Why interoperability is imperative for healthtech

How to position — and prove — seamless data exchange



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Overview

Interoperability has evolved from a technical advantage to a fundamental business requirement.

It directly impacts revenue, market access and competitive positioning for healthtech firms. Solutions must enable seamless, secure data exchange without creating data silos or forcing duplicative data entry.

As AI adoption grows and point solutions flood the healthcare market, healthtech companies face mounting pressure to gain and maintain market share. How you position — and demonstrate — your solution's interoperability matters. Framing interoperability as a revenue enabler and risk mitigator can help you win business and showcase how your solution goes beyond technical integration.

In this e-book, you'll find guidance on how to:

- Position interoperability as a core value proposition.
- Demonstrate integration capabilities across clinical systems.
- Reduce risk through strong security and data governance.
- Navigate emerging regulations and certification frameworks.
- Support growth at every stage of organizational maturity.

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How to position, and prove, interoperability

As a healthtech leader, you are laser-focused on the clinical problem you're trying to solve.

But it's a misconception that building a great final solution will generate traction. Even the most well-designed solution won't succeed unless it clearly demonstrates how it fits into the broader health IT ecosystem.

To gain traction and win deals, you need to show how your solution enables secure, seamless data exchange and supports clinical, operational and business goals. That means framing interoperability in ways that resonate with buyers and stakeholders.

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Here are 4 core value propositions to consider as you position your solution's interoperability:

1 Value proposition

Enhance clinical workflow

Organizations across the healthcare sector expect solutions that:

- Integrate seamlessly with their preexisting workflows and systems.
- Enhance, rather than disrupt, clinical workflows

How to demonstrate

Demonstrate ease of integration

While ease of integration depends heavily on the depth of data integration required, you will still need to demonstrate that your solution already integrates seamlessly with major electronic health records (EHRs) to win business. Show how your solution:

- Pulls and pushes data directly from/to leading EHRs without manual reentry.
- Fits into existing clinical workflows by triggering alerts, documentation support or task automation within the provider's standard interface.
- Reduces provider burden by saving time and minimizing clicks, whether that's streamlining charting, note generation, order entry, etc.

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2 Value proposition

Enable revenue

An interoperable healthtech solution should reduce integration friction and increase time to value. In other words, your solution should be easy to implement, and your client should see ROI quickly.

This is especially true for business models that need complex, large-scale, data-driven insights for things like population health analytics and care coordination.

How to demonstrate

Provide concrete ROI scenarios

ROI scenarios should clearly — and, ideally, quantifiably — demonstrate how your solution increases efficiency, reduces duplicative efforts and improves overall user satisfaction. Examples:

- Reduced onboarding time
- Increased retention
- Cleaner data
- Faster payer reimbursement due to improved data accuracy and streamlined claims submission
- Higher provider utilization rates
- Reduced duplicative testing leading to faster treatment delivery for patients.

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3 Value proposition

Improve care delivery

Ultimately, your healthtech solution seeks to solve a healthcare challenge to improve patient care delivery. How you build your tool into the wider ecosystem is part of that. The network effects of being interoperable are substantial, enabling streamlined care delivery across the entire network.

4 Mitigate risk

Interoperability helps decrease errors in care delivery by improving the exchange of information and reducing data leak risks from faxing protected health information (PHI) or having patients transport their own data. Interoperability can also improve data accuracy, support compliance and audit readiness, and improve incident response and risk containment in the case of data breaches.

How to demonstrate

Provide examples and case studies

- Showcase how your solution enables real-time data sharing to support faster, more informed decision-making.
- Provide case studies where interoperability reduced care fragmentation.
- Demonstrate how your tool supports closed-loop communication across systems.

Demonstrate your security posture

- Provide strong governance.
- Implement security controls.
- Demonstrate oversight and commitment to compliance with a third-party audit.
- Ensure third-party vendors have high security standards and controls in place.

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Managing risk across interoperable systems

While interoperability can increase efficiencies, it can also introduce new risks, from increased attack surfaces and system dependency to data leakage and privacy violations.

To mitigate risk, interoperability must be coupled with strong governance, security controls and oversight.

Increased attack surface and data leakage risks

Connecting more systems increases the number of endpoints and interfaces that threat actors can target if application programming interfaces (APIs) and data exchange mechanisms aren't hardened. Similarly, a lack of proper controls during implementation can lead to unauthorized data sharing. Processes related to handling PHI are required to be HIPAA-compliant, and increasingly they require you to do more and follow additional standards.

