

Chris Little

Hi, I'm Chris Little, senior vice president of strategic partnership growth at Highmark. Welcome back to Hitting a Higher Mark. This podcast explores topics that are transforming how healthcare is delivered, used and paid for. Today, we will be discussing how organizations can transform by delivering enhanced outcomes for customers, improving financial outcomes and increasing employee engagement with Lumevity. I'd like to welcome our guests, Deb Rice-Johnson, president and chief growth officer at Highmark Inc. And Larry Kleinman, chief human resources officer for Highmark Health. Thank you for joining us. Let's dive into today's topic.

Larry Kleinman

Thanks Chris. We're glad to be here.

Deborah Rice-Johnson

Thank you, Chris. Happy to be with you today.

Chris Little

All right. Okay, let's get started. Larry, can you start by telling us about the work Lumevity does within Highmark health?

Larry Kleinman

Yeah, Chris, it's an interesting story. Lumevity was born as an internal radical transformation approach at Highmark Health over the last several years. And what we've accomplished over the last several years is we've delivered a lot of economic benefit to the tune of almost a half a billion dollars at the same time reducing quality, at the same time improving processes, at the same time driving employee engagement, which is unique to get all those things coming together at one time. So, as a result of that, we formed a new company called Lumevity, which we're helping other companies to get to the places where they can fulfill their mission in a way that's different from other places.

Chris Little

That's great. Deb, you were really Lumevity's first customer. As president of such a large organization, why is this an important initiative for you?

Deborah Rice-Johnson

Yeah, for sure. Well, Larry mentioned radical transformation and that was critical, and we were down that path and really needed to find ways to create additional efficiencies. We were looking for ways to work with our leaders and teams to innovate, right? And engage, and we wanted to enhance the customer experience, right, and their outcomes.

Deborah Rice-Johnson

And so for us, it was a no brainer. Whenever Larry brought this idea to the table, we thought, well, let's give it a try. Right? And let's drive value for our customers, customer first, one of our

core behaviors. So, that was really important. And so I think I was the first customer because Larry thought I can sell her on this, right? The ultimate sales guy. But it really has helped us become more competitive. It's helped us to grow and growth helps fuel our strategy for the enterprise.

Chris Little

That's great. Well, following up on that, what are some of the projects that Lumevity took on through Highmark's business transformation that have been most impactful?

Deborah Rice-Johnson

Yeah. I'm going to read a few facts for you. We have, I love three big projects that we've done. And I say that because we've been able to build on them. Right? And do many others using the technology.

Deborah Rice-Johnson

So, the first technology was, what I call, a COVID bot. So, it's really our COVID claims bot. Right? And we were in a situation where whenever COVID started, we were going to have to hold claims because regulations and requirements were changing on us almost daily, as we all know, as we were learning about COVID and how we were going to help our customers and providers get through that. And so next thing you know, we have more than 300,000 claims just sitting in limbo, right? And if you think about the amount of time it would take people, human beings to handle that kind of volume, it would be extensive.

Deborah Rice-Johnson

And then we were in a situation at that time where providers were losing money because all the elective procedures were eliminated, and so they needed the money, right. They needed us to pay every claim that came in the door expeditiously. So over one weekend, a cross enterprise group got together, and they built a bot. The next thing you know, we were able to get rid of those claims in a really positive way and make sure that our, our, our providers and our clients were taken care of. So that was really critical. So that's the bot industry or a bot sort of capability.

Deborah Rice-Johnson

Second one was AI, right? Artificial intelligence. It's around the E.D. We like to call the emergency room frequent flyers. And we're always trying to help get ahead of that, right? It's not just the cost, it's the inconvenience.

Deborah Rice-Johnson

It's, you know, the safety of our members. And so we were able to use artificial intelligence to build algorithms that allowed us to identify these people that would become frequent flyers. So looking at different things like claims history, like conditions, some of their diagnosis and other risk factors to identify this is probably going to become a frequent flyer. And we were able to

create this scoring model. It was machine learning capability. So the technology gets smarter as we run claims through the system and identify additional risk and it's real time, which was exciting. We have a scoring model now that is first of its kind at Highmark at least, and allows us to identify people sooner. And what does that do? Keep some healthier, keeps them out of the emergency room.

