Business challenge

To launch a collaborative framework designed to connect patients with the right specialist care more quickly, Medical Confidence Inc. sought a highly secure cloud platform for development and delivery.

Transformation

Founded to help patients access specialist treatment more quickly and effectively, Medical Confidence needed a secure hosting platform for its sensitive data and applications. With an IBM® Cloud™ solution, the company addresses industry security requirements and creates a streamlined and supportive framework to help users get the care they need.

Bogdan Stanescu
Co-owner and Chief
Technology Officer
Medical Confidence Inc.

Results

74 days faster
for patients to get an initial specialist appointment

235 days quicker
on average to initiate treatment

6 months less
time spent on disability leave per employee claim

Medical Confidence Inc.

Connecting patients with the right care at the right time

Headquartered in Ontario, Medical Confidence formed in 2009 to empower patients seeking treatment within the Canadian healthcare system. The company helps individuals understand their health-related circumstances, access the optimal physicians for treatment and become actively engaged in decisions leading to the best possible outcomes. By empowering consumers, Medical Confidence also benefits employers, insurers and Canada's larger healthcare system by helping drive down costs, improve efficiency and minimize the impact of presenteeism and absenteeism.

"The IBM Cloud ecosystem that's available to us is key in growing and developing our business."

—Bogdan Stanescu, Co-owner and Chief Technology Officer, Medical Confidence Inc.

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A healthcare concept requiring secure hosting

For people suffering from a serious illness or ailment, managing the condition can be challenging enough. But patients navigating the Canadian healthcare system face added layers of complexity in reaching the right specialist for treatment.

"Public healthcare in Canada has many silos of care," says Angela Johnson, President and Founder of Medical Confidence. "Specialists typically reside in one office and general practitioners reside in another. They communicate by fax machine—very rarely do the two worlds meet. Most GPs don't have the time or resources to help patients navigate the system, so patients are often left on their own."

The process is further complicated by the fact that although treatment providers in Canada are becoming increasingly specialized within their areas of practice, information resources for referring physicians aren't kept up to date.

"Physician directories for the provinces don't provide knowledge or insight as to whether a particular orthopedic surgeon just works on shoulders, for example, or just on hips and knees," says Johnson. "A patient will wait eight or nine months, only to find out that a specialist can't treat his or her condition. The process starts all over with a second referral and a waiting period."

Envisioning a collaborative framework to empower patients and connect them with the appropriate care more quickly, Johnson founded Medical Confidence. While building a network of participating treatment providers throughout Canada, the company began looking for a highly secure cloud platform to host applications and safeguard sensitive patient and specialist data.

Cloud with rigorous security—and flexibility

Medical Confidence evaluated leading cloud infrastructure solutions, choosing IBM Cloud based on the offering's flexibility, security capabilities, and broad ecosystem of products, services and resources.

"We looked at quite a few cloud providers and found that IBM Cloud is at the top in terms of security," says Bogdan Stanescu, Medical Confidence Co-owner and Chief Technology Officer. "Plus, it's quite easy to grow with IBM as it integrates new products and open source components in its offering."

An IBM Cloud team worked closely with Medical Confidence to address rigorous industry requirements for storing medical data. In addition to performing vulnerability and penetration testing, IBM provided critical insight into meeting specific needs for the company's insurance company customers.

"There's no way to be a master of all trades—sometimes we need a subject matter expert like IBM to validate what's best for a particular situation," says Stanescu.

The IBM team also introduced Medical Confidence to a research and development group at the IBM Toronto Software Lab, allowing the company to explore new open source technologies and collaborate with experts from Canadian colleges and universities.

"IBM opens up a lot of doors and gives us access to a lot of subject matter expertise," says Stanescu. "The IBM Cloud ecosystem that's available to us is key in growing and developing our business."

A ground-breaking navigational platform

Building on its technology team's background in Big Data, Medical Confidence used predictive analytics software, evidence-based health measurements and patent-pending algorithms to develop a platform for navigating Canada's network of specialist physicians. The company teamed with IBM to create a flexible cloud environment for the solution, choosing IBM Cloud data centers in Montreal and Toronto as hosting locations.

With a foundation built on scalable IBM Cloud IaaS components—including IBM Cloud Virtual Servers—Medical Confidence can expand its infrastructure quickly and easily, as business demands. When engaging a new customer or launching a new offering, the organization can deploy pre-configured virtual servers and accommodate additional workloads in just minutes.

"We use quite a few other IBM services along with IaaS," says Stanescu. "IBM MaaS360® with Watson™ is important for us in making sure we have the proper security in place on user laptops and devices. We also rely on IBM BigFix® to help inventory the products and licenses we have installed, since that's a part of our security requirements."

Streamlined access to the optimal care

With the Medical Confidence service available directly, through an employer benefit plan or from an insurance provider, patients now have a more streamlined and supportive option for accessing the care they need within the Canadian public healthcare system.

Dedicated professionals guide patients through every step of the process, helping them identify the optimal physician from a network of nearly 14,000 specialists across Canada.

By aligning people and processes in the healthcare system more effectively, the Medical Confidence solution helps patients bypass standard obstacles and delays, speeding access to treatment. On average, a Medical Confidence user has an initial specialist appointment 74 days faster and initiates care 235 days earlier than a patient navigating the system independently.

Insurance carriers offering the Medical Confidence service also benefit considerably by helping plan members receive treatment more quickly. "Insurers are challenged in keeping rates for disability coverage affordable for their plan sponsors," says Johnson. "The longer employees are off work, the greater the cost for the insurance company and premiums have to go up. On average, insurers and plan sponsors see a six-month reduction in claim duration when Medical Confidence is engaged."

Delivering a service with such significant value translates into continued success and growth for Medical Confidence as a business. "We've grown 200 percent each year over the last four years," says Johnson. "As we get new clients, they have new requirements and new needs—we're constantly evolving."

Stanescu looks forward to continuing to work with IBM in evolving the company from an IT perspective as well. Anticipated projects include the development of an intuitive online chatbot based on IBM Watson® technology.

"Our strong relationship is what keeps me turning to IBM," he says. "It's so easy to reach out for subject matter expertise, to get some answers or to collaborate on solutions. We work with IBM because of the support its team provides and interest it has in our success."

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Solution components
- IBM® BigFix®
- IBM Cloud™
- IBM Cloud Virtual Servers
- IBM MaaS360® with Watson™

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Increase productivity with Watson AI.

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