### **PIWIK PRO**

### How to Improve the Digital Journey in Healthcare with Web Analytics & Personalization

A Practical Guide to Enhancing the Usability of Patient-Facing Platforms While Keeping Sensitive Data Secure



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### An introduction

Healthcare tends to be one of the slower adopters of analytics and marketing technologies. That often hurts the quality of digital services and negatively affects patient satisfaction. However, despite many restrictions, the industry is not condemned to act on assumptions that modern analytics can't be used in their industry.

We believe that with the right approach to data privacy, companies operating in this sector can not only improve patient satisfaction with their services, but also gain a competitive advantage over other healthcare institutions that haven't recognized the potential of web analytics and content personalization tools.

That's why in this guide we want to familiarize you with the practical aspects of enhancing the customer journey in healthcare. We're going to:

- 1. Address the most common concerns and challenges involved in using patients' data to increase their satisfaction with healthcare services.
- 2. Discuss the key aspects of choosing the right marketing technology partners (in this case, web analytics and content personalization vendors) for companies operating in healthcare industry.
- 3. Present four actionable use cases of how web analytics and content personalization can be utilized to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your digital platforms.

We hope that the information contained in this ebook will be useful for developing your own strategy for improving the patient digital journey.

### The needs, fears and myths around e-healthcare and the customer experience

Over the past few years, there have been only a few sectors which have experienced such a dramatic technological disruption as in healthcare. The healthcare industry is increasing the volume of patient interactions through various digital platforms. These new digital interactions allow them to not only reduce business costs, but also to catch up with the latest trends in customer service.

### "The Amazon effect"

There is also a so-called "Amazon effect" that the healthcare industry has to address when designing their digital platforms. The term describes the expectations of customers who have gotten used to the level of convenience provided by Amazon and seek the same experience with every online service.

Patients are less willing than before to spend time on mundane procedures, like filling out paper forms or using telephones to schedule an appointment. They expect instant access to medical care, customer service, test results and their health records from every device they have. And exactly as with Amazon, they expect transparent prices and extensive data that will help them make informed decisions related to their health. Patient engagement platforms are the answer to those expectations.

#### A short introduction:

### What is a patient engagement platform and what benefits does it provide?

A patient engagement platform is a digital tool designed to improve management of healthcare services and collaboration between patients, physicians, and healthcare administrative staff. It also personalizes and transforms an individual's patient journey.

It has many advantages over traditional healthcare platforms:

#### 1. It makes it easier to take advantage of healthcare services

Your patients don't have to leave the platform to pay for a visit, check their medical records, schedule an appointment, seek medical advice, or perform other healthcare activities. It makes taking advantage of your services less difficult. Providing your clients with access to a centralized platform noticeably improves their satisfaction and makes it easier for them to take care of their own health.

#### 2. It ensures faster recovery

Patient engagement platforms allow patients to easily adhere to doctors' treatment schedules, post-discharge plans, and more. These innovations lead to better healthcare outcomes.

#### 3. It reduces readmissions

Not many people realize that readmissions result in high costs for both patients and hospitals. Thanks to patient engagement platforms, healthcare providers can more effectively manage activities such as follow-ups and post-discharge treatments.

Unfortunately, for such platforms to actually engage users and live up to their expectations, they must be continually analyzed for effectiveness and user-friendliness, as well as deliver a personalized user experience. In the case of healthcare, this can be quite a challenge.

# Data breaches cast a long shadow on healthcare

Healthcare organizations can't exactly compete with the speed of change in retail or even banking. There are still a few issues holding the industry back from accelerating the process of digitization and boosting the utility of their online services. One of them, fully understandable, is connected to an always-present fear of data breaches.

In the digital era, breaches of data tend to occur quite frequently. However, such incidents are especially common in the healthcare sector.

A recent report from the Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights showed that in 2016, in the US alone, there have been 329 reported data breaches of more than 500 records. A report from the Ponemon Institute estimated that 90 percent of healthcare organizations have experienced data breach in the past two years. Every mishap of that sort is not only extremely dangerous but also expensive - the same report from the Ponemon Institute calculated that the average cost of a breach is \$8 million!

Yet the most serious costs emerging from breaches are more indirect. Data breaches undermine patients' trust making them less willing to share their private and often sensitive information with their healthcare provider. A lack of trust can also cast a shadow of doubt over the patient-doctor relationship, possibly negatively affecting healthcare outcomes.

