



Roche Diagnostics leverages fast-built Smartsheet solution to manage COVID-19 test distribution and data analysis

Roche Diagnostics collaborated with Smartsheet experts to rapidly create a solution to track demand prioritization, distribution, and use of COVID-19 diagnostic and antibody tests in the U.S., allowing distribution to the areas in greatest need and rapid reporting of pandemic data to federal health authorities.



Smartsheet has offered us the ability to integrate other platforms, information flows, and workflows that our existing solutions were not able to meet. As we have developed these solutions, they have replaced stand-alone applications. They have replaced countless communications that are very inefficient. And we have seen productivity increases within our product project management organization of 30% and 40%. Same head count, more projects, more improved customer experiences, simply by eliminating waste and utilizing a more efficient platform.



Bryan Langford, Vice President, Implementation, Planning, and Support, Roche Diagnostics North America



Customer:

Roche Diagnostics

Industry:

Healthcare

Organization Size:

Enterprise (10,000+ employees)

Region:

North America

Website:

diagnostics.roche.com

Roche Diagnostics leads the industry in the development of diagnostics products for cancer, cardiac health, infectious diseases, women's health and diabetes management.

Background

Roche has been at the forefront of health research for decades, with a global portfolio of medicines and diagnostics encompassing oncology, immunology, ophthalmology, infectious diseases and neuroscience. When Jonathon Fullerton joined the company as senior manager of the commercial project management office eight years ago, he was surprised to find that the company's cutting-edge scientific work was supported by a mixture of paper-based processes and stand-alone word processing and spreadsheet documents. Within a few years, Fullerton's efforts to digitize and automate project management led to the implementation of Smartsheet.

"We decided it was time to reinvent how we project-manage our implementations," Fullerton says. "We selected Smartsheet as a vendor and developed a very customized solution. Smartsheet's connectivity allows us to integrate other systems of record around the company. We can really tie in with other enterprise systems and share data and processes."

Roche had been using Smartsheet for a few years when the emergence of COVID-19 and its rapid spread around the world created a new project management challenge. By early March 2020, Roche was poised to bring the first federally approved high throughput COVID-19 diagnostic test to the U.S. market. Langford and his colleagues realized that manufacturing could not possibly keep up with exploding demand; Roche needed a way to identify the communities with the greatest immediate need and direct supplies to them, and to pivot quickly as those priorities evolved.

"We needed something that was incredibly flexible, because in the world of COVID things change every day, if not every hour," says Lisa Glavan, marketing product manager at Roche. "We needed something that was very robust, knowing that we'd be gathering a lot of data over an unknown amount of time as the pandemic continued. We needed it to be secure because we would be gathering test

Customer:

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We knew that we had to have an urgent response, and that how we do things today really didn't matter anymore. It was daunting, and while I will say that no one knew how we were going to do this, we knew we would find a way. And we also knew that in Smartsheet we had a partner that would help us find our way. ”

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The company also needed help. The kind of Smartsheet solution they envisioned would typically take weeks or months to develop, and Fullerton and his colleagues realized that they didn't have the right expertise in-house to build it that quickly. Langford reached out to Smartsheet. Within three days, a collaborative team of Smartsheet experts and Roche staff had developed and launched the first iteration of a system to support the company's testing product.

Managing a dynamic situation with real-time data

Today Roche is using Smartsheet to manage demand prioritization, distribution, and data-gathering for its diagnostic and antibody tests for COVID-19. The company collects information from hospital labs and reference labs, including number of tests run, number of positive results, and number of test kits left in stock at a location. The data is then analyzed against production and order figures, status and location of shipments, and epidemiological data to dynamically determine which areas are highest priority for the next wave of product deliveries.

“This is a test that didn't exist,” Fullerton says. “All of a sudden we're making millions a week, and it's still not enough. No vendor can keep up with the demand for COVID testing. We've had to create all kinds of tools for allocating supply, picking the right places to send things, prioritizing, and tracking. We've used Smartsheet in nearly every one of those areas.”

Dashboards display data for a variety of stakeholders, helping company executives and sales directors see what's happening in the areas they manage. One of the most important elements of Roche's Smartsheet solution was simplifying the process of compiling and reporting real-time data to federal health authorities, including the White House coronavirus task force.

In a Nutshell:

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“Every day we had a production meeting at 3:00,” Fullerton says. “We reviewed the data; we made sure everything was right. At 3:15, that report went off to the White House. I’m a process improvement person, not thinking about working on something that directly flows to the White House. But I was pretty proud, and my kids were proud as well.”

A platform that powers agility and innovation

Since the start of the pandemic, Roche has regularly seen more than 100,000 tests administered each day across the United States. The company’s Smartsheet solution has been updated and expanded to more effectively help track and manage product needs. The volumes of data are impressive, but not as much as the dedicated efforts of everyone across the company.

“We always know we’re impacting patients, but it is really incredible to be able to actually see that happen,” Glavan says. “To see how many tests are being run, to look at the supply that’s being used, and to watch hotspots come up and go down throughout the United States. We always make an impact, but I never feel it this directly.”

Fullerton says Roche has also started to transform its culture to become more agile and innovative, not just as an approach to crisis management but as an overall way of working. Using Smartsheet has helped the company communicate more effectively across teams, even as a large number of employees are working remotely.

“The way we do business has fundamentally changed,” Fullerton says. “Especially with our whole workforce being remote, this year has been the biggest change I’ve seen in my time here at Roche. How agile we are as an organization, how quickly we can move; we definitely need platforms like Smartsheet. We’ve done things the same way for many years, and the events this year have forced us to break the glass and move to a whole new way of thinking. It’s an incredibly exciting time at the company.”

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