Deborah Rice-Johnson

So that's one of my favorites too, because that's very repeatable.

Deborah Rice-Johnson

And then the third one, maybe my favorite, natural language processing. Did you ever hear that Chris?

Chris Little

I have.

Deborah Rice-Johnson

Okay. Well, we have too, and we've done a lot of good work around that. One of our first efforts using natural language processing methodology was around our revenue program management. If you think about the Medicare advantage business, really important business for us, very important members, very complex cases, and the only way you can make those programs work economically is if you're able to capture the risk of a member, provide that to CMS and then CMS pays you for that. So if you're not good at doing that, you can't make the program work economically. You need the revenue that CMS will pay. So using this natural language processing, we were able to get through these cases faster.

Deborah Rice-Johnson

So, typically what we would have is, you know, a team of clinicians going through 600,000 records, right? Probably millions of millions of pages of information to really identify the risk classification for these individuals. What we were able to do is through natural language processing is scan those, identify the ones that were most important and then turn those over to the clinicians. So it did a couple of things, right? It took out the tasks that no clinician wants to reform and allowed them to really focus on the work that was going to be meaningful.

Deborah Rice-Johnson

So those three are, I call them my favorites because they were building blocks for everything else that we're doing.

Chris Little

That's fantastic. When you talk to your counterparts at other companies, what sort of advice do you give them about executing a successful transformation?

Deborah Rice-Johnson

Yeah. It probably starts with any company customer first. So what can you do to provide a better experience for the customer? You know Whether it's economically for them or the experience they have using your products and services? So what I would say is all the work that we're doing is really designed around that thought right. Customer experience. And so, you know, if we can do things like keeping people out of the ED that improves the experience and improves the cost, right. If we can do things like making sure that we're processing claims as efficiently and quickly as possible, it helps our providers, it helps the members. So all of those, that sort of transformation, radical transformation, Larry, really puts the customer at the center. Right?` I just think that you need to ask the question, how does this change better support my customer? That's the key question.

Chris Little

That's right. Absolutely.

Chris Little

Larry, what makes different than traditional consulting firms?

Larry Kleinman

Well, it's a good question, Chris. I there's a few things, but first let me clarify a couple of things.

Larry Kleinman

Deb was the first customer, but she's no different than all the other customers in the respect that every company right now is trying to transform. Every company is looking for cost advantages. Every company is looking to figure out how do I get my workforce to be a part of this and not become a victim from the things that happens with other approaches to these kinds of things. And so when we started with Deb, we knew not only was she a great leader, she's constantly searching for ways to improve in ways that impact the customers.

Larry Kleinman

As so we think about what we do versus other types of consulting companies, they tend to focus on one or two of the things. They can focus on getting economic benefits that are hard to sustain. They can focus on process efficiencies, and those kinds of things. They can bring some automated solutions. But the combination of all those along with bringing the workforce, engaging them as a community, as the key constituency, is what really makes the difference. When you get all those things coming together, those are unique capabilities that can help transform any company.

Chris Little

Sure. Well, the healthcare space is so unique. How much of this work translates to other sectors?

Larry Kleinman

Yeah, I think there's a lot of things that transfer. I think on the provider side, there are some more distinct, unique aspects that are not as transferable. Outside of that, when you think about Deb's business and you think about all the other businesses that we have at Highmark, very transferable across all sectors. We're very confident that the same capabilities can easily be deployed and get very similar results.

Chris Little

Well, how can businesses interested in Lumevity learn more about the services?

Larry Kleinman

They could call Deb, or they can call me. Of course, the official answer is go to the Lumevity website and we'll be, we'll be happy to follow up there as well.

Chris Little

Great. Well, thank you, Deb and Larry for joining me to talk about how Lumevity is lighting the way for organizations like Highmark Health. To listen to an extended video version of this interview, visit us at youtube.com/highmarkinc. The link will be in the description of the show. I'm Chris Little. And thanks for listening to Hitting a Higher Mark.