What you should do

Develop and follow strong controls, including:

- Delegated authority
- Consent management
- Authorization controls
- Brokered authentication access controls
- Audit logging and monitoring

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Vendor and system dependency risks

Your security posture isn't solely governed by your own internal controls. It also depends on the users and on other interconnected systems, both upstream and downstream, including how they are set up and operating. For example, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) System and Organization Controls (SOC) framework defines this as "user entities" and "service organizations." The security of the entire interconnected system is impacted by each type of player.

What you should do

- Conduct third-party due diligence.
- Execute business associate agreements (BAAs) with customers and third-party vendors.
- Only use third parties that can demonstrate their strong security posture against an industry-accepted framework.

How to evaluate the maturity level of a third-party vendor

Just as healthcare organizations are more closely evaluating you and your security posture, you should carefully evaluate the interoperability maturity of third-party solutions before you incorporate them into your own offering. You don't want the shortcomings of a third-party vendor to negatively impact your brand. But, in an industry where everything is changing quickly, it can be hard to evaluate maturity when nearly everything is new.

Here are two key questions you can ask to help determine the maturity level of a potential partner:

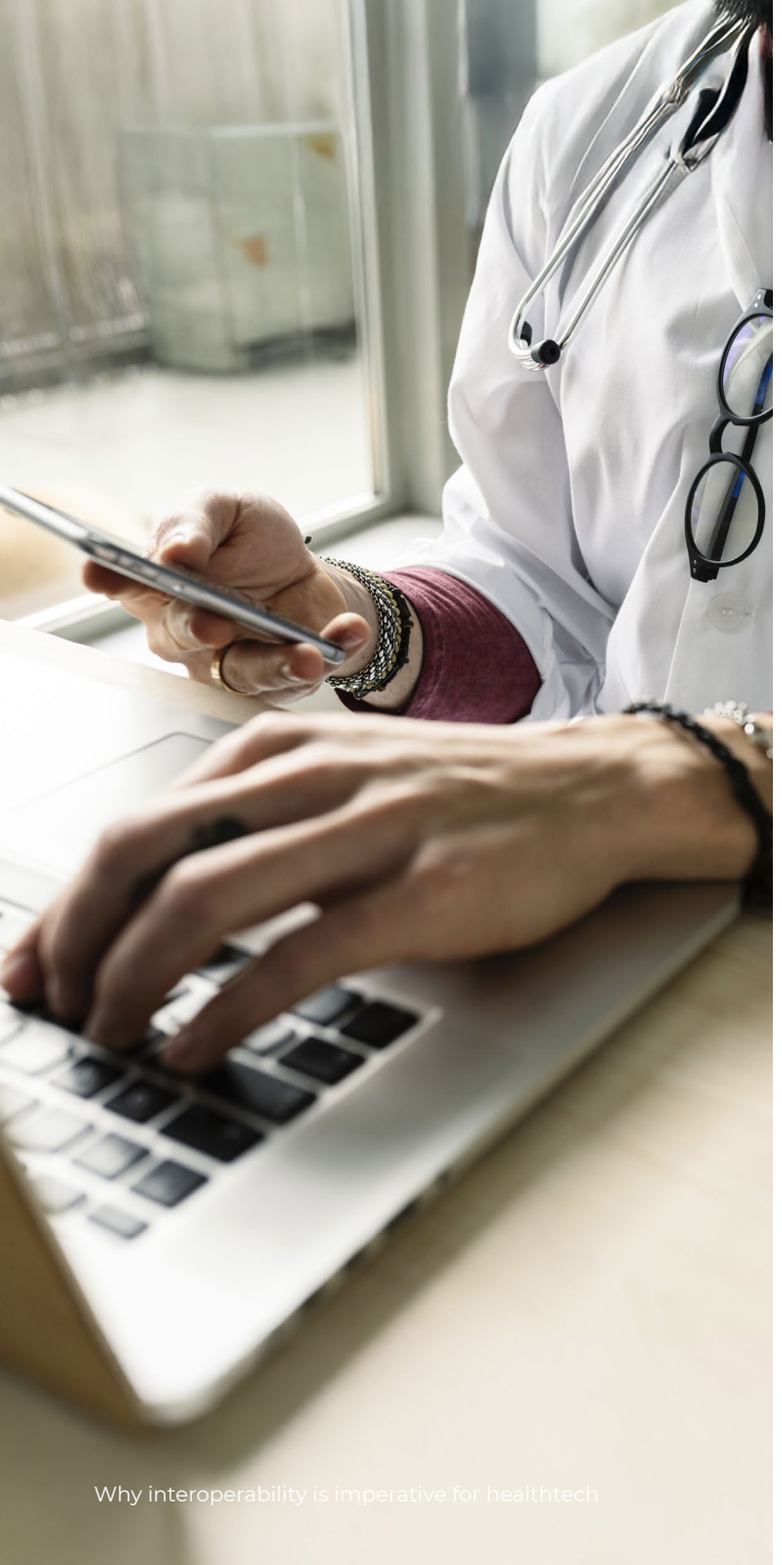
1 Where are they at in their maturity life cycle?

