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AnalysisWorks

Helping Organizations Work Smarter

By *Corey Van't Haaff*

Identifying a problem is the first step in figuring out how to fix it, but what if you don't quite know exactly what the problem is? How do you make any progress in correcting a problem if you can't be absolutely certain what needs fixing?

Defining the problem and then using advanced analytics to resolve it is the business of AnalysisWorks. The management consulting firm uses evidence-based techniques to get to the root of the problem, and then uses analytical technologies and common-sense consulting skills to find a workable solution.

AnalysisWorks specializes in the effective application of leading edge analytics including pattern recognition, simulation modeling, and optimization, but always focuses first and foremost on finding a practical solution. The company works with operations, marketing, and financial decision-makers, giving them the power to make more effective decisions with a more complete picture of the data, processes, available options, and predicted outcomes.

"We use techniques to discover what the true problem is, and its causes. We focus on the client and their needs in the diagnostic phase so we know what needs to get done to solve that problem," says Jason Goto, president and principal consultant at AnalysisWorks. "It's not uncommon during the diagnostic phase to identify the real problem as something other than what the client thought it was."

AnalysisWorks' clients are primarily in healthcare, aerospace, and educational sectors. Its biggest challenge is that very few business leaders know what AnalysisWorks does, as the company operates in a niche that doesn't otherwise exist.

"Organizations don't always understand how we can support them," he says. "Organizations that call us are often frustrated that something is not working, even after multiple attempts to fix it. Some examples include improving patient flow, optimizing a global supply chain, building an evidence-based strategic plan, or allocating scarce resources to different business units. It isn't like they don't have smart people working or them; they have a lot of them. The value-add that we



bring to the table is our objectivity, being evidence-driven, and our innovative analytical technologies—we are evidence-driven; we don't do our work by gut feel or anecdotal evidence."

Sometimes the barrier to success is in how they are approaching the problem. These days, there are often many people to please from board members to executive leadership to front-line staff and unions. AnalysisWorks has learned that it often increases buy-in to the solution when the right stakeholders have been involved in arriving to that solution.

"Our approach is to observe the process, talk to the people, analyze the data, and then say, 'this is what the evidence is saying is the real problem.' That gives us a hint of the direction we need to go to develop the solution. We work with the internal team to work out options and discover which solution is the most actionable and which solution is ready to be implemented. Then we work with clients to arrive at a decision and we help to implement that decision so the work gets done and the organization can realize gains," says Goto. "We help organizations to understand their best course



of action. We help organizations operate at a higher level and we partner with them to make that happen."

AnalysisWorks has the best talent in the country when it comes to those adept at using analytical tools, linked with consulting skills.

"We attract great talent, because our team members value that they are able to make a positive impact," says Goto.

The company formed in 2000 and its business has grown by 25 per cent per year because it is able to generate results for clients.

"The outcome we achieve by the work we do is our main marketing tool. We help an organization achieve a degree of success, and other organizations ask how they can connect with us. We have repeat clients and we increase our client base through word-of-mouth," says Goto.



"The exciting thing in this type of work is we effect change. I believe there are many organizations that could use some help to get to the next level."

It is one of the fundamental differences between AnalysisWorks and other research/analytical firms or universities, which may be more interested in publishing results than implementing them.

"Our objective is to find

the best way to effect change, using our approach. We have seen organizations pay a lot of money for management consulting services and nothing happens. They write beautiful reports and nothing happens as the consultants focus primarily on delivering the report and not the ultimate outcome for the client."

He likens it to personal coaching; if a coach decides on a right course of action but

the client doesn't buy into it, even if it's the best advice in the world, it has been a waste.

"The best consultants figure out what you are willing and able to do, and then work with that to find a solution. We structure our engagements so that when the analysis and recommendations are done, we have coached the client along the way, and they are ready to take action when the solution is delivered," says Goto. "The client arrives at the discovery and root cause and solution along with us. As a result, they buy into it."

Client relationships, says Goto, are based on earned trust.

"When we make promises, we follow through and deliver. We say what we are going to do, then we do it. We enjoy a lot of high trust with our clients. Without that trust, they would not be asking us to support them," he says. "Whatever we do, we try to bring fresh thinking to the table. Our clients often say that they had 'never thought of that before.' Also, we really go above and beyond when it comes to delivering our work. Everyone who works here and all our clients are committed to making positive and measurable change." ♦

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