Spotlight On
OPTUMHEALTH

OptumHealth℠

LARRY MULLEN, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONAL REPORTING

OptumHealth helps make health care more accessible, affordable and effective for employers, health plans, public sector entities and nearly 60 million individuals through information, tools and solutions that help people navigate the health care system— from behavioral and clinical health support, online health coaching and counseling for complex medical conditions, to health savings accounts. At the 2011 U.S. Tableau Customer Conference, director of operational reporting Larry Mullen spoke about how Tableau has impacted IT and the company at large.

TABLEAU:
What's it like at OptumHealth 'before and after' Tableau?

LARRY:
Before Tableau, we had all these different data sources and Excel spreadsheets. Now with Tableau, we can bring it all together. We can really get a holistic view of our operations and address customer issues as they come up.

TABLEAU:
What has been Tableau's biggest impact at OptumHealth?

LARRY:
The biggest impact Tableau has had on our organization so far is to help us understand the spaghetti junction of data and help us manage it, and present it in a meaningful way. Prior to Tableau, we had different silos of reporting teams, data sources, and separate spreadsheets. Now with Tableau we can integrate that data, provide a holistic view, and really add value to the organization; and on the flip side develop content in a fraction of the time. So, there's increased efficiency, which is a key value-add, but also the additional data insights that is really helping us drive performance of the organization.

TABLEAU:
Got an example of how data visualization has driven value for you?

LARRY:
We had to track our various distribution partners, independent brokers. And historically we just had monster spreadsheets that were unmanageable, not very useful. We produced these spreadsheets for our sales team, but, you know, they would filter and sort, but they really weren't driving value. So, we put Tableau on top of the -- this dataset, and really provided a very useful tool for our sales force to look at their sales territory, see where the key brokers and distribution partners are, and really look for opportunities.

TABLEAU:
How has working with Tableau impacted you personally?

LARRY:
I love Tableau. It makes work fun. It makes my work day more enjoyable. Instead of dealing with all these data issues, Excel spreadsheets, and Access databases, now we get to be creative. As a 'super analyst', we can try to understand what's the best way to present data. Before, we were asking users, "What columns and rows do you want in your report?" Now, we ask, "What do you need to drive the business?"

TABLEAU:
What's the return on investment like for OptumHealth?

LARRY:
Every day we find another use case and we find more value, and it's really helping us run our business more effectively, but also service our customers more effectively.

TABLEAU:
Are you looking forward to Tableau Mobile?

LARRY:
One of our key lessons learned from using Tableau: Put Tableau where the users go. So, we embed it in SharePoints, we embed on active desktops. We've put it in PowerPoint. And now as more and more executives use the iPad, it just is another form factor that we can use to distribute and relay information. So, Tableau Mobile will allow us to publish content once, and then deliver it to our users wherever they access data.

TABLEAU:
What are the benefits of deploying Tableau?

LARRY:
More insight into our customers' experience, and understanding how they interact with us with all the data that flows through our various systems. That's the real value that Tableau has provided to our organization

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TABLEAU:
Does it take long to turn people on to Tableau?

LARRY:
One week after I transitioned to my new role, we had Tableau dashboards published, and the new organization was amazed by the content we would be able to create with the "instant-on" of Tableau.

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