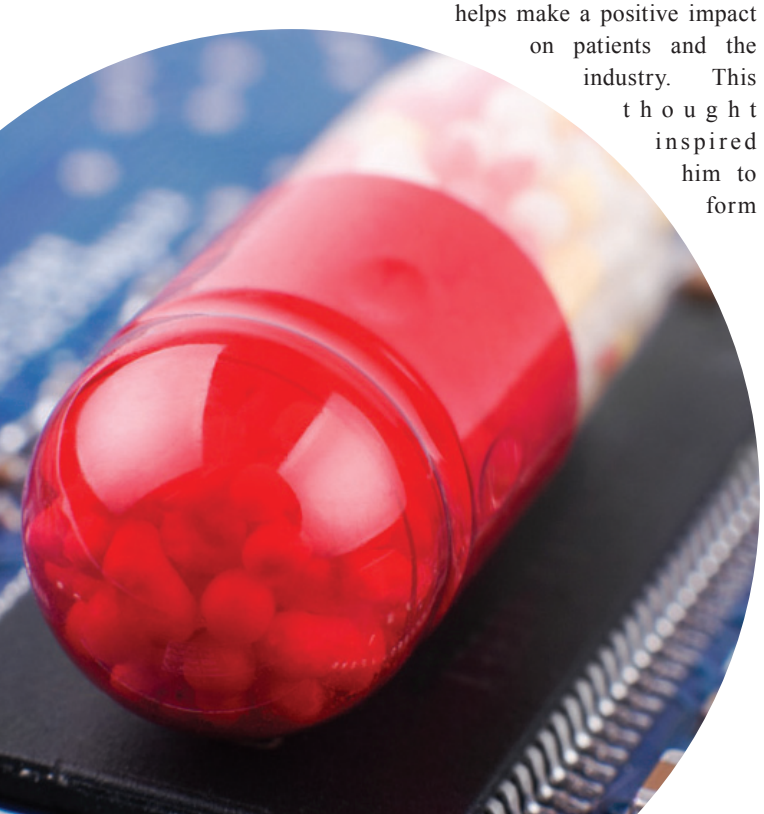
Orbytel Group: 'Harmonizing' the Future of Pharmaceutical Sector

In working with the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry for nearly 20 years and venturing into different roles—as scientist, technologist, sales and marketing executive, and a consultant, Murtuza Abuwala feels that he has developed a deep connection and appreciation for the complexity of biopharmaceutical product planning. "It's daunting to consider developing a product that takes nearly 10 years to bring to market, costs billions of dollars, and has less than 15 percent chance of regulatory approval. The sheer number and diversity of the individuals involved, combined with the clinical and commercial risks pose enormous challenges and opportunities," says Abuwala, CEO of Orbytel Group. Abuwala believes that by helping to bring better treatments to market sooner and more economically, he helps make a positive impact on patients and the industry. This thought inspired him to form Orbytel Group.



Headquartered in Bethlehem, PA, Orbytel Group offers a unified, web-based, platform, harmonyTM, for product acquisition, development and planning experts. In the present scenario, medicine development is becoming costlier. With clinical research and development prices towering, commercial and R&D harmonization and success is imperative now more than ever. Orbytel Group strives not just to decrease these costs, but also to increase the likelihood and magnitude of commercial success after approval by improving collaboration during early product development. "We are specifically working on improving collaboration within and between corporate development, new product planning, portfolio decision analytics, clinical development, finance, medical affairs, and regulatory to make product acquisition, development, and planning easier, faster, and smarter. This, in part, entails developing a shared data structure, vocabulary, resource library, place to store and find information, and a governance structure," says Abuwala. The company's harmony platform implements a unified data structure and language, which is then applied to several key inter-connected modules (Numbers, Plans, Files, Intelligence). This cloud-based application is an exceptional and powerful tool that supports improved collaboration, coordination, and strategic decision making for individuals involved in the product acquisition, development, and planning process.

The Numbers module of harmony, for example, can perform complex patient-based product assessments like Net Present Value (NPV, rNPV) and allows users to traverse 10-year financials for any number of products and countries in real time. The module is equivalent to having scores of spreadsheets available and working together at your fingertips, allows spreadsheet style editing and manipulation, allows drag-and-drop dynamically generated "roll-ups", and one-click generation of MS PowerPoint slides of charts and tables. All this

is done without concern about saving, versioning, emailing, or keeping track of individual edits because the system does it automatically in the background.

Harmony's powerful Planning module provides a means to construct and edit plans and systematize people, files, work streams, and activities. It makes it easy to team up with internal colleagues, facilitates secure information sharing with external associates, synchronizes calendars, enables "rolling-up" multiple plans to create a unified view, and effortlessly creates formatted MS PowerPoint summaries. The module is utilized not only for creating and managing various product development plans, but also for managing thought leader engagement plans for scientific exchange.

harmony also includes the Files and Intelligence modules. Through its unified, full-text searching and tagging system, users can easily find, store, and manage files. Additionally, the company's collaborative news reader automatically retrieves news based on information in the system. Both files and news can be seamlessly connected to any number of plans, numbers, contacts, organizations, or any other object in the application.

The company offers strategic services and use of its platform to pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, consulting firms, advertising agencies, and financial services firms that have an interest in the life sciences industry. The major differentiating aspect of Orbytel Group is their focus on achieving positive organizational impact.

Orbytel Group works mostly with large and mid-size biopharmaceutical companies. One recent project entailed supporting the development of a global 10 year strategy for a $50 billion company that was facing significant market pressures and considering portfolio trade-off decisions. It was very important for this client to solicit input from its senior leaders across the world and frame its strategic options in financial terms. However, when Orbytel commenced the project, the client neither had a unified long-range financial modeling methodology nor a common vocabulary for business planning across all of its products and countries. This made it difficult to understand the implementation of its current strategy and to develop a financial framework to justify trade-off and M&A decisions. So, the Orbytel team standardized over 40 countries and 5 products onto a single financial modeling methodology and framework. Second, they led the development of a standard global vocabulary to describe the product and business planning deliverables. This enabled them to translate the nearly 150 separate MS Excel financial models into a single format with a common vocabulary. Once imported into harmony, the team brought these data to life. Orbytel associated files and news articles to commercial assumptions in order to create context (e.g., attach the market research findings to the current patient share assumptions). Next, they activated the "bots" within harmony that scour the web every hour of every day to automatically find relevant information (e.g., a competitor press release that may impact the patient share assumptions of a particular product). Once the information was unified within harmony, Orbytel was able to more easily facilitate discussions between cross-functional teams (e.g., R&D, commercial, legal, finance, etc.) – information transparency, a common vocabulary and a consistent data structure, coupled with the unified financial model in harmony helped develop transformational and financially viable strategic options, energized the team, created approximately of $150M of NPV, and continues to save them approximately $1M in costs per year.

"We aim to bring key people from different functions together, provide them with the structure, language, data, and tools to create understanding and alignment on business issues in a deep and meaningful manner, and enable them to more effectively discuss and develop strategy," concludes Abuwala.CR

> **"We help leaders increase their confidence and efficiency in pipeline and portfolio decision making"**


Murtuza Abuwala