



CASE STUDY



HOW TWO SMALL RADIOLOGY PRACTICES JOINED FORCES TO IMPLEMENT A UNIFIED RADIOLOGY PLATFORM

Overview

In 2014, Radiology Associates of Indiana (RAI) and Irvington Radiologists, both 25-member private radiology practices, joined forces and in just eight months pulled off a successful merger.

As a next step, the newly formed Radiology of Indiana (ROI) engaged Canopy Partners as consultants and guides in developing a unified radiology platform. Their mission entailed providing every ROI radiologist with a consistent interpretation experience regardless of the worksite.

Canopy Partners helped ROI evaluate and select products from among the leading vendors for radiology worklist, PACS, voice recognition, analytics, interface engine, and more as well as design an implementation project plan.

Today, the 50-member ROI is well positioned to offer complete radiology IT system management for their hospital partners and referring facilities. Their hospitals have been very receptive to this change, and in many cases, have been willing to pay ROI for IT services.

Solutions to Problems

This case study highlights a growing trend among private radiology practices. Many groups are investing in unified radiology platforms to ward off competitive threats, remain independent, and position their practices for future growth and success.



"CANOPY PARTNERS HAS BEEN A STRATEGIC BUSINESS PARTNER FOR US. THEY'VE HELPED US DEVELOP A UNIFIED RADIOLOGY PLATFORM AND POSITION OUR PRACTICE FOR FUTURE GROWTH AND SUCCESS."

—Pat Hurley, CEO,
Radiology of Indiana



Issue Overview: Remaining Independent

Over an eight-month period, RAI and Irvington Radiologists merged their two practices to form a new 50-provider group called Radiology of Indiana (ROI). Jointly they serve two major health systems and many regional hospital clients across the greater Indianapolis area.

A predatory move by a national radiology group was the catalyst event. RAI convened a group of leaders from their practice and Irvington to discuss the situation and options. Despite fears and concerns, the two groups forged ahead at a rapid clip.

The groups didn't just merge and consider their work done. Their goal was to implement a unified radiology platform and back office support services that would offer benefits to their hospital partners and other small radiology groups in their region.

Brian Mullins, CIO, knew that he did not have the in-house expertise or staff to pull off a project of this magnitude. He needed strategic, market-relevant advice and step-by-step assistance. Canopy Partners offered both by walking alongside Mullins as well as the firm's partners and stakeholders.

Solution: A Unified Radiology Platform

After the merger, the newly formed ROI leaders knew that to expand services and create a scalable back office system the next step entailed creating a unified radiology platform. As a private practice with limited IT resources, ROI needed help to make the transition to a unified workflow. They still had to carry on with daily operations.

Brian Mullins said, "We didn't want to reinvent the wheel. Frankly, I just wanted to do it right the first time, which meant creating an exceptional user experience for our radiologists. I wanted them to sit down at a single workstation every day and experience a natural and smooth workflow."

Mullins heard about Canopy Partners from his PACS vendor. After some research and due diligence, a relationship began at HIMSS in 2014 when Mullins and ROI CEO Pat Hurley met Canopy Partners' executives for an initial discussion. Next came a visit to Canopy Partners' main office for an in-depth look at Canopy's offerings and how one of Canopy's clients, Greensboro Radiology, had successfully made the transition to a unified radiology platform eight years prior.

ROI was reluctant to staff up for the implementation of a unified radiology workflow. They knew it would be hard to find talent familiar with cutting edge technology and keenly aware of the marketplace.


"Once we saw that Canopy Partners had experience with successful IT conversions and had a finger on the pulse of the marketplace, working with them became very appealing. Radiology firms in transition should consider renting the strategic IT resources to determine true need and learn from the successes and mistakes of others," said Mullins.

Canopy helped ROI learn how to make the interface and data flow work and consulted on how to build the right IT infrastructure for workflow, voice recognition, and PACS.



