



10 Tips for Managing the Changing Landscape of Healthcare

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1. Let Vision and Mission be your Guide

Change efforts should be aligned with the vision and mission of your organization. The first question should be, “How will this change support us in moving toward the future we hope for?” If the change doesn’t move you substantially in that direction, it may be time to re-evaluate priorities.

2. Collect Data and Foster Data Driven Dialogue

Taking care of your organization, just like taking care of a patient, needs to be an evidence-based practice. Collecting data is an important first step. Dialogue around data encourages exploring and understanding current and future states. The shared meaning emerging from this dialogue provides fertile ground for shared commitment and action.

3. Identify Key Stakeholders and Encourage Involvement

Ask yourself, “whose support will we need to implement,” “who will be impacted by this change,” and “who would have valuable expertise to contribute?” Through interviews, focus groups, advisory committees, cross-functional teams, and surveys, you can include many perspectives. In healthcare, the patient perspective is particularly important.

4. Communicate

Communicating is not just about sending out memos and announcements. It means having difficult conversations and face-to-face meetings with the people who matter the most. It is a process of keeping people in the loop both formally and informally and confronting issues as they arise.

5. Define success—Quality of Care. Efficiency. Patient Satisfaction.

Always begin with the end in mind. Patient satisfaction, quality of care, and efficiency are important outcomes in healthcare. A balanced score card might be an effective way to capture where you are on these areas.

6. Manage the Risk

When human lives are at stake, managing risk becomes life or death. Taking time to thoroughly understand the risks involved with a potential change is key. Leaders who can foresee and balance these risks in an effective way ensure changes occur more smoothly.

7. Deal with Resistance

When change occurs, resistance is a natural part of the process. Taking time to listen to and fully consider the hopes and concerns of each stakeholder group is important. Not only does it reduce resistance, it can also provide valuable ideas and suggestions that will contribute to success.

8. Focus on the Positive

Often we focus on resistance and forget to reinforce the positive. Rewarding early adopters and celebrating success creates a positive tone and builds momentum.

9. Identify Structural or Process Barriers

We are often tempted to pin problems onto people when there are actually larger system problems at hand. For example, is constant tension between pharmacy workers and the floor nurses because of style differences? Or is there an inefficient process in place? When barriers or problems arise, it is important to look beyond people to processes, structures, resources, and equipment.

10. Identify Human Resource strengths and needs.

Having the right skills and talent in place makes change sustainable. Examining the strengths people have to offer as well as training needs is critical to ensuring success.

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