

How to Select and Manage the Right EMR Implementation Project Team for Your Practice

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By First Insight Corporation

Now that you've decided to implement a practice-wide EMR and Practice Management system, don't forget to focus on one of the most important ingredients for a successful outcome—**selecting your EMR implementation project team**. By choosing the right internal leadership team, focusing on good communications, creating a detailed project plan, setting realistic measurable goals, and devoting sufficient time for deployment and training, your move from paper-based documents to an electronic system can be a smooth transition.

We all know that moving to a new EMR system can be challenging at times, and it often requires a change in employee attitudes and behaviors. According to business strategist Peter Senge, "People don't resist change. They resist being changed!" Even though they may agree with the concept, many have a low tolerance for change.

So how can you get off to a good start? Listed in this white paper are a few suggestions that will help guide you as you select the right people to

serve in the important role of implementing an EMR system—a flexible and comprehensive system that will ultimately improve the quality of patient care, enhance your office efficiency, and improve office communications.

- **Designate a project manager** (doctor, office manager or office administrator). This person should have the skills, training and time to form, lead and facilitate groups. He/she will also develop the project plan, coordinate and track the implementation issues, deficiencies, decisions, and tasks assigned by your team members.
- **Form a project team/committee** with people who will embrace change, contribute enthusiastically and have the respect of their peers. The team should include representatives from each department, including Information Technology (IT) or your hardware/networking technician. Remember, implementing an EMR system should not be driven solely by IT. It requires

the involvement and commitment from every level of your practice.

- **Define and set realistic measurable project goals and objectives.** The vision must be driven from top down management, as this will help your team make necessary system-wide changes.
- **Specify tasks and how they will be achieved,** what resources you need, including budgets, people and timelines. It's important to develop a clear definition/goal of what you want the EMR system to accomplish and make decisions based on the process that supports the goal.
- **Analyze every function of every job** to understand how tasks were accomplished with the old system.
- **Develop a comprehensive data map** of all organizational workflows and processes, including office modifications, hardware installations, software configuration, developing a backup system, entering old patient data into the new EMR system, moving from paper-based documents to an electronic system, deployment and staff training.
- **Take EMR project team meetings seriously** and follow these simple guidelines:
 - a. Meet weekly and always prepare and follow an agenda.
 - b. Establish the following ground rules for meetings: Everyone participates, focus on goals/objectives, maintain momentum and enthusiasm, maintain confidentiality about critical business decisions, and reach closure or consensus.

- c. Meetings should last no more than 90 minutes.
- d. Brainstorm and allow people to express their opinions freely.
- e. Convert your decisions into actions.

- **Resolve conflicts effectively by setting goals and be honest about concerns.** Agree to disagree—healthy disagreements can build better decisions. Let your team create; people will support what they create.
- A few members of the project team should **visit at least one or two optometry practices** that implemented the software you are considering or have purchased. Meet with doctors and high-level users and talk about their experiences. If you don't have time to visit their office, take the time to speak with key users on the telephone.
- The project team should **meet weekly and use e-mail** to develop and refine the implementation plan, discuss issues and update the progress. Remember, ongoing communication is a key element to a successful outcome.

Free Practice Analysis

Ask First Insight how they can help you develop a plan of action, evaluate a return on your investment, and create a smooth-running paperless office.

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