

Customer 'Think'

A customer-centric healthcare organization is defined as one that has a mission of creating meaningful value for customers across all touch points, leading to sustained competitive advantage for both short-term and long-term organizational success. It doesn't take a genius to figure out that the current market conditions are forcing healthcare organizations to reduce their costs constantly. Both hospital and physicians are under tremendous pressure to do more for less.

So how does a hospital go about protecting the customer experience while the financial people are trying to drive down costs to ensure that the business survives? Well, there is a wrong way of cutting expense, and a right way of driving down expense while maintaining and even enhancing customer experience.

First one needs to decide which costs we want to reduce, and understand how they impact the customer experience. This tends to be problematic for most healthcare organizations due to the fact that they are functionally organized, and therefore have great difficulty correlating between their cost centers and the customer experience. Cost optimization is fast becoming the latest industry buzzword. But what do you optimize costs around? If it's just cutting cost for the sake of lowering expenses, then it will almost certainly impact the customer experience.

What to do? Who is a Customer?

What we need is to look at these old problems in a new light. We need to look at these challenges from the eyes of the customer. We need to think of not only cutting cost but also ways of increasing revenue via customer 'think'. Yes, that's right – there are lots of revenue enhancing opportunities also in 'customer think'.

But before we get too far ahead of ourselves, let's define who are our customers, and how can one become a 'customer think' organization. Most hospitals have defined their customers in two broad categories: Patients and Physicians. Let's take each one and see how we can enhance their experience across the healthcare touch points.

Patient as a Customer

For many, the word "design" conjures images of sleek architecture, or avant-garde fashion. But for designers at progressive hospitals, it wasn't plans for a new building or new product that brought them together. It was the prospect of designing a better healthcare system.

The idea of using "design thinking" to solve big problems may be a relatively new idea in the world-at-large, but for progressive healthcare organizations, a project aimed at understanding and improving the interaction between patients, physicians and hospital is key to future success.

For too long we've looked at the healthcare system – a system on the verge of collapse – from the perspective of healthcare providers and insurers, not from the perspective of the patient. A project can bring new visibility to how patients experience care and open up opportunities for improving this experience, bringing us closer to our goal of providing higher quality, lower cost healthcare.

A project can create a detailed depiction of the experience patients have interacting with providers across the spectrum. From the physical spaces where this interaction takes place to the systems and processes that dictate how information is exchanged, the designers are mapping how each component contributes to the quality, patient safety, and outcome as patient moves across the healthcare landscape.

Moving Customer-Centric Healthcare Forward

Customers are also becoming more actively involved in the healthcare process due to Internet availability and the shift towards higher co-payments. Internet usage in USA has surpassed 75% of the households. A national

Kaiser Family Foundation survey of older Americans found that a third (31%) of seniors (age 65 and older) have gone online, but that more than two-thirds (70%) of the next generation of seniors (50-64 year-olds) are even more active Internet users for healthcare inquiry. The differences among seniors and 50-64 year-olds are striking and indicate that online resources for health information may soon play a much larger role among older Americans. Notably, women have reached parity with men in the wired senior population. In the year 2000, about 60% of wired seniors were men and about 40% were women. In February 2004, the gender ratio among wired seniors has shifted to 50% men and 50% women – the same ratio as the general Internet population.

Wired seniors are often as enthusiastic as younger users in the major activities that define online life such as email and the use of search engines to answer a specific question. Also, wired seniors are as likely as younger users to go online on a typical day. Internet is now also quite prevalent among poor and low income families. Even though low income fathers might not be quite as active on the internet, their children on the other hand are active and especially mothers work with their children on the internet to assist with school activities.

The healthcare IT marketplace is responding to this by offering powerful browser based Patient Portal solutions that enhances the patient experience while reducing administrative costs and allowing healthcare organizations to offer a level of service with operational excellence. Because of this tsunami of readily available Internet users, healthcare organizations that do not take advantage of emerging web-based solutions to attract and retain patients will miss out and lose current and future potential customers to those hospitals that are willing to offer Internet based services so that patients can effectively manage their financial, administrative and clinical aspects of their healthcare.

