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SOFTWARE

Spotlight On
UC IRVINE MEDICAL CENTER

UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA, IRVINE · HEALTHCARE

CHARLES BOICEY, INFORMATICS SOLUTIONS ARCHITECT

The University of California, Irvine Medical Center is ranked among the top 50 American hospitals by U.S. News & World Report—and the only university hospital in Orange County. Their informatics solutions architect Charles Boicey spoke with us at the 2011 Tableau U.S. Customer Conference about how the medical center uses Tableau and access to near real-time data to understand best practices and orchestrate the best quality healthcare for patients.

TABLEAU:
What made you check out Tableau?

CHARLES:
We have spreadsheets, we have Access databases, we're on the map to a data warehouse, and we really needed a tool that could allow us to present that data to the folks within our community. I did a Google search, found Tableau and downloaded it. I found out that I could quickly attach it to a spreadsheet, and within a matter of about a half an hour come up with a real nice visualization of some quality data, push that out to some folks within the hospital, and that was it: problem solved.

TABLEAU:
So Tableau helps your organization understand all that data?

CHARLES:
In this day and age of trying to get the most quality for the lowest price for our patients, it's really important to look at the data and understand the best practices. Tableau has made us folks in health care be able to understand our data, and not have to wait to understand it; we can understand it today.

TABLEAU:
Getting insight quickly is important in your business, I bet.

CHARLES:
We're dealing with patients' lives, and it's really, really important that you know what's happening at the moment that it's happening, or a little bit before. Thirty days doesn't do you a lot of good. With Tableau, we've been able to generate near real-time visualizations, which provides us the data we need to better serve our patients. Being able to bring the data and push it back to the organization so they know what's going on — in near real time — they're able to take care of those problems as they come up.

TABLEAU:
What's your implementation been like?

CHARLES:
We needed a solution that could work within our environment now as well as work within our environment in the future, and that's what Tableau allowed us to do. It allowed us to get up and running today, not wait till the data warehouse was complete, today. So, we're able to generate visualizations from the moment that we got it. We rolled out to each department, to one or two analysts to start off with. We also purchased a Tableau Server, and that's really our BI portal for the enterprise. So at UCI, Tableau is our BI solution.

TABLEAU:
So you're providing your hospital with self-service business analytics?

CHARLES:
We really wanted a self-service model. The folks in IT really didn't want to be the report writers, nor should they be. From an IT perspective, we can put Tableau where it belongs, in the hands of the folks that use the data and know the data. Self-service business intelligence for us is the folks that collect the data, that know the data,

that own the data, are then developing their own visualizations, their own reports, outside of the space of the IT department. It doesn't need to be in the IT department, it really doesn't. It needs to be with the folks that know the data, understand the data, and can really make visualizations and then present them to the community. And then they become the heroes within their own departments, which is really cool.

TABLEAU:
Did it require a lot of work from your IT group?

CHARLES:
In a health care environment, especially now with the push to implement EMRs, the bandwidth is really not there to bring in some sophisticated BI tool that you have to program, that you have to manage, you have to do all this kind of stuff with, you know, your traditional BI. But we do have the bandwidth for a tool that's very easy to use for — for users, that we can push out in a self-service model to the — to the various departments, teach them a little bit on how to use it, and get them up and running, and then just maintain a Tableau Server, which is very little maintenance at all.

"Health care is very constrained from both a human resource, as well as financial resource. We're data rich but we really don't have insight into our data...

Tableau allows us to have insight into our data so that we can do better for our patients. "

TABLEAU:
So Tableau helps IT look good to the rest of the organization?

CHARLES:
You know, you can't lose here. This is a win-win for everybody. I look better and our team looks better. IT becomes superstars.

Tableau Software helps people see and understand data.
To learn more visit http://www.tableausoftware.com