

Health Information System Implementation: The Role Of Business Process Management On Successful Implementation

Abdullah S. Al-Mudimigh

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Abstract-Integrated HIS provides significant improvements in efficiency across an environment of health care. However, there are also risk associated with implementation of integrated HIS but the actual implementation of integrated health information systems (HIS) is a challenging issue. Implementing integrated HIS are increasingly seen as the way to achieve quality and continuity in treatment, reducing clinical errors, and supporting health care professional in providing care. With the hurried growth in popularity of integrated HIS package, an increasing number of health care sectors are making the decision to implement an integrated HIS. The critical success factors for integrated HIS implementation include top management support, a clear business vision and issues specific to HIS such as implementation strategy and software configuration. However, some of the more important factors are the issues related to re-engineering business processes and the integration of various core processes to the HIS. This paper investigates the role and impact of business process management in successful integrated HIS implementation. The paper starts by defining business process management and the integrated HIS critical success factors. The impact of business process management on successful integrated HIS implementation is then assessed through looking at the experiences of several health care sectors. The paper concludes by documenting best practices for capitalizing on business process management for successful integrated HIS implementation.

Key Words:Critical Success Factors (CSF), HIS, Business Process Management (BPM).

I. INTRODUCTION

The recent push for healthcare reform has caused health departments to focus on ways to streamline their processes in order to deliver high quality care while at the same time reducing costs. Integrated Health Information Systems (HIS) software packages (synonyms are hospital information systems, health information management, clinical information systems, healthcare information systems, health information technology, and health application systems) seek to integrate the complete range of a health departments processes and functions in order to present a holistic view of the health care from a single information and IT architecture. I can say that the health departments increasingly recognize the value of sharing information among all stakeholders. Few health care sectors will dispute the value that HIS software can bring to their business. However, most health organizations are not

putting in place the procedures to manage the changes and customizations they need to make to HIS for establishing better services to their patients and staff. Most health sectors are too busy building and running the technical aspects of their HIS package to recognize the need, and long-term value of change and business process management. These values extend well beyond application development and in fact it provides the backbone for successful installations and operation of an HIS. Health care are becoming engrossed in building and running the technical aspects of their HIS to recognize the need and long-term value of change and business process management. Integrated HIS is the umbrella for integrating sets of health departments applications that allow them to manage almost all aspects of operations. The value of this holistic view extends well beyond application development and in fact provides the backbone for successful installations and operation of an integrated HIS software package. Integrated HIS packages have made a tremendous contribution to the world of health care [12]. Indeed, the value that HIS packages can bring to health sectors is clear to many health organizations and few will dispute its potential. However, there are also hazards associated with implementation of integrated HIS. Their failure is high and may cause negative effects on staff and patients [1,2,11]. These software packages are huge and complex systems and warrant careful plan and execution to ensure successful implementation. In other words, integrated HIS implementation is much more than implementation of hardware or software systems; they affect how a health care conducts itself. The success of an integrated HIS implementation has often been attributed to two facts: the HIS package is configured and running and the whole project is (more or less) on time and within budget [6]. However, this is a narrow view of HIS implementation focusing on the hard aspects and reducing it to mere software or IT project. Many integrated software implementation failures have been due to the lack of focus on 'the soft issues', i.e. the business process and change management [5,14]. The role and impact of business process management (BPM) in successful integrated HIS implementation is crucial, and is the subject of our investigation here.

II. INTEGRATED HIS CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Due to the complex and integrated nature of HIS software package, the large investments involved (time and money), and the relatively high implementation failure rates [1,2,3]. It is imperative for health care sectors to study the experiences of others, and learn from their practices and success factors. A literature review was conducted to understand the critical success factors in successful integrated software implementation [17]. The review covered numerous published books and articles. The review concluded the identified CSFs fall under one of four main categories, namely: executive leadership, changing of the existing processes, deploying change management, and the IT infrastructure. These CSF categories are presented in Figure 1.

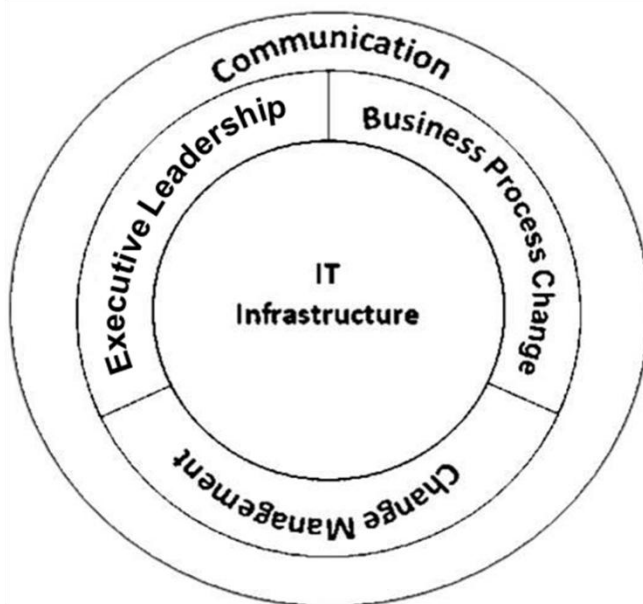


Figure 1: CSF Categories for successful integrated HIS

The following is a brief overview of each of these categories:

