

Petalogo.ai is building the Tools and Platform addressing the Specific Needs of Senior Care Providers with Enterprise-Level Support and Solutions, and a Mobile App for Caregivers to Triage Assistance Requests



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CEOCFO: Mr. Roussel, what is the idea behind Petalogo?

Mr. Roussel: I was in the senior care industry for a decade and just kept running into the same problems. Nobody seemed to recognize senior care as a unique niche with its own goals and needs. The tools and processes available to us were either antiquated, or we had to bring them in from other industries and make them work for us. After a decade of banging our head against the wall and never seeing the right tools, we decided to start Petalogo to address the challenge head-on and begin building the tools and platform addressing the specific needs of senior care providers.

We went out to talk to a bunch of providers and confirmed it was not just my unique experience. We saw the same problems talking to several operational leaders, CEO's, and others. The first things they told us were all focused on communication and efficiency.

CEOCFO: What did you find was lacking?

Mr. Roussel: One of the big pieces is the integration between systems. Healthcare is complicated. For one, you have a lot of different providers. For example, if you go to a facility for short-stay rehab, the facility is one provider, but they might have outsourced the rehab team, the pharmacy, and the docs. The facilities themselves have a bunch of different internal systems. Just answer simple questions like "When am I going home?" or "What time is my rehab?" which seems simple, are difficult to answer because the information is in three or four different systems. We are trying to simplify that and bring it together into one place so you can ask a simple question and get a simple answer.

CEOCFO: What is the challenge in making that happen?

Mr. Roussel: You usually have electronic health records that the facility is using, but the doctors might be using something different, and the rehab team something else. Internally the various silos within a community from dining to activities all have different systems. The challenge then is getting those to talk to each other. Everything has been turned into electronic format, so instead of paper, it is all digitized, but there is no universal standard for those things to talk to each other.

CEOCFO: How does Petalogo work?

Mr. Roussel: We are using technology to provide that integration layer. So, folks can keep the data and the processes that they have today, but we can go tap into each of those individual systems and bring it all together onto our platform. Then we provide that common view to the end-users and the staff. When customers ask what is for lunch, or what

activities are happening tomorrow, they do not have to go to different systems, they do not have to ask different people, they can ask our platform and since we have one view of all the systems, we can go in and reach into the information that is needed and answer those questions. The other part is we are focused on voice first, and what we have seen in senior care, is that adoption of technology is growing rapidly, but voice technology and voice interaction is the fastest-growing segment and the easiest to use.

CEOCFO: Do you envision that the long-term care facility would assign something to each of their patients or is it up to the patients to come with something to plug-in?

Mr. Roussel: It depends on the line of business, so in independent living, usually it is the residents or guests that are bringing their own devices. They often already have devices on which they are shopping or listening to music. What we are providing is additional skills that they can enable. In a healthcare setting such as rehab, usually folks are there for a short-term, so we provide the devices, one in each room so that it is ready for the guest and they do not have to worry about it.

CEOCFO: How do you know when you have reached critical mass?

Mr. Roussel: I do not think you are every there. What you are doing is just building on it day-by-day, and as people's needs change, platforms change. Part of what we designed is the ability to partner with folks rather than be a one-and-done, so we can continue adapting with their needs. For us a that's a large part of the value we deliver, so how much time are we saving staff by either answering requests without staff having to get involved or making staff more efficient with their time so that they can respond with what is needed immediately. We are providing value right off the top, but we continue to evolve to meet our customers' needs.

“Technology is advancing at an exponential rate, and unfortunately healthcare has not kept pace, but there is no reason we can't catch up and provide the same type of experience folks expect from Amazon, Starbuck's and Apple, in the healthcare space.”- Camille Roussel

CEOCFO: Do patients or residents struggle with not getting that personal contact or because it is faster and easier they are appreciating it more? What is the acceptance from the end user?

Mr. Roussel: There are two parts to that. On the one end, because it offers a voice assistance piece, we have seen much higher adoptive rates than when we have tried to do things with just touch or screens and so on. Voice has a much higher adoption rate for seniors. There seems to be a high adoption rate even among folks that are not using other technology.

The other part is that we are not eliminating the human touch. Part of what our platform does is you are still allowed to put in requests, but what they are seeing is staff come prepared, so they get faster response times, which means the guest is happier and because the staff knows what the requests are ahead of time they are happier too.

