

Before You Purchase a Business Performance Management Tool, Ask Yourself.....

How will this application be integrated with my current reporting technology?

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For a Business Performance Management (BPM) system to be useful, it must be able to consolidate multiple sources of information into a centralized database. While the key indicators captured in the BPM system can be found using various reporting systems and through manual manipulation of data, often the effort involved in compiling the reports can outweigh Management's ability to respond to critical changes in their business performance. By implementing a performance management system that will combine key data elements from all of your systems into one system, business leaders have the ability to see the entire "performance picture" without having to toggle between systems and piece together key data elements from multiple sources. Similarly, the link and dependence between key measures become unmistakable by using a consolidated data structure. Business performance stories can be logically told by the synergy among metrics that may otherwise have come from disparate sources.

What are the Frequency of Updates to the Key Indicators reported in the Business Performance Management Application?

In the technology rich environment we are in today, business leaders should look for and implement systems that will help them manage their operations in a real time fashion; not react in the historical manner of using outdated reports to help them make business decisions. Likewise, the BPM system should be updated daily/ monthly to ensure real time review and reaction to business performance.

How will the Business Performance Management Application fit into the Culture of My Organization?

While new technology and process is always an adjustment for some, the benefits and rewards gained by implementing a BPM system far outweigh the learning curve involved. Using the BPM tool, all levels of the organization will have the ability to review

and understand the organizations' current and historical financial and operational performance. As pricing transparency floods the healthcare language, financial transparency also extends to the leaders and employees within these healthcare organizations. For each team member to understand his / her impact on the operational and financial performance, he/she should have the ability to review that performance at the click of a mouse. Companies that hide performance and performance goals are only limiting themselves in achieving greater success. Furthermore, by allowing all levels access to performance and performance goals, the team will be able to keep their eyes on what is important. Likewise, leadership can use the BPM dashboard to reinforce strategic objectives and incremental milestones. However, in order to achieve the benefits of transparent performance and shared organizational goals, it is important to ensure the performance management system is easy to use, lending itself to a high adoption rate. In addition, the information contained in the BPM system should be specific to each users job function and have a concise set of relevant information related to job performance.

What Functionality Should I Look for in a Business Performance Management Application?

There are three main criteria that should be met when assessing the functionality of a business performance management application: Web Based, Custom Alerts, and a User-Friendly readable format.

The first criteria in assessing the functionality of a business performance management system is to ensure it is web based. Web based applications allow users to access important data more timely since it can be accessed from any computer. Additionally, system updates and scalability can occur within the vendors' domain without having to make modifications at each user's terminal. This is advantageous to ensure that the system will grow at the same pace as your office.

The second main criteria is that the application should allow for custom alerts to be set based on your organizations goals and targets. Alerts should be universal in nature such that all users are reviewing the data against the organizations' defined targets. In addition, the tool should have some customization built in to allow specified individuals

the ability to set secondary targets that compliment those that are universal. This allows top executives and leaders the ability to modify the target based on performance and measure incremental progress towards a goal or be alerted to declines in performance before the metrics are in a compromising range. Most importantly, the alerts and “flags” alerting the team to positive and negative performance patterns should be sent automatically to the users’ email address. This ensures that the user is aware of the significant changes in performance in they event they are not able to access the BPM application. This can be especially beneficial for busy leaders that have conflicting priorities each day.

Finally, the third main criteria is that the application should be user friendly, present data in a readable format such as charts and graphs, and allow users to modify the view as needed to highlight the most relevant data such as Payer, Location, Physician etc. A user friendly navigation of the menu assures that the team will not shy away from the BPM system due to the complexity of data retrieval and system usability. Furthermore, data should be presented clearly with a logical order and relationship among metrics. Color coded graphs and charts also enhance the user’s ability to identify performance trends and key values. Lastly, by having the ability to view key measures “at a glance” as well as drill down into patient level, users will be able to view their data in a powerful and significant context. Above all else, users should be able to retrieve meaningful data with ease and spend more time and effort analyzing the data and executing performance plans to continually improve performance.

Tracey Lewis is currently a Black Belt with the Performance Excellence Department of New York Presbyterian Hospital in New York City. Her past experiences include working as a consultant for the Healthcare practices of both Arthur Andersen Business Consulting and Cap Gemini Ernst and Young. During this time, Tracey was engaged to assist clients with their Revenue Cycle Re-designs including implementing benchmarks and best practice process flows to optimize both efficiency and revenue. Following her consulting experiences, Tracey was a Manager of Analytics and then the Director of Productivity and Quality for Tenet HealthSystem, Dallas TX.