

# Addressing Strategy From Every Angle: Auckland District Health Board

## A StrategyBlocks Success Story



”As a public sector agency we are committed to improving the health of our community, goals that take precedence over quantitative goals like revenue or ROI. StrategyBlocks is the ideal solution to assess, measure and evaluate our strategic initiatives, not just those with easily measurable KPIs and outcomes, but those with ‘softer’ deliverables that hit at the heart of our mission.”

— Jacob Toner Director, Enterprise Portfolio Management Office (EPMO) at Auckland DHB

## The Organization

Auckland District Health Board (Auckland DHB) was established with three main objectives:

- Improve, promote, and protect the health of communities
- Integrate health services, especially primary and secondary care services
- Promote effective care or support of those in need of health services or disability support

Today, Auckland DHB is the fourth largest, and one of the fastest growing, DHBs in the country. It serves the greater Auckland community and operators from three major facilities: Auckland City Hospital, Starship Children's Hospital and Greenlane Clinical Centre. Auckland City Hospital is New Zealand's largest public hospital and clinical research facility.

The vision of Auckland DHB is to support the people it serves and assist them in achieving the health outcomes they desire for themselves, their whānau (the Māori word for family) and their community. Auckland DHB plays a unique role in the New Zealand health sector as the provider of specialized services, including transplants, high risk obstetrics and some pediatric services; the largest trainer of health professionals in the country; and a key driver in advancing national and international research. Auckland DHB boasts one of the highest life expectancies in the country.

### Snapshot

- Funds and provides services for 530,000 individuals across Auckland, Waiheke and the Great Barrier Islands
- Largest employer in Auckland, employing over 10,800 people
- Largest trainer of doctors in New Zealand, with 1,800 medical staff
- Delivers more than one million patient contacts each year
- Manages an annual budget of approximately \$2.1 billion
- Achieved a score of 8.8/10 in a comprehensive patient satisfaction survey

## The Problem

Auckland DHB is guided by seven strategic themes:

- A community, family/whānau and patient-centric model of healthcare
- Emphasis on investment on treatment and keeping people healthy
- Service integration and/or consolidation
- Intelligence and insight
- Consistent, evidence-informed, decision-making practice
- Outward focus and flexible service orientation
- Emphasis on operational and financial sustainability

As a large and diverse health care organization, Auckland DHB found itself facing a multitude of ambitious strategic initiatives, all tied to the key themes, but covering a wide variety of sectors - everything from physical infrastructure to technology implementations to clinical treatment and patient programs.

Not only did these strategic initiatives run the gamut of costs, requirements and resource needs, but their outcomes varied greatly between easily measurable deliverables such as project completion or ROI, to softer achievements such as patient experience.

”Our biggest concern was how to adequately track our different projects and goals under one umbrella, and to effectively measure the outcome of those projects against the wider strategic initiatives. In isolation, every project looked like a great idea, but the implementation and execution process lacked the necessary insight into the larger organizational picture. This made it hard to compare results, which could vary widely depending on the project.”

Auckland DHB needed a method to better evaluate and track the totality of the various strategic opportunities and challenges, while also being able to quickly understand the logic behind each initiative. In addition, the organization wanted to provide faster access and more straightforward insight for the Board to track and evaluate the various projects in flight.

# The Solution

StrategyBlocks, an intuitive SaaS platform, makes it easier for organizations to succeed in strategic planning, strategy management and agile execution by presenting a comprehensive strategic plan in the most visually compelling way. StrategyBlocks offers a unique view of execution performance company-wide, joining vision with operational delivery and creating the link between effort, outcome and risk.

Designed with agility and customization in mind, StrategyBlocks enables any strategic plan to be modeled with ease, using the organization's existing strategic phrasing. Its proprietary 'Cascading Metric' system simplifies KPI reporting and metrics, removing redundancies and inefficiencies and giving an organization an unprecedented, top down and bottom up view into business intelligence and operations.

StrategyBlocks allows secure data to update in real-time, and the platform highlights duplication of work and cross-departmental inefficiencies. Its Strategic Health feature allows a company to monitor its overall execution health including subjective, qualitative data as well as risk.

Auckland DHB first came across StrategyBlocks at a conference, and thought it would align well with some of the challenges the organization was facing in tracking and evaluating the outcomes of its strategic initiatives.

**”** *After a thorough comparison of StrategyBlocks with other tools on the market what stood out most, and continues to make a difference today, is the highly personalized support from the StrategyBlocks team. Working with larger vendors it is easy to feel like a small fish in their big pond of customers, but StrategyBlocks takes the time to listen to our questions, internalize our suggestions and tailor the solution to fit our needs - with an incredibly fast response time.*

# The Results

“We had two main challenges with visibility into our initiatives - not knowing how things fit together into our overall efforts around strategic change, and not knowing if an individual initiative was tracking well and would elicit expected results,” Toner said. “StrategyBlocks’ tree structure allowed us to attack both of these issues by quickly seeing how projects interrelate to one another, the current health and viability of each initiative, and easily drilling down to discover where we are having the greatest success or challenge.”

Within the first year of using StrategyBlocks, Auckland DHB achieved a significant maturation in the process around its strategic initiatives.

“It took some time to get to the basic level of using StrategyBlocks, because we first had to implement all of our current programs and initiatives into the platform and make sense of where everything stood. We took our time with this stage as it proved incredibly valuable and helped us surface where there were gaps and what areas we could address immediately,” said Toner.

Today the platform has over 50 users which include EPMO team members who act as coordinators and provide support and expertise, as well as the product and program managers leading the various strategic initiatives. Executives and board members largely use the platform to quickly view progress at a glance. This has been ideal for leadership who can now engage at the appropriate level and maintain focus, with the added assurance that they can drill down into specifics as needed.

**”** *“We’ve seen a measurable change in the way executives engage with the information provided around our strategic initiatives. They are now able to more readily drive the focus and the agenda, asking the right questions and receiving assurance that programs are on track and will deliver on our strategic goals. We’ve transitioned the conversation toward providing strategic guidance rather than being mired in operational details.”*

— **Jacob Toner** Director, Enterprise Portfolio Management Office (EPMO) at Auckland DHB

# The Future

Healthcare is a heavy capital-investment industry, due to the large expenditures required around facilities, clinical equipment and technology. Auckland DHB remains committed to providing top healthcare services to the populations it serves, and that will go hand in hand with ensuring its capital expenditures are delivering adequate return on their investment.

Moving forward, Auckland DHB plans to use what its learned with the StrategyBlocks platform to incorporate more of its capital initiatives into the governance and oversight processes it has established. The team at Auckland DHB is also looking forward to continuing to closely work with the StrategyBlocks team, tweaking the platform as needed to meet the ever expanding needs of the large and diverse organization.


With over 10 business awards for its innovative approach to strategy management, StrategyBlocks is well prepared to move forward with Auckland DHB and continue to deliver the agility, highly visual and easy-to-understand system that will ensure the healthcare organization's strategy is both well defined and well executed.



## StrategyBlocks

For more information on StrategyBlocks, please visit [www.strategyblocks.com](http://www.strategyblocks.com) or email [info@strategyblocks.com](mailto:info@strategyblocks.com). If you would like an online demonstration please click the “Request an online demo” link from the website and we would be delighted to show you how StrategyBlocks can have a positive effect on your business.

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