Making the Most of Your Technology Investment: Preparing and Planning for Technology

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Homecare is at the forefront of improving the access to healthcare across the care continuum and continues to be the leading area for growth in staff and focus across healthcare. CellTrak has been providing industry leading solutions for homecare and hospice for the past nine years. Homecare services include both medical and skilled nursing services and personal care services; including bathing, condition management, wellness, nutrition, and transportation services. Home health care can also include other services such as medical equipment and supplies, physical therapy and psychological services.

The following whitepaper has been developed by C3 Advisors, LLC in conjunction with CellTrak Technologies, Inc. to highlight the proactive reasons on how to make the most out of a technology investment. With day to day changing patient needs, there is increasing evidence that deploying new technologies and applications will transform the industry and facilitate improved outcomes.
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The decision to purchase or replace business software is driven by a number of factors. They may be the need to increase efficiency and productivity, reduce errors and waste, increase customer and client satisfaction, and sometimes to increase regulatory compliance. The ideal scenario leaves existing workflows intact, causes no disruption to processes and allows employees to continue performing their duties as usual using the new software to support their respective functions. Sounds simple, but in reality only large companies with significant manpower, in-house tech expertise and substantial financial resources have the luxury of building systems to accommodate existing processes. More typical is the organization that purchases a software application and then is faced with adapting its workflows to fit within the new system’s framework. The success of the system implementation and the ROI on the technology investment rests in large part on designing processes that sync with the application’s features and then engaging employees to embrace a new way of doing things. Both can be a significant challenge, but with the right strategies in place a business will get the most out of a technology investment.

**Workflow Analysis**

New systems often create opportunity for better customer service and employee satisfaction through more timely, consistent and accurate data. To fully realize those benefits, though, processes must be in place to ensure that information is entered in the system at the appropriate time, reviewed and monitored for deviations by supervisory personnel, and utilized by management for decision making purposes. Addressing a business's pain points without creating a new set of issues requires a careful review of processes and procedures to ensure they are aligned with the new system's functionality. Creating efficient, cost effective workflows that allow for full system utilization requires an analysis of each point where a user interacts with the technology. It is a detailed look at what, when, who and how. The steps in a process, the order in which the steps are completed, the individuals who perform and review each step, and how information is communicated may need to be changed, replaced, or eliminated. For example, information recorded on forms or documents is replaced by an entry to a computer screen eliminating the need for the preparation and filing of a paper record. Or the new system generates a report which was previously unavailable and now a manager must interpret the report, and a procedure must be developed to address actionable information.

**User Acceptance and Competency**

A successful software implementation is possible when an organization's staff embraces the concept that business as usual has changed forever. Engaging employees to adopt a new way of doing things can be a significant challenge, but with a well-planned strategy, a company can achieve the anticipated results. Once the processes and procedures are mapped out and the talent needs are identified, users should be trained and tested to ensure competency on system functionality. Even more
Utilizing Your Technology Investment

important than training is conveying the expectation that new processes must be adhered to. A very common scenario which destroys system integrity and efficiency is where employees return to the old way of doing things, or worse, invent their own shortcuts and processes.

Ensuring that employees are accountable for proper system use and process protocols can be accomplished by revising job descriptions and creating performance evaluations that include measures for competency and compliance with system use. Ongoing training on system updates is essential for all users. To ensure incorrect or inefficient methods are not perpetuated, new hires must be trained and tested in a standardized training program, not by other users or the employees who they are replacing. Role changes can be one of the most difficult issues for employers to manage in a system implementation. Employees who lack the qualifications required by new technology or who fail to change their habits diminish the return on the investment—this can be the case for managers, too. Unfortunately, reluctance to terminate these individuals can cause serious data integrity problems, lost efficiencies, poor employee morale and dissatisfied customers.

Organizations of any size will benefit from a change management program designed around a software implementation. The cost of either hiring an expert or deploying internal resources to oversee a change management program for a system implementation can seem excessive, especially during the first year when the outlays are highest. In the long term however, ROI on the technology investment will be greater if new practices are reinforced through communication, goal setting, education and counseling activities delivered by a change management program.

**Performance Metrics**

Measuring the improvements from new technology requires the identification of the problems it is intended to correct. Statistics such as timeliness, error rate, and costs should be articulated and then compared against desired benchmarks. Deviations should be analyzed for the cause. If new problems arise as the result of a software implementation, the resources used to resolve new issues should be quantified.

**Conclusion**

Any investment in technology should include consideration of the merits of process review and redesign, optimization of technology features, change management programs that address user acceptance and competence, and regular performance review to monitor results of the changes made. Organizations that understand the need to contiguously address the people, process and technology issues that are inherent in any technology acquisition will be those with the best returns on their investment.
Utilizing Your Technology Investment

About C3 Advisors:
C3 Advisors, LLC provides expert solutions guided by the conviction that the most successful healthcare service providers build value through proactive management of operations, effective financial management and adoption of strategic human resource programs designed to increase productivity and profitability. C3 focuses on delivery of high quality, affordable services to its clients. The C3 team has deep, rich and relevant expertise in home healthcare services that encompass the work of Medicare certified agencies, private duty providers, community care providers and hospice. For more information please visit our site: http://www.c3advisors.com/

About CellTrak:
A proven mobile technology leader, CellTrak Technologies is the pioneer in guiding the way for home health with embracing mobile technology and beyond. CellTrak has become the leading provider of integrated mobile solutions for the home healthcare, hospice, and private duty markets. The patented software-as-a-service solutions run on your choice of GPS-enabled mobile devices connecting through product specific web portals integrated with your scheduling, payroll and clinical systems. Data is transmitted wirelessly to an internet site making the data available real time and secure instantaneous integration is provided to the back-end clinical systems and the payer networks. Home Healthcare Workers across Canada, the United States and Europe have delivered millions of successful visits via CellTrak. For more information please visit: www.celltrak.com