

NOVANT HEALTH

# Driving Innovation In Healthcare To Deliver A Remarkable Patient Experience

## **N** NOVANT HEALTH

Novant Health is a not-for-profit integrated healthcare system with a single vision: to deliver the remarkable patient experience. The healthcare provider's 25,000 employees and physician partners care for patients and communities in North Carolina, Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia. With 13 hospitals and a medical group consisting of approximately 1,200 physicians in 355 clinic locations, Novant is tasked with decentralizing innovation to reach front line employees in order to cultivate an empathic approach to improving patient experience.

## The Challenge

The United States ranked 37th in quality of care and number one in spend according to the World Health Organization's 2000 research released in 2011. While we can debate the method by which the 37th ranking was calculated, the trials facing healthcare are indisputable. But like the many challenges that are now engulfing us, the solutions lie not in the rearview mirror but rather in the imagination and creative solutions that have yet to be realized.

Novant Health has taken a progressive forward-looking approach to the challenges facing the healthcare industry; its vision rests with its belief that innovation in patient care should be driven clinically by care providers, and the organization has implemented an innovation program to facilitate this vision.

### CHALLENGE

Novant Health takes progressive approach to the challenges facing today's health care industry, all based around the belief that innovation in patient care should be driven by care providers. As such, Novant has pushed internally to constantly innovate.

### SOLUTION

Novant believes that the wisdom of many is typically better than the wisdom of a few, thus Novant chose the Spigit platform to collaborate and align employees with the strategic objectives of the organization.

### RESULT

Novant has been able to quickly implement key ideas submitted into the platform – such as shrinking the product development cycle down to eight weeks.

According to Matthew Gymer, Corporate Director of Innovation for Novant Health, "Novant is committed to the process of being agile and innovative in how we continue to deliver a remarkable patient experience. Our commitment to innovation is not only in the communities we serve, but nationally as well in how we forge new collaborations with partners to drive industry transformation."

Healthcare is a complex industry; many large healthcare systems seek to create more continuity across the offices, labs, and hospitals that make up the modern system. Novant recognized the opportunity and wanted to create an innovation infrastructure that created new communication, collaboration, and work systems for doctors, nurses, and clinicians to innovate seamlessly. Ironically, it is the healthcare providers who often have the least opportunity to collaborate in real time because they are seeing patients and are frequently siloed because of profession, organizational structure or physical proximity.

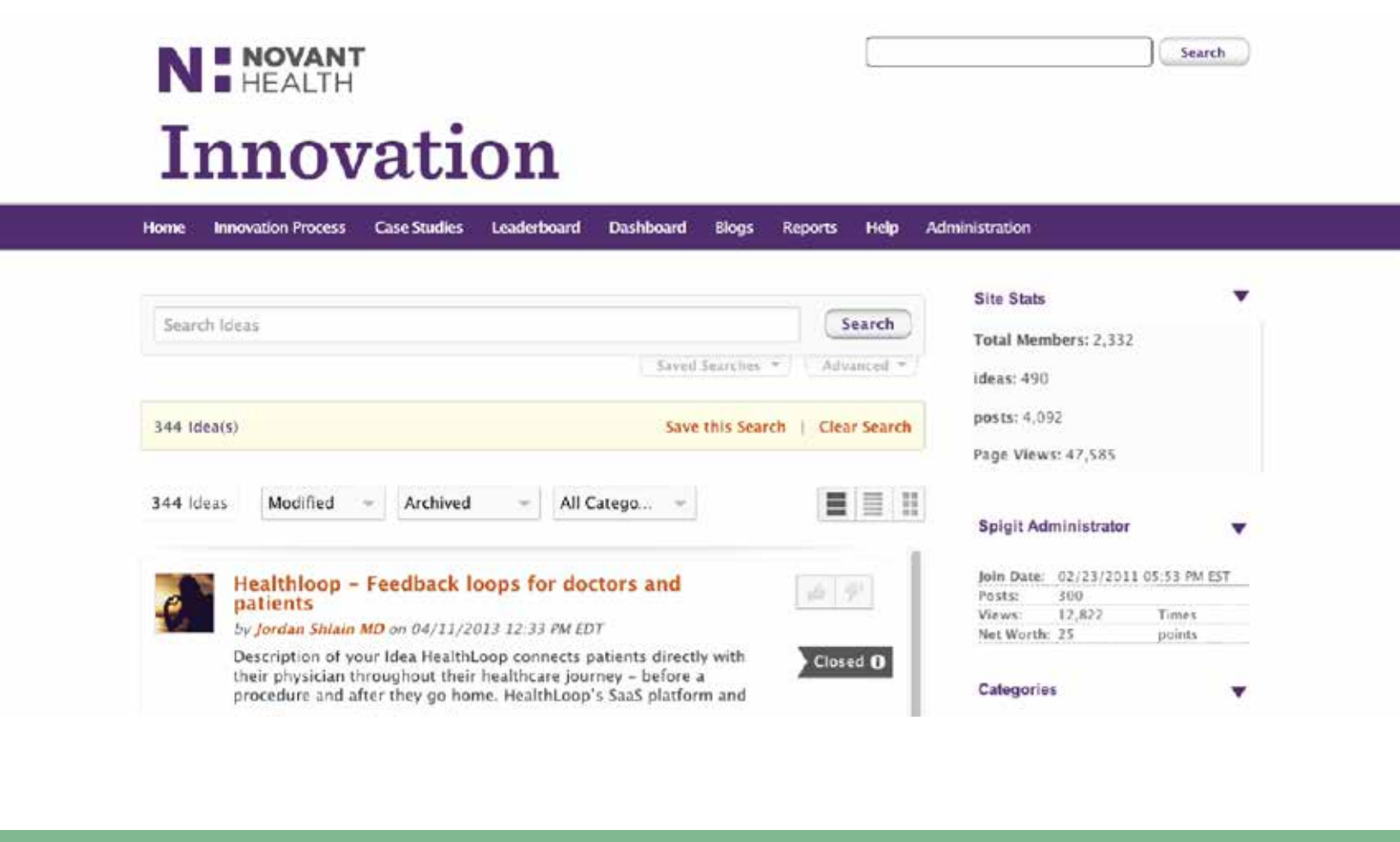
Matt and his Team identified three important design features that they wanted to address to drive innovation in patient care relative to how Novant Health delivers its vision of a Remarkable Patient Experience and to what they saw as critical to the healthcare industry at large:

