

Healthcare Research Firm Toughens Survey Standards as More CIOs Reap the Profits of Reselling Vendor Software

Black Book™, recognized as a leader in crowdsourced perception polling on hundreds of healthcare managed services and technology products announced today that current and future Electronic Health Record survey results will be rigidly audited to remove ballots cast by provider organizations that serve as the resellers, VARs and/or channel partners. By constantly culling conflict of interests, Black Book continues its commitment to impartial product and service evaluations with the patient at the center of its business model.

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Black Book's survey inspection of the nearly 29,000 EHR user responses collected from Q3 2014 to Q1 2015 uncovered 33 hospital resellers casting EHR satisfaction and loyalty ballots for 740 physician practices, prompting supplementary audits and an extended resurveying phase to resolve what Black Book deems intentional bias.

Black Book also determined that 93 percent of physician practices and small hospitals that procured an EHR product directly from the CIO's office of a flagship hospital felt obligated to only select that EHR from the hospital reseller. 730 of 740 resurveyed physician practices admitted they feared facing financial consequences from declining those EHR implementations including interrupted referral streams, segregation from clinician data sharing and accountable care organizations, and exclusion from important hospital communications.

"It's not Black Book's issue that community physicians were pressured into implementing a particular EHR from their leader hospital," said Doug Brown, Partner of Black Book. "Black Book's issue is that the hospital IT managers responsible for (re)selling and overseeing system implementations for particular EHR suites were also grading the product satisfaction and service delivery perceptions on behalf of providers they actually sold to."

A post-survey sampling of 800 community physicians and inpatient facilities under 100 beds that participated in Black Book's 2015 EHR user polls identified 48% of larger hospital channel partners had scored the satisfaction of EHR products in network physician practices in place of, or in tandem with, independent end users, with or without the practices' knowledge.

"That is no different than soliciting a salesman to rate his own merchandise, which in turn leads to improved or influenced sales," said Brown. "We determined it was judicious to disallow hospital channel partners from rating their physician clients' satisfaction and loyalty, in order that Black Book could get a more accurate measurement of true user experiences in 2015." said Doug Brown, Managing Partner of Black Book.

Black Book's internal review revealed that hospital managers selling EHR products directly to community physicians and other inpatient facilities also on average rated that EHR up to 49% higher in satisfaction and 73% higher in vendor loyalty than the actual physicians and staff using the product.

Black Book also has delayed the announcement of their annual top rankings of EHRs from the customary January to mid-March 2015, in order to complete the resurvey and audits of over 3,000 more respondents.

Additionally, 96% of physician practices resurveyed stated they are unsure if the hospital reselling their EHR actually reap profits from the vendor from the sale or maintenance of the EHR.

80% of physicians that replaced their original EHRs for a hospital's network EHR in 2014 felt the pressure to concede to the EHR the hospital that was reselling, or being ultimately left out of community health information exchanges, referral networks, physician alerts and patient portals.

"Unlike all the other tech industries - from outsourcing to banking to energy - that Black Book has surveyed since 1999 globally, software resellers were typically evident and easy to exclude so that the marketers were not rating their own wares," said Brown.

"However, resellers in the US hospital and physician software market (which Black Book fully entered in 2009) has not been so apparent. We've had mounting objections through 2014 from end users and competitive vendors alike pleading Black Book to restrict provider channel partners reselling for vendors from scoring their own product satisfaction ratings. Going forward, that's been rectified."

Despite the two month delay in their 2015 EHR research reporting, Black Book anticipates this year's exhaustive scrutiny and ultimate methodology shift will fortify their reputation for elevated objectivity in satisfaction and vendor loyalty surveying.

About Black Book [™]

Black Book Rankings, a division of Black Book Market Research LLC, provides healthcare IT users, media, investors, analysts, quality minded vendors, and prospective software system buyers, pharmaceutical manufacturers, and other interested sectors of the clinical technology industry with comprehensive comparison data of the industry's top respected and competitively performing technology vendors.

The largest user opinion poll of its kind in healthcare IT, Black Book[™] collects over 450,000 viewpoints on information technology and outsourced services vendor performance annually. Black Book was founded in 2000, is internationally recognized for over 15 years of customer satisfaction polling, particularly in technology, services, outsourcing and offshoring industries.

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