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CLOUD REALITIES

CR005

Digitalisation in healthcare with
Tony Ambrozie, Baptist Health

Capgemini's Cloud Realities podcast explores the exciting realities of today and tomorrow that can be unleashed by cloud.

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[00:00:00] Do you know what sort of processes they're trying to optimize for ai? No.

Excellent. You ask so many difficult questions full, full of.

Welcome to Cloud Realities, a conversation show exploring the practical and exciting alternate realities that can be unleashed through cloud driven transformation. I'm David Chapman. I'm Sjoukje Zaal, and I'm Rob Kernahan.

. This week we'll be talking about digital change in the healthcare sector with new, readily available technologies such as wearables, along with leveraging the huge amounts of data.

That we collect in all processes these days. Consumer experience as [00:01:00] well as clinical and operations are all being impacted.

Joining us this week to talk about this is Tony Ambrozie, chief Digital and Information Officer of Baptist Health. Hey Tony. How are you doing, man? Good. Thank you for having me. Great to see you and great to have you here. Uh, maybe say a little bit about yourself. So I joined the Baptist about two years ago, coming from Disney, the Disney parks, and then before that, from American Express, I have been driving a change in transformation, uh, using technologies and digital for a number of years.

So, um, it clearly coming to healthcare was from that perspective, um, the, uh, the interesting place to, to be and, and go. Brilliant. Well, maybe we can start by, why don't you just tell us a little bit about, uh, Baptist Health, your, your company, what do they do and what attracted you to join? Of course. So Baptist Health is, [00:02:00] uh, probably the largest health system provider system, hospital system in, uh, south Florida.

Uh, 12 hospitals and 26,000, uh, employees. Uh, long established, long revered in the communities that we serve and. I came here, I was brought here two years ago to drive the digital transformation to help drive the digital transformation. Baptist has been the, you know, the board, the, uh, executive, uh, uh, committee has been thinking about, have been thinking about, uh, digital and, um, what the means and should mean for Baptist and its continuing mission to, to serve patients in the future.

Right. And what was the current thinking on cloud, for example, just as you joined? Well, it was interesting 'cause at that time, obviously, uh, as in most of, uh, healthcare Cloud was not necessarily very well known or understood. Um, I think there was [00:03:00] more fear and doubt than, and certainly and doubt than anything else.

Um, so at the beginning, I, I heard, oh, um, Cloud will not work for, for us. Right, right. And I thought that's, that's strange. How can it not be? But um, obviously it was in the part, in the context of the larger transformation, digital transformation where, uh, cloud has a big, big part in addition to all the other, uh, capabilities.

And, and so now it's an integral part. We have started the migration of the, uh, capabilities that we had on-prem to the cloud about a year ago. I think we're. 70% done, maybe. Uh, it's a two year journey. Um, and I think it's, it's going very well for us. And, and what was it about cloud that WA was concerning to the organization before you sort of unpacked it and, uh, well, I think it was more the unknown, um, frankly.

And then of course, um, Um, there have been concerns about security or lack of [00:04:00] security, but, uh, clearly when we went through and we talked through, and I think people understood the benefits, um, and, uh, as I said, we're on way, on our, our way. Well, let's talk about the benefits a little bit. And talk about the, the structure of your business case before we get into the journey itself.

So what was your business case predicated on? It can be sometimes difficult, I think, to set out a pure value case for a situation that is a little unknown. So where did you start? Did you start with cost? Well, it's interesting because, yes. Um, so this is my second cloud migration. In previous life, we've, we've gone through that.

So you're like a, you're like a veteran at this kid. Two tours. Two of duty. Yes. Um, it's interesting that, um, for, for the technologists and the digital professionals cloud is a lot more than just infrastructure and is definitely a lot more than, uh, saving money, which, [00:05:00] uh, it does, uh, properly managed. Um, however, uh, in order to get the money for the migration, that's the, the focus of, uh, the proposal.

