

A platform for healthcare IT innovation

Achieving your strategic objectives with the right infrastructure

Strategic plans: the core of business operations

Most hospitals, radiology groups, and other healthcare organizations have a strategic plan.

Strategic plans carry a heavy responsibility in that they define the direction for a healthcare organization over the next three to five years.

The objectives might include:

- Improving patient care
- Increasing outreach
- Controlling costs
- Improving operational capacity

With that type of weight associated to the document, basic questions need to be answered:

- Does it really matter?
- Who reads it?
- More importantly, who or what enables it?

Many strategic plans can become meaningless.

Much time may be spent on developing the plan but then it just becomes a document or nice “flowery”

language for websites or organizational meetings.

Since strategic plans encompass grand visions and goals, getting them started can be complex and may require new skills, technology, and processes.

Strategic plans need to be enabled

Because healthcare is a technologically-based industry, enabling a strategic plan requires specific strategies and special consideration into the infrastructure chosen—and on the ability of that infrastructure to deliver on the strategic objectives.

Healthcare IT departments play a significant role in making strategic plans a reality. Understanding the key goals of your strategic plan is necessary in order to:

- 1 Determine the right IT infrastructure
- 2 Align your IT infrastructure to enable the strategic plan

Determine the right infrastructure

Selecting the right infrastructure is driven by the process and technology requirements to bring it all together and achieve the necessary results. Given the changes occurring in healthcare today—HITECH, Meaningful Use, HIEs, etc.—CIOs and other healthcare IT professionals need to understand their calling.

Enable their strategic plan and turn it into a guiding document for their infrastructure technology decisions.

The underlying infrastructure can be the make-or-break point in the productivity and cost-effectiveness of success.

With the right infrastructure in place, your hospital or healthcare facility can take specific steps to realize broader strategic goals and gain an edge in the marketplace and in the healthcare community.

Align your infrastructure to your strategic plan

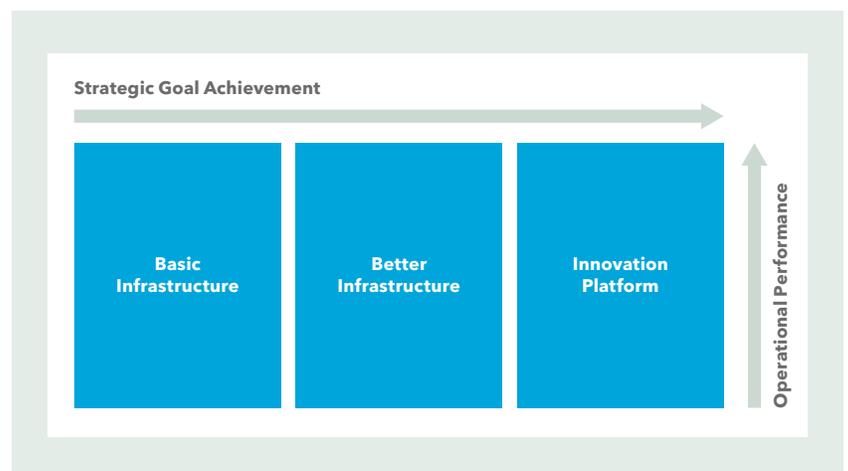
Infrastructure can be thought of as having either a low or high ability to align your IT capabilities with strategic and operational goals. Some solutions only create incremental performance improvements. Others move beyond performance improvements and into providing a means to achieve broader strategic goals.

The most innovative platforms can effectively meet the base performance improvement requirements while enabling strategic goals and producing tangible shifts in meeting new demands.

This is done with infrastructure that creates new leverage points to produce new results, leaving the old ways behind and enabling new ways much more effectively.

New infrastructure capabilities will make a simple and effective transition to interfaces in hours rather than days, connectivity that extends outside the four walls without limitations, and data that can be used as insights rather than as only static information.

Using the right IT infrastructure—a next generation of infrastructure—can take your organization from average to exceptional, simply by harnessing technology as a backbone for success.



Realizing your strategic plans

Outlined below are some common objectives that may be included in your organization's strategic plans and what it really means to achieve those objectives—including the role that a robust infrastructure solution can play in enabling real success.

