

Big I.T. Projects? Behemoth Consulting Firms Not Required

The Quammen Group offers the expert knowledge and full range of services needed



Terry D. Shaw
CFO and senior vice president
Adventist Health Systems



Paula Anthony
vice president
East Texas Medical Center (ETMC)
Regional Healthcare System

When leaders from large health care systems are hungry for help with information technology projects, conventional wisdom says that they are likely to limit their search to the big consulting firms that can satiate their many needs.

Super-sizing it, however, is not always the right move, according to health care system executives. Many are finding that they can get the knowledge, expertise — and, perhaps most important, personal service — from smaller consulting companies such as The Quammen Group, a full-service, boutique consulting firm based in Winter Park, FL.

“I have found that whether it is a large or small consulting group doesn’t really matter,” says Terry D. Shaw, CFO and senior vice president at Adventist Health Systems, Winter Park, FL. “The advice that you get and the talent and service that is offered are what really matters.”

Shaw, for example, has turned to The Quammen Group numerous times during the past seven years to help with information technology projects at the health care system’s 38 hospitals, 19 nursing homes and many outpatient care facilities. Adventist has relied on the skills and expertise of the consulting group for a plethora of projects including: strategic planning, system selection, vendor contract negotiation, enterprise resource planning project management, clinical systems project management, resource referral, interim staff augmentation, consultant placement in clinical projects, and application outsourcing.

Concerns that a smaller firm won’t be able to bring the required number of players to the table simply do not apply to The Quammen Group, according to Shaw. “The depth of experience available is always more than enough to meet our needs,” Shaw says. “They have many experienced people on staff and are able to call on a network of top-notch experts.”

The group has proved that it is more than capable of leading and implementing system-wide projects. For example, Quammen supplied strategic direction and support when

Adventist chose and implemented an enterprise-wide clinical system — quite an undertaking considering the sheer size of the provider organization, which serves more than 4 million patients each year.

MORE THAN EXPECTED

The consulting services from Quammen, however, came with a number of distinct advantages that, according to Shaw, might be hard to find in larger consulting firms. For example, Quammen enhanced the engagement with the following:

- **CEO involvement.** When working with The Quammen Group, CEO Robecca Quammen frequently sits at the boardroom table, offering her personal advice and expertise on various information technology projects. “Robecca is still personally involved in many of the projects — and getting her expertise is truly valuable. You really can’t get that level of knowledge when working with less senior consultants from larger firms,” Shaw says.
- **No bureaucracy.** With a smaller group, Shaw finds that it is easier to get work done — as he doesn’t have to get caught up in bureaucratic red tape.
- **High level of industry knowledge.** Because The Quammen Group is a boutique firm, it specializes in the health care industry — and the firm’s consultants have “their ears to the ground,” Shaw says. As a result, they are able to offer a high level of strategic advice about emerging technologies and industry trends.



Paula Anthony, vice president of East Texas Medical Center (ETMC) Regional Healthcare System, Tyler, TX, also has discovered the true value of working with the Quammen Group.

When ETMC embarked on an electronic medical records project, Anthony needed the knowledge and expertise of a high-level strategic consulting organization, but she also needed a group that could actually help implement an EMR system. After a long search for a partner, she finally settled on The Quammen Group.

“Paula Anthony Quote”

“We needed to get from point A to point B,” she says. “We had very specific outcomes and deadlines that we wanted to meet. And The Quammen Group was very willing to work within these established parameters. While there are many consulting companies out there that are truly top-notch, The Quammen Group really fit into our culture. They take a very no-nonsense approach and don’t spend a lot of time dreaming. They simply figure out what is, what needs to be and what needs to get done.”

It was this willingness to not only provide the high level strategic advice but also the roll-up-your-sleeves implementation support that helped ETMC successfully get the new electronic medical records system from Siemens Medical Group up and running.

Doing so, however, was no small task, as this was ETMC’s first foray into electronic records, according to Anthony.

“We were entirely paper-based. So, we needed a consulting company that would help us go through an entire workflow redesign process,” Anthony says.

THE RIGHT INGREDIENTS

Fortunately, The Quammen Group was able to bring the right blend of clinical, technical and organizational skills to the table to help get this done.

“Quammen Group consultants were able to communicate with the clinical and administrative sides. They talk both languages very well,” Anthony says. “They understand the

intricacies of the workflow challenges on the clinical side and, at the same time, they know exactly how to deal with the administration to create an environment that produces optimum outcomes.”

In addition to knowing how to communicate with all of the hospital players, The Quammen Group also brought a high level of technology knowledge to the mix, Anthony says.

“They really have a strong grasp of technology. One of the problems with EMR projects is that they often drag on and on and nothing seems to get done. Quammen, however, brings a level of technical sophistication that simply makes things happen,” Anthony says.

Perhaps most important, however, The Quammen Group made sure that there was an educational component to their services, instead of protecting the knowledge, according to Anthony.

“Terry D. Shaw Quote”

“Quammen was very interested in teaching and pushing the knowledge to us. They were very focused on empowering us to get the expertise that we need to keep the project rolling,” she says.

In addition to Adventist and ETMC, The Quammen Group has worked with many other health care organizations of various sizes, providing a full array of services including business planning and management; information systems design and deployment; and outsourced information technology support. In each of its engagements, The Quammen Group provides the breadth and depth of experience typically associated with large consulting firms — and the personal touch that is only available through smaller consulting groups.

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