The Healthcare Executive’s Role in IT Decisions

Length: 1.5 Hours

Target Audience: Mid-level to senior healthcare leaders
Those involved in information technology decisions who do not have a strong technology background

Description: Today’s healthcare executive works in a world of ever-increasing information technology options. How do they navigate, evolve and respond to the changing informatics world. These leaders often do not work directly with information technology, nor necessarily understand the application, but they are asked to make crucial decisions about their implementation. The outcomes of those decisions have financial, strategic and patient outcomes and the cost of a mistake can be devastating. Is there a methodology or a roadmap to assist the non-technical executive to proactively make technology decisions?

Faculty: Moderator and two to three panelists.
The moderator should be a senior healthcare executive who routinely makes or weighs in on IT purchase or implementation decisions.
Panelists should other executives who have IT backgrounds, a CIO, a technology vendor or a consultant who specializes in helping healthcare organizations make technology decisions.

Topics for Discussion:

- Successful approaches that other senior leaders have used to make confident decisions on topics for which they may have less specific content knowledge. For example, when a CEO must make a purchase decision for a new medical device.
- How critical information technology is becoming in transforming patient care
- The perils of chasing technology
- How to assess the huge capital and operating budgets required to support health information systems
- How new IT systems work cooperatively with existing systems
- The costs (financial and operational) of training staff to use new systems
Questions for Discussion:

1. What are the processes you use in making decisions on implementing new technologies or technological approaches?
2. Who are the key stakeholders and what are their roles?
3. How do you go about making decisions on topics for which you do not have a complete understanding?
4. When a CIO or technology vendor starts rolling out “techno-speak” how should you respond without appearing “dumb?”
5. How do know when your IT decision makers are getting too tight with your technology partners? What should you do when this happens?
6. Where do you turn to separate the technology facts from the technology fads?
7. What role should managers and other employees play in IT decision-making process?

Material for Distribution:

"How to Avoid the Train Wreck" Chapter 2 in *The Executive's Guide to Electronic Health Records* by Smaltz and Berner, 2006; pp 53-70.

*(Go to: Chapter Education Manual Appendix for handout)*

Additional Resources:


