

Strategic Collaboration to Fill Gaps and Provide Direct Entry into U.S. Healthcare Supply Chain

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"Supply chains [are a] very complex model that has a lot of different players—from source to end user and all the steps in between, i.e., transportation to information technology to delivery services. Understanding all the needs and requirements, and then integrating that into a strategy, I think is critical these days to make sure that you stay relevant and efficient and can compete in the healthcare supply chain."

- David Teeple, Sedlak Supply Chain

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David Teeple is the Director of Client Services at Sedlak, an organization that provides supply chain and network strategy. Teeple has forty years of experience in the supply chain arena with more than one hundred successful client engagements, many of which exist in the healthcare sphere. As an industry leader who witnesses successful technology integration from companies across the globe, Teeple provides strategies for successful entry into the U.S. healthcare supply chain industry.



One of the most significant barriers to collaborating in the U.S. healthcare supply chain market is navigating U.S. healthcare insurance companies. These companies stress that U.S. healthcare providers must minimize costs while still delivering on the public's high expectations of quality care. Teeple explains how that *"can be a double-edged sword because it can also deter investment in the efforts to try and keep overall costs down. So, I think it's forced people to look at how to more creatively justify investments in technology."* International companies looking to collaborate with key players in the U.S. healthcare supply chain must not only provide justification for their technology but also demonstrate proof of their effectiveness over competitors in producing more effective, streamlined supply chain processes.

Teeple emphasizes the key trend of digitization in the U.S. *"There was a definite push, even before the pandemic, towards digitalization. We are at a time when the baby boomers are starting to retire. Companies have to find ways to do more with less, as the labor pool is diminishing"* he says. *"We also talk a lot about AI these days, and certainly, data and analytics have been pushed right to the forefront of the supply chain."* International technology start-ups can offer solutions to potential partners to meet those critical gaps in the U.S. healthcare supply chain. Albeit, the key to successful entry is not these solutions alone but their use within key collaborations in the healthcare industry to improve and streamline supply chain processes.

More specifically, digitalization and automation in the U.S. healthcare supply chain have not always been commonly integrated. Thus, this segment is a crucial opportunity for international companies looking to incorporate via untypical partnerships as a means of U.S. entry. *"The healthcare supply chain has been historically challenging and lags in technology, simply because it's such a unique supply chain—it's very preference driven,"* says Teeple. By offering unique solutions that use customization in a specific system, international companies looking to enter the U.S. healthcare supply chain will succeed more in this segment.

According to Teeple, the benefits digitization can bring to the U.S. healthcare supply chain are efficiency and safety. Healthcare products, more so than other products, have an abundance of data such as serial and lot codes, expiration dates, and more, which must be tracked through the process. So, for instance, *"if you have recalls for issues with the expiration of a product, you have to make sure that, again, patient safety is first and foremost. And so, digitalization ensures higher accuracy, so people aren't making mistakes,"* says Teeple. *"And they're getting it in the most efficient manner."* International companies can find more success when they highlight key benefits in their targeted messaging for the U.S. healthcare supply chain.

Ultimately, digitization is most beneficial in increasing efficiency because it can help companies and supply chains in the healthcare industry stay ahead of the curve. *"Digitization helps you provide the ability to predict trends and react to them,"* says Teeple. International companies can demonstrate this key benefit to healthcare players in the U.S. when seeking collaborations in the sphere.

The key ingredient in integrating successfully into the U.S. healthcare supply chain industry is by way of strategic collaboration. One tactical way to initiate collaborations is by *"getting exposure, whether it's through different types of industry events,"* to demonstrate your company's abilities to key decision-makers. International companies are encouraged to seek out and connect with key decision-makers in the healthcare supply chain for smoother market entry. *"Being able to communicate effectively with those people is critical,"* he says.

Robotics has generated a lot of interest in Supply Chain. International and domestic technology companies such as GreyOrange, Geek+, and more have already begun successful integration into U.S. healthcare supply chain processes. *"They're doing some very innovative things with product movement and sortation—the more traditional warehousing type of processes and making those more efficient,"* says Teeple.



David Teeple, Sedlak Supply Chain

For instance, an automation technology company, Locus Robotics, focuses its attention on the healthcare supply chain segment, integrating into U.S. healthcare companies' supply chains like Cardinal Health. There, they delivered on their promises of improved employee retention, improved pick error rates, and reduced turnover and training time.

Teeple provides international companies seeking strategic collaboration with one final piece of knowledge: *"the ability to deliver on promises is critical for companies that are looking to get into the market that isn't necessarily household names."* Establishing a U.S. presence through successful use cases that fill critical gaps in the healthcare market is key to securing strategic, advantageous partnerships.

-Content by Emily Curtis, Junior Marketing Associate at BDMT Global

If you are interested in connecting with David Teeple or in working with Sedlak Supply Chain please send an email to sim@bdmtglobal.com