It's no wonder why healthcare providers are afraid to use any new technology that could potentially jeopardize the security of their data.

# Strict data privacy requirements of HIPAA and GDPR

There are also very strict data privacy laws healthcare sector has to adhere to. In recent years the US and Europe have been rushing to make sure that data privacy, particularly for healthcare related data, is a top concern of companies based in their territory. Recent regulations and data privacy rules only emphasize this—in the US health data is regulated by HIPAA, and in Europe the EU has created new data privacy regulations (GDPR) to make Europe fit for the digital age.

Both regulations significantly tighter limits of use for patient data. They also impose a number of responsibilities on technology partners of healthcare companies. All this makes the digitization of medical care an enormous challenge.

# Myths are slowing down healthcare digitalization

There are also other factors that should be taken under consideration when analyzing the state of digitalization in healthcare. As it turns out, many fears concerning online medical services are fueled by misconceptions and outdated information. The "McKinsey Digital Patient Survey" revealed many surprising insights about the way patients perceive e-healthcare. It also debunked many myths surrounding the sector, such as:

### Myth #1: People don't want to use digital services for healthcare

Many people believe that the slow adoption of digital technologies in healthcare is caused mostly by the very nature of medical care and the type of information it uses. However, the reasons why patients are not interested in taking advantage of digital healthcare are quite different. The survey showed that more than 75 percent of respondents were keen on using digital solutions if those solutions were able to provide them with a sufficient level of quality.

### Myth #2: Older generations are not keen on digital services

Another common myth is the idea that only younger generations want to use digital healthcare services such as patient engagement platforms. McKinsey's survey debunks it as well.

It holds that patients from all age groups are keen on using digital services for healthcare. And what's even more interesting: Older patients (50+) want to use digital healthcare services almost as much as younger respondents!

### Myth #3: Patients want innovative services and ground-breaking apps

It's a popular belief that digital services should be innovative. However, the study showed that patients expect that their online healthcare systems will:

- Be efficient.
- Give them better and quicker access to information.
- Integrate with other channels.
- Allow them to contact a real person (if necessary).

The same conclusion can be found in "Empowering The Consumer Healthcare Journey", a study conducted by UpWard. It showed that when it comes to healthcare websites and apps, more than 70 percent consumers want to be able to take advantage of the following features:

- Contact information/directions/hours
- Lab and imaging results
- Personalized post-care instructions and follow-up
- Insurance acceptance and coverage
- Electronic health records
- Account info/bill pay
- Fill out pre-admission forms in advance of a visit
- Treatment cost estimates
- After-hours/emergency physician contact information
- Symptoms and treatment options
- Account changes/management
- Appointment self-scheduling

The list of the desired features is not extensive or surprising. It proves that patients place quality over the quantity or innovation of the services offered.

That's why it's so important to focus on optimizing the digital journey of patients and personalizing their experience to help them get the information they need quicker and in a more convenient way. And there's no better way to tackle this issue than with reliable data on hand.

This approach will result in eliminating potential obstacles and tricky steps in patients' digitial journey and help healthcare companies gain a technological advantage over their competitors.

With the right tools at your fingertips you'll able be able to define:

- 1. Touchpoints: the places where patients come into contact with a healthcare provider
- 2. Positives: outcomes leaving patients feeling good about the experience
- 3. Pain points: places of friction where the patient's experience does not go smoothly

Living up to the golden standard of Amazon services requires putting analytical tools to work. And then in order to tackle all the important regulatory requirements plus avoid data breaches, you'll need reliable technology partners providing powerful, privacy-oriented products.

We'll show you exactly how to achieve those goals in the rest of this whitepaper.

# Web analytics for healthcare: important features to look for

As was mentioned earlier, success in enhancing patients' digital journey depends on understanding their digital preferences. That's why it's crucial to base your digital strategy on reliable statistics and measurable data.

Unfortunately, there is an extensive list of requirements healthcare providers should bear in mind when searching for the right tools. This shouldn't come as a surprise. Healthcare is a sector that operates on sensitive data—protected health information (PHI). This kind of data requires going the extra mile to ensure the total privacy of patients.

