THE CLIENT: A billion-dollar, multi-hospital management company, serving communities across the U.S., primarily through acute care hospitals and employed physicians.

THE CHALLENGE: To maximize incentive benefits from the HITECH ACT, the client needed to understand Meaningful Use requirements, create a technical and operational plan, and deploy EHR technology within a tight time frame.

THE SOLUTION: North Highland worked with all parts of the organization, from IT to clinical operations to finance, to help the client meet Meaningful Use requirements and ensure program timelines were met.

THE VALUE: North Highland expects the client to receive more than $100 million in incentive payments. The client became one of the first multi-hospital companies in the country to collect Meaningful Use payments.

Founded in 1881 by philanthropist Clara Barton, the American Red Cross is the premier emergency response and relief organization in the United States. In addition to disaster relief services, the American Red Cross is also the nation’s leading supplier of blood and blood products, with approximately 40 percent market share and four million donors.

THE CHALLENGE
The American Red Cross’s Blood Services organization had been operating as a collection of decentralized business processes across a number of independent business units. When new leadership arrived in Blood Services, they were faced with a myriad of business challenges including ongoing scrutiny from the FDA, an eroding donor base and the emergence of new competitors in both the public and private sectors. As such, the new leadership team was eager to reshape operations to focus on improved customer service, tighter efficiencies and standardized business processes. Capitalizing on its strong brand and portfolio of care-giving services, the American Red Cross wanted to re-energize its mission and take the organization to the next level by executing a new strategic plan.

THE SOLUTION
To launch such an initiative, American Red Cross leadership needed a consulting advisor that could help them not only define the new strategy, but also—equally important—execute this strategy across the entire Blood Services organization. To address its unique challenges, the American Red Cross engaged North Highland, and the combined team immediately conducted a thorough assessment of Blood Services’

GETTING BEYOND STRATEGY DEFINITION TO SUCCESSFUL EXECUTION

*Healthcare Case Study*
organization, processes and culture. After this initial analysis, North Highland proposed a multi-phase effort that would result in a measurable, manageable and mission-driven strategy. This included three distinct phases:

- **Align**—Develop top-down strategy maps aligned directly with four key balanced scorecard dimensions impacting the way they do business: mission results, external constituents, internal processes and organizational capital.
- **Measure**—Implement a framework of performance measurements to ensure that the organization’s strategic goals and vision are realized in day-to-day business functions.
- **Execute**—Establish an Office of Strategy Management to monitor performance of key initiatives, manage the project portfolio and maintain focus on the newly-refined strategy.

Two years later, the American Red Cross sought to assess the effectiveness of its strategy execution by answering key execution questions. Was the strategy integrated into the organization at all levels? Were the metrics effective in changing behavior? Were business processes still aligned with the original strategy maps? North Highland evaluated the strategy implementation and identified the following success factors:

### ORGANIZATION ALIGNMENT

There was clear ownership of strategic objectives, and organizational structures were redefined to best accomplish the strategy. Management and decision-making processes were redefined around the strategy, including project funding and portfolio prioritization.

### STAYING THE COURSE

Despite leadership changes over the past several years, the American Red Cross has supported a consistent strategy and has not been distracted by the “next big thing”.

### VISIBLE METRICS

The balanced scorecard provided a high visibility framework for measuring success and for decision-making through the use of metrics. The scorecard also provided a common language for discussion and decision-making across departments and regions/divisions.

— A. SAUNDERS
Vice President, American Red Cross

"WE HAVE TAKEN TO HEART NORTH HIGHLAND’S ADVICE ON WHY SO MANY COMPANIES FAIL TO EXECUTE STRATEGY AND FEEL THE PROCESS WE DEVELOPED WILL ENSURE OUR ORGANIZATION’S SUCCESSFUL EXECUTION OF STRATEGY."
A LEARNING PROCESS
Leadership recognized that strategy development and execution are a continually evolving process and challenged their teams to be flexible and forward-looking.

THE VALUE
The American Red Cross is now better positioned to focus on those initiatives that are clearly aligned with the strategic goals of the organization. A rationalization exercise was conducted to look at every project in the organization’s portfolio to ensure that these initiatives were accountable and measurable for improved performance. After careful analysis, the portfolio was reduced from over 200 siloed projects to approximately 50 key strategic initiatives. In turn, these initiatives have led to improved business results, including: expanded market share, new hospital relationships and improved customer and donor satisfaction. Overall, the American Red Cross has learned that strategy execution is a continuously evolving management process. Likewise, they now possess much stronger execution capabilities to support the core mission of being the nation’s premier blood supplier and provider of disaster relief services.

ABOUT NORTH HIGHLAND
North Highland is a global management consulting firm that delivers unique value, big ideas and strategic business capabilities to clients around the world. The firm solves complex business problems for clients in multiple industries through an integrated approach and offers specialty services via its Data and Analytics, Managed Services, and Sparks Grove divisions, as well as TrueBridge Resources. North Highland is an employee-owned firm that has been named as a Best Firm to Work For every year since 2006 by Consulting Magazine. The firm is a member of Cordence Worldwide (cordenceworldwide.com), a global management consulting alliance. For more information, visit northhighland.com or follow the firm on @northhighland and on facebook.com/northhighland.