Hey, we will spend, we'll save money. We compare it what we spent today to what we would spend in the cloud for equal, uh, equal, uh, loads and increase over time. Um, however, as we were, uh, saying earlier, For us, it's, it's not just, it's not the money, it's not just the infrastructure, but it's that entire ecosystem of capabilities that cloud providers have and you can just get them, uh, you know, uh, as they come and not necessarily having to reinvent, um, all that management or the tooling or the marketplace that.

Uh, that the, these providers, uh, have, but, uh, you know, um, you know, you start with really with the money because that's what, uh, gets, gets things going, right? And then the, it's, it's, it's interesting how, [00:06:00] you know, you have to build that case. Um, Migrating to the cloud is, is not cheap necessarily, but what we did, we looked at over five years.

Mm-hmm. How much was the cost of the, the on-prem or our data center, the, the need to refresh, uh, technologies all the time. The, uh, uh, need to, uh, automate and to invest in automation tools. And then we looked at, as I said, the equivalent over five years. O of the cloud, uh, with the expected growth in, in both places.

And I think what we've seen is a, a pretty substantial, uh, cost reduction, uh, from, from that perspective. I mean, that's, that's terrific to hear because, uh, a lot of people struggle to get. Cost savings when they moved to the cloud. And my, my perspective is, well, if you were moving from a, a really slick, very high, uh, utilized environment into the cloud, then you [00:07:00] might, you might struggle with it a little bit, particularly if you don't get your head around finops.

What was the secret sauce for you and your context? Well, you're right, you're absolutely right. If, if you come from a very well modern data center that it's, you know, densely populated, therefore you, you get the value, uh, um, lower per unit of computing. Yeah, it is a little bit more, more, uh, complex. We, we had a relatively large um, Uh, data center.

Right. And that was not particularly well utilized from that perspective. We're not talking about 80 to 90% utilization or. Yeah, plus it needed, uh, in the, the coming years, uh, a number of investments in, uh, obs uplifting, uh, automation. And I think the case was, uh, easier, easier to be made here. As I said, in a even a previous life, the case was still there.

It wasn't as good, but [00:08:00] is still very positive, um, for the, for the migration. Now, one thing that yes, is depends on what type of capabilities or loads. But costs can go, uh, up if they're not controlled. Of course, if you have a bunch of developers, um, uh, starting instances and, you know, um, uh, buying things from the, uh, for the marketplace without controls, it could get expensive very easily.

Yeah, yeah. But there are so many buy now, so many processes and tools and, um, expertise to make sure that all the time you are optimized what, whatever you have bought or used, it's optimized to what you really need. And that, that helps immensely And to, to their credit,

I think at least the a w s that I know of, um, they make it, they're, they're supporting this.

They have tools and they provide, uh, help to reduce the, uh, the cost. I. My perspective on [00:09:00] not realizing cost saving on the other side of the transformation, you know, depending on the AFO engine context is maybe they haven't got mature finops processes in place. So exactly to your point, if it's, if it's left unguarded, Then costs can run up.

But you must have brought some experience to that conversation. Absolutely, and, and as I said to, to their credit, um, even if you, we didn't know about it in the first, uh, first go, um, Amazon or a w s, um, they're, they tell you, Hey, you should, this is how you optimize. These are the tools. Can we help you? I think their, their business cases is through volume, not through, you know, to, through, uh, consumers or customers using a lot more, for a lot more things versus, uh, inefficiency or, uh, unit, unit prices.

Did they also, uh, support it with the actual migration? Uh, yeah, absolutely. [00:10:00] Um, as, as much as we needed. Absolutely. Uh, they're very, they've been, uh, we have a great, uh, account team from them and, and very, very supportive and, um, and providing whatever we needed. Yes. Okay. That sounds good. They've been through this journey, um, you know, a hundred thousand times, so Yeah, they're pretty good at it.

Yeah. So you've set yourself up nicely. You've got yourself a business case that's kind of got a robust underpinning from a financial perspective. You are, you are on the journey. Now. Let's just take a little bit of a step back and, and talk about the business context within which you were operating. So tell us a little bit about the US healthcare market, um, as was present at the point you making some.

