The 10 MOST INNOVATIVE PHARMA & LIFE SCIENCES SOLUTION PROVIDERS 2018

Cover Story

ORBYTEL GROUP:

Helping Organizations to Work Better and Faster



Murt Abuwala
Founder

> At the heart of our solutions is Harmony, our custom-built, patent-pending, cloud-based platform designed from the ground up to meet the unique needs of the biopharma industry.

Overcoming the differences in culture and communication between commercial and research organizations is a challenge especially when it comes to biopharmaceutical R&D productivity. In order to remove these barriers, **Orbytel Group**, a data science and decision system company, builds solutions that help teams structure, manage, and act on complex data.

The vision of Orbytel Group is to empower scientists, physicians, business professionals, and patients to radically improve therapeutic development and delivery.

A Veteran Leader
With more than twenty years of experience in the pharmaceutical industry, **Murt Abuwala founded** Orbytel Group in 2009. When he invented a mathematical and experimental approach to identify potential medicines for neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's Disease, he was thrust into the commercial side of the industry. After working in sales, marketing, analytics, IT, managed care, and corporate finance he became a consultant to the industry.

When asked about this future plans, he stated "*We want to make science easier for business people and business easier for scientists. This divide is at the root of the R&D productivity problem facing large companies and our aspiration is build tools that help bridge the gaps between these two very different and important groups.*"

After leading two successful consulting teams at major firms, Murt started Orbytel Group in order to focus on how organizations can improve decision making. He has worked with more than thirty publicly-traded global biopharmaceutical companies, including 7 of the top 10 in M&A, portfolio analytics, commercial strategy, R&D strategy, sales strategy, and medical strategy.

Murt is a Phi Beta Kappa, magna cum laude, and honors graduate of Oberlin College with a degree in biochemistry. He was part of the student government, played varsity tennis, and received awards and grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF), Howards Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI), and the American Chemical Society (ACS) for his research.

A Unique Organization Taking On the Challenges of the Industry
According to Orbytel Group one of the most significant challenges facing the industry is the ever-increasing cost of bringing an asset to market. This challenge is magnified by the increasing pricing pressure biopharma companies are facing. Consequently, companies are seeking ways to reduce costs and find efficiencies. Orbytel Group believes that the core of this challenge is pipeline asset assumption management. Assumptions about clinical differentiation, net pricing, reimbursement, product uptake, and promotional response need to be vigorously reviewed, debated, and carefully managed to ensure R&D investments that are generally made over 10 years and are in the hundreds of millions dollars reflect future market realities.

To address this large complex challenge, companies have to organize large volumes of data across many disciplines, develop analytic standards, and standardize decision making processes across thousands of individuals. It is a large high-risk cross-functional initiative that most companies are reluctant to undertake. Through its extensive and unique experiences with most of big-pharma for many years, Orbytel Group had a unique perspective. It took the best practices from many companies and created data standards and a common data structure. Following that, Orbytel created a custom technology platform designed for business planning and competitive intelligence. It allows end-users to interact, visualize, and act upon data consistently towards a common goal regardless of their department or discipline.

Helping Organizations to Make Better Decisions
Orbytel Group helps companies to manage, organize, and act on data so they can make better decisions. The organization mainly works in three areas - R&D/Medical Affairs, Finance, and Sales.

Within R&D/Medical Affairs, Orbytel offers two solutions: Meeting Assistant and Trials. These modules are focused on structuring complex clinical and scientific data in a way that is easier to understand, analyze, summarize, and communicate. They enable companies to track and manage much larger volumes of data which in turn improves their understanding of data generation opportunities and risks. For Finance, Orbytel offers a Forecasts module to help teams create, manage, and communicate long-term product valuations. It replaces MS Excel, standardizes forecasts across assets, countries and teams, and enables teams to understand the long-term financial implications of various clinical data scenarios. In short, it helps determine how to best direct R&D dollars.

Orbytel Group also helps companies run their sales forces more profitably. The solution provided by Orbytel simplifies sales operations & analytics, optimizes sales strategy on financial goals, and reduces dependency on multiple third-party systems and vendors. Through sophisticated analytics and reporting, data is presented in a way that helps individuals make better decisions. For a sales force of fewer than 100 individuals, a VP of Sales is able to run the entire system and process with no need for dedicated sales operations or analytics staff. This unified, highly-streamlined application assists enterprises in dealing with an increasingly difficult selling environment by lowering operational complexities and expenses.



> "Orbytel creates and implements data structures and processes that improve the way in which scientific, clinical and financial data is visualized, managed, and communicated."

Thanks to the innovative solutions provided by Orbytel Group, clients are now able to reduce costs and increase efficiency. They believe that by being able to make better decisions more consistently, its clients also gain broader strategic and competitive advantages.

Entering the Vertical
Murt started his career in pharma R&D as a chemist nearly twenty years ago and has always worked in the pharmaceutical industry. Orbytel Group will continue to focus on this industry. Murt believes the biopharma industry is currently under pressure but that it will come out stronger than ever and will have a profound impact on health in the next 30 years.

"The biopharma industry is at the cusp of an amazing intersection of genetic understanding, biological manufacturing capacity, and portable computing power. Truly amazing things are happening, and Orbytel Group is excited to be a part of the growth and optimistic that it will

have a role, however small, in positively impacting patient health outcomes."

Tackling Initial Rough Days and Future Plans

Orbytel Group started working on their technology in 2014, but did things backwards from the "norm". Rather than starting with the UX/UI, Orbytel focused on the data model. They approached it as an exploration of whether it could create a unified data model for the biopharma industry that could structure data in a meaningful way for R&D, finance, and commercial simultaneously.

Additionally, Orbytel Group worked on a data security model to easily handle the unique firewalls in the biopharma industry while also permitting the secure flow of data between departments compliantly. This created a low-level blueprint for the data structure it wanted to ultimately achieve.

When Orbytel was happy with its design, it looked for an application development platform to start building applications in which data flowed seamlessly and could easily automate workflows. Nothing readily available worked, and they made the tough - and expensive - decision to build their own platform called *Harmony.*

It took about a year to create the core platform and another year to work out the kinks, polish its features, and improve the UI. Their next big challenge was customer acquisition.

Finding individuals who were willing to listen and lead change via a new and potentially disruptive technology was difficult. Orbytel ended up coupling its new software products to its established services at strategic accounts. This helped to establish a track record and gradually increase their user base.

> "We provide Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) to help our clients accelerate therapeutic development and optimize commercial success."



According to Orbytel Group, starting with the data-model and building a platform from scratch was risky but everything fell into place eventually. Once people experienced the product's benefits and the company's service, they grew open to the changes and many provided referrals. In fact, in 2017 alone, their user base grew by over 300-fold and is still growing each month.

Orbytel's software is coupled with data and analytical services, training, and professional services - a unique full-service offering that its top-tier clients demand. Orbytel is very proud to have a 100 percent customer retention rate for the past 7 years. They plan on growing their user base with their existing products and expanding their product offerings to additional areas of R&D.