



## 20 Years!

...20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

**T**wenty years ago this October, three veterans of leading HIS vendors met at one of their homes and agreed to form a consulting firm aptly named HIS Professionals that would:

- Employ no *juniors*, unlike the “Big 8” firms,
- Conduct *brief*, efficient engagements,
- Offer billing rates hospitals could *afford*, and
- Capitalize on their *vendor* experience.

Our three founders pictured above smoking celebratory cigars were:

- Bob Pagnotta - founder and president of Medical Data Systems, one of the pioneering shared systems of the 70s, acquired by giant Tymshare, which Bob also led until it grew to serve hundreds of hospitals nationwide, and then was eventually acquired by McAuto.
- Karl Sydor - a veteran “Data Processing Manager” from New Jersey and one of the first Installation Managers for Shared Medical Systems, who built their Woodbridge, NJ, office from scratch, installing dozens of NY and NJ hospitals on SMS’ early systems.
- Vince Ciotti - another SMS veteran who worked with Karl as an Installation Director (ID) in NY/NJ, then became Education Manager at the firm’s headquarters in nearby King of Prussia, PA, and moved to McAuto just before they acquired Bob’s Tymshare division.

There are few companies in the healthcare IT industry, whether vendor or consulting, that have lasted 20 years, with all of the Big Eight consultants having fallen by the wayside along with countless other start-ups and “boutiques” firms. What is equally amazing is that most of the firm’s original consultants are *still* active with the firm after 15 or more years, including:

- Ed Gavin in Philadelphia, who joined HIS Pros in 1988 after serving with several Big 8 firms.
- Bob Alcaro in New York, who joined in 1989 after working with Bob at Tymshare.
- Bill Bogutski in Washington DC, who worked with Karl and Vince at SMS and joined in 1993.

Although Karl Sydor is now retired in Miami, Bob, Vince and all of the above consultants are still active with the firm, which has added five more members with an average of over 30 years experience *each*, a far cry from the “juniors” we agreed to never let into our ranks. Working collaboratively, they have introduced many new concepts to HIS consulting such as:

- Selecting systems *without* RFPs,
- *Strenuous* contract negotiations, and
- No vendor implementation *partners*.

Since 1987, HIS Pros has served over 300 hospitals and health systems, growing to well over a million dollars in annual revenues, with clients ranging in size from 25 beds to multi-IDNs with *thousands* of beds. We provided exclusive IT consulting to The Hunter Group for over 13 years, and Navigant Consulting for 4 years, who brought us into to some of the nation’s largest and most complex facilities.

This success is due primarily to Bob Pagnotta’s philosophy of doing what is best for clients, making their problems *our* problems, and solving them to our mutual benefit. In tribute to the many hospitals who gave us a chance to prove ourselves over these many years, we chronicle some of our most prominent engagements on the next page, a bit of “time travel” back to the “good old days.” The names of vendors and technology may have changed over the years, but hospitals still face the same challenges: using technology to provide high quality patient care at an affordable price.

**Some of our most notable consulting engagements over the past 20 years:**

1980's

**Pioneering Systems**

The latest buzz words these days are CPOE and EMR, when in fact these systems go back to the 70s with pioneers like Technicon (TDS), eventually acquired by Eclipsys. Our first system selection in 1987 at Chilton Hospital in NJ saw the medical staff chose TDS for its CPOE/EMR capabilities. Too small to run its own mainframe, Chilton then chose MDT, a local data center, for "remote hosting," another very popular theme among vendors today.

**Non-RFP Selections**

We first introduced our "Non-RFP Selection Process" at Underwood Memorial Hospital in 1988. We enlisted user department heads from Nursing, Patient Accounts, Medical Records, etc, to evaluate vendors with their own eyes and ears through scored demos, telephone reference calls and reviewing vendor user manuals. The resulting "buy in" by users made a better implementation, with the system still in use today!

1990's

**PC-Based (C/S) Systems**

In 1990 we led the selection of HMDS at Central Medical Center in St. Louis, a pioneering PC-based vendor, whose low-cost, distributed approach presaged today's Client/Server systems like McKesson's Paragon and Meditech's Magic C/S.

**Detroit Medical Center**

This 2,000-bed multi-hospital IDN was our firm's largest and most challenging project. We were brought in there by The Hunter Group in 1999 to save this Detroit institution from closing its doors due to losses. IT at the DMC was so poor we elected to outsource it, one of the first and largest healthcare IT outsourcing projects with a 10-year value of almost a *billion* dollars. Just before Y2K, we not only outsourced the 400-person IT shop to CompuWare, but completed one of Cerner's first Millennium implementations, as well as a number of smaller system implementations.

2000's

**Best of the Best**

What are the "best" hospitals we have seen among our 300 clients? Three stand out:

**Johns Hopkins**

We worked at this world-renowned institution on 4 projects over the past 10 years. Their IT assessment in 2006 was self-inflicted by the CIO, asking to be compared to the "best of the best," which surely earns her that accolade!

**Meridian Health**

Another repeat client, we wrote their IT Plan that merged 4 hospitals in the mid-90s, and were asked in again by the CIO to re-assess how she was doing years later, another brave CIO.

**Sisters of Saint Francis**

Another large, complex and repeat client, their IT shop has not only lowered IT costs and staffing levels, but did it while raising user satisfaction scores!

***/// H.I.S. Professionals, LLC***

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