

Leveraging sustainable telehealth care business strategies in a post-pandemic era

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In conversation with Rachel Coxon, Vice President Healthcare, Barco APAC



Digital technologies are infiltrating every area of medical care, but the best solutions will optimise healthcare resources and enable improved health outcomes for patients. Telehealth services empower hospitals and clinics to do more with fewer resources and focus on complex procedures and severe conditions as community care gains importance. **Rachel Coxon**, Vice President Healthcare, Barco APAC shares more insights.

How did the pandemic affect the telehealth industry and what are the significant trends in the Southeast Asia region?

The pandemic accelerated adoption of telehealth services in countries, such as Singapore, Indonesia and Vietnam, that have active developer communities and strong governmental support. It emerged as an essential way to ensure that people could receive care without physically entering a hospital. Telehealth enabled medical care to be delivered quickly, especially to remote areas, and for information to be shared efficiently to produce better health outcomes.

The adoption of telemedicine solutions is projected to increase in the region. According to a 2020 survey by Bain & Company, 46 percent of people in the Asia Pacific region expect to use telemedicine at some point over the next five years. In the long-term, a hybrid model is emerging in healthcare to provide a more efficient experience for hospitals, clinicians, and patients.

What are the different business strategies that telehealth players can leverage for further growth in a post-pandemic world?

The business strategy for telehealth companies is no different from the strategy of any other business. Apart from having the

ability to anticipate key industry issues that need to be addressed, companies should also understand their solution's value proposition to customers. In the Southeast Asia region, there is also the added challenge of different healthcare regulations, languages, patient populations, and reimbursement schemes in each country, which makes designing a single solution challenging.

In a post-pandemic world, all players in the healthcare ecosystem will have to rethink their standard ways of working and the administration of healthcare. It's anticipated that there will be spending to prepare systems for the next pandemic, which means a renewed focus on infection control, new protocols, and software to shift patients to community care as well as the remote delivery of healthcare services. Some healthcare providers will also look at additional areas that can be converted when there is an overflow of critical patients in the hospital.

Are there any regulatory constraints in Southeast Asia that may impede the operations of telehealth players?

Some governments in the region eased restrictions on telehealth solutions, recognizing the benefits of the technology in combating COVID-19. However, regulators may need to reduce barriers further to facilitate widespread adoption. Singapore, for example, is moving forward with plans to license the industry in the upcoming Healthcare Services Act. Data protection and cybersecurity also remain key considerations, that each country in Southeast Asia must define to facilitate growth.

The challenge for tech players in launching a product in Southeast Asia is understanding how regulations vary to carefully select markets.