



## Effective Strategies for End-User Adoption

By Gia Brown

*Leadership must communicate value*

**In an economy of rising costs and diminishing budgets**, healthcare organizations are becoming increasingly conservative when investing budget dollars into technologies that ultimately fail because staff do not fully embrace or utilize the applications. After a system Go-Live or upgrade, leadership often discounts the value of end-user groups, super-user teams and job-specific training as viable components to successful end-user adoption.

### Change is Good

This may sound like an old cliché, but there is a lot of truth to this timeless expression. The introduction of new technologies to a healthcare organization can open the possibility of up-to-the-minute, efficient processes, which in many cases can lead to increased revenue. Unfortunately, change can also bring resistance among end users who are not fully on board. Typically, employees resist change or even fear it because it might affect their current workflow or procedure. Because there are many facets to getting end-user buy-in, it should be leadership's role to communicate the objectives as well as the value content for the impending application or new functionality to the end users prior, during and post-Go-Live.

### End-User Work Groups

Implementing an end-user work group that functions prior to and post-Go-Live is an excellent way to ensure end-user adoption and cement end-user buy-in. These end-user work groups should be comprised of key end users and stakeholders of the organization. The role of a work group is to provide valuable insight into workflow, testing, system design and system usability from the business perspective for the system implementers.

End-user work groups are also instrumental to continued application monitoring and often pave the way for new system processes and policies once implementation is complete.

From an engagement perspective system implementers working in concert with an end-user group can prevent elements of surprise and rework as business objectives of the client are in alignment with the project timelines and goals of the implementation team. The creation of end-user groups and solicitation of key end-user and stakeholder input empowers the staff to have a proactive part in the technological advancement of the organization.

### Super-User Teams

Soliciting key staff members to be super users is an effective strategy to ensure end-user adoption. Typically, the super users also serve as members of the end-user work groups. The super-user role is to function as a facilitator, filtering information to fellow staff members post-Go-Live. The first few days after a system Go-Live are critical to end-user receptiveness and adoption.

During the training sessions end users are provided tasks and case scenarios, often through a simulated environment. Although these scenarios are designed to function according to real-time processes, the true test comes once the new application is in use. Super users functioning in facilitator roles in their respective departments create a smooth transition from old to new processes.

Another added benefit of utilizing key staff in the role of super user is that they can function as a bridge of communication between the support staff and the departmental team when updates or changes to the application are made.

### Job-Specific Training

Before the training phase of the engagement begins, it is important for the Training Team to identify the end-users' job sets so the Team can train the end users in the application according to their job functions and primary tasks in the system.

This means delivering job-specific training sessions and supplying training materials with instruction of what is needed as opposed to teaching concepts that they will never use.

Another useful strategy that ties into job-specific training is the introduction of training prerequisites post-Go-Live for new and existing end users. Based upon different functions in the applications and level of complexity, users should not be given access rights to perform complex functions in an application without first learning the basics. This prevents abuse of the system and incorrect work flow processes.

Catering to the end-users' specific needs and training solely on what is necessary create a sure-fire method for greater retention of materials and functions presented during the training session. This tactic provides an environment of comfort and learning that comes from working on the user level,

not flooding the user with information superfluous to his or her job function.

The success or failure of an engagement is measured by the success of end-user buy-in prior to and adoption after Go-Live. The implementation of end-user work groups consisting of key end users and stakeholders during the beginning stages of the engagement provides the groundwork for keeping the system implementers in sync with the business objectives of the organization.

The creation of super-user teams functioning as facilitators for fellow employees post-Go-Live helps smooth the transition from old to new processes while providing valuable feedback to the system implementers. And last, the creation of end-user, job-specific training sessions and deliverables gives the end user the opportunity to receive needs-based training.

Gia Brown is a Beacon Partners Consultant. Beacon Partners is one of the fastest-growing privately-held healthcare management consulting firms, coaching organizations in the development of strategies that are centered on maximizing Enterprise Yield performance. To achieve top levels of performance, an organization must factor strategic direction, physician alignment, economic incentives and overall market impact. Our experience has proven that focus on these critical success factors will strengthen an organization's position in the market and, ultimately, improve the patient's experience with the provider.

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