What Can These Solutions Do For Your Customer?

- Patients can register themselves via a browser interface. If they are already registered, they can update their demographic information.
- Patient can make request for scheduled appointments using an easy to use calendar
- Patients can search for available physicians and based on insurance and specialty and find a provider with a few clicks.
- Dynamic content management system so that when customers come to your website, based on their profile, automatically receives timely clinical service information for preventive care.
- On-line access to all their accounts and their dependent accounts, for viewing of detail bills and an integrated bill payment.
- Patient can go on-line to request Rx refills, and it can be automatically routed to the appropriate provider, and based on rule based queue management system, the request will be reviewed and routed to the patient preferred pharmacy for completion.
- Publishing of education and other classes offered by the hospital and on-line payment of these classes and reminder management system.
- Secure access to patient clinical data and EHR based on clinical rules
- Eliminate calls to physicians and hospital departments and reduced paperwork and customer inconvenience
- A "one-stop" solution that combines administrative, financial, and clinical portal where they can come for all their needs in a self service and empowered manner.

Physician as a Customer

For most CEO's, physician relationships are their top concern. Relationships once built on mutual commitment to quality and facilities are not enough today. They have been complicated by money, regulatory stress, malpractice, etc.

The growing divergence between hospital and medical staff needs require that you consider new approaches to looking at a physician as a customer. A customer, whose loyalty is fragile, requires new understanding of what a physician is going through, and how a hospital can create a win-win solution that can not only meet the needs of the physician but also positively impact its bottom line, quality and outcome. So what can hospital do to attract and retain physicians?

Efficiency Drivers

- Provide a Physician Portal which allows them to access all their patients' data in an easy to use manner like 'Google'.
- A solution that alerts physicians via cell phone/PDA for abnormal alerts and they can with a simple click view their lab results on a PDA in a secure manner
- Be able to have dinner with the family and walk to their child's PC and to respond to their deficiencies and E-sign the legal chart from the comfort of their home.
- Be able to do electronic rounds if required in the morning with two clicks per patients.
- Be able communicate with other physicians via secure messaging on a patient in an efficient manner
- The portal should be single-sign-on solutions from which they should be able to launch much different application in a longitudinal manner.

Relationship & Revenue Drivers

- Outreach for Laboratory so that physician's office can easily orders Labs from hospital thus generating additional revenue and enhancing physician & patient satisfaction.
- Automate the Medical Necessity process at the point of order which is costing hospital lost revenue.
- Offer on-line physician query capability so that Coders do not have to chase physicians with questions for MS-DRG, and physicians can answer them on-line in an expedient manner.

Let's face it – the physician/hospital relationship is not what it used to be. But physicians need an electronically connected hospital to survive and succeed. On one hand they drive tremendous amount of revenue to the hospital; on the other hand, hospital's need to offer an electronic solution that will make the physician's job more efficient and effective.

Key Factors in becoming a Customer 'Think' organization:

- Be a listening organization
- Respond to the information
- Be innovative and creative
- Anticipate—ahead of the curve
- Lead by example
- Align business processes and technology

In conclusion, it's all about achievements not lip service that matters. Technology and social changes are creating a potent mix of forces that will transform the way all businesses operate, offer service, and relate to customers. These portals will enable organizations to aggregate customer data, analyze that data, and automate workflows to optimize customer-facing business processes. We recommend that hospitals look at their portfolio of electronic solutions that they are currently offering today to their customers and ask themselves: are these technology solutions really helping their customers?

Kam Shams is the Chairman of The Shams Group (TSG), a workflow-based software firm and recipient of national awards and recognition for solutions in Business Intelligence, Document Imaging, EMPI, Physicians & Patient Portal, CPOE, and EHR. Today, TSG is one of the premier vendors in the MEDITECH marketplace, providing 'open' system, web-based, integrated solutions for progressive hospitals to leverage their IT investments. Kam has coached CIO's & CEOs around the country on how to leverage MEDITECH technology. He works closely with prestigious educational institutions to provide data analytics, revenue cycle management, and community-based EHR workshops throughout North America.