**Boundary Spanning** - Novant wanted to develop a capability that allowed care givers to collaborate across the boundaries that have

historically defined healthcare – from professional boundaries where nurses, doctors, administrators, clinicians, and lab techs are all very siloed to market boundaries where geographies can be defined by different cultural norms. The ability to boundary-span time and space was also critical. Knowing that doctors and nurses would likely be logging into the system from home after hours, the Team didn't want clinicians to have to log on to the Novant network behind the firewall in order to do work.

**Story Telling** - Healthcare is very much driven by story telling and by the people that have been in the industry for a long time and have strong informal networks. Therefore, Gymer and his Team wanted to devise a program that uses narratives to propagate innovation amongst people.

**Development Cycle Time Reduction** - In the past it could take a year or two to develop a new concept and get it through the system. Gymer realized the need to shrink this and put a 90-day stake in the ground – meaning that in 90 days the organization could collect ideas and move the best ones into the operational and clinical improvement test phase, and eventually implementation.



The screenshot shows the Novant Health Innovation Spigit interface. At the top left is the Novant Health logo. A search bar is located at the top right. Below the logo is the word "Innovation" in a large, bold, purple font. A navigation menu includes: Home, Innovation Process, Case Studies, Leaderboard, Dashboard, Blogs, Reports, Help, and Administration. The main content area features a search bar for "Search Ideas" with a "Search" button, "Saved Searches", and "Advanced" options. Below this, it shows "344 Idea(s)" with "Save this Search" and "Clear Search" buttons. There are filters for "344 Ideas", "Modified", "Archived", and "All Catego...". A featured idea card is visible with the title "Healthloop - Feedback loops for doctors and patients" by Jordan Shlain MD on 04/11/2013 12:33 PM EDT. The card description reads: "Description of your Idea HealthLoop connects patients directly with their physician throughout their healthcare journey – before a procedure and after they go home. HealthLoop's SaaS platform and". A "Closed" button is present on the card. On the right side, there is a "Site Stats" section showing: Total Members: 2,332, Ideas: 490, posts: 4,092, Page Views: 47,585. Below that is the "Spigit Administrator" section with details: Join Date: 02/23/2011 05:53 PM EST, Posts: 300, Views: 12,822, Net Worth: 25 points. At the bottom right is a "Categories" section.

“The comments within the platform are full of great stories and subject matter expertise. When people post a comment in an idea thread, when they share their experience and tell their story, they are driving new collaborations... People are eager to submit ideas because they can see that IT, Marketing, and legal for example are helping shape their idea.”

Matthew Gymer  
Novant Health, Team member

---

## The Solution

Because Novant believes that the wisdom of many is typically better than the wisdom of a few, social technology in the innovation space was identified as an ideal way to boundary-span. Gymer and his team went through a formal project management review with their IT group and looked at several vendors in the crowdsourcing space.

“What attracted me most to Spigit was that the people at the company transcended a variety of industries and possessed the best practices that we needed,” said Gymer. “We needed to understand best practices for marketing innovation challenges for example. We needed guidance in designing the user interface for the innovation management process and the website.”

