

It is during this stage that you start to define how the partnership will work and the relationship develops. Jointly developing a go to market project plan allows the individuals to build trust and relations within the partnership.

The partnership will start to develop its own 'ways of working'. It is important that all are aligned to these and make sure they become the adopted standards. i.e. each partner reporting progress against their own KPI's using their own system leads to confusion and misunderstanding.

Announcing to interested parties and wider stakeholders.

We then let others know what & why we are doing it.

We use the stakeholder influence maps to develop our communication plan.

This provides early traction for the initiative and increases partnership moral and motivation.

3. Execute:-

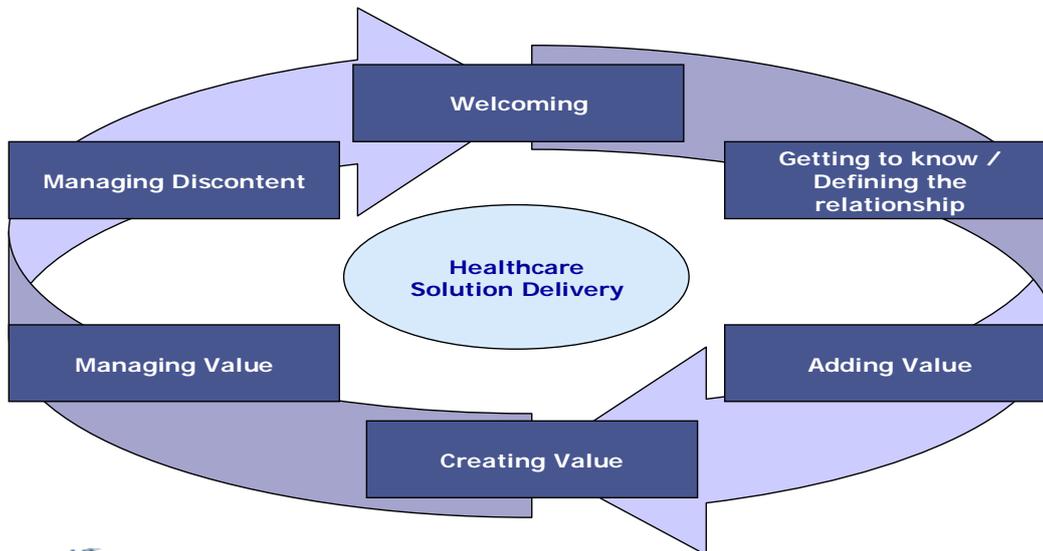
This is the part where the 'rubber hits' the road and the partnership starts to actually deliver the solution(s).

Here we move firmly into our **"Doing"** section...here we outline those things we need **to do** as managers of partner relationships. The review process ensures what we are doing is having the required effect and ensures the relationship remains healthy and positive.

3.1. Jointly delivering it

Here we employ the SCS partnership relationship development model.

Partnership Relationship Development Model



Welcoming

Defining the roles within the Partnership Relationship.
 Defining the 'start point' and introduction into the partnership and healthcare solution.

Welcoming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring the partner is fully inducted into the way partnership works. Expectations of all parties are agreed. The partners are inducted into any new brand/system/procedure effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laying out what the partnership offers and the partners can expect. Developing an induction programme that matches the Solution under development and partnership being created to deliver it.
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Getting to know / defining the relationship

Contact strategy development
 Penetration

Getting to know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the partners needs/strategy & aspirations. Finding out what motivates the relationship. Establishing the decision making process & key players. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where is the value in the relationship. What are the key motivators.
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Relationship Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of relationship do we need to have :- Transactional, supplier-buyer or partnering. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does everyone understand the type of relationship that can be expected. • Has the market segmentation been fully explained.
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Adding Value

Training and development
 Skills within the partnership
 Expertise
 Knowledge
 Information flow

Adding Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the information and your knowledge to identify commercial opportunities for both parties. • Fine tuning the relationship to improve value delivery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How am I adding value to this relationship • What do I do that generates value.
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Create Value

We harness the partnership to develop additional value over and above the Healthcare solution identified. This is done through the SCS five value lenses.

1. Create ~ new solutions that the partnership can develop and deliver
2. Retain ~ Ensure the PCT continue to support our healthcare solution.
3. Add ~ Can we increase the number of healthcare solutions the partnership deliver? Can we increase the value we develop from each healthcare solution?
4. Manage Risk ~
5. Mangle Cost ~ Can we make the current healthcare solution more efficient and effective

Managing Value

Meeting framework
 Performance reporting
 Reward and motivation (Tactical and Strategic)

Managing Discontent

Once the partnership gets underway it is highly unlikely that you will all skip off into the sunset holding hands!!

As in all relationships things can and do go wrong. It is essential that you are tuned into this and act early and decisively to counter any negative impact upon the partnerships ability to deliver. It might be the subtle withdrawal of resources by one partner that is an indicator or Having a 'win-back' plan and process, if things start to go off the rails is essential.

3.2. Making sure it's having an effect

Partnership Relationship 'health check' assessment.

Management by Objectives and review of progress.

Is it delivering what we expected?

Are we on plan? If not why not? What's the process to get back on track.

Actions to exploit new opportunities &/or take corrective action

Delivering 'bad news' and what do we do when it's all over?

4. Summary

We are reading and hearing an increasing amount about working in partnership to deliver Healthcare solutions. It is often cited as the future way of working to unlock knowledge, expertise and resources to improve patient outcomes. The APBI has made a start in laying down partnership entry guidelines. These need to be supported with a robust 'best practice' approach to partnership development and execution. This is more than 'improved communication' it's a fundamentally different business model and way of working.

Sources:-

ALLIANTIST:- Fulfilling the promise of partnering

SCS:- Project work

Research within the healthcare sector

Interview with:-

Chief executive of a pathfinder Foundation Trust Hospital

Senior Marketing Manager within a Branded Pharmaceutical Supplier

Henley Pharmaceutical Forum

I-10 Forum

Journal of Medical Marketing:-MS no. JMM 015, A Model for Strategic Partnership Development:

"Developing Supplier ~ Hospital Relationships – A route map to success in the early phases"