

In Consultants' Words: Why We Left the Big Firms to Join Premier

Ask almost any healthcare consultant what it is they wish they had access to, and nine out of 10 times, they'll say extensive clinical and financial data.

"I joined Premier in 2017 because I believe that data-enabled decision-making and benchmarking should be the backbone for any consulting practice," said Chris Smedley, Vice President of Premier's Strategy, Innovation and Population Health advisory practice. "It's always been the model that I envisioned but was unable to realize anywhere else.

"Historically, consulting firms have been built around people and their collective knowledge," he elaborated. "But Premier turned that model upside down by investing in data technologies while scaling an advisory practice."

In their own words, here are three reasons consultants have opted to join Premier and supercharge its members' improvement efforts.

Reason 1: Robust Data with a Healthcare Focus

The most effective consultants internalize the data. If they're going to defeat their clients' greatest foes - variation and waste - they need to know everything about these adversaries.

That requires consultants to know the data's origin story, the various universes it connects to, and how it can be sliced and diced to reveal its secrets. They need to know how to use this data to shape clients' goals, benchmark it to track progress, and navigate it to find new opportunities.

With an alliance of approximately 4,100 hospitals in the U.S., and a clinical database representing 45 percent of the nation's hospital discharges, hundreds of health systems use Premier's timely, robust and standardized data for benchmarking and analytics. In fact, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) recognized Premier with its [first-place prize in its Predictive Analytics Challenge](#) in 2020, highlighting Premier's advanced data science analytics, clinical intelligence and predictive data capabilities.

With these aptitudes, Premier members have been able to leverage Premier's business intelligence to benchmark variation out of daily practice, [earn reimbursement](#), achieve cost savings and position themselves as a choice provider in their markets.

"I have worked at some great places prior to coming to Premier, but none of them had the platform, access to data and technology assets Premier does to enable long-term success," said Roger Weems, Vice President, Advisory Services Market Leader, who joined Premier from previous consultancies. "We don't have to buy benchmarking from a third-party - they come to us for it. We have and know the clinical and operational data inside and out. And that gives our members the edge in performance improvement."

Reason 2: The Partnership Model with Members

A partnership model unites providers and experts who together co-invest in the providers' long-term success via shared goals. Partnerships like this lend themselves to innovation and improved outcomes because both the provider and the outside expert align around a joint mission, financial targets and KPIs, structured with clear accountability.

This incentivizes strategies that ensure sustained progress well after an engagement ends, including technology-enabled processes and hardwiring of best practices.

[McLaren Health Care](#), the Michigan-based system with 15 hospitals, first engaged Premier in 2018 to coalesce its disparate data sources into a cohesive and accessible analytics infrastructure. Now, the system has again partnered with Premier to go deeper into the data and technology they invested in three years ago.

Over the next year, Premier is building McLaren a customized technology platform, inclusive of industry-wide benchmarking capabilities, robust business intelligence solutions and rich data analytics. This powerful engine will drive the

clinical operating model to reduce clinical variation and unwarranted costs—and enable broader, more meaningful and more sustainable operational improvements long term.

Scott Orzell, who joined Premier in late 2020, said he was inspired to join a company whose membership model creates a real partnering dynamic with clients. “Premier’s DNA is different from the traditional consultancies,” he said. “Our long-term partnerships with our members allow us to help them with their most pressing needs and become their trusted advisors.”

Reason 3: An Innovation Engine

A membership model coupled with data and technology naturally yields innovation – especially [amid a pandemic](#). One of the ways a technology and consulting organization should leverage its membership model to drive results and innovation for its customers is through collaboratives. These data-driven networks unite providers that are on a similar journey to listen and learn from one another’s successes and challenges, enabling

progress via shared expertise and analytics. Members in Premier’s collaboratives have saved nearly \$18 billion and 200,000 lives.

To ignite improvements in maternal and infant care, more than 200 hospitals are currently joining together in a [data-driven collaborative](#) to test processes, share learnings and scale evidence-based best practices nationwide. One reason to be excited about this is because the method to combine data with tested quality improvement techniques has proven results: Hospitals in Premier’s previous maternal health collaboratives have reduced neonatal birth trauma by 20 percent, maternal complications by 15 percent and medical malpractice claims by 39 percent.

“I moved to Premier because they are a purpose-built healthcare improvement company,” Weems said. “Everyone here is laser-focused on leading positive change in healthcare and our members see the results every single day.”

[Learn more](#) about why the top consultants in healthcare are moving to Premier. ■



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