If you think of a traditional nurse call system, usually you push a button, and the light goes on in the hallway, and the staff has no idea what they are walking into. They do not know if someone wants a blanket or needs immediate care. Now with our system, they do. Therefore, the whole interaction, the human contact piece has improved dramatically for both the guest and the staff.

CEOCFO: What have you learned since you introduced Petalo in 2018; what has changed?

Mr. Roussel: Nothing can be simple enough. Part of our platform is an app for frontline staff. It is an app for the caregivers on the frontline to use, and we have actually removed a bunch of functionality from the app, which they did not need and just complicated their lives. It is simple things too, like getting rid of passwords. We have a passwordless login system that is tied to an email account where it is not another password you need to remember. I think simplification is undervalued and giving folks what they need immediately and no more is a primary driver for adoption for us.

CEOCFO: How are you making inroads for the various constituencies?

Mr. Roussel: That is challenging. Partly we can tap into our own past experience. My coworker Jason Gottschalk is also from the industry, and he ran a community as an executive director. I have been in the industry for ten years so I think we can speak directly to provider pain points because we have lived through them, we know what works, we know what does not. We are reaching back to our contacts and reaching out through industry groups and just hammering the point that this is what we saw, these are the pain points we had, and if you are sharing them, we would be happy to talk to you which seems to resonate with a lot of folks.

CEOCFO: *How does a facility integrate your system?*

Mr. Roussel: It depends on the facility. Because we are integrating so deeply with their existing systems, it usually takes some discovery work where we will talk with the community and figure out what they are using and figure out what is best. The platform is very scalable so what we see a lot of communities do is pick one line of business or a wing of the facility where it makes sense to them or where they will see the most immediate value, and they can deploy it there and see how it works for them.

Once they can prove it out for themselves, they expand it out to the other lines of business. Rehab and long-term care are two areas where the facilities are really excited about our product. Usually, if we get in the door there, and they see how well it is functioning, then they want to try it out in assisted living or other areas of care that they are providing.

CEOCFO: *What is your business model?*

Mr. Roussel: We offer the platform as software and hardware as a service, so it is a monthly fee with no upfront cost. It is fully managed, so on top of providing the service, we are managing the ongoing integration. As community needs change we continue to update the product, so you are getting software, hardware, and you are getting development all in one monthly cost which makes it much more affordable than some other services out there where there is a considerable upfront investment, or there is a low investment but then the integrations are left to the communities to figure out.

CEOCFO: *How does all of this match with HIPAA regulation and some of the regulatory challenges?*

Mr. Roussel: The service offering today is not a HIPAA Certified service. We are not passing along any protected health information. We are working with Amazon to get to be whole skill certified under HIPAA so we can then start offering integrations directly into healthcare records for folks to access through the voice piece. The other part we are doing is developing different apps for end consumers so for the HIPAA protected pieces that we cannot deliver by voice, and we will be able to provide those through either a secure portal or secure app.

CEOCFO: *You spent time in the military. What did you from that experience that translates to business?*

Mr. Roussel: Being mission-focused and always having the end-goal in mind is really important. It is easy to get lost in your head to do a lot of strategic planning, and it just never works out in operation. Keeping the operations and the frontline forward in mind and what their needs are essential. The other part is starting a business is challenging; you see a lot of obstacles and elements you need to overcome. The resourcefulness, self-determination, and the ability to drive on through obstacles are all fundamental values I picked up from the military.

CEOCFO: *Are you seeking funding, investment, partnerships, as you move forward?*

Mr. Roussel: We are well funded at the moment and are not seeking any investments at this time. We have an investor already who has done well by us. Right now, we are just looking for new partnerships as far as customers and unique areas to expand and learn more.

CEOCFO: *What is next? What should we expect from Petalo a year from now?*

Mr. Roussel: We are planning on developing more to the platform, for senior care. You will see more apps reaching out to family members directly to get the family members more involved and directly integrated into the experience of their loved ones living in the communities. Then just expanding to other areas of the facility operations like events management, menu management, and the like where there are systems in place, but they are usually not tailored for senior care in particular. We want to start picking those off one by one and developing a turnkey solution that works for senior care providers.

CEOCFO: *Final thoughts?*

Mr. Roussel: Technology is advancing at an exponential rate, and unfortunately healthcare has not kept pace, but there is no reason we can't catch up and provide the same type of experience folks expect from Amazon, Starbuck's and Apple, in the healthcare space.