"IF RADIOLOGY FIRMS
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TECHNOLOGY IN PLACE.
IT'S NO LONGER "FREE"
FROM THE HOSPITAL."

— *Brian Mullins, CIO,*
Radiology of Indiana



“Canopy helped us quickly make decisions based on our needs and current market developments. We were then able to scale up quickly and hire a right-sized team,” noted Mullins.

Objective 1: Offer higher quality sub-specialized radiology to your facilities

The unified radiology platform became the springboard that ROI needed to approach their hospital partners with a stronger value proposition and breadth of services.

“This is not magic, but it is critically important to keep your hospital partners in the loop. It’s not the same conversation with every hospital. You’ve got to understand their pain points, fears, and threats,” says Pat Hurley, CEO.

Hurley started at the top levels of hospital administration and convinced them of the need for doing something different. After getting the executives aligned around the project objectives and benefits, the directives trickled down to IT.

Objective 2: Position the practice for future growth by creating a safe place to land for other small, independent radiology firms

ROI wanted to create an option for other small, private groups to remain independent by offering a strong back office infrastructure, e.g. HR, finance, operations, etc.

ROI is now a very attractive partner to small groups in the Midwest region that want to join a physician-led and owned group.


Steps for Implementing a Unified Radiology Platform:

1. Determine project vision and objectives
2. Get buy-in from your physician partners
3. Hire an independent, experienced consulting firm to help you navigate this process
4. Form an internal steering committee comprised of key stakeholders (business, clinical, and technical)
5. Determine the key wins and messaging points for hospital and referring facility stakeholders
6. Evaluate vendors, select products, and negotiate contracts
7. Develop a realistic and attainable project plan for implementation
8. Implement all products (Worklist, PACS, Voice Recognition, etc.) in conjunction



FIVE KEY COMPONENTS OF A UNIFIED RADIOLOGY PLATFORM:

1. Unified Worklist
 2. PACS
 3. VR
 4. Interface Engine
 5. Data Analytics
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9. Start with easy wins and low hanging fruit first
 10. Onboard hospitals one at a time, not a big bang
 11. Be prepared to upgrade your IT infrastructure and hire additional IT staff
 12. Make sure to build the platform in a way that it is scalable to support future growth and expansion



"CANOPY PUT US IN A POSITION TO APPROACH OTHER FACILITIES JUST 18 MONTHS AFTER OUR MERGER."

—Pat Hurley, CEO

Summary of Outcomes

CEO Pat Hurley calls himself the starting pitcher and Brian Mullins, CIO, the closer. What started as a response to a threat to two well-established groups, ended in a successful merger of two cultures and IT platforms. This move allowed the newly formed entity, ROI, to strengthen its relationships with existing partners and to provide better service and patient care. And it provided a platform for future growth as ROI seeks to bring on smaller radiology groups looking for a partner who can help them survive, thrive, and remain independent.

Hurley says, "It's exciting to work with a group uninterested in taking their foot off the gas. I'm proud of our docs and business office. We have lots of talent, and they all come to work ready to face and embrace the next new challenge every day."

"Canopy Partners has been with ROI for every step of this journey. We could not have done this in such a compressed timeframe without their expertise and support," concludes Mullins.

ABOUT CANOPY PARTNERS

Founded in 2011, Canopy Partners is a privately held healthcare technology company based in Greensboro, NC. The company's mission is to elevate the role of medical imaging in the healthcare value chain. We work collaboratively with our clients to create flexible, customer-driven business solutions that improve productivity, profitability, and patient care.

Canopy Partners specializes in strategy and advisory services, referral management services, enterprise imaging IT, and revenue cycle management for healthcare imaging providers.

Since the company's inception, Canopy has experienced rapid growth, nearly tripling its revenues and employees while expanding from coast-to-coast. The company has been named to the "Inc. 5000" list of America's fastest-growing private companies in 2015 and 2016.