That's why in order to measure the performance of your healthcare platform, you need to find a reliable technology partner. One that will allow you to capture pertinent information on the behavior of your patients without putting data privacy at risk.

Here you can find some tips on what to look for in a web analytics tool for the healthcare industry. The right tool should:

### 1. Protect the privacy of your patients' data

In such a demanding sector, operating on huge amounts of confidential data, it's crucial to apply high privacy standards to all information gathered through analytics tools. First, it's necessary to comply with all the regulations imposed on the healthcare industry. Second, it will avoid data breaches and protect your reputation. Fortunately, there are at least a couple of ways to handle your marketing data with proper respect for the privacy of your clients.

See our list below of steps to take for a bulletproof web analytics setup for a healthcare organization:

### a) Store your data in a compliant environment

Adhering to these rules will probably be the most important task you'll have to accomplish on your journey to creating a compliant web analytics setup. Both HIPAA and the GDPR prescribe the web analytics infrastructure requirements you will have to satisfy in order to fully comply. However, HIPAA also requires signing business associate agreement (BAA) with every third party that has access to the PHI of your patients.

#### Not sure what a BAA is?

A BAA is a contract between a HIPAA-covered entity and its business associates. It obliges both sides of the contract to safeguard protected health information (PHI) in alignment with the guidelines provided by HIPAA.

As you may already know, many marketing technology vendors avoid signing such an agreement. It's this way for at least two reasons:

- Handling data in alignment with HIPAA introduces advanced data privacy demands which often cannot be met with many standard web analytics solutions (especially those operating in public cloud environments).
- Signing a BAA introduces major responsibilities for both sides of the contract. As business associates, web analytics vendors are directly liable under HIPAA and can become subject to penalties (both civil and criminal!) in the case of unauthorized use and disclosure of PHI.

Fortunately, there's a way to work around this problem. How? Instead of convincing your vendor to sign a BAA with you, you can seek a platform that allows you to store all PHI collected on your own servers or in a private cloud environment. If you want to learn more about this topic, we advise you to read this blog post: You Don't Have to Sign a BAA With Your Web Analytics Vendor to be HIPAA-compliant.

### b) Encrypt your data

It's one of the restrictions imposed by HIPAA. The regulation states that in order to provide sufficient security for collected PHI, you should be able to encrypt your data. It applies not only to the information actively used by your employees, but also to data lying dormant on a server somewhere (data at rest).

Before signing a contract with any marketing technology vendor, you should make sure that your data storage infrastructure allows you to encrypt PHI.

### A piece of advice

In this case, a great solution may be a tool kept in an on-premises environment (like the on-premises version of Piwik PRO), or in a private cloud environment. This resolution also lets you to implement your own compliance procedures and additional security measures.

If you want to learn more about the pros and cons of going on-premises with your analytics, we advise you to read this blog post.

### c) Use authentication to log into your web analytics system

One of the most popular authentication techniques is single sign-on (SSO). The method allows for the use of a single set of login credentials to access various accounts and applications. It's not only extremely helpful for users, but also for the employees operating on the back end. It lets administrators see user activities within the system. It also allows them to monitor users' accounts from one easily managed central database and have control over the entire platform.

The list of the most popular SSO methods includes: SAML (security assertion markup language), LDAP (lightweight directory access protocol) and OAuth2. It's possible that your company is already taking advantage of one of these solutions. That's why when seeking the right marketing technology vendor for your business, you should check if their solution is compatible with your preferred SSO method.

### d) Minimize the amount of data you collect

The rule of thumb when collecting and utilizing data in sensitive sectors is to cultivate data minimization. Not sure what it means? The term applies to the practice of limiting the collection of personal information (in healthcare that will include PHI) to cases where it's directly relevant and necessary to accomplish a specified purpose. This practice is becoming more and more popular as companies and governments are beginning to see the value in a "less is more" approach.

Why? First of all, recent data privacy regulations such as GDPR and HIPAA demand limiting collection of data to the absolute minimum necessary. Second, relatively limited collection of data prevents you from capturing a tsunami of unnecessary information—the kind you'll never put to good use.

### A piece of advice

In the case of limiting the amount of data, a tag management system (TMS) may prove useful. This tool will allow you to pre-define what particular kinds of data you'll gather with your web analytics solution. However, it's extremely important to find a TMS that will not jeopardize the privacy of PHI you want to collect. That's why you should definitely look for a privacy-friendly tool (like the on-premises version of Piwik PRO Tag Manager—if you want to read more about it, we encourage you to read this blog post).