SMARTER SOFTWARE FOR BETTER HEALTHCARE



Are your Patients connected to you via the WEB for all your Services?

75% of Americans have home access to the Internet.
This amounts to 204 million out of the projected 272.81 million

DON'T THINK LIKE A HOSPITAL

THINK LIKE A PATIENT



Find your answer on the next page

Case Study: Systemic & Transformational Wins

How can you get there and stay there....

ABC Memorial hospital wanted transformational change. Its organizational problems were stacking up like delayed flights at DFW airport. Information Technology (IT) challenges were negatively impacting cash flow and care process across the organization and IT response was nowhere in sight. Not that it was all IT's fault. It appeared that lately IT could not do anything right. Their past strategies were not working. No one could figure out what management wanted. It was clear that change was in the air. Change that required speed and innovation.

How Did This All Come About?

Senior management during the past year had been hiring talented operational managers across the organization to upgrade its human asset to transform the organization, and these managers were demanding new innovative technology like Business Intelligence tools and web-based solutions to improve the organizations performance and bottom line.

Before these progressive managers came on board, the decision making process for both financial and clinical managers was painful and long winded. IT department lacked progressive and modern reporting solutions to meet the needs of the organization. They struggled to respond to physician request for advance clinical systems. Business Office was backlogged with getting bills out with little time for customer service. Revenue Cycle was like a clogged artery, with the possibility of a financial heart attack at any time due to backlog and complexity of coding. The list goes on and on...

As mentioned, it was not all IT's fault. Part of the challenge was due to IT leadership and part was middle management and key end-users. In the past, middle management did not have the know-how and the skills to demand and use knowledge based solutions to transform the organization. All this started to change in last few months as new blood flowed in the organization.

Now, top management was looking at their middle managers to innovate and rejuvenate the organization. But one cannot do this by just hiring new middle managers. Hiring talented middle managers is a good start, but if these managers do not have access to modern software solutions and decision support applications, they cannot provide the proverbial 'systematic/transformational wins', the most familiar phrase made up of two of the most seductive syllables in the business.

Transformation with Speed and Agility

Not only senior and mid-management wanted transformational solutions integrated with MEDIETCH in a workflow centric manner, but they wanted it with reasonable speed and agility. IT realized that if they are to remain viable, they must act now and they must also act with speed and agility. They must seize the moment and provide a new direction and leadership.

ABC Memorial hospital also realized that a patient safety driven competitive landscape has prompted many hospitals around the country to spend tens of millions in upgrading their IT towards Advance Clinical Solutions. ABC Memorial did not have tens of millions of dollars, nor did it have a large IT staff to roll out these Advance IT solutions. Also the IT department was smart enough to realize that buying a solution is just the start, if success is to be transformational and lasting. They wanted these new Advance Solutions to encompass the following:

Pre-build Advance Solutions - Applications that came pre-built with all relevant dictionaries thus saving hundreds of hours of valuable staff time for IT and Users. They knew that automating the build process resulted in 'best practice build', standardization of dictionaries and elimination of error during the build process.

SMARTER SOFTWARE FOR BETTER HEALTHCARE



**How to make
Web pervasive
across your organization?**

Physician Portal follows you from your desktop to your pocket/purse.
2 Clicks in Physician Portal Vs 99 clicks in HIS

**DON'T
THINK
LIKE A HOSPITAL**

**THINK
LIKE A PHYSICIAN**



Advance..... →

On-going Dictionary Maintenance of these new Advance Solutions - Applications that come with dictionary synchronization capabilities so that IT does not have to maintain dictionaries outside MEDITECH. As MEDITECH dictionaries are regularly updated, these advance solutions are automatically synchronized thus eliminating need for dictionary maintenance. Other benefits of this could include single sign-on as PW dictionaries are kept the same.

Ease of Deployment - Applications that are web-based so that no deployment is required at the desktop. This saves hundreds of hours in initial deployment and ongoing technical and helpdesk support. For remote users the savings are even higher.