Strategic objective: better quality care

A strategic goal for most facilities is to create a better overall experience for their patients and to deliver the best care possible. But defining the patient experience and then improving upon it can carry multiple facets. Achieving this strategic objective often includes goals such as:

- Developing ways to measure clinical quality in each inpatient and outpatient department
- Providing patient-centered service and better overall processes
- Monitoring physician performance and trends
- Demonstrating widespread improvement monthly with quantitative data
- Creating better clinical documentation for patient records
- Attracting the best physicians and staff in the nation

While there are many factors that can determine the success of this initiative, a key strategy for achieving better quality care is creating a better data flow environment: ensuring the patient's data is available when it is needed, in the format it is needed in, and in a quality, accurate manner.

Making this type of improvement strengthens overall workflow cycle times, further enhancing reliability for patients and creating even greater improvements in care.

The focus is on improved workflow, but robust technology is necessary to make it happen.

Why?

- To streamline processes and improve communications between systems, you must find a way to transform and map data regardless of the geographical location of the connected system.
- To implement more accurate and efficient clinical documentation, you must find a way to support the varying formats of new types of medical record systems (e.g., Electronic Medical Record—EMR and Electronic Health Record—EHR) and/or documents (e.g., Continuity of Care Document—CCD and Continuity of Care Record—CCR).
- To gain insight into workflow performance, you must find a way to access key data in a meaningful way in order to report metrics and view trends.

Creating a better data flow environment that can solve all of these challenges requires an investment in a robust infrastructure solution. Doing so results in better care for your patients by helping prevent bottlenecks or problem areas in the overall patient

KEY ACTION

Walk through a typical patient data flow experience and identify the gaps. What are the wait times? How often do you have to fill out paperwork? Then develop a plan to close those gaps by leveraging your IT infrastructure.

experience, and lets you quantitatively demonstrate workflow improvements within your organization.

It also helps you attract and retain the best physicians and staff by giving them timely access to

the information they need to do their jobs. Retaining quality physicians goes beyond simply providing a good work environment—better workflows and reliability are a key factor.

Strategic objective: improved capacity

Improving operational capacity at your facility can be a vital strategic objective. But capacity can have multiple elements. Integrated applications and connected communities are driving healthcare interface demand to new, all-time levels. Coupled with this demand is a lack of resources to throw at the need.

Some strategies to improve operational capacity often include:

- Increasing the volume of clinical activity as a whole
- Increasing the number of active medical staff
- Creating outpatient satellite facilities and increasing the number of auxiliary members
- Implementing flexible structures, functions and processes
- Ensuring that IT systems, HR processes and other leadership and communications support the overall mission

Realizing goals for increased capacity does not have to translate into a similar rise in costs or resources.

As long as the right IT infrastructure is in place.

The right infrastructure should be robust enough to support easy scalability, wide compatibility, and minimal increases in costs with continued increases in volume. It should also include new ways to build and test interfaces and new ways to easily connect to external points of care.

It also helps you more effectively meet emerging standards or certification requirements, and may even allow your organization to take advantage of the \$20 billion allocated to health information technology in the federal stimulus bill—ARRA > HITECH > Meaningful Use.

Adopting this level of infrastructure allows you to dramatically increase overall capacity, connect to more remote facilities, and create a more flexible processes for your organization.

A better infrastructure successfully balances out cost and resource requirements, making it a part of the broader plan to help meet your other capacity improvement goals of increasing medical staff and creating new satellite facilities.

Technology makes everything come together for streamlined efficiencies in your organization.

KEY ACTION

Identify your capacity constraints. Is it people? Finding the right skills? Is it approach? Programming every interface and elements of the supporting infrastructure? How will you keep up with increasing demand and the addition of new facilities or processes? Then determine how your infrastructure will allow you to add capacity for your organization.

Strategic objective: increased outreach and partnerships

Many strategic planning initiatives include an objective of increasing partnerships with other healthcare organizations and referring physicians. This objective might even go a step further to include developing new services and programs to meet the needs of your community. Some strategies to help create this type of growth often include:

- Being able to reach out into the healthcare community beyond the immediate geographic area
- Developing more business partnerships with physicians
- Increasing office space to expand outreach
- Establishing clinics in new communities
- Creating cutting edge educational and training programs

Technology can enable you to achieve this goal by enabling secure connectivity to any trading partner outside of your hospital's four walls, regardless of their physical location or the type of application they utilize.

Included are the ability to fully participate in Health Information Exchanges (HIEs) and Regional Health Information Organizations (RHIOs), as well as other related community health initiatives that promote safer, timely, and more effective movement of clinical data.

The result is greater outreach into the physician community plus easy scalability and low costs for new partnerships.

Over time, this translates into cost savings that can be used to further the other community outreach objectives of your organization—like increasing office space, establishing new clinics, or creating new educational and training programs.