Check to see if the potential partner is self-funded or has investment backing. Look to see if they are scaling their solution, and make sure solutions are standards-based, which indicates a higher level of maturity. The integrations they offer can also be an indication of maturity.

2 Who's on the team?

Newness isn't necessarily an indication of immaturity; a new startup could have a team from several other successful projects. Look closely at who's at the helm to evaluate the likelihood of product maturity.

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Strategic focus shifts as healthtech firms scale

In our work with healthtech firms across the full maturity spectrum, from early startups to industry-leading firms, we've learned that you need the right funding, the right expertise and the right maturity to be able to gain — and maintain — market share.

Here are some key insights we've learned from working with firms at different points in their journey:

Startup stage

Startups are focused on launching a minimum viable product (MVP) whose baseline functionality solves the healthcare challenge they set out to address. Early thinking about interoperability tends to focus on integration hurdles, but firms should think early about how they will demonstrate security as well. In addition to seamless integration with leading

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EHRs, you will need a fully baked solution for security and risk management to win deals.

Especially as artificial intelligence (AI) accelerates the cyberthreat landscape, organizations are looking at third-party vendors more closely and more critically. The challenge is balancing the cost of a third-party audit with the startup costs of launching your product or service.

In our experience, firms can get caught in a catch-22: They can't go to market without third-party due diligence audits, but they don't yet have the funding to pursue such audits. Firms need evidence of a secure environment, following industry-relevant standards, earlier than they think, and then find themselves scrambling to get it to close a deal.

Early to mid-maturity

Healthtech firms in the early to mid-maturity state typically have landed some big accounts and are looking to grow. But they can face a similar catch-22 as startups: They need funding and increasing levels of expertise to gain new business, but they also need the new business to be able to finance growth. It's critical to have the right subject matter experts on the team, yet firms in this stage may not be able to afford a full-time staff member. Outsourcing for critical subject matter expert (SME) roles can be a strategic and affordable way to support growth.

If they haven't already, firms at this stage should also:

- Get a third-party due diligence assessment, such as HITRUST or SOC 2.
- Incorporate Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (FHIR) into their growth strategy. It's foundational, so startups should include it as part of their MVP.
- Ensure a pristine data foundation before adding AI solutions.
- Follow strong security controls and data management best practices.

Mature

Mature healthtech firms face an increasingly competitive landscape as AI solutions flood the market. To maintain their edge, firms should actively monitor the changing regulatory landscape, especially with regard to AI regulation and data privacy. And, they should monitor the development of AI risk assurance models, like HITRUST AI Assurance, to begin preparing for a new level of risk assurance and assessment.

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Thriving in a time of uncertainty

The healthtech industry is experiencing a period of rapid innovation coupled with mounting uncertainty.

The rise of AI-powered solutions and new digital entrants has accelerated competition. At the same time, the regulatory and interoperability landscape remains in flux.

In this environment, success depends on your ability to navigate change with agility and foresight. Next, we explore three key forces shaping the healthtech market — and what you can do to stay ahead.

