

A Spread Planner for Senior Leaders

In his keynote address at the 1996 National Forum on Quality Improvement in Health Care, Don Berwick, MD, focused on the issue of dissemination of “best known” practices in health care. He pointed out the large gap that exists between available knowledge and the use of that knowledge in practice. The work of Everett Rogers^{*} and others, as well as the experience of many organizations within and outside healthcare, suggest that effective dissemination of new systems occurs when several elements are present in an organization. These include strong executive and day to day leadership, widely available information for potential users about how to implement the new system, a communication campaign with a strong message about the benefits of the new system, data on desired outcomes as the new system is implemented, and identification and training of key messengers who can explain the new systems to others.

The ultimate responsibility for spread within an organization rests with executive leadership. This Spread Planner provides a step-by-step approach to developing a spread plan so that you can make the most of your organization’s participation in IMPACT.

The first section contains detailed questions that you may find useful in beginning to plan for spread: Leadership for Spread and Set-up for Spread. The second section includes additional issues that we encourage you to consider as your initial spread work unfolds.

^{*} The Diffusion of Innovations, 1995

Leadership for Spread

- ◆ Is improvement in this area a key strategic initiative within the organization?

Improvement is a strategic initiative:	Circle: Yes No Unsure
If "No" establish top-level commitment before proceeding.	
If "Unsure" how can this be clarified?	
Actions: _____	

- ◆ Is there an executive(s) who is responsible for the spread?

Who: _____	
Is this person passionate about the change?	Circle: Yes No Unsure
Is success in spreading this improvement part of his/her goals/performance evaluation?	Circle: Yes No Unsure
Actions: _____	

- ◆ Is there a person or team who will manage the day-to-day spread activities?

Who: _____	
Does this person or team have sufficient time specifically dedicated to spreading this improvement?	Circle: Yes No Unsure
Actions: _____	

- ◆ Are the goals and incentives for the organization aligned with the new system?

What organizational goals relate to: _____	
Are the goals sufficiently aligned with major organizational goals to motivate leaders and new adopters?	Circle: Yes No Unsure
Actions: _____	

Set-up for Spread

- ◆ What is the target population (e.g., which facilities, units, etc.)

Target facilities, units, etc. _____

- ◆ Is there a successful pilot site that has implemented the new system?

Successful site(s) : _____
How do you know the site is successful? (Be sure to review tests of change and results from pilot site)

Potential role of pilot site(s) in spreading to new sites: _____

- Who are the key groups who make the adoption decision in the target population (Surgeons, PCPs, Nurse Managers, Schedulers, etc)?

Target Groups: _____

- ◆ What is your initial strategy to reach all sites? (A brief statement of 1-3 concise sentences) Considerations include:
 - Will certain components of the change be spread to all sites or will all the components be spread to certain sites?)
 - What is the relationship of units to the pilot sites?
 - Where do champions exist or where can they be readily developed?
 - At the leadership level?
 - At the grass-roots level?
 - Where are resources available?

Initial Strategy: _____

Other Considerations

Developing the Communication Plan

- ◆ How will awareness of the initiative be communicated?
 - Have the benefits been documented?
 - Is comparative data available?
 - What channels will be used to raise awareness in the target population?
- ◆ How will technical knowledge be communicated?
 - Have the potential changes and the ongoing learning been documented in a succinct format?
 - What face-to-face interactions are planned?
 - How will successful sites be involved to supply technical support?

Strengthening the Social System

- ◆ Who are the key messengers that will explain the new system to the target population?
- ◆ Can “communities of practice” (people with similar positions and responsibilities, e.g., physicians, nurses, technicians, clerks, etc.) be established to facilitate discussions among peers?
- ◆ What are the concerns of the front line staff in the target population? How will these concerns be addressed?
- ◆ What tools or methods did the successful pilot sites use that can make it easier for the new teams to make the changes?
- ◆ What kind of technical support will be provided to the new teams?
- ◆ How will the leadership stay involved and connected to the front line teams?

Developing the Measurement and Feedback System

- ◆ How will outcomes be measured?
- ◆ How will the rate of spread be monitored?
- ◆ Who will be responsible for collecting, plotting and sharing the data?
- ◆ What information/reports will be used to monitor and refine the spread strategy?