



WHITE PAPER

Avoiding Common Legacy Support Pitfalls

7 CONSIDERATIONS TO ENSURE LEGACY SUPPORT SUCCESS

Avoiding Common Legacy Support Pitfalls

Disruptive software implementations are here to stay in the healthcare industry. According to a pair of IDC reports on the future of healthcare, **patient engagement** is expected to move from passive to active in 2017, and an influx of new, third-platform **Electronic Healthcare Records (EHR)** solutions is expected to occur from 2017 through 2019.

These changes are in part a response to the limitations of existing electronic healthcare solutions now deployed by many healthcare organizations. A lack of interoperability in legacy systems can slow a healthcare provider's goal of making the patient the focus of its activities.

As new technology emerges, existing systems are being modified, upgraded and eventually replaced to take advantage of advancements taking place in the healthcare sectors. This can be one of the most difficult challenges for a CIO in healthcare, and based on a recent **article** discussing an IDC study, one in ten providers and payers are currently in the process of implementing digital technologies. Additionally, in 2018, 42 percent of providers and 58 percent of payers have plans to deploy new digital solutions.

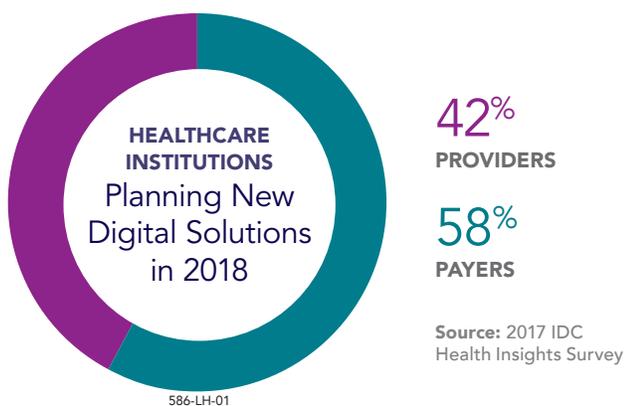


FIGURE 1. Healthcare Institutions Planning New Digital Solutions in 2018

LEGACY DOESN'T MEAN OBSOLETE

Despite advances in technology, legacy systems continue to provide significant services, supporting specific healthcare processes and maintaining critical records and data. But CIOs still must struggle with the challenge of keeping these systems secure, compliant with state and federal regulations, and current with vendor support. And as all systems eventually reach an end-of-supported-life, the CIO must also plan for the eventual decommissioning of the legacy applications.

This process of maintaining, updating and decommissioning legacy technology must be continued as the transition to new applications and systems to support the digital transformation is going on. Other challenges in providing legacy support during a transition are the need to maintain legacy support for break-fix issues, conduct the ad-hoc user instruction for workflow and application usage, and maintaining regulatory updates and table maintenance activities.

CIOs in healthcare organizations can ease these burdens by partnering with an organization to support this transition. This can help to ensure consistent performance of their legacy systems, accurately predict and control costs, and remain compliant with government and industry requirements.

Preparing for legacy support from a third-party provider also has challenges. Understanding the time and effort needed for a successful legacy support engagement can help smooth the transition to a third-party vendor. Planning ahead to avoid common mistakes and often-overlooked challenges can save time, money and effort.

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR THE LEGACY SUPPORT ENGAGEMENT?

PITFALL #1: Underestimating the Effort for Proper Onboarding

The transition to a legacy support provider can go smoothly if some basic work is conducted up front to prepare for the engagement. This legwork includes ensuring the legacy support teams will have adequate access to systems. This includes permission to enter facilities, providing access to the network and systems, and providing a place for the teams to work.

“We had no idea that all the Legacy Support people had left because our level of support never changed.”

– CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

Security must also be considered at this point. There will be a temptation to use default or generic usernames and passwords in providing system access to simplify the onboarding process. But this represents a major security weakness. Access privileges should be closely controlled on basis the basis of least-privilege. Healthcare providers often have multiple facilities, each with its own access requirements. Processes for approval at each site should be mapped out in advance so that workers can be added to directories, privileges assigned, and credentials made available for disparate systems that might have different requirements.

Healthcare providers also will have some unique concerns for workers, contractors as well as internal employees. These include medical and immunization requirements, which can differ from state to state and from facility to facility. Legacy support

teams should not be greeted on arrival with last-minute requests for immunization records or other certifications. Such basic communication can avoid delays of days or even weeks in bringing legacy support contractors onboard.

Workspace for legacy support teams should be set up in advance so that team members can start working immediately upon arrival. In addition to hardware, adequate telecommunications and Internet access, teams will need basic office furniture and supplies. Legacy support teams will not be working in a vacuum, so the workspace should be conducive to the knowledge transfer between contractors and hospital staff. Legacy support teams will also need documentation and other information for the systems they will be working with. Full discovery, audits and documentation should be done in advance to identify the scope of the task and so that work can begin immediately.