### e) Set granular permissions for the information gathered by your web analytics

This point is closely connected to the previous one. You should restrict not only the amount of information you collect, but also the number of employees who will have access to particular kinds of data.

That's why your ideal tool should allow you to set permissions for particular data collections. That way you'll be 100% sure that confidential information about your patients won't fall into the wrong hands. You'll also provide your employees with a decent, but not overwhelming, set of information. After all, you should remember that what can be useful for the UX department won't necessarily be essential for the hospital administration staff.

### 2. Fit for your organization

The right digital analytics tool can provide a strong foundation for creating effective promotional campaigns, designing user-friendly interfaces and improving the general satisfaction of your patients.

However, in the case of enterprises (we can put healthcare organizations in this category) choosing an adequate solution may be a challenge. There are at least a couple of issues you may stumble upon while searching for technology that can fit the needs of large business:

### a) Data sampling for high traffic

Huge amounts of traffic can be both a gift and a curse. It proves that many people visit your website and that your services are getting the attention of current and prospective clients. But with high traffic, most analytic solutions rely on data sampling when generating reports.

This is especially the case if you want to avoid data sampling, which typically occurs when your website experiences more than 500,000 hits per month (at least that is true for the free version of Google Analytics). For healthcare organizations dealing with hundreds of thousands of patients on a daily basis, it's more than likely to occur.

Not sure what data sampling means and why it may skew your data? Then you should definitely read this blog post.

That's why you should seek an enterprise-ready tool: one that will allow you to take advantage of advanced functionalities but at the same time handle spikes in website traffic.

### b) Gather information from every website and app you're using

As a healthcare organization, you probably take advantage of a vast set of channels to communicate with your current and prospective clients.

The list would typically include:

- Your company website.
- Patient engagement platform (where content is available after logging into the system).
- The mobile or app version of your platform.

You'll need a solution that will allow you to track the data from each and every one of them. It should also provide you with valuable reports, giving an overview of your patients' whole customer journey—the way they interact with your apps, schedule appointments, read your articles or seek medical advice.

#### A piece of advice

Although with this paper we don't aim to delve deep into the technicalities of the products, there's one important feature to look for in your future web analytics platform - it's called user-centric reporting.

#### What is user-centric reporting?

User-centric reporting provides you with deep insights into a visitor's individual behavior by summarizing and listing their visits. It takes information about them to compose Visitor Profiles, which you can use to prepare individual profiles for the most important segments of website visitors. Ultimately, user-level reporting helps to uncover the entire journey customers take across all of their digital touchpoints.

You can learn more about it here.

### c) Integrate with other tools used in your organization

Healthcare data tends to be located in at least several systems, such as:

- EMR (electronic medical records)
- HR software
- Internal systems of different departments (for instance, cardiology or pharmacy)
- Physical data storage
- Web analytics platform (in some cases)

What makes things even more difficult is the fact that healthcare data also comes in different formats - text, video, images, old digitized medical records and more. As a result, it's hard to aggregate it all into one centralized system, not to mention make it more actionable and optimize patients' digital experience.

That's why it's important to seek a web analytics solution that will easily integrate with third-party tools. With access to raw data you'll be able to aggregate all the important information from various sources and create clear, informative reports with the tools of your choice.

# Personalization and data privacy in healthcare

Although web analytics is a powerful tool that delivers insightful information about the way patients interact with your platform, it's personalization that will allow you to make your data actionable. With this tool at your fingertips, you'll be able to tailor the experience of specified groups of users, providing them with easy access to information and services that are relevant to their needs. We feel that this technology is still quite new, so requires further introduction.

#### What is personalization?

Personalization tools allow you to segment your visitors and then display customized messages on your website or mobile app. Although the possibilities of using personalization are endless, several areas lend themselves more easily to its use:

- Product & content recommendations
- Cross-promotion

### The advantages of personalization

Personalized content and offers are powerful. A recent study found that personalized promotional emails produce six times the revenue than those that weren't personalized. Additionally, another study showed that personalized promotional content receives ten times more clicks than non-personalized offers.

