



## TRANSFORMATION SYSTEM

# CASE STUDY: RAPELA LABORATORY, ARGENTINA

## DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR COMPANY GROWTH

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Transformation System by Abbott uses a flexible, collaborative process that helps to build and align stakeholders around a strategic plan for the lab through a series of workshops, engagements, and discussions. Together, we address clinical, operational, and financial concerns around a laboratory's growth goals. The power of the co-creation process is that it generates growth opportunities to help realize greater lab value. In 2022, Rapela Laboratory began its Transformation System journey with Abbott.

### OVERVIEW

- Rapela is a private, family-owned laboratory founded in 1979 in Buenos Aires
- Provides testing services across multiple sectors, including clinical, toxicology, veterinary, bromatology, cosmetics, pharmaceutical, clinical trials and third party services
- Serves and operates medical centers focused on patient wellness and care across Buenos Aires
- 1,000 m2 of laboratory space equipped with advanced automated analytical equipment, including three Alinity analyzers from Abbott
- 90-95 % of procedures are performed on equipment from Abbott
- Worked with Abbott for over 20 years

### LABORATORY GOALS

- Provide an accessible service to meet the needs of its clinicians, patients and healthcare centers
- Set up a new laboratory with a streamlined workflow
- Reach targets set for improved clinical performance
- Standardization of processes and key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Enable dynamic growth in a tightly regulated industry

### AREAS OF FOCUS FOR THE CUSTOMER

- Improve customer satisfaction with a focus on patient centricity
- Active participation of the cross-functional team in strategic planning
- Standardization of KPIs between different stakeholders
- Optimization of procedures to improve productivity and operational capacity

“The review of the competitive landscape and situational assessment was very helpful, because the discussions and exercises helped us to define the priorities, objectives and key projects that we want to focus on, based on our current market position as an organization.”

Alejandro Rapela,  
Director of Rapela  
Laboratory



## DYNAMIC, GROWTH MINDSET

Rapela Laboratory was originally founded in 1979 as a small, family-owned laboratory serving a private hospital in the Buenos Aires. However, the company later expanded its headquarters to a larger 1,000 m2 facility, and broadened its offerings to provide analytical services to multiple sectors, including clinical services, toxicology, veterinary, and many more. This goal-orientated company operates with a growth mindset, and is currently transitioning from a small, family-run business to a medium-sized enterprise with various medical centers across Buenos Aires. As part of this growth, Rapela is constructing a new laboratory and re-evaluating its current processes to optimize productivity. The company recognized this milestone as an opportunity for a broader strategic review of its practices, and worked with Abbott to perform an in-depth analysis of its operations, and define clear KPIs and actionable goals for its future success.



## STRATEGIC REVIEW

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The Transformation System process began with a multi-disciplinary Rapela-Abbott team conducting Discover and Envision workshops to analyze current working practices and highlight areas for improvement in each of Rapela's established laboratory workflows. The Discover phase included a whole market analysis, competitive landscape review, situational assessment, KPI setting and refinement, and a review of the existing objectives. In addition, the group undertook a review of all of Rapela's existing KPIs to define whether or not they aligned with the new objectives, and discussed how the organization was perceived, both internally and externally. In the Envision workshops, skilled representatives from Abbott helped the company to organize and review the gathered information to define clear priorities and generate a strategic plan for implementation.



## OPTIMIZING LABORATORY OPERATIONS

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The Discover workshops brought to light several areas for improvement in the company, and identified that certain facilities were not reaching their outlined objectives. For example, the situational analysis and meetings with management team discovered that one of the medical centers served by a Rapela laboratory was operating inefficiently. The customer team found that the time slots for patients were not well assigned, and the gaps between shifts were too long, reducing the productivity of the clinic. With this awareness, the customer team was able to adjust the shift allocation to increase the number of patients that could be seen in a day by 10%, while decreasing the demand on services.

In another setting, it was identified that the laboratory did not have the same processes or quality of communication found in its other settings. Reorganization of the department was therefore identified as a priority to employ a new patient-centric focus.

“We were able to bring the measurements to the center and, together with the medical staff, adjust the service to make it more efficient. This was a very good example of how objectively measuring performance meant we could develop an action plan, and follow up on the expectations.”

**Alejandro Rapela, Director  
of Rapela Laboratory**



"Abbott was very important during the process, providing us with approaches that favored the team's participation, so that everyone was able to take part without limitations. The resulting debates were very important to align everything, and for individuals to understand each other's positions. The conversation Abbott's team facilitated helped us to define realistic objectives and make them more achievable, while still being ambitious."

**Alejandro Rapela, Director of Rapela Laboratory**

## A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

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The workshops and exercises provided an opportunity for open discussion within the organization, helping to increase the level of transparency between divisions, including laboratory services, finance, IT and quality control. Abbott fostered an environment that enabled stakeholders to communicate, regardless of hierarchy, using methodologies that favored participation from the entire team. These insightful sessions enabled individuals to better understand their colleagues' positions, and align the vision for their department with the wider company objectives. This highlighted that a breakdown of communication between departments had enabled discrepancies between KPI measurements. To overcome this, the team established a dashboard to keep track of its goals with clearly defined KPIs, and now regularly holds meetings with senior and middle management to monitor progress, helping information to flow more dynamically through the company.



## CONTINUING ON THE PATH TO SUCCESS

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Rapela is committed to continuing the success achieved through the ATS strategic planning by frequently re-evaluating its progress. The KPI dashboard is revisited and reviewed regularly in interdepartmental meetings, which also include frequent reporting on how the strategic plan is being implemented. The organization has explored the benefits of holding different types of meetings, with varying numbers of participants, in order to find an efficient and dynamic mechanism for following up on its objectives. This has improved the entire business culture of the company, helping to accelerate planning for business growth in the highly dynamic and regulated health sector in Argentina.



## A TRUSTED PARTNER

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Rapela has worked with Abbott for over 20 years, and has a number of Alinity analyzers for diagnostic testing. Over the years, the two companies have formed a trusting and dynamic alliance that has adapted to changing market needs as Rapela has grown and developed into the modern business it is today.

“I think the biggest impact of ATS for the organization was cultural; it helped us to find new ways of working, particularly as we transition from a family-owned to a highly professional business.”

“The health sector in Argentina is complex, so it is important for us to have a good strategy to face any challenges. ATS has been able to provide us with a framework that we can use to plan and monitor our objectives.”

**Alejandro Rapela, Director of Rapela Laboratory**

“We have a very fluid relationship with Abbott. For us, Abbott is a strategic partner, and know us very well, so has been able to adapt to the changes that we are going through as an organization. They know what our reality is, and are able to provide us with the tools we need to grow or strengthen the company.”

**Alejandro Rapela, Director of Rapela Laboratory**

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