To achieve optimal engagement, organizations should plan for up to six weeks between the contract signing and the start of the transition. This provides time for legacy support analysts to be recruited and vetted, for completion of paperwork and for access to be managed.

Hospitals should think of legacy support analysts as new employees, and make advance arrangements for onboarding, including:

- ▶ Filling out forms ahead of time
- ▶ Providing access requirements
- ▶ Providing medical and immunization records needed for each facility
- ▶ Providing a fully equipped workspace
- ▶ Providing network connectivity and remote access

PITFALL #2: Not Engaging the Right People

Executive sponsorship can make or break a project, in healthcare or any other sector. Integrating a legacy support team into a healthcare system transition is no exception. The organization's CIO usually is in charge of the transition and should work closely in choosing a legacy support vendor.

As the lead executive in the process, the CIO should ensure that senior management is aware of the effort and prepared to support it. This should begin in the earliest planning stages, before the selection of a vendor, and a point-of-contact should be identified to organize the advance logistics, to shepherd the contractors onboard, and to act as a liaison throughout the engagement.

This representative usually is the Director of Application Services, and should have the authority to clear roadblocks in planning the program. Responsibilities will include communicating with groups that will be coordinating with the contractors, including facilities teams and badging departments. Organization representatives should determine ahead of time what legacy support positions are deemed important enough to warrant investing interview time.

PITFALL #3: Failing to Communicate

The three most important activities for a healthcare organization during a contractor engagement are Communicate, Communicate, and Communicate.

Communication with employees should begin before the project kick-off meeting. Frontline managers should be informed of the legacy support engagement so that they can minimize disruptions, avoid scheduling conflicts and facilitate communication between legacy support analysts and hospital staff.

The organization should conduct a stakeholder analysis and map the people, roles and applications that the legacy support analysts will be working with. This analysis should include holiday, vacation

and training scheduling. When dealing with multiple locations, the geographic separation should be considered so that travel schedules can be aligned.

PITFALL #4: Underestimating the Transition Activities

The actual knowledge transfer and transition of responsibility to a legacy support team is the most critical step in the entire engagement. When a legacy support engagement starts, the internal staff is expected to help train the new analysts while managing their day-to-day activities and preparing for the deployment of the new application. Doing some groundwork ahead of time can help staff cope with these changes while helping the legacy support analysts learn their roles more quickly.

Gathering a library of workflows, processes and procedures, such as escalation, prioritization and communication, and having those documents ready to go can help legacy support analysts be productive more quickly faster, and allows the organization to devote more resources to migrating to the new system.

A few tips to help staff concentrate on new system transition include:

- 1 TIME:** Provide time to let the legacy support team perform the appropriate knowledge exchange.
- 2 FOCUS:** Let your resources prioritize their time with the legacy support team so that they can focus on the new implementation.
- 3 DOCUMENTATION:** Capture all the workflow and design documents.
- 4 PREPARATION:** Provide all documents to the legacy support teams.
- 5 PROCESS:** Provide all the access requirements and logistical work required to accommodate the legacy support staff once on site.

Data Collection Workbooks	Comprehensive documentation for the suite of applications
Workflow Documentation	Detailed documentation of your specific workflows and procedures
Historical Issue Analysis	Ticket metrics for developing proactive solutions and preventative measures
Lesson Plans	Reviewed to enable robust and complete Service Desk transition

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FIGURE 2. Mature and Robust Transition

There often are multiple new legacy support analysts coming in at the same time. By providing one copy of documents to all teams at once, it saves the time and eliminates any potentially ongoing communication issues. Thinking through the transition activities and streamlining the delivery of standardized information eliminates noise and stress.

Proper preparation will also streamline the transition phase. This will release your staff to concentrate on your new system implementation early and will save costs.

PITFALL #5: Delaying Your Legacy Data Archival Strategy

Organizations should begin their legacy decommissioning processes with the end of the system in mind. Once a legacy system is shut down and the support services are no longer needed, what will happen to the patient data? Complexities of systems, data types, uses of patient data and regulatory requirements all must be considered before data is archived or disposed of.

An effective legacy archival strategy requires organizations to understand what data must be kept for operational, regulatory and legal reasons, and what the financial and technical impacts will be. Once the data has been inventoried, application Subject Matter Experts will need to access the data in each system and map it for extraction and conversion if necessary. Regulatory requirements

define the type and historical duration of much of the data retention, but the organization will also need to consider the user demand. Guidelines for extended use of older records should also be established.

These efforts will require a project manager working with Subject Matter Experts and should be done with the due diligence of a standard project, including a current-state versus future-state analysis, project planning with milestones and deliverables, a stakeholder analysis, and a communication plan that includes a risk and issue analysis.

