

Imagine Future of Aging - Practical Action Steps

Overview

Boards, senior staff, committees and planning groups all need to start thinking about how emerging aging services technologies (as seen in the CAST “Imagine” video) will likely impact your organization’s services in the near and distant future. The convergence of shifting consumer (Baby Boomer) needs/expectations and the reality that emerging technologies will enable such individuals to remain at home (in non-facility-based environments) much longer, requires today’s aging services providers to explore how to sustain their mission while diversifying services in non-traditional ways.

This document was designed to provide you with ideas and suggestions for practical steps you can take today to prepare for the new care paradigms in the CAST “Imagine” video. Each organization has a unique mission, vision, and goals. Therefore, this document is not meant to serve as a “one size fits all” solution. There is no one direct way.

Changing the Mindset—Making the Business Case for Aging Services Technologies

Suggested Activities:

- **Start a dialogue – the most important first step you can take is to talk.**
 - Talk to your board – make technology an agenda item on the next board meeting. Watch the “Imagine” video and begin discussing what it means for the long term success of your organization.
 - Keep place with changes (technology, laws) that could impact long term care and discuss them often.

- As more and more people can access and control their health information in an electronic personal health record, is your organization prepared to provide this information efficiently and effectively?
 - Does the board believe that technology could significantly impact the organization?
 - If not, why not?
 - If so, how?
 - Does the board believe that the organization will remain the provider of choice in the next 5-10 years based on current strategic plans? What are the key elements of that plan and how can technology help ensure its success?
 - Regardless of what level or type of care/service you have been offering, how can emerging technologies enhance both facility-based and non-facility-based programs?
 - Has the board accepted that there will be new competitors offering technology and aging services in the home? Is there a plan to work with these potential competitors or compete with them?
 - What does the board plan to do to empower the organization to be prepared and lead the way?
 - Are the right financial and human resources in place?
 - Confront the challenges head on. If you aren't having an edgy, provocative conversation, you are likely not discussing the right things.
- Talk to your staff – Staff buy-in is crucial for the success of any major organization's initiatives. Hold a meeting with senior staff and all staff to discuss implications to organization.
- Talk to your residents/consumers – Conduct resident/consumer and family focus groups using the “Imagine” video and capture their reactions, thoughts, and ideas.

- Talk to other organizations – We’re all in the same boat. Other providers may be at a different stage than you and it is important to get their input.
- Synthesize the information you have collected to help you make decisions on how you are going to approach integrating technologies into your long term business plan.
- **Conduct SWOT Analysis, in light of your above exploratory discussions around emerging aging services technologies.**
 - What internal strengths does your organization have that you can maximize as you move forward in your plan?
 - What internal weaknesses do you need to minimize?
 - What external opportunities exist that can help your organization move forward from awareness to action in preparing for caring for tomorrow’s seniors?
 - What external threats should you plan to minimize?
- **Develop a long-term strategic plan for how your organization will thrive amid the inevitable landscape of rising healthcare costs, disruptive technology innovations, and an aging population who prefers to stay at home.**
 - Technology innovation will allow family caregivers to provide more care for longer in the home.
 - How will you integrate technology into your strategic plan and how will it impact the many ways you actualize your mission (both today and in the future)?
 - How will technology influence the way your offer care and/or services—and how will it drive your strategic plans for the growth and diversification of such services?
- **Learn, learn and learn some more.** Attend conferences and meetings, research, read. Get ahead of the curve and stay there. Technology innovation changes rapidly and providers need to react quickly.

Overcoming Organizational Technophobia—Incorporating Emerging Technologies Today

Suggested Activities:

- **Establish a collaborative “future technology” committee made up of stakeholders at every level in your organization.** Work with this team to help guide decisions throughout the process.
- **Conduct an organizational readiness assessment.** Determine the current culture of your organization. Are your staff members ready and willing to embrace change?
 - Staff needs to be prepared that both care and business processes will change when new technology and services are implemented. If your staff are not prepared, your organization will likely spin wheels and lose money.
- **Conduct an internal audit of ways your organization is using today’s technologies and identify areas where technologies could be incorporated.**
 - Select priority areas, establish implementation goals and develop a plan to reach them.
- **Choose technology focus areas. Technology is an accelerator, not a solution. Don’t accelerate the wrong technology.**
 - What problem are you trying to solve? Dedicate time with your staff to discuss options and identify priorities.
 - Discover what technologies might be available to help you tackle priority problems.
 - Use the CAST Clearinghouse as a resource – more than 300 technologies organized by specific content categories, including Communication, Monitoring, Smart Home, Personal Assistance, Assistance Call System, Mobility, Medicine Management, Telemedicine, Wander Management, Fall Management, Cognitive

Aids, Electronic Health Records, Health Promotion, Resource Administration

- Electronic health information is the basis of future technologies.
 - Has your organization implemented electronic health records?
Does your organization have a plan to transition from paper records to electronic?
- **Network with other providers.**
 - Arrange for a site visit to experience first hand services and technologies provider organizations are incorporating today.

Planning Today for the Technologies of Tomorrow

Suggested Activities:

- **Partner with companies and universities to pilot test technologies.**
 - Building a technology research collaboration is not an easy task but it is a rewarding experience for everyone involved. Follow these steps to determine if your organization is ready for what it takes to effectively partner on a technology pilot project.
 - **The Will:** Does one or more facilities want to be a test site?
 - **The Focus:** Brainstorm with staff and residents to determine the top three resident needs or problems you would like to tackle. Establish a vision for your project.
 - **The Strategy:** Inventory local assets. What organizations have the resources (human and financial), incentives and expertise to help work on the technology area?
 - Universities, companies, government, community services, foundations.
 - **The Action:** Hold a meeting with internal and external stakeholders to discuss the