

Cloud-Based Healthcare Solutions Improving Workflow and Patient Care



Bill Bartzak- CEO

MD On-Line, Inc. (MDOL) is a leading provider of data-driven healthcare solutions that improve practice efficiency and enhance patient care. Endorsed and cobranded by more than 40 major insurance companies, MDOL applies its cloud-based technology to optimize provider offices and educate them on the latest advancements in medicine directly related to their patient population. The company's "all-payer" EDI solutions directly connect 80,000-plus providers with more than 2,200 payer organizations nationwide. In addition to supporting all HIPAA administrative transactions, MDOL offers a full suite of web-based solutions, including an intuitive PM/EMR system, revenue cycle management, and medical transcription. For more information, visit www.mdol.com.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: Mr. Bartzak, What is the idea behind MD On-Line?

The idea behind MD On-Line is simple: how can we take a routine manual process—in this case, paper claims submission—and automate it to maximize efficiencies in the provider office? Today, MDOL is directly connected to over 80,000 healthcare providers nationwide (enabling them to submit healthcare transactions electronically to a network of over 2,200 payers), and offers a comprehensive suite of cloud-based solutions that improve practice workflow while enhancing patient care. Through securely leveraging the data our providers submit through us, we are able to educate them on the specific conditions of their patients.

CEOCFO: Would you explain the education component?

Mr. Bartzak: In aggregating all of this claim data, we are able to mine that data to know what doctors are seeing what patients for what conditions at all times. Through the acquisition of Strategic Edge Communications (SEC), we now have numerous relationships with those pharmaceutical companies that have therapeutics designed for the treatment of patients with these conditions. We educate the doctors about these conditions, as well as potential new treatment options, and provide them with the tools to change their current pattern of behavior.

CEOCFO: Do the doctors specifically ask or because of their type of practice do you automatically send them information?

Mr. Bartzak: The information they receive is based on the specialty of the practice and the presenting conditions of their patient population, both of which can be determined through the coding process. While we are processing the claims to the insurance companies for payment, we can leverage that data to educate the doctors on the latest advancements in medicine directly related to the patients that they are seeing.

CEOCFO: Do you follow up to know, in general, that the education is being utilized?

Mr. Bartzak: We have the ability to know whether or not the education is being utilized, in large part due to certain coding processes. Through our Instinctive Data platform, we can analyze patterns of behavior before and after a message was sent to determine whether or not their behavior changed as a result of the tools they were provided. That's what Instinctive Data's all about—making data actionable. To measure direct participation, we also routinely conduct surveys with our doctors, both on behalf of MD On-Line and the pharmaceutical companies with which we are partnered.

CEOCFO: Is this service unique to MD On-Line?

Mr. Bartzak: As far as we know, no one else has anything like this. We have filed multiple patents around the process surrounding our data analytics and passing our findings on to the doctors. What we are doing is very similar to what Amazon was doing in recommending books or movies to their customers, in that we are passing to the providers only that information which is directly relevant to both their practice and patient population.

CEOCFO: You mentioned 80,000 providers, which is a substantial amount. What do you understand about the electronic service that perhaps others do not?

Mr. Bartzak: It is not necessarily our PM or EMR, but it is the efficiency of our claims processing service and unique paper conversion process that has attracted the attention of our payer partners. Currently, we are featured on the website of more than 40 insurance companies as their preferred solution for their providers to submit claims electronically. In submitting electronically, doctors experience faster reimbursement, and get their rejections faster so they can sooner correct them and resubmit for payment. As a whole, we specialize in converting those smaller, one to five doctor practices that are often hesitant to incorporate technology into their existing workflow. What we've found is that these practices are more than willing to adopt technology so long as they are given the appropriate tool set for doing so. In providing them with intuitive products and award-winning customer support, we're setting them up for success.

CEOCFO: Are there still doctors doing it by paper?

Mr. Bartzak: This is going to be startling to you. We are bringing on about 70 new doctors every month, and almost half of them do not have a practice management system. Our job is to educate the doctors on the benefits of using technologies like ours, bring them onto the electronic highway, and then train them on those additional capabilities that would help them run their practice even more efficiently.

