

# Performance Strategies

for Healthcare Leaders



Drive Adoption and Effective Use of IT

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## People are the Key to Successful Technology Deployments



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### Developing Processes That Drive Deployment

One of the most asked questions about healthcare IT is how to ensure it is effective. How do we deploy software and hardware so that they pay off in terms of greater efficiency, better patient outcomes and improved cost savings?

To paraphrase author Stephen Covey, the best deployments begin with the end user in mind. Physicians, nurses and other stakeholders must be involved in key steps along the path of designing the new system. This means giving them input and understanding how they will use the new technology in their care process. It also means teaching them how they can review and use information differently in making decisions.

By bringing users into the design process, organizations create greater confidence that:

- The right information is being documented
- The right information is documented the same way from patient to patient

An important aspect of end-user involvement includes a clear understanding of the magnitude of change created by the technology. If I am entering an all-electronic world, I need to know how information makes its way to the correct people. This serves to create a high level of confidence that the data is getting to the right person in the right form at the right time.

### Systems Designed for End Users

Equally important is that users must be assured that care methods and critical policies will drive the technology and not the other way around. If today I'm using paper to document an event, I must be able to meet that same requirement using technology. That requires stakeholders to have a say in the content and in the way in which the system is configured.

Adoption also becomes easier when systems enable users to document care in a logical manner. I want to follow my care practice in the way that I was taught rather than adopting a different, and perhaps inferior, process.

When users are engaged, they can work to discover and remedy the problems that inevitably arise before the system is rolled out to the entire organization. This process also gives them the opportunity to examine and improve their own processes before they are converted to an electronic system. Long-term adoption is enhanced when processes are first optimized without technology. The addition of technology enables consistent application of policy, process and practice.

As solutions are rolled out, user training becomes critical to adoption. The most successful efforts provide opportunities for training at various times in multiple locations. To meet the needs of different styles of learning, training should be available in a variety of media ranging from print to classroom to the Web.

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## People are the Key to Successful Technology Deployments (Cont.)

### A Focus on Adoption and Optimization

When new technology is not being used as intended, the reason can usually be traced to a lack of focus on adoption and optimization prior to go-live. Effective deployment requires tracking of training and usage at specific intervals.

Successful organizations review implementations for the level and success of staff use. Doing so requires a commitment of time and resources to make adjustments and improve systems and procedures.

### Analytics for Effective Deployments

Technology enables organizations to make use of [analytic tools](#) to aid in changing behaviors and realizing greater benefits.

Once in place, these systems provide managers with the reporting capabilities to pinpoint problems in adoption. The data helps in making better determination of the actions needed to remedy the shortcomings. Analytics provide:

- The ability to evaluate compliance by drilling down to a specific unit and employee
- The ability to publicize results within the unit

Instead of simply knowing that you have a 50% compliance rate on bar-code scanning, the system can drill down to the specific users who are driving this performance score. By understanding that shortfalls are happening at particular times of day or with particular medications, you can tailor training to focus on a shift or a specific drug to gain greater compliance.

Planning for optimization and long-term adoption is often one of the greatest shortcomings in major IT deployments. Because of the scope and level of change required, an organization may not fully roll out the system. Instead of reaching house-wide deployment, some departments are up and running while others are still mired in paper.

The longer it takes for full deployment, the lower the ROI and the greater the danger that the implementation will stall. Given the nature of organizational life and politics, a slow rollout also heightens the possibility that other projects will break ahead, delaying deployment even more.

In the critical transformation from paper to electronic systems, what you do after the deployment is just as critical as everything that comes before. By understanding the human elements of technology and its effective management, you can achieve success.

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## People are the Key to Successful Technology Deployments (Cont.)

### A "FITT" Framework for Approaching IT Adoption in a Clinical Environment

The authors of a research article and case study, "IT-adoption and the Interaction of Task, Technology and Individuals," provide a framework for analyzing the factors that affect the success of IT adoption in a healthcare environment.

The framework, called FITT (Fit between Individuals, Task and Technology) is defined as "the fit between the attributes of the users (e.g. computer anxiety, motivation), of the attributes of the technology (e.g. usability, functionality, performance), and the attributes of clinical tasks and processes (e.g. organization, task complexity)."

The article explores ways to influence and balance the fit of these keys to adoption. The authors say previous studies did not focus on the important interaction of user and task. For example, implementation of IT often results in process changes, where a user becomes responsible for a new task. They cite Computerized Provider Order Entry as an IT implementation that requires a physician user to take on a greater documentation burden, which could lead to user dissatisfaction or even user boycott.

The authors recommend investing in user training and support to affect both the individual-task fit and the individual-technology fit. In addition, user involvement in system design and selection can improve the task-technology fit. Involvement in evaluation of the technology can be a good predictor for overall fit. [Read the entire article on the BioMed Central Web site.](#)

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