

BlueStrata: Keys to Successfully Manage Change

White Paper

Intro

When it comes to the implementation of an EHR system, one word goes hand-in-hand with the process: **Change**. When implementing an EHR system there is no way around change, but how the change is handled can help or hinder the transition into and application of a new technology. Understanding the difference between *change* management and *project* management is key to a successful implementation.

Change Management vs. Project Management: What's the Difference?

Change management is a structured approach for ensuring that changes are thoroughly and efficiently implemented. More specifically, it is *how* humans adapt to these changes while continuing with their daily obligations. On the other hand, project management is the process and activity of planning, organizing, motivating, and controlling resources, procedures and protocols to achieve specific goals in scientific or daily problems. In other words, change management focuses on impacts to people and related behavior, while project management is more associated with tasks. The key to successful change management, though, is being able to adapt to new systems without it affecting daily obligations.

Leadership Sets the Direction

When implementing a successful EHR system, upper management plays one of the biggest roles. Having your team onboard and accepting that change is happening can reduce stress and makes the transition into new technology simpler. Top management sets the tone for the entire transition and, ultimately, the tone for the entire team. When regarding EHR, what must be understood is that a nurses' first priority is resident care. A nurse may be hesitant to change because one believes it may impact his or her patient care. How does one solve this dilemma? By training a vendor and guiding him or her through the entire process, and by developing a process that will be successful and have less of an impact on nurses during this change.

Appointing the Right People as Leaders

Another problem often faced when implementing an EHR system is the concern that your team has no voice in the entire process. By appointing leaders, you can give your team a voice and a sense of involvement. These leaders play an important role in the transition process and become the gatekeepers to a successful change. Just as important, though, is appointing the right leaders.

5 Key Traits of Great Leaders

- Vision
- Passion
- Decision Maker
- Team Builder
- Character



Leaders are then used to help communication between top management and your team, while helping to funnel the training process to the entire team. This steady flow of communication between top management and your team, results in more efficient change, met with more acceptance from your team. When choosing a leader, it is equally important to not only pick skilled leaders, but to also a leader that wants to be in such a role. He or she must be a leader that is willing to put in the time and effort to see the change process through.

Good Leaders Address Challenges during the Engagement

When dealing with the implementation of an EHR system, you are going to face challenges along the way. The implementation process can be tougher on certain individuals than others, not only physically but also emotionally. Thoughts of doubt and frustration are common challenges leaders face when implementing an EHR system. When this occurs, you rely heavily on your leaders to face these challenges head on. Leaders have to communicate to their team on an emotional level and connect with them using empathy, not sympathy. It is key for them to realize you understand their frustration and the many problems they face. Good leaders are able to identify these problems and fix them to keep your team on track. The EHR system cannot be learned at once and it will take time. Being able to communicate this to your team is crucial to the success of the implementation. Good leaders can envision the end goal and when faced with these challenges, they can keep their team on track.

Training

One of the biggest keys to a successful change management process is training. The training of your leaders is one of the most crucial roles in the process, because they ultimately are the ones teaching the process to the entire team. A lack of training can cause multiple problems and, possibly, an unsuccessful implementation process. As mentioned earlier, these leaders need the proper skills and training to be able to make decisions, communicate, and envision the end goal. When implementing training, it is key to train leaders *and* members across all facilities to ensure a smoother process and to ensure consistency. By training across all facilities, responsibility and accountability is established.

As mentioned earlier, it is not only important to train the vendor, but to see the entire process through. Part of the process is being able to listen and learn from facilities, and then implement what you have learned. While the process is going on, it is key to closely monitor and observe processes and results. You are measuring outcomes and observing potential issues. Leaders can be of great help at this point, because they are working hand-in-hand with your team.

Conclusion

Overall, your goal is to implement a successful and consistent process that relieves nurses from the stress of change. A nurses' first priority is resident care and one does not want to take away from it. It is vital to get your team on board and using your leaders is a great strategy. Lastly, always remember to monitor your process and be prepared to learn.