Skillsets and assets needed to support a complete Legacy Archiving Strategy:

- ▶ Solid Project Management experience
- ▶ Database architects with technical maps of all legacy applications
- ▶ Experts in each department that understand where all their data is housed
- ▶ Understanding of all proprietary applications

HAVE YOU DONE YOUR DUE DILIGENCE?

PITFALL #6: Selecting the Wrong Vendor

Before beginning your search for a legacy support vendor, define the qualities needed for the job and allow enough time for the selection process. Finding a contractor is like hiring new full-time employees. You should take the time to find the right candidate for the job.

Healthcare organizations need to research legacy support vendors to identify the right ones. Making a selection based on lowest price isn't always the most



effective process. Organizations should begin their search about four months before they need a legacy support team to arrive on premise. Organizations can spend this time looking at vendors with whom they already have established partnerships and research other vendors that have successfully executed similar legacy support engagements.

When reaching out to new and potential vendors, it's a good practice to ask specific, predefined questions to evaluate how relevant the vendors' services are to the organization's needs. Some high-level questions to identify a good match include:

- ▶ How do the strengths and weaknesses of the services compare to my requirements?
- ▶ Does the vendor have the scale and performance history to meet my needs?
- ▶ Have my peers at similar organizations had success with any of these vendors?
- ▶ Has this vendor had experience across multiple organizations?
- ▶ Is the vendor prepared for problems and have experience in fixing problems?
- ▶ Can I talk to the vendor's previous or existing customers?

“Our implementation project is smoother than we ever imagined because we’re doing such a successful job with our Legacy Support.”

– CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

Organizations should perform a pros-and-cons analysis for prospective vendors and seek a partner that understands the organization. This includes a culture that matches the client's. It's also vital that

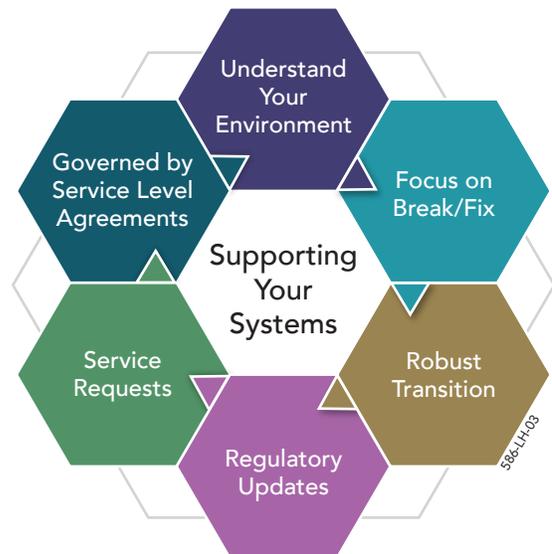


FIGURE 3. Supporting Your Systems

the contractor demonstrates an understanding of the volumes and routines behind day-to-day operations. This level of analysis can help the organization choose a vendor that can provide long-term support if needed.

Finding the right vendor is about identifying the expertise and the skills being brought to the table. Staffing, technical and process issues can still arise, but by following these steps, you can make sure the legacy support vendor you choose can be trusted to solve problems and provide collaborative solutions.

PITFALL #7: The Complications of Contract Negotiations

One of the first decisions to be made in negotiations is whether you want your contractor to sign your Master Services Agreement (MSA), or whether you will sign the vendor's MSA. Either way, having an agreement ready to go can speed up contract negotiations.

It's necessary for the organization's representatives to understand their level authority for approving requirements and budgets. Some changes and

additions can require the approval of the board of directors. Clear lines of authority for signing contracts are also needed.

Legal teams should review and approve items as early as possible, and all internal decision-making groups should meet regularly as negotiations move forward.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

As patient engagement moves from passive to active, in 2017 and beyond, new EHR solutions will usher in changes in many healthcare organizations. The need for new EHRs highlights the lack of interoperability in legacy systems that slow a healthcare provider's ability to provide a higher level of patient focus.

The time-consuming nature and elevated costs associated with the implementation of new EHR technology is slated to disrupt the healthcare industry and further accents the need for legacy support. Legacy support engagements, however, come with a series of challenges and pitfalls that healthcare organizations have to overcome.

Through proper onboarding, engaging the right people, communicating effectively and performing the required due diligence, healthcare organizations can emerge from this disruption with the appropriate legacy support that helps provide the best level of care possible to patients, and helps CIOs correctly handle the transition and adoption to the new EHR.

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Leidos Health is a leading healthcare IT consulting firm with deep clinical and technical expertise to support our customers in selecting, implementing, and optimizing information technology investments. Leidos Health offers a comprehensive range of technology services for healthcare providers — from vendor selection, strategy, design, implementation, and optimization — across all major electronic health record systems. Our professional services help providers define and enhance IT strategy, optimize technology for their clinical workflow, improve the revenue cycle, and meet regulatory requirements.

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