

UNCOVERING THE NEEDLE IN THE HAYSTACK

IN THE SUMMER OF 2011, PROGNOSIS HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEMS WAS WELL-POSITIONED TO MAKE A MAJOR SPLASH IN THE BURGEONING EHR TECHNOLOGY MARKET. BUT AS A RELATIVELY YOUNG COMPANY, HONING IN ON THE RIGHT TARGET CUSTOMERS POSED AN UPHILL CHALLENGE. PROGNOSIS SOON REALIZED THAT IT NEEDED TO QUICKLY REVAMP ITS LEAD GENERATION PROGRAM TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE POTENTIAL EHR “GOLD RUSH.” WITH THE HELP OF OPENVIEW VENTURE PARTNERS, IT WASN’T LONG BEFORE THE HOUSTON-BASED ORGANIZATION FOUND ITS LEAD GEN TEAM RE-STAFFED, RE-BOOTED, AND ON THE FAST TRACK TO A JAM-PACKED SALES PIPELINE.



In 2009, Congress announced that it was creating a stimulus package that would provide \$273 billion in incentives to hospitals and healthcare providers that moved away from a traditional paper-based records system and toward an Electronic Health Records (EHR) application. This sparked what Ramsey Evans, CEO of EHR provider [Prognosis Health Information Systems](#), refers to as the beginning of a veritable gold rush.

After all, the potential market for EHR technology certainly existed before that stimulus plan was signed. A study published by the [New England Journal of Medicine](#) in 2009 revealed that just 1.5 percent of U.S. hospitals had a comprehensive EHR system in place. The biggest contributor to that lack of implementation, the NEJM study found, was the capital and time required to install an EHR.

The stimulus plan, however, eased that concern and kicked open the proverbial door for EHR system providers. But there was one catch: healthcare providers and hospitals had to implement those electronic records systems by July of 2012 to receive the maximum \$44,000-per-physician incentive, and they had to show what the government called “Meaningful Use” – proof that the EHR technology was being used in ways that significantly improved the quality or quantity of their care.



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Brian Zimmerman, Managing Director
[OpenView Venture Partners](#)

The good news for Prognosis was that its product was well positioned to provide speedier – and less expensive – implementation via its web-native, cloud-delivered system. The bad news was that the relatively young company wasn’t a well-known brand at the time, and it lacked the firepower to efficiently identify and target its ideal customer profile.

“We needed more bullets in our gun,” Evans says. “We had to get out there, let our prospects know that we existed, and do all of that while lowering our cost of sale. Most of our lead generation and qualification to that point was based on heavy lifting – pounding pavement, going to conferences. We faced a real uphill challenge if we wanted to get in on that gold rush.”



DEPLOYING A SECRET WEAPON

The solution, Evans and his team realized, was to develop a lead generation and qualification program that could support its sales team and advance its sales cycle. The problem, of course, was that building that kind of operation would take the company months, if not longer, to complete. And Prognosis didn't have that kind of time with the EHR stimulus plan's deadline looming.

Thankfully, Prognosis had an invested partner ready to help: [OpenView Venture Partners](#), a Boston-based venture capital firm, and its OpenView Labs team – a group of strategic and operational consultants that could help Prognosis recruit, hire, train, and deploy a lead generation team in a fraction of the time it takes most businesses.

So, before Q3 of 2011, OpenView Venture Partner George Roberts, who also sits on Prognosis's Board of Directors, Managing Director Brian Zimmerman, and Sales and Marketing Associate Devon McDonald met with Evans and other critical members of the Prognosis team.

"Our goal in the initial meeting was pretty simple: We wanted to learn more about their sales process and how a lead generation team would ultimately help them achieve their pipeline and sales goals," McDonald explains. "They had a very specific target customer in mind and a well-defined set of goals, so from there it was up to us to find the right people to fill the role and get them up-to-speed as quickly as possible."



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Devon McDonald, Sales and Marketing Associate
[OpenView Venture Partners](#)

That started with OpenView's recruiting team, which not only needed to find candidates that fit in with Prognosis's corporate culture, but also didn't mind the sometimes-arduous job responsibilities of a lead generator.

"I know from experience that it's not easy to find people that actually like cold calling and prospecting for eight or 10 hours a day," says Prognosis Director of Business Development Ann Phillips, who would ultimately oversee the company's lead generation program. "It takes a very unique personality to be successful in that role and if you hire someone that decides a few months later that they don't like the job, you're in trouble."



THROUGH THE EYES OF A RECRUIT: AN INSIDE LOOK AT OPENVIEW'S RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Client solutions specialist Lauren Coles, one of two lead generators that OpenView worked with Prognosis to hire, answers a few questions about her recruitment, why she was ultimately sold on working for Prognosis, and how OpenView's two-week incubated training helped prepare her to hit the ground running...

On how she was first introduced to OpenView and the job:

"Two of OpenView's recruitment team members reached out to me and I went through a Q&A about why I was thinking about leaving my current job, what I valued most in a new job, what about their job description caught my eye, and why I thought I could succeed in pretty time-sensitive environment. "

On the intensity of the screening and interview process:

"It was very thorough. You could tell that there was a very specific person they were looking for and that they knew exactly what they wanted. I just tried to be completely honest with my answers."

On what drew her to the position:

"I had done cold calling in the past and enjoy the process of nurturing leads and bringing potential customers through the buying process. Learning about Prognosis, their sales structure, and the market they were selling into, it sounded like a really exciting opportunity to create something that could be very valuable."