Delivering on this strategic objective means your organization needs a way to cultivate relationships and enhance communications with off-site providers and referral centers while at the same time, cutting costs to allow consistent growth of vital community healthcare programs.

Similar to the previous example, an innovative infrastructure facilitates the realization of new goals; it is not the bottleneck or the cost driver for realizing the goal. It is the means to achieve and extend the goals set forth within your organization's strategic plans.

KEY ACTION

Determine whether or not your organization is maximizing its potential for community outreach and partnerships, and whether or not your existing infrastructure can adequately support an increase in those key relationships.

Strategic objective: benchmarking and self-audits

A common strategic goal is to find ways to continuously monitor the health and effectiveness of an organization. And to effectively demonstrate that steady forward progress is being made.

Realizing this objective often includes such strategies as:

- Being able to harness and track clinical data and results and make comparisons to other available data
- Delivering quantitative information about quality, safety, satisfaction, outcomes and costs that can then be evaluated

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- Setting high standards for clinical services and continuously measuring success

To create effective self-auditing practices, your infrastructure should be able to harness physician, patient and other data in a real and measurable way so that it can be easily analyzed for trends and performance issues.

The most robust technology can integrate data analysis with interface connectivity into a seamless package, enabling further cost savings and a better ability to gather key business data regardless of geographical location.

An innovation platform creates a strategic advantage for your organization because it means data can be harnessed from all satellite facilities and trading partners, creating more thorough monitoring and more accurate audits.

The end result is improved performance and better benchmarking for your organization.

The right technology can pull data from the message flow and refine it into valuable information about the business.

KEY ACTION

Determine whether or not your organization has a way to harness key data from the workflows for all systems and trading partners, regardless of where the data comes from and whether or not it was created locally.

Strategic objective: a secure financial future

Most strategic plans aim to ensure that the financial stability of the organization remains intact. Creating a secure financial future involves multiple facets—from increasing efficiency to making target investments.

So realizing this objective often includes such strategies as:

- Maximizing efficiency for all facilities, systems and staff
- Acquiring and investing in the latest medical technology
- Creating easier billing workflows to hasten charges and payments
- Adding new clinical services and administrative programs to increase revenue
- Reducing the debt to equity ratio
- Making target investments in specific programs that help further the organization's financial goals

Technology plays a key role in reaching these goals. How?

- To maximize efficiency between facilities and systems and make your staffs' jobs easier, a robust integration solution should be in place to automatically translate and send data between departments or external locations.
- To create easier billing workflows, financial data should be electronic and automated alongside patient information so that processing time is streamlined and payments to your organization are hastened.
- To invest in new medical technology, add new programs and services, or make target investments in new programs, your organization must find a way to streamline costs so that these more broad objectives can be achieved.

All of this can be done with an investment in a robust infrastructure solution.

With an innovation platform, your organization can adequately streamline its workflows, processes and overall efficiency such that monetary savings build up over time. And in turn, your organization's financial goals can more easily be met so that a strong financial future is secured, as is continued quality service to the community.

KEY ACTION

Does your infrastructure create leverage points to gain insights into the data flow? In other words, does the data flow provide performance insights?

Harness innovation

There are varying infrastructure solutions available in the marketplace, each falling into a category of either: “enough” (performance improvements only) or “next generation” (performance transformation plus strategic innovation).

Choosing an appropriate infrastructure solution should be more than just finding an adequate resolution to immediate or urgent problems. Your IT infrastructure should also be able to keep pace with the living, changing documents that form an organization’s strategic plans.

And it should be able to take those plans and make them a reality, in all areas and for all goals defined, without leaving out key priorities that can move your organization into a new realm of strategic advantage.

Key action 1 Review your strategic plans to determine which specific goals still lack achievement.

Key action 2 Evaluate your current infrastructure to see if the technology in place can truly achieve all facets of your strategic objectives.

Key action 3 Modify your technology infrastructure investments such that all operational and strategic goals can be fully realized and met, while at the same time setting the stage to adequately meet future organizational growth, new healthcare initiatives, and communication challenges.

About Corepoint Health

Corepoint Health has the healthcare IT experience and strength to deliver a dramatically simplified approach to internal and external data integration and health information exchange for hospitals, radiology centers, laboratories, and clinics.

Our next generation software solutions are transformational and will streamline your IT environment, provide a fast track to achieving your interoperability goals, and create operational

leverage within your organization. Corepoint Health's solutions achieve a needed balance of being both intuitive and sophisticated while delivering solid functionality and performance.

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