Well, I think healthcare probably across the world, definitely in the United States, has been behind in terms of technology and [00:11:00] digital for quite a while. Um, so which, which is a little ironic given things like wearables and, you know, oh, absolutely. Personal technology is really in that space, isn't it?

Then that, that's, that's true. Um, but, you know, I think the, the focus had been, uh, elsewhere in maybe high acuity areas. Uh, yeah. Uh, but, um, you know, even on the technology side, I think, you know, somewhat behind, uh, across the board. And, um, that's, that's the, that's the, that's the context. So, so part of what, uh, you know, uh, folks like me are trying to do is to basically raise that bar across the board.

And frankly catching up, catch up with the world, uh, so to speak. You know, both from a technology perspective, but also from a, um, consumer capabilities perspective. 'cause on, on the, in that space, the consumers, I. Consumers, uh, don't judge us necessarily, or individual hospitals comparing to other [00:12:00] hospitals, they judge us comparing to their other digital experiences.

Right? Right. And so you have to compete with how easy it's to shop on Amazon or you know, on Disney or, or what have you. Um, so there is a element of catching up, uh, frankly, that, you know, we're well on our way, uh, for that. And I think you described the situation in the healthcare system at that point as a bit of a perfect storm.

I wonder if you can just unpack what you meant by that. Oh, absolutely. I think it's, you know, it started with, it became obvious with the pandemic and it was a terrible, uh, Uh, terrible tragedy. Tragedy. Um, very stressing, very demanding on, uh, healthcare across the world, on all systems, uh, on the individuals, the healthcare providers themselves, the nurses and the doctors.

And then after that, as we were coming out, then we. We we're encountering all of us this

issue with inflation everywhere. Um, and so that's, that's [00:13:00] number two, but also is the consumer, uh, expectations being a lot higher, especially during the, you know, where with during the micro, the pandemic, a lot of, uh, consumers have been using, um, digital experiences to, to great, great results.

Now the expectations are more high, much higher. Um, Which is something that started before the pandemic, but I think it's accelerated. There is an expectation of being able to find, being able to book, being able to, uh, check in, being able to have telehealth that, um, that did require a lot of, uh, TR transformation and, and technology and, and digital, which in, in turn, um, you know, requires things like clouds, uh, AI and ml.

And so, So as you were looking then at a Baptist specific business transformation elements, what are the core technologies and experience changes that you wanted to make in your organization? [00:14:00] Um, definitely focusing on, especially on the, on the digital experience side, focusing on those, uh, uh, experiences for consumers.

And I, you know, usually they're called front door and I really don't like that because it's, it's, it's a, you know, um, The wrong paradigm, uh, mental model if you want, but everything that the patient needs to, um, have access to the, uh, the care and have access to their information in the most, uh, effective way.

That has been the, the, the core focus at the beginning and then and moving, uh, to the next, uh, area is, is really about, um, improving the experience for providers as much as possible through using technologies. Um, and, and the digital experiences. How do we make things better for those, uh, that, that need, that use the internal systems, and it's just to say variety of [00:15:00] things.

Some of it is really help helping transform some of the processes that we have, which is always difficult. Others is based on, uh, thought through product management, introducing new capabilities or new tools. Right. So it's a real end-to-end ecosystem player rather than purely a consumer experience player.

Ab absolutely. It has to be. And then there's a, by the way, there's a third part, which is the really the operations. Looking at the operations. 'cause they all come together now. When you start, you have to start somewhere. Then, you know, we started, you know, on the consumer side, but clearly, um, also on the other two.

Parts, providers and, and operations. Um, and now as the consumer part is, I think going very well now focusing more on the, uh, clinical provider experience and, and the things in, uh, in operations or administration or what have you. Because they do come together. They, they work together, the patient having [00:16:00] better access in the, um, uh, the providers being able to provide more care or simpler in simpler ways.