Advance UI for Ease of Use - Applications that come with Advance User Interface (UI) similar to Google and Yahoo with intuitive features like hyperlinks, automatic drop downs, and dashboards look and feel for high adoption by users.

Pre-build Work-Flow based Integration - Applications that goes beyond the basic minimum HL-7 integration to advance workflow based integration without MEDIETCH involvement. This reduces cost, minimizes finger-pointing, and eliminates operational risk.

Pre-build MPI - Applications that populates MEDIETCH MPI into the Advance Solutions from day one, and keeps it synchronized going forward. This offers Advance Clinical Applications with a level of redundancy required by Joint Commission, and during downtime offers a backup system at no additional cost.

Welcome to the Future

Once the IT department put these requirements in writing, and identified their preferred vendors for Advance Solutions, management rallied around their recommendations and things started to fall in place. Also because of these requirements, transformation came with speed and agility. IT and end users did not have to put massive resources in building and deployment of these applications. They were able to direct most of their resources towards process change/transformation, application testing and training.

Going in, ABC Memorial hospital knew that many of its workflow challenges required for transformation were across the continuum of patient care process. These challenges were more 'systemic' in nature rather than 'quick fix' problems. Managers and analytical users needed easy to use modern business intelligence and decision support tools to better understand the 'complete' organizational workflow in a granular manner. Many of the problems were related to different units or parts of organization not operating in a unified manner. Deep problems that arise in organizations are almost always the product of interaction of parts. Now with advance decision support and clinical solutions, they were able to solve transformational problems expeditiously.

This case study reveals one approach to how to go about creating an IT strategy where one can have "transformational wins" across the organization. These wins boost morale and bottom line, and builds momentum for ongoing change in enhancing clinical practice and patient safety. These are the kind of strategies that get colleagues to come together to solve common workflow challenges.

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Empower Your Future

TSG is a software and services firm with agile architecture that focuses on four major core competencies: Business Intelligence, Electronic Health Record (EHR), Business Process Management (BPM) and Integration Solutions. We provide innovative IT solutions that allow any hospital to enhance its revenue cycle, patient safety, data quality, enterprise-wide integration, and business intelligence. We have worked with over 400+ hospitals across the world.

With nearly two decades of research in MEDITECH and other HIS systems, we offer 'open' system, Web-based, integrated solutions for progressive hospitals to leverage their IT investment. All our products come with seamless built-in MEDITECH integration adapters (with no MEDITECH involvement necessary). For non-Meditech HIS vendors we provide HL-7, SQL and other industry standard integration protocols.

Our solutions stretch into every context of healthcare. We offer an Identity Management solution to securely bring order to duplicate and disjointed medical records. Our fully-interoperable Paperless Medical Records/HIM solution allows hospitals to create the most robust legal electronic medical record. Business Offices and Finance are redefining efficiency through our Paperless Registration, Revenue Cycle & Denial Management, Paperless Accounts Payable & Materials Management, and Business Intelligence innovations. Medical Dictation, Transcription, and Outsourcing are made easy through our ETranscription solution. We have even enhanced the lab and pharmacy workflow with our Laboratory Outreach Communication Portal, and Medication Order Management solutions.

Our goal is to continue to be a thought and innovation leader in the healthcare marketplace by providing you with integrated solutions that maximize the quality of all the IT investments that you have made so far. We are dedicated to providing optimal solutions to the US and global healthcare industries through our advanced knowledge in Data Warehouse/Business Intelligence Support Systems, Document Imaging/Object Archiving, Electronic Health Record, Electronic Master Patient Index (EMPI), Medication Order Management, CPOE and Web-based portals (Physician/Patient).

Solution Suite

E-HIM

Legal Electronic Health Record
EzDictation and ETranscription
EMPI and Patient Identity Management

Physician & Patient Centric

Physician Portal
Patient Portal
Outreach Portal (Ambulatory Orders and Results)
Computerized Provider Order Entry (Inpatient CPOE)

Business Process Management

Electronic Document Imaging and Object Archiving
Process Automation

Data Warehouse

Business Intelligence
Decision Support
Service Line Analysis

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