1). **Executive Leadership:** Executive must be a part of integrated HIS implementations. The leadership is a high level official who works for institutionalization of the project, is a talent and good communicator, and has political awareness and influential contacts. The IT literatures have clearly demonstrated that for IT projects to succeed executive support is critical. However, executive in many health care sectors still view the installation of an integrated HIS as primarily a technological challenge and assign its responsibility to the IT departments. This is seen as a risky act due to HIS's profound health care implications.

2). **Business Process Change (BPC):** Implementing an Integrated HIS package involves changing the existing business processes to the best business process standard.

Integrated HIS was built on best practices that are followed in the health care sectors, and to successfully install HIS package, all the processes in a health departments must conform to the HIS package.

During the HIS preparation phase, health care sectors face a question as to whether to implement the HIS software "AS IS" or modify the product to the specific needs of their requirements. Indeed, it has been recommended by practitioners and expert people that a hospital has to change its processes to conform to the integrated HIS package. In fact, this need to change the hospital's business processes is seen as one of HIS's major benefits.

3). **Change management:** One of the main obstacles facing integrated HIS implementation is resistance to change. There will be resistance from users (for instance, from nurses, phlebotomists other paramedical staff, etc) who may feel that feeding information into the computerized system is additional work and not their primary responsibility or core competence. "Health care constantly evolving. Wave after wave of new technologies, insurance model, information systems, regulatory changes, and institutional arrangements buffet the system and the people in it. But people and institutions, for the most part, do not like change. It is painful, difficult and uncertain" [2]. To successfully implement integrated HIS package, the way health departments do business will need to change and the ways people do their jobs will need to change too. Its success is largely dependent on the commitment of health management, IT staff, and program staff to implementing integrated HIS that will change the way they do their jobs [9]. Thus, change management is essential for preparing a company for the introduction of a HIS, and its successful implementation. However, change management has to be structured within an overall Business Process Management methodology to achieve its goals.

4). **IT Infrastructure:** Implementing integrated HIS presents an immediate information architectural challenges that has organizational implications. Adequate hardware, communication, and networking infrastructure is required for HIS application. Integrated HIS can't be without sophisticated information technology infrastructure. Three primary attributions of success were identified from the descriptive statistics: willingness to change to new computer applications, effort, and persistence. In addition to the infrastructure, clearly, the software configuration has a critical influence on the implementation process and outcome [4]. Clearly, three out of four of these main categories fall under the umbrella of Business Process Management (BPM). If anything, this strongly re-iterates the fact that integrated HIS is not merely software implementation or an IT project. Thus, to ensure successful HIS implementation and running, health care sectors must pay sufficient attention to BPM.

III. BUSINESS PROCESS MANAGEMENT (BPM)

A business process is set of interrelated activities which have definable inputs and, when executed, result in an

output that adds value from a customer perspective. Business processes are quite simply the way work is done in any organization. They are cross-functional and go across the organizational functions, e.g. order fulfillment which spans all organizational functions from customer order to final delivery. BPM is a structured approach to understand, analyze, support, and continuously improve fundamental process such as manufacturing, marketing, communications and others major elements of a company's operations.

BPM is a wide and encompassing system that starts with top management understanding and involvement, focuses on process improvement across the supply chain, instills a structured approach to change management, and emphasizes people management and development.

IV. BPM FOR SUCCESSFUL HIS IMPLEMENTATION

The importance and impact of BPM on integrated HIS success will be demonstrated in this section through assessing the experiences of six hospitals.

1) *Case Study Hospitals*

The case studies analyzed in this paper are shown in Table 1.

