

Technology and management functions: overview

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Introduction

Any hospital, whether public or private, requires a clear and comprehensive system of management that will enhance the quality of all organizational initiatives. As with any other type of organization, a hospital must be able to handle tactical and strategic issues, and to guarantee smooth operation and continuity of all business processes. At the age of technological advancement, technology determines the quality, speed, and cost-effectiveness of organizational decision-making. That is why the development and implementation of integrated IT frameworks is the key to a better quality of all planning, organizing, directing, and controlling processes that take place within a highly complicated clinical environment.

Planning

Planning is “ unending course of action” (Buzzle, 2008). The hospital I used to work at was trying to enhance the quality of all planning processes by using an Executive Integrated System (EIS), where budgeting tasks were reasonably combined with other key management functions. The hospital had successfully launched an effective software system, to provide managers with objective financial information and to eliminate wasteful paper-based operations.

The system made it possible to track and manage medical order supplies, to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of all medical services, and to address spend management issues. Fully automated reports contained brief critical information with regard to costs and productivity indices for a given period of time. The previous information system had failed to deliver information in a

usable form; very often, the needed information had been delivered too late. The newly launched EIS was efficient in a sense that it provided real-time information and maintained flexible approaches to planning (Keegan & Baldwin, 1992). Any changes in financial or strategic management data were immediately reflected and delivered to the hospital's management, with the latter being able to timely respond to the emerging issues.

Organizing

Objectively, " management must organize all its resources well before in hand to put into practice the course of action to decide that has been planned in the base function" (Buzzle, 2008). In hospital, organizing is probably the most complex and the most responsible management mission, which requires using a well-developed system of software solutions and maintaining reasonable combination of electronic and manual organizing procedures. The use of wirelesscommunicationsystems has become the critical factor leading the hospital to total care quality standards.

The introduction of bar coding for all medication items, the use of laptop computers at the bedside, and a new advanced paging system were aimed at providing employees with a better understanding of their responsibilities and tasks. However, despite the visible effectiveness of all these organizing solutions, hospital's personnel were largely unprepared to using advanced technologies in the workplace, and only with time, all administration and business organization processes have been harmonized to serve the needs of patients. By using the new wireless system of communication, the hospital's management has finally achieved the five majorgoals of the

organizing process, including the effective division of labor, staff positioning, reasonable departmentalization, delegation, and equalizing the power.

Directing

Although organizing is the most responsible of all management functions, it loses its relevance, if organizations cannot direct and motivate their employees. Our hospital had initially been trying to change the traditional vision of healthcare management, and to make the directing function of management “ more technological”. It should be noted, that a hospital usually resembles a kind of a virtual team, where team members are scattered across different physical locations but need to maintain continuous intrapersonal relationships. At our hospital, voice conferences were used as the means of synchronous communication between different hospital departments.

Voice conferencing was chosen as the communication tool, which did not distract employees from their direct functions, but could be used to ensure that all of them understood the hospital’s strategic goals. Emails and written documentation were used to enhance the quality of virtual communication with employees and between employees and the senior hospital’s management. Unfortunately, technology could not resolve all directing issues; very often, employees needed face-to-face consultations to establish credibility of their organizational efforts. However, with time voice conferences have substantially changed the quality of employee relations at workplace, providing management with an effective real-time tool for directing and motivating medical personnel.

Controlling

Controlling is the last out of four functions of management, which “ includes establishing performance standards which are of course based on the company’s objectives” (Buzzle, 2008). In case of the hospital, controlling was used to evaluate employee performance by means of several automated performance appraisal systems in the workplace. As a result of technologies implementation, the time allowed for the completion of performance evaluation forms was dramatically reduced; the hospital’s management was given an opportunity to manage workflows and to track the progress of the performance evaluation process.

Although the majority of medical personnel needed time to learn additional technical skills, the system has significantly improved the quality of all business processes within the controlling area. Technology has proved to be an excellent tool of developing cohesive relationships between employees, as well as between employees and the senior management, and has finally created a technologically enhanced management environment across all hospital departments.

Conclusion

The use of reliable technological solutions is the key to developing and implementing an effective management system in a highly complicated hospital setting. With the use of budgeting solutions, automated organizing techniques, voice conferences and performance appraisal strategies, a hospital is likely to turn into a technologically advanced, and as a result, a highly organized system of employee interrelationships, which in turn

substantially improve the quality of medical services delivered by the hospital to all groups of patients.

References

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