Adding even more weight to the argument, the results of Janrain & Harris Interactive's survey found that nearly three-fourths of respondents got frustrated when content appearing on the websites they're visiting is not relevant to their interests.

The same goes for healthcare. When a patient visits the doctor for the first time they expect an initial background interview. But when they come back for another visit, they do not want to repeat everything they've said during the first appointment. Otherwise, they feel the doctor isn't paying enough attention to their treatment.

Your online visitors expect your digital platform to do the same thing.

Keep in mind, however, that the line between making your patients comfortable and being intrusive is quite thin. This is especially true in healthcare marketing where privacy is a paramount concern. On one hand, people want to find information that's relevant to them and their specific healthcare needs. But on the other hand, this can't be at the cost of patients feeling uneasy about the amount of information strangers (in this case - marketers!) have about their health conditions.

A survey conducted in 2015 showed that consumers are concerned about the way companies use their data. Nearly 96 percent of the respondents claimed that the idea that businesses and organizations know the information required to serve them personalized ads makes them feel uncomfortable.

#### Important note

Bear in mind that your content personalization tool should adhere to all the data privacy demands listed earlier in this paper!

# Possible threats: The Mega-Rule and its role in promoting healthcare products

Sector restrictions prohibit the use of an individual's PHI for marketing purposes without signing an authorization. And that's definitely something you shouldn't disregard when using content personalization or other promotional activities. The requirements were established in HIPAA, and the HITECH Act. However, the most recent law—known as The Mega-Rule (HIPAA Omnibus Rule)—excludes the following from the definition of marketing:

- Treatment of an individual by a healthcare provider (i.e case management or care coordination for the individual, direct recommendations for alternative treatments, therapies, healthcare providers)
- Describing a health-related product or service (or payment for such a product or service) included in a plan of benefits
- Information about a company being part of a healthcare provider network or health plan network, including replacement of, or enhancements to, a health plan
- Health-related products or services that add value to a health plan, but are not part of it
- Case management or care coordination, when providers contact individuals with information about treatment alternatives, and related functions; as long as these activities do not fall within the definition of treatment

It means that there's a lot of room for promotional activities that won't violate regulations and also won't require the consent of your patients. That's why in the next section of this paper you'll find four use cases which put web analytics data to work but at the same time are fully compliant with the demands of the data privacy restrictions imposed on healthcare.

# Using web analytics and content personalization to improve patient's digital journey

For the purpose of this paper, we'll focus on use cases involving web analytics and content personalization working together to deliver the best results. Our challenge will be to use this tool to enhance the digital journey in patient-facing platforms and applications.

Why focus our attention there? First, because it's more challenging. These kinds of platforms are filled with sensitive data and should be handled with due diligence. Second, because patient-facing modules are the place where your clients spend the most time and perform the most activities on the platform. That's why it's so important to design them to fit your patient's needs and expectations.

For your convenience, we'll explain every use case with an example from the Piwik PRO Marketing Suite.

So without further ado, let's see what can be accomplished with the right tools:

# USE CASE #1: Improving sign up rate for flu vaccines

Let's say you're a product manager for a major health insurance company who is trying to improve the signup rate for flu vaccines. It is recommended that everyone over the age of 65 gets vaccinated as the lack of preventive care in that case can result in serious complications. Currently you have over 2 million registered members over the age of 65, but only 20% of them get vaccinated every year. This is causing many health complications and driving up healthcare costs for both your members and your company.

• Your data shows that of the 2 million members over the age of 65, around 500,000 of them regularly log into your online health insurance platform.

- Your IT department evaluates and then installs Piwik PRO on your local infrastructure. You import the data into Piwik PRO Data Manager and use the Piwik PRO On-Premises Content Personalization engine to create a pop-up prompting your members to register for the flu vaccine online. Even better, you tailor the pop-up to be displayed to everyone over the age of 65 every time they log into your platform (before and during the flu season).
- You're able to monitor the interaction of your users with the campaign. You see how many of those that were shown the pop-up signed up for the vaccination programme.

The result: Vaccination rates increase from 20% to 26% following the personalization campaign for 500,000 online members ages 65+. You've just helped over 30,000 additional people get vaccinated and prevent possible health complications. In the process both your patients and your company save on the cost of the much more expensive flu treatment.