“The Spigit team has great expertise in this area and is big enough to bring the appropriate use cases forward and provide hands-on support that enabled us to turn our strategic vision into operational reality. We really benefitted from what Spigit clients were seeing and doing in a variety of industries. That was the partnership piece that allowed us to think through long-term design considerations.”

Spigit initially prescribed crowdsourcing time-based challenges as part of Novant’s program design. This approach allows an organization to quickly align large audiences with the strategic objectives of the company and to draw on the latent knowledge and talent of many minds to solve for an outcome. A side benefit is then a self-reinforcing success story that can be re-marketed back to the organization.

With more than 3 million registered nurses (RNs) nationwide, nursing is the nation’s largest healthcare profession with arguably the most touch points in terms of direct care that affect patient experience. In selecting the first challenge to crowdsource, Gymer recognized that the nursing population while perhaps the most difficult to enlist due to time and access constraints, held the most promise in terms of involving the maximum number of front-line care providers.

“We started with a challenge to a portion of our nursing community of 3,000,” said Gymer. “We have many Chief Nursing Officers (CNOs) who are very engaged so we wanted the challenge to come from CNOs and migrate down to nurse managers, and then managers could propagate to front-line staff.”

As part of Novant’s initial Springboard workshop, a session that builds cross-functional alignment around key pillars of program design, the Novant architects identified communication mediums to help promote the program. Thanks to a nurse in attendance the group realized that nurses rely more on the bulletin board in the locker room and their weekly ‘huddle meetings’ with managers than on email.

Integrating Spigit feedback and reports into these offline huddle rituals was a key aspect in the communications strategy for launching and propagating success stories related to the online engagement. During the four-week idea capture period of the challenge, nursing leaders received weekly engagement reports for their huddles that shared their activity on the Spigit platform and how their group was stacking up against different hospitals on a market-by-market basis.

## The Result

In terms of predefined success criteria Gymer was looking at response rate and overall engagement criteria that will define the development of the community moving forward. Gymer realized that he needed to understand who the community really is in order to optimize for the community.

“The comments within the platform are full of great stories and subject matter expertise,” said Gymer. “When people post a comment in an idea thread, when they share their experience and tell their story, they are driving new collaborations. To help that process along, we have designed a reward system so people from all departments can have a voice in the innovation process. If you innovate at Novant, you are awarded a badge so that idea submitters know that different business people from across the organization are on the platform. People are eager to submit ideas because they can see that IT, Marketing, and legal for example are helping shape their idea.”

Novant is developing the attributes and the supporting training materials that encourage innovation amongst their people. But what the Team is seeing is that people tend to take on the tactics that they like. There are those who like to submit ideas but not comment, those who most often like to comment, and others who just want to observe. Matt and his Team are monitoring that, sending out personalized notes, and training material so that if people want to take on a piece of moderation or be a subject matter expert, for example, they can opt into a role that is bigger than their defined job title.

“One of my proudest moments so far was a nurse that we have in our Virginia market who joined without prodding, figured it out and began submitting ideas and commenting,” said Gymer. “When I saw her overwhelming activity level, I called her and sent her the templates for the different roles. She naturally assumed a connector role and has become the informal leader for the market. By her efforts alone she’s created an innovation community node and is teaching others how to be change agents.”

As far as results are concerned, Gymer said that even at the early stages he and his team received great ideas that the organization can immediately act on. With respect to time reduction, Matt and his team have been able to meet their goal of shrinking the product development cycle down to eight weeks.

Gymer said that the landscape at Novant has evolved to be more forward thinking as a result of senior leadership driving and supporting the innovation process. “I’m not exactly sure where we will end up as we are all still learning,” said Gymer. “But our CEO appreciates that in order to navigate the industry changes we need to proactively hear from everyone in the company and our industry partners in order to continue to deliver The Remarkable Patient Experience in the communities we serve.

Spigit was founded to help companies unleash the power of their employees, partners, and customers to drive innovation. Spigit is the leading software for crowdsourced innovation, and is used by leading companies in systems integration, financial services, insurance, pharmaceutical, healthcare, technology, and more, including IBM, Capgemini, Citibank, and Pfizer. Spigit’s 4.5M users from 150+ countries have generated over \$1B in increased revenue from their enterprise innovation programs. Spigit is a wholly owned subsidiary of Mindjet, and is headquartered in San Francisco with offices throughout the U.S., U.K., France, Germany, and Australia.

SPIGIT | [spigit.com](http://spigit.com) | [hello@spigit.com](mailto:hello@spigit.com) | (US) 1-855-774-4480 | (US) 1-415-229-4200

Spigit is registered trademarks of Spigit, Inc. Fortune 100 is a registered trademark of the FORTUNE magazine division of Time Inc.