Empowering Your Team: Selecting the Right Technology Partner

Cheryl Marks Young
CFO, Easter Seals New Jersey
Agenda

• Introductions

• Technology Acumen for Leaders
  • Technical vs Strategic
  • Personality types – dealing with information overload
  • Key Technology Concepts
  • Cutting through the data – 5Qs – What does it all mean?

• ROI (return on investment) and WIIFM (what’s in it for me)

• Telling your story
  • Influencing outcomes
  • Using data and SMEs (subject matter experts)

• Case Studies
Quotes

• “In god we trust. All others bring data”

• “If you can't describe what you are doing as a process (briefly), you don't know what you're doing.”

• “If you do not know how to ask the right question, you discover nothing.”

~ W. Edwards Deming ~
Father of Statistical Quality Control &
Inventor of the “Plan-Do-Check-Act” Cycle
Technology Acumen

Technical versus Strategic Thinking

• Definition/Description

• When to use which concept

• Knowing your limitations and those of your audience
  • Speaking their language
  • Minimize or define mnemonics or abbreviations or subject specific lingo.

• Wear your own hat of authority - credibility
  • Use the expert rules and regulations as a resource to back up your recommendations as the underlying premise only

• Enlist SMEs (subject matter experts) where necessary
Personality Type with Data

• Dealing with data overload

• The goal is to influence the outcome

• When too much of a good thing is not effective.
Hierarchy of Leadership & Technical Design

- Strategy
- Planning
- Risk Management
- Analysis
- Reporting
- Control
- Compliance
Technology Acumen – Key Questions

Key Questions to assess technology needs

• What problem am I trying to solve?
• What output/outcome is needed?
• Who understands the problem internally?
• Who supports the technology solution internally? Externally?
• What is the competition using?
• Do I see any trends in technology projects internally or externally?
• What decisions do I need to make and/or actions do I need to take based on the technology and financial information?
Cutting through the information

5 Qs

• What?
• Why?
• When?
• Where?
• How?
Choosing your team

• Committee Structure
• Cross Functional Teams
• Internal Subject Matter Experts
• External Subject Matter Experts
• Stakeholders
• Mediators
• Time keepers
• Note takers
• Guardians of the “Gate”
Team Responsibilities

- Review
- Design
- Decide
- “Sell”
- Implement
- Test
- Adjust
- Test
- Repeat Test/Adjust/Test as often as necessary until desired results achieved
- Train
- Go Live
Selling your decision

- Influencing Outcomes
  - Rules of the Road for Success
    - Be Brief
    - Be Specific
      - Include credible data and use expert references as needed
    - Be Mindful
    - Be Solution Focused
    - Translate the benefits of what you are trying to achieve into a benefit for your customer
  - Be Prepared
  - Respond to questions – “Good Question”; I’ll get back to you vs I don’t know.
  - Follow up
Telling Your Story – Getting to YES

• Perspective is a Critical Success Factor

The Goal is not to implement a winning strategy or program...

It is to accelerate operational (or other) excellence to create sustainable competitive advantage.

When we look for “Silver Bullet” Solutions we can wind up with a “Program of the Month Mentality”. Nobody will buy another one of “those”.

Balance your perspective and walk in the other person’s shoes before you make your pitch. Communicate a Value Proposition they can use.
Telling Your Story – What is “Value”

“The Value of an item must not be based on it’s Price, but rather on the Utility that it yields”

~ Commentarii Academiae Scientiarum
~ Imperialis Petropolitanae, Tomus V
~1738

“Value depends entirely on Utility”

~ The Theory of Political Economy
~1871

“The inherent worth of a “product” is judged by the customer”

~ The Lean Lexicon
~2008
$1 Million vs $1 Dollar Solution

During the early days of the Space program, engineers spent $1 Million to invent a ball point pen that would write in space. Our then competition, took a pencil.

Remember to think about perspective and value propositions.
Exercise – Case Studies – Influencing Outcomes

Review Committees – Cross Functional Teams

- Your job is to review and rate each case study and answer the following questions:
  - What problem is being identified?
  - Where is the problem?
  - Why is it important to solve this problem?
  - How is the problem being solved?
  - When will the problem be solved?
  - What resources are being requested?
  - Who benefits: positive and negative results of this project?
  - What is the ROI for this project?
  - Would you approve this project and all related funding?
Discussion – Case Studies

• General Ledger Package
• Electronic Records Management System
• Electronic Billing System
• Customization vs Out of the Box or Off the Shelf
• Keeping it Simple
Getting to Real Results

Lessons learned:

• Identify internal and external champions
• If at first you don’t succeed…
• Think outside the box: your first solution may not be the only solution
• Creative problem solving is critical
• Cross functional teams are beneficial to success
• Quality Improvement projects are not always a zero sum game
Thank you for attending

Empowering Your Team: Selecting the Right Technology Partner

Cheryl Marks Young
CFO, Easter Seals New Jersey