And then with the operations, providing the, an underlying support for both, both to have or both of those two happen. Um, and as I I always say is if we can make things easier and better, we can provide more care and sooner, and that's good for patients. Absolutely. And are you also within the right regulation framework?

Of course, harvesting data that might improve clinical outputs eventually. Uh, we are looking at that to be very clear. We're not selling data. This is just No way. No. Um, whether is, you know, obviously it's, it's, um, there are protections, but even beyond that, it would be not the right thing for us to do. But absolutely, really mining the data in order to provide better care in whether it's purely clinic or pure, um, uh, medical or maybe as a [00:17:00] way to understand and, and make, make our operations more, more efficient.

Absolutely. That's, that's something that, you know, the people say, you know, the data is the new oil, but, uh, in order to get the oil into gasoline, into our tanks, there's all those infrastructure that that needs to be, uh, that it needs to be created. Yeah. Maybe just to bring our, uh, conversations today to a bit of a conclusion, I'm interested in what you did with your IT organization because you've obviously gone through a huge technical change, which is, uh, giving you the platform on which you can deliver these new experiences and new.

Backend optimizations, what impact did it have on your IT organization and and how did you negotiate that change? And so first of all, uh, this is still ongoing. Um, we're two years and probably in a five-year transformation. And even that is a little bit misleading 'cause these things are not, Projects, will they start in an end?

Yeah. And then in the [00:18:00] five years we finish the digital transformation, then we're done. No, obviously, as I said, we're catching up and then we're gonna start evolving. I always think the behaviors and the way that you end up working during the transformation is the way that you will end up working, post the transformation, the sense of sort of iterative discovery.

Uh, that, that's exactly right. That's a great point. Uh, however, sometimes that is missed and everybody looked at, uh, looks at, yeah, this is the change during the, the, the transformation process. But then we, we go back to not go back to how we did it before. Yeah. Not having to change. So we haven't learned, we learned learning that we how to change all the time.

And, um, and regularly. So it's, it's, it's still a, a definitely a process. There's so much to do. There's so much we can do. That's part of the, what attracted me to healthcare in the first place, by the way, which is there's so much opportunity. And, you know, as a, as a patient myself, I see the opportunities and, um, it's very clear, uh, to me that, hey, there are so many things that we could do.

I [00:19:00] know we can do them and we are doing them, but, and that, that was the, the, the attraction, uh, attraction for me. Do you have an example so far on your journey that you are particularly pleased about, whether it be to do with the cloud transformation and the cost reduction, or whether it be to do with a new experience delivered that you could share with us?

I think, you know, it's been, is clearly these things are not easy for anybody. There's a lot of investment that needs to be made and a lot of change and a lot of, uh, hard, hard work. Um, involved, yes, cloud is, uh, is definitely something that, uh, we're very pleased. Not just because of the, the money, uh, frankly, but because of the things that now we can do and it's so much easier and, and, and frankly, sometimes the only way to do things.

Um, and I'm, I'm very, very happy with how we're progressing on the consumer digital capabilities and, you know, um, I think that's, that's, that's great work there. And we're making [00:20:00] progress in, uh, AI ml, um, and we started there really, uh, not on the clinical side, so not on the medical side. That's, that's I think a lot more, a lot more complex and complicated.

And, but we started with things that we can apply. Models to operations, uh, that frankly are very similar to, uh, things that have been done by others outside, even by myself or ourselves, you know, in, in previous lives, you know, uh, opera, you know, a, um, optimizing a a, a process through, through mi, uh, free ml.

It's something that we've been doing for a while. So therefore we started there and I'm, I'm, I'm pleased with the, the progress there. Again, there's so much more to be done. Um, um,

it's a, uh, it's a, uh, work in progress.

Sjoukje, what's trending this week. Every week I will do some research on the recent tech [00:21:00] innovations and pick one that I find interesting to share with you. And this week's innovation is about the UK government because they launched a 1.5. Million Pound program to support the use of AI to reduce carbon emissions.