2) *Bpm Elements*

As noted earlier, BPM has several main pillars. The following are highlights to demonstrate their importance in successful integrated HIS implementation

a. *Executive Leadership*

The experience of all six hospitals highlight the importance of having executive leadership directly involved in planning and implementing an HIS. KFSHRC's executive was instrumental in overseeing its integrated HIS project and the entire board reviewed and approved the plans. At KFMC and Dallah hospital, the decision to implement an integrated HIS was also made at the board level and the senior management team input was very important when selecting a suitable vendor. Executive support and commitment does not end with initiation and facilitation, but must extend to the full implementation of an integrated HIS. KFSHRC, KFMC, SGHG, and Dallah hospital noted that HIS implementation is about people, not technology. The organization went through a major transformation, and the management of this change was carefully planned (from a strategic viewpoint) and meticulously implemented [10]. All the case studies analyzed have shown that the key to a smooth rollout is the effective change management from top. Intervention from management has been necessary to crucial for the adequate resourcing of the project, to taking fast and effective decisions, resolve conflicts and bring everybody to the same thinking, to promote company-wide acceptance of the project, and to build co-operation among the diverse groups in the organization, and in many times across national borders. Executive needs to constantly monitor the progress of the project and provide direction to the implementation teams

Table1. Case Studies of successful integrated HIS

Hospital	Major integrated HIS Results
King Faisal Specialist Hospital & Research Centre (KFSHRC)	Improving the quality of patient care. Makes data retrieval faster Makes management decision faster. Provides better service to Patients. More expansion and increase of activities in the same resource.
King Fahad Medical City (KFMC)	Comprehensive Performance Reports. Powerful Search Facility for patient records. Use efforts and time more effectively and productively. Lower inventory holding. Better decision.
Dallah Hospital	Reduce operation cost. Access to timely and complete information Cut the costs of operational systems, improved the reliability of customer service, and assured timely delivery and follow-up. Data integration and standardization.
Al-Noor Specialist Hospital	Makes data retrieval faster. Provides better service to Patients. Improved inventory record accuracy Enhanced data visibility. Reduction in operation costs.
Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Mishari Hospital	Comprehensive Performance Reports. increased revenue and the decreased costs Information can be accessed in real-time, meeting one of the prime objectives of the project.
Saudi German Hospitals Group (SGHG)	Improving the quality of patient care. Well controlled inventory system. Improved financial control. Reduce administrative costs.

b. PROCESS MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

The two main areas in process management and improvement that directly affected integrated HIS success were business process change, performance measurement, and putting in place the appropriate process management structure. Business Process Change – Proper business processes, re-engineering and accurate definition of workflows incorporating global best practices will improve

the effectiveness and efficiency of the hospital and in turn provide better patient care. The most common reason that hospitals walk away integrated HIS projects is that they discover that the software does not support one of their

important business processes. At that point there are two things they can do:

a). They can change the business process to accommodate the HIS software, which will mean deep changes in long-established ways of doing business (that often provide better services to patients and staff) and shake up important peoples' roles and responsibilities. Or they can modify the HIS software to fit the process, which will slow down the project, introduce risky bugs into the system and make upgrading the software to the integrated HIS vendor's next release excruciatingly difficult, because the customizations will need to be torn apart and rewritten to fit with the new version. Without exception, all six hospitals agreed that BPC is one of the main critical success factors for integrated HIS success. Rather than attempting to modify the software, KFSHRC, KFMC, Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Mishari hospital, Al-Noor specialist hospital, Dallah hospital, and SGHG redesigned their business processes to be consistent with the software. This has proved to be critical to the project's success. The others undertook a mix of BPC and HIS software re-adjustment. Within this context, KFSHRC and KFMC have strongly emphasized on the criticality of structured project management approaches for integrated HIS success.

b). Performance Measurement – It has been said that you can not manage what you do not measure, and this is especially true in the case of integrated HIS implementation. Health sectors must be able to establish a clear and well defined performance measurement system to allow them to assess the development, and/or problems, that are occurring. KFSHRC, KFMC, and Dallah hospital noted that having a well established measurement system was crucial in their HIS project management initiative to allow for measuring and publicizing success stories for motivation, assessing progress, assigning and redirecting resources, and instilling an overall system of continuous improvement for the integrated HIS life cycle.

c). Process Management Structure - KFMC put someone "in charge" and centralized the management structure of the project in order to avoid duplication of effort. KFMC considered their project a success because of a centralized management structure. This has been implemented by KFSHRC, and Dallah hospital all saw this as an important factor in managing the HIS implementation efficiently. However, even those with no 'HIS Process Leader' still maintained this focus by appointing a 'champion'. The project leader for the HIS project was clearly a "champion" for the project, and that role was critical to marketing the project throughout the organization.

c. Change Management

The main hurdle faced by all the organizations was resistance to change. There will be resistance from users (for instance, from nurses, phlebotomists other paramedical staff, etc) who may feel that feeding information into the computerized system is additional work and not their primary responsibility or core competence. Indeed, staff were reluctant to learn new techniques or the IT department

was reluctant to change due to attachment to its product; this was one of the main hurdles faced during the integrated HIS implementations [15,16]. For users, the implementation of HIS means that their computer-related job tasks is completed in totally different computer environment. The complexity of these systems results in enormous learning curves and behavioral changes for user, implementers, and organizations. A variety of reactions by individuals, ranging from resisting to enthusiastically embracing HISs, are demonstrated, and unexpected difficulties often arise during all phases of implementation. Consequently, HIS users need to make sense of, and understand, their reactions to this technology, and their changing computer environment and computer-related job tasks. The attribution of HIS performance are important because they can either positively or negatively influence user's learning, confidence levels, effort, persistence, and use of these systems. Unfortunately, our understanding of individuals' reactions to HISs, and why they elect to use or avoid them, is limited [9]. Four elements which can help reduce the resistance are tremendous executive support; training and education, placement of best people on implementation; and heavy involvement of people from the field. The main approaches to achieve the sought-after people involvement and commitment are an open environment, characterized by open communication and trust. Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Mishari hospital, AL-Noor specialist hospital, KFSHRC, Dallah hospital, and KFMC agreed that effective communications should tell everyone in advance what is happening including the scope, objectives, and activities of the project, and admit that there will be change. Dallah hospital and KFMC saw an open and honest information policy helping the user to become acquainted with the new situation, to build up confidence in the project and its members, and finally to accept the project. Open communication and ethical behavior generate trust. KFMC highlighted the relationships of trust among the project members as a main success factor for HIS package. KFSHRC noted that trust can be built up with intensive communication, coaching, delegation of responsibility, personal care and attention, among other things.

d. People Management And Development

People management is clearly a subset of change management. However, some specific issues have been shown to directly affect the success of integrated HIS implementation, and were mainly in the area of people development. The implementation of integrated HIS package requires a whole new set of skills and expertise that organizations must pay extra attention to where these skills will come from. Two main streams have emerged and all six organizations have used a mix of both: Training and re-skilling - Rigorous and continuous training and showing tangible benefits are the answers to overcome the initial resistance. Training is critical in an integrated HIS project. The most effective HIS possible will not improve health departments if their employees do not know how to use it.

Installing an integrated HIS package without adequate staff preparation could yield drastic consequences. In this respect, KFSHRC and KFMC noted that the costs of training and support are often under-estimated, and these costs may be many times greater than originally anticipated. At Al-Noor specialist hospital, Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Mishari hospital, Dallah hospital, and SGHG one of the critical workforce requirements for the project was the ability to obtain and train analysts with both "business" and technology knowledge. However, retaining these professionals was a significant problem because of their market value. SGHG, KFMC and KFSHRC invested heavily in training and re-skilling their developers in integrated HIS package software design and methodology. Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Mishari hospital considered their project a success because of investments in training and support required to overcome technical and procedural challenges in design and implementation.

(b) Using external consultants - With new technology, it is often critical to acquire external expertise, including vendor support, to facilitate successful implementation. Hundreds of companies provide integrated information systems services. Those services may include all or some combination of these offerings:

- Road Map
- Change management
- HIS package selection
- Business process planning or changing
- HIS implementation
- Training
- HIS maintenance and support

Quite simply, when they didn't have needed expertise internally, KFMC brought in the consultants they needed. They stressed that good consultants improve throughput time and quality. The success of a project depends strongly on the capabilities of the consultants because the consultant is the only one with in-depth knowledge of the integrated software

V. BEST PRACTICES FOR CAPITALIZING ON BPM FOR SUCCESSFUL HIS

This study relieves that the best practices for capitalizing on business process management for successful HIS implementation, are the following: The success of a major project like an integrated HIS implementation hinges on the sustained commitment from executive. An overall commitment that is visible, well defined and felt is a sure way to ensure a successful outcome.

1. Implementing an integrated HIS is not a matter of changing software systems; rather it is a matter of repositioning the health care sector and transforming the business practices.
2. Training - whole departments must be retrained, jobs redefined, and procedures discarded or rebuilt from scratch.
3. Performance Measurement - Because the successful implementation of an integrated HIS is contingent upon an accurate assessment of the associated organizational

changes, there is a need to investigate the organizational consequences of HIS software.

4. Selecting the right employees to participate in the implementation process and motivating them is critical for the implementation's success

VI. CONCLUSION

Healthcare departments involve complex processes that span diverse groups and organizations. The implementation of Health Information System (HIS) to manage and automate the processes has increasingly played an important role in improving the efficiency of healthcare enterprises. However, most of the Health Information System (HIS) implementations are big failures considering the time taken or the desired results achieved. However, the benefits of implementing a fully integrated Health Information System (HIS) – better patient care, increased efficiency, lower costs, etc. – can be enormous. But the price tag can also be large, and the time-to-payback long. Overall, it can be concluded that integrated HIS is far from being an IT project, and is more of an integrated clinical development approach that changes the way health departments do business, and the way work is done. Consequently, to implement HIS successfully, health departments must treat it like a change management project and focus on an integrated approach of Business Process Management. This paper has investigated the role and impact of business process management in successful integrated HIS implementation.

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