On how the two-week training process in Boston made her more well-prepared:

"It was like having three months of training in two weeks. They made cold calls with us, did a great job of explaining the company's value proposition, addressed a lot of common objections, dove into the nuances of the EHR market, and laid out exactly what we needed to do on a daily basis to be successful."

On Prognosis's relationship with OpenView:

"It's just very reassuring knowing that we have OpenView as a resource if we need them. If I have a question about a particular objection or customer and my boss is out of the office, I know I can reach out to someone like Devon (McDonald) for help."

It took OpenView's recruiters just three weeks to find, interview, and hire Lauren Coles and Seku Browne, both of whom had previous experience in a cold calling or lead qualification environment. During that recruitment process, McDonald worked with Phillips and marketing consultant Louise Goodman to prepare sales content, scripts, buyer personas, pain point information, and email templates. The goal was to have everything ready to go once Coles and Browne were officially onboard (see sidebar: **THROUGH THE EYES OF A RECRUIT – AN INSIDE LOOK AT OPENVIEW'S RECRUITMENT PROCESS**).

From there, Prognosis sent its two new hires to OpenView's office in Boston for a two-week long incubated training process. It included call coaching from Zimmerman and an interactive presentation prepared by McDonald, Phillips, and Goodman that covered topics such as Prognosis's competitive advantage, performance goals and metrics, and "model day for success," a formulaic daily checklist of activities designed to improve Coles and Browne's efficiency and effectiveness. Meanwhile, OpenView Senior Research Associate Tien Anh Nguyen and his team helped provision Prognosis's database of leads – cleaning up contact information, identifying key decision makers, and honing in on the "needle in the haystack" prospects that best aligned with Prognosis's target customer (rural hospitals with fewer than 300 beds). They also worked to build out the company's CRM system, creating reports and dashboards to help track and manage the team's performance.

"For me, that was one of the biggest benefits of the whole joint initiative," Goodman says of the two-week training period and lead provisioning. "As an organization, we were able to continue business as usual. If we would have had to do what OpenView did for us, it would have taken much longer and required a significant investment of time that we didn't have."



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Louise Goodman, Marketing Consultant
[Prognosis](#)

How OpenView Helps with Recruiting

Founder Scott Maxwell and Venture Partner George Roberts break down OpenView's recruitment process and describe the role the firm plays in finding top talent for its portfolio of expansion stage companies.

"If you step back to 100,000 feet and look at the success of young companies, it's really all about the people at the end of the day," says Maxwell. "[Hiring internal recruiters for OpenView Labs] has allowed us to have, to some extent, a queue or inventory of people that could be available for our portfolio companies as they have needs."

THE SWEET TASTE OF INCREASED OPPORTUNITY

The fruit of OpenView and Prognosis's labor can be measured in increased conversations and appointments, leading to stronger brand awareness and an enhanced understanding of the company's competitive landscape. Best of all, many of those appointments have now been converted to opportunities and added to the sales team's pipeline.



"WHATEVER ISSUE A PROSPECT IS HAVING, IF LAUREN AND SEKU CAN UNCOVER IT AND THEN COLLECT THAT INFORMATION, IT ALLOWS US TO TAILOR OUR VALUE PROPOSITION OR SCRIPTS WHEN WE CALL THEM. I'M CONFIDENT THAT WE WOULDN'T BE IN A POSITION TO DO THAT RIGHT NOW WITHOUT OPENVIEW'S EXPERIENCE PUTTING PROGRAMS LIKE THESE INTO PLACE."

Ann Phillips, Director of Business Development
[Prognosis](#)

It didn't take Prognosis long to see these results. Within their first week on the job, Coles and Browne were consistently having more than 10 conversations a day with decision makers within the hospitals.

"That kind of production, talking to 100 prospects a week that might not have heard of us before or are using a competitor's product, is absolutely amazing," Goodman says. "It's hugely beneficial from a marketing perspective. It improves the effectiveness of our other marketing activities – like direct mail – and it allows us to gather critical competitive intelligence. If one of our competitor's products isn't cutting it and a prospect tells us that, it creates a real opportunity for us."

And with hospitals and healthcare providers starting to feel the pressure of proving "Meaningful Use" by the government's deadline, those opportunities may become more plentiful. Prognosis's system features a built-in dashboard that provides users a glance at how well their hospital is performing in meaningful use metrics, a selling point that the company's marketing and sales team can now collaboratively communicate to prospects struggling in that area.

"Whatever issue a prospect is having, if Lauren and Seku can uncover it and then collect that information, it allows us to tailor our value proposition or scripts when we call them," Phillips said. "I'm confident that we wouldn't be in a position to do that right now without OpenView's experience putting programs like these into place."

Ultimately, this has allowed Prognosis to advance from a relative unknown in the EHR gold rush to a major threat. And while Evans won't suggest that Prognosis has made the leap from up-and-comer to established player quite yet, the company is clearly better prepared to take advantage of short and long-term opportunities.

"At the moment, our 2012 Q1 pipeline is bigger than it's ever been," says Evans. "Before we got started with OpenView, a lot of our leads would be in Texas or surrounding states. Now, we have leads in eight new states and I expect that footprint to continue to expand as Lauren, Seku, Ann, Louise, and our sales organization continue to refine our lead generation and management processes."

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