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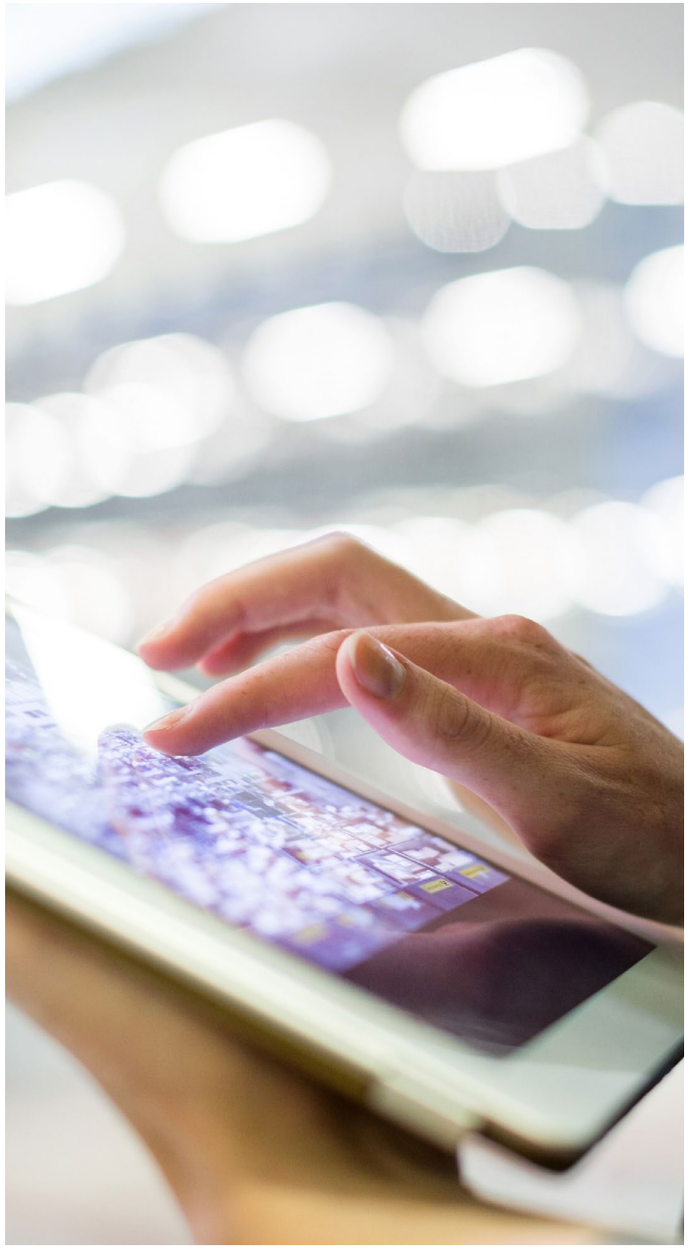
Artificial intelligence

AI has the potential to make healthcare more human-centric, allowing providers to focus on patient care. When used effectively, it can also advance interoperability by enabling faster data normalization, mapping and pattern detection across large data sets.

However, the benefits of AI are only realized when accuracy, security and privacy are prioritized from the start. Without proper safeguards, the risks — particularly when handling PHI — can outweigh the gains.

What this trend means for you:

- AI solutions that improve interoperability — such as tools that normalize and map data — offer you a competitive advantage.
- Security, accuracy and HIPAA compliance must be demonstrated from the outset.
- Human validation remains essential to help ensure outputs are clinically relevant, unbiased and reduce the risk of data leakage.



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Financial landscape

As of mid-2025, the number of healthtech deals is down but the actual dollars aren't. Investors, particularly in private equity (PE), are focused on AI-powered platforms that integrate cleanly with EHRs and other clinical systems.

And, healthtech market consolidation is still likely a few years out. Analysts don't expect to see it for another five to 10 years. The consolidation time frame for AI-specific SaaS and tech products is likely even further in the future.

What this trend means for you:

- Investors expect AI functionality as a baseline feature in any emerging healthtech product.
- Demonstrating seamless interoperability with leading EHRs and clinical tools improves your chances of securing PE investment or landing large accounts.
- Now is the time to begin planning for long-term differentiation and adaptability ahead of inevitable market shifts.

National interoperability landscape

The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a joint request for information (RFI) in May 2025 seeking public input on how to strengthen the national interoperability ecosystem.

The RFI focuses on improving data interoperability, access and security, and it invites feedback from patients, providers, payers and technology vendors on barriers to data sharing, digital tool adoption and support for value-based care models. It also explores ways to enhance standards, certification programs and infrastructure such as the Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement (TEFCA) to enable more secure, seamless health data exchange.

In parallel, recent activity from the Sequoia Project — the designated Recognized Coordinating Entity (RCE) for TEFCA — suggests that the national framework may be gaining new momentum. While TEFCA is not yet in an enforcement phase and participation remains voluntary, the Sequoia Project has resumed active stakeholder engagement under the leadership of the new federal health IT appointee. Early signals from these meetings indicate that TEFCA and other national interoperability initiatives could advance further in the coming year.

That said, it remains uncertain whether TEFCA will transition into an enforcement phase or if broader interoperability progress will continue to rely primarily on regional and state-level health information exchanges (HIEs) and private-sector initiatives.

What this trend means for you:

- Track how TEFCA evolves, especially any moves toward enforcement, and begin assessing how your solution aligns with its principles.
- Ensure alignment with emerging data standards.

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Wipfli: Helping you be a change agent

Healthtech is moving fast, and the stakes are high.

Whether you're building your first product or scaling an established solution, success depends on your ability to demonstrate secure, seamless interoperability. That means building with the right standards, validating your AI responsibly and preparing for shifting regulations before they arrive.

You don't have to go it alone. The right expertise at the right time can help you navigate funding cycles, build trust with enterprise buyers and prepare your solution for the future. Wipfli brings deep knowledge of both healthcare and technology to help you secure data, meet compliance expectations and grow with confidence.

Learn more at

wipfli.com/healthtech

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