## USE CASE #2: Increasing patient engagement via personalized recommendations

You lead a team assigned to a project with the main goal of increasing patient engagement with your e-health platform. The concrete target is to reduce the number of phone calls asking for the information that can be easily accessed online.

To do so, you deploy the Piwik PRO Data Management and Content Personalization platform. Based on feedback received from the customer service department regarding the most frequently asked questions, you set up the following personalization campaigns:

- A pop-up reminder, reminding patients about their yearly checkups. You import the data containing the latest appointment dates into Piwik PRO Data Management, where you define audiences and use them to configure the campaign inside of Piwik PRO Personalization.
- A second pop-up reminder about an upcoming visit or video consultation with the doctor whenever the patients logs into the platform.
- Recommendations of other services offered by your organization via patient engagement platform based on patient records and previously consumed content.

The result: Your content personalization campaigns result in 30% less phone calls, higher engagement with your platforms content and a 20% raise in the number of services being upsold and cross-sold via your platform.

# USE CASE #3: Analyze visitor behavior to increase the donation rate for annual fundraising

Let's imagine you're a marketing manager for a large hospital who has been tasked with helping spread the word for your annual fundraiser to support cancer patients. There are over 250,000 unique users who visit your website every month. However, despite having a banner on the homepage announcing the event, only 1% of all visitors click to learn more about it. You want to make a data-driven decision on how to optimize the performance of your donation banner, so you do the following:

- Implement Piwik PRO Analytics and Tag Manager and learn that only 30% of your visitors scroll below the fold–where the fundraiser banner was placed.
- Having this data, you move the fundraiser banner above the fold.

The result: The click-through rates of your banner increase from 1% to 3%. That's leads to significantly more visitors signing up and participating in the fundraiser. This contributes to greater awareness and more money collected for the treatment of cancer patients.

### USE CASE #4: Use segments to target those with chronic illnesses and provide them with valuable recommendations regarding their treatment

Let's say you plan to improve online medical care for patients afflicted with chronic illnesses, like diabetes, hepatitis or arthritis. You want the patient-facing platform to display relevant health recommendations regarding particular illnesses, including recommended dietary plans, exercises, supplements and more. That way, you'll help your patients improve the quality of their lives, despite the disease, and enhance their satisfaction with your services.

- You import the chronic illness data of your patients into Piwik PRO Data Management to create enriched client profiles. You then build audiences to count and segment sufferers of chronic conditions (e.g. audience #1: users with arthritis, audience #2: users with diabetes, audience #3: users with hepatitis, audience #4:...).
- Then you use the audiences in a personalization campaign. On customized banners and other placements, you promote content that is relevant to patients with certain health conditions (e.g. personalized care instructions or dietary recommendations for patients who suffer from diabetes, or stretches to improve pain management for patients suffering from arthritis).

The result: Your patients are more informed about the nature of their conditions and they take steps to improve the results of their treatment by changing their lifestyle choices. The cost of treating patients decreases and their quality of life increases. They actively prevent complications from their diseases and improve their chronic disease management strategies.

### Summary

Healthcare is an industry with some of the most restrictive regulations on handling personal data. But with the right tools, you'll be able to fulfill all the obligations imposed on you and at the same time maintain the quality of the data you collect and act on.

We hope that all the information gathered here will shed more light on the whole process of utilizing web analytics and content personalization to improve the customer journey in healthcare.

However, we are aware of the complexity of the topic and of the many questions that may come up during such a complex operation.

That's why, in case of any doubts or queries, we hope you'll simply get in touch with us. We'd be happy to share our knowledge with you!

### Schedule a FREE demo to see the Piwik PRO Marketing Suite!

Find out why healthcare institutions value the performance & security level of Piwik PRO's Marketing Suite. Schedule a discussion with one of our Piwik PRO experts and see how we can help your organisation succeed.

#### Request a Demo

### About Piwik PRO

AdTech and MarTech experts founded Piwik PRO in 2013 due to the lack of an analytics stack that was both high performance and privacy-friendly. Our suite of products marries privacy by design, flexible hosting and full data ownership with enterprise-level features and support.

The Piwik PRO team consists of seasoned analytics experts and engineers who have advised on and delivered a wide range of successful implementations. Acting as your technology partner, we share our expertise, tailor our products and services to match your particular goals, and support you from start to finish.

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