CEOCFO: Does the electronic medical records include claims processing or is that still up to the doctor?

Mr. Bartzak: It is completely separate. Every doctor is required to submit claims to the insurance company, or they won't receive reimbursement for services provided—it's up to them how they want to submit these claims, whether manually or electronically. The electronic medical record (EMR) is relatively new; the old way of doing it was for the doctor to handwrite notes from the patient encounter and store it away in a file jacket. Now it is all done either on a tablet or an iPad, allowing the doctor to instantly access information about a patient's medical history and treatment plans without having to take time out of their day to thumb through a patient's chart. . We recommend using both solutions together along with our practice management system to maximize time savings, but physicians are still able to purchase them separately.

“Through the use of advanced technology, along with a comprehensive knowledge of the overall healthcare industry, we are able to offer our providers the utilities that they need to run their practice as a business, while also educating them on the latest advancements in medicine as they relate to the patients they are seeing on a regular basis. In giving providers everything they need in a single location, we are simplifying the process of healthcare, and allowing our providers to continue doing what they do best—providing exemplary care.” - Bill Bartzak

CEOCFO: Is electronic claims processing still optional for doctors?

Mr. Bartzak: Currently, electronic claims processing is not mandated, but we are hoping that legislation will be passed in the near future to make it so.

CEOCFO: Do many of your customers take advantage of the full depth and breadth of your services or do they start with a piece and hopefully move forward?

Mr. Bartzak: It's our job to help them move forward. The smaller one-to-five doc practices are the last adopters of technology, so we bring them on the electronic highway by getting them started with the solution that's easiest for them to use and implement: claims processing. Once they become comfortable incorporating technology into their workflow, we introduce them to our practice management system, which handles the scheduling and billing needs of the office. Once they become accustomed to the PM, we transition them to the EMR where they can record the details of their patient encounters and transmit prescriptions to the pharmacy electronically. With this step-by-step approach, the providers now have everything they need in a single location. That was really what we envisioned ourselves to be from the beginning, a true “one stop shop”.

CEOCFO: There are many companies, at least generically, in your industry, and I know that they are calling on doctors continually. How do you reach your potential new customers and what are you able to tell them that is creates an aha moment when they say MD On-Line is where they need to go?

Mr. Bartzak: In my opinion, it's the education process. We do not try to sell our doctors and office managers; rather, we try to educate them on what they could be doing to be streamlining their practice. We reach out to these doctors on behalf of our payer partners, and encourage them to visit a co-branded Web portal where they can begin submitting their claims to that payer through MDOL for free. This endorsement by the insurance company, coupled with an expedited reimbursement process, is a very big incentive for providers to switch from paper to electronic.

CEOCFO: *What has been the key to getting insurance companies to say MD On-Line is the one?*

Mr. Bartzak: From the beginning, we set out to create a product that was very easy to use. It would be counterintuitive to offer providers a way to speed up reimbursement but then require them to spend a lot of time learning the ins and outs of our products. We pride ourselves on our customer service, and our ability to understand and empathize with the individual needs of our customers. This customer-centric philosophy resonates not only with our providers, but also with our partners, and has allowed us to really separate ourselves from the rest of the pack.

CEOCFO: *How do you ensure that ease of use?*

Mr. Bartzak: When I started this business nearly 20 years ago, I wanted our solutions to be simple enough that the doctor's mother or sibling would be able to use them without any technological background whatsoever. We kept it basic, allowing them to directly key in data into an online version of a CMS-1500 form—the exact same form they were used to filling out manually every day. Even as we expand the breadth and depth of our services, user experience remains at the forefront of our minds. The terms “simple” and “powerful” don't have to be mutually exclusive; we can still produce robust, innovative technology while ensuring the user experience remains optimal.

CEOCFO: *Are you concerned that eventually there will not be a need for MD On-Line because the smaller practices will fade out?*

Mr. Bartzak: Not at all. A lot of people become doctors because they wanted to be independent; doctors from smaller practices are used to working on their own, and tend to like doing so. We have several customers that sold their practice, went to work for the hospital or institution that they went to work for, and then left and started their practice back up again—we see this scenario playing out more and more frequently. There have been three main waves of consolidations in the history of our company, but it's the larger practices being bought up more so than the smaller ones. They are not buying the one to five doc practices; they are buying the five to 25 doc practices.

CEOCFO: *You really have a niche market that is working very well for you!*

Mr. Bartzak: Yes we do, and despite all the recent changes in healthcare, we have still maintained significant growth. We see significant upside in all that we are doing.

CEOCFO: *In the instruction set part of what you are doing, where do new ideas come in? If there are cutting-edge situations, do they filter into that process as well?*

Mr. Bartzak: It sounds cliché, but we listen to our customers. We listen to their individual needs as they relate to the changing healthcare landscape, and allow their voices to set our priorities with regards to project development. There is another industry-wide change on the horizon called ICD-10, under which the current procedure and diagnosis code system is undergoing a complete overhaul. As part of this, doctors will have to incorporate tens of thousands of additional codes into their repertoire, and will have to learn how to properly enter these codes into their claims. We can provide them with the necessary education and product enhancements to aid them in this conversion process. For every change that happens in healthcare, we want our providers to feel comfortable coming to us first and foremost for the most up to date information.

CEOCFO: *Do most practices understand the need for a person who really understands coding?*

Mr. Bartzak: I think it's absolutely critical that every practice in our country have an experienced, qualified coder. With the ICD-10 transition coming this October, it is imperative that every coder be well versed and trained in the new code sets. Otherwise, the doctors could be putting themselves at risk.

CEOCFO: *How do you provide that superior level of customer service?*

Mr. Bartzak: I have been extremely fortunate to have been able to hire the best of the best in the customer service and technical support areas of our company. For the people that have been staying with us for years and years, the reason that they stay and are so entrenched in the business is because they recognize that as the company grows, everybody wins. Roughly 85 percent of all employees double as shareholders or stakeholders in the organization. Because of this, everyone views themselves as an owner, and not just an employee. A satisfied staff makes for satisfied customers; it's as simple as that.

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us a little more about Strategic Edge Communications?*

Mr. Bartzak: SEC is the healthcare marketing division of our business, and the agency of record for a number of pharmaceutical companies. We acquired SEC about two and a half years ago with the goal of being able to educate providers based on their patient populations. Out of this relationship came what we call Instinctive Data. At InstinctiveData.com, potential partners can see exactly how many patients we have in our database, and with what conditions, without ever exposing PHI. This allows us to instantly demonstrate to them the breath of reach of a particular program or educational campaign. Of the 80,000 doctors we have on our system today, 96% log in weekly and 76% log in daily. Through embedding ID in their existing workflow, we can message them at the time when they are most receptive while avoiding compromising the doctor-patient relationship.

CEOCFO: *That sounds like a phenomenal amount of intention that they are paying to what you are doing.*

Mr. Bartzak: It all starts with their dollars.

CEOFO: *Put it all together for our readers. Why is MD On-Line exceptional?*

Mr. Bartzak: We put the needs of our customers first. Through the use of advanced technology, along with a comprehensive knowledge of the overall healthcare industry, we are able to offer our providers the utilities that they need to run their practice as a business, while also educating them on the latest advancements in medicine as they relate to the patients they are seeing on a regular basis. In giving providers everything they need in a single location, we are simplifying the process of healthcare, and allowing our providers to continue doing what they do best—providing exemplary care.

BIO: William (Bill) Bartzak is the president, CEO, and founder of MD On-Line, Inc. (MDOL), a provider of innovative technology solutions that power the ability of physicians and healthcare professionals to address today's practice and patient needs and easily adapt to tomorrow's healthcare challenges. Founded in 1995, MDOL is one of the fastest growing healthcare technology companies nationwide, and was awarded the honor of NJBIZ 2011 Business of the Year. A veteran entrepreneur whose vision led to the development and continual innovation of MDOL, Bill is a frequent speaker at healthcare and medical technology industry conferences, and authored the "Inside the Minds: CEO's Best Practices Skills, Values & Strategies for Successful CEOs" series of books for C-level executives. In 2010, Bill was named an Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year.



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