And that AI for Decarbonization program is part of the wider 1 billion net zero innovation portfolio. And this program aims to accelerate the commercialization of low carbon technologies and business models. So the AI for decarbonization will consist of two initial stages. The first stage will provide up to 500,000 pounds of funds to create a virtual center of excellence on AI innovation and decarbonization through March, 2025 and stage two is where the remaining 1 million pounds will be used to fund innovative AI powered decarbonization projects.

So the UK is really seeking to increase its energy independence following Russia's invasion of [00:22:00] Ukraine and the weaponization of supplies. So do you know what the underlying AI that they're using, so like what exactly are they doing, do you know? No, that's not really clear. But they are really looking for new projects to be funded to really work on these types of projects.

Types of challenges, to be honest. Hmm. Basically, it, it's a fund. Uh, if you have a good project that you want to build or something that you want to, uh, invest on, you can use that fund of the UK government. Are they looking for anybody to sort of pitch in and apply to that fund to be able to use technology to drive the decarbonization effort?

Yeah, they're really looking for projects to bid for funding. Yeah. Hmm. So the new energy infrastructure to increase supply will take a long time to build. So reducing demand in the meantime is extremely important. And two leading solutions to that are improving the installation of homes and businesses and using technologies like AI to optimize the [00:23:00] processes.

Yeah. They been doing that whole. Insulating houses this thing for quite a while, haven't they? I wonder how AI is actually going to improve that. That is very difficult to say at this moment because the amount of information for this project is still very limited. Mm-hmm. But, uh, let's hope that we will find out in the upcoming period.

If there is any news around this. Alright. Okay. We like to end each show by asking our guests what they're excited about doing next. So Tony, what are you excited about doing next? Are you excited? It could be anything from, I'm looking forward to, you know, walking the dog all the way through to a, a big next phase transformation program.

Well, I think so. You, I, I mentioned earlier we're in a, a phase, uh, that really is, I call foundational and still in terms of for consumer, for patients access. A lot of it is about access to information, to, to care. But I think the next thing, next generation of [00:24:00] our transformation will be around all those things that we can do.

True. Um, improve their health, not just provide healthcare, improve their health in, in even in between, um, the, uh, in interactions that we have, the encounters, the, the visits to, to the, to our doctors. So would that be the sort of thing where you're trying to encourage healthy lifestyles and, uh, you know, monitoring and things like that?

I I, that's exactly right. So you were mentioning earlier, very early on about, um, uh, sensors. There is so much now becoming available, you know, clearly all of us, well some of us at least, um, have the Apple Watch and then there's a wealth of information coming from there. But

the others things that, and that, that kind of, they carry, they stay with us 24 hours a day and how do we harness that to provide as much as possible, you know, a better.

Uh, but the ability for, for, uh, consumers and patients to manage [00:25:00] their, their health better. Amazing. Amazing. And when do you think, is it too early to say when you might be getting that to market? Probably, probably we can still have some, uh, catch up to do. But, uh, you know, we've always, the, the way we, I like to do things and, you know, start somewhere small and, and, and then, and evolve, um, as, as much as possible.

And, you know, frankly is, um, you know, all of us are getting old. The least I'm getting older. Amen. Me too. Yes. And therefore I look for those, those things that I would want to have in terms of, uh, you know, supporting my. My health and my wellbeing, um, you know, um, permanently or constantly. Indeed. Well, we'll, we'll look forward to seeing that greatly and, uh, many thanks for your time today and for the insights that you've given us into your process and transformation.

We wish you the very best of luck with it. Well, thank you. I appreciate it. So a huge thanks to our guest this week. Tony. Thank you so much for being on the [00:26:00] show with us. Thanks to our producer Marcel, our sound and editing wizards, Ben and Louis, and of course, to all of our listeners.

We're on LinkedIn and X, Dave Chapman, Rob Kernahan, and Sjoukje Zaal. Feel free to follow or connect with us and please get in touch if you have any comments or ideas for the show. And of course, if you haven't already done that, rate and subscribe to our podcast.

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