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The 1980s ushered in electronic spreadsheets, a level of computerized decision support. A spreadsheet program such as Microsoft Excel provides transaction processing because it efficiently manages lists and implements formulas. Spreadsheets provide opportunities to record, store, and manipulate data in ways unimaginable using paper and pencils. Spreadsheet programs can even perform "what-if" analysis, which influences worker productivity.

Yet, something more than transaction processing and spreadsheet programs are needed to truly increase the productivity of today's behavioral healthcare practitioners. Providing healthcare services is an information management task, not transaction processing task. Professional clinicians are knowledge workers, not production workers. Their decisions are based on judgment, not number crunching. Their value is not measured by clinical charts' word count.

And no "what-if" analysis can predict an individual patient's outcome. Good patient outcomes are the functional result of effective clinical decisions, which are the product of subject matter expertise and practitioner experience. Therefore, EHR software that addresses expertise and experience will increase practitioner productivity.

Today's information technology enables sharing of the subject matter expertise that forms the basis of professional healthcare practice. Information Technology now allows the most talented and highly skilled clinicians and supervisors to leverage their ability to gather and effectively use information throughout an organization.



For example, effective EHR software assists new employees or trainees with clinical assessments. EHR software supplies lower-skilled practitioners with subject matter expertise using electronically stored clinical libraries created by highly skilled clinical supervisors. Using these libraries, lower-skilled employees perform assessments nearly as well as their supervisors. Thus EHR software controls expertise and experience, increasing organizational productivity when lower-skilled employees function at this higher level.

Effective EHR software also supports multidisciplinary clinical teams. EHR software enables practitioner to easily search electronic charts, and multiple practitioner can access a chart simultaneously, making an EHR a fountain of shared information. Moreover, electronically charted information is immediately available to the treatment team, which is especially important when treating high-risk patients.

Behavioral healthcare organizations must adapt to changing IT or else fade away, just as any organization any industry. IT today is no less than incredible, but the fast pace of change and massive leverage effect that IT exerts on organizational productive make today's IT decisions difficult and risky. The correct technology decision will leverage success, but the wrong decisions will leverage failure.

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In growth industries you have to work overtime to kill business. In a mature industry, such as behavioral healthcare, effective customer service is defined by a business that is growing. If your organization isn't growing than you can start growing it by improving customer service. This isn't some theory!

It's by definition.....

Our Mission

Our Mission is to provide a quality continuum of comprehensive treatment and related services, in a caring atmosphere and at a reasonable price, for all people experiencing problems with alcohol or other drug use.

The purpose of providing those services is to improve the quality of life of those receiving services as measured by abstinence from alcohol and other substances, as well as by increased life satisfaction, improved family relationships, marital stability, job and career performance and financial stability.

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2011 Conference Schedule

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May 14-17

Behavioral Health &
Addictive Disorders
Seattle, WA
June 1-3

West Coast Symposium
La Quinta, CA
June 2-5

Behavioral Health &
Addictive Disorders
Newport Beach, CA
June 16-18

Cape Code Symposium
Cape Cod, MA
Sept 8-11

NCAD
San Diego, CA
Sept 17-21

Valley Hope—IMCSS
User Conference
Kansas City, MO
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addicts...

Our work is helping alcoholics
and addicts....

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No One Said This Would Be Easy

John Leipold
Executive Vice President, COO
Valley Hope Association

On February, 16, 1967 (Stardate 3142.8) Ricardo Montalban (playing Khan Noonien Singh) said in the *Star Trek* episode "Space Seed," "Improve a mechanical device and you may double productivity. But improve man, you gain a thousandfold." Khan was referring to genetic engineering, but behavioral healthcare organizations certainly do not have that option available to improve their employees' productivity! Instead, they can use technology to increase their workers' productivity.

History has many examples of technologic improvements increasing productivity. Computer technology has its roots in the 19th century when mathematician Charles Babbage created a programmable computer. The first electronic computers built in the 1930s and '40s used thousands of vacuum tubes, which were replaced by transistors in the 50s. Early computers could perform math and accounting tasks. Therefore, banks, insurance companies, large corporations, and governments were early adopters of computer technology, as electronic transaction processing increased worker productivity.

Computerized transaction processing has not changed much in the past 50 years, except that it is now available to everyone and computers handle virtually all repetitive tasks. While many behavioral healthcare organizations have not implemented fully functional electronic health record (EHR) software, it is unlikely that they are maintaining patient accounting data exclusively on paper ledgers. Computerized transaction processing has reached into every behavioral healthcare business office no matter how small, as this technology is so productive that no business can afford not to use it.

Continued page 2.....

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Do
More



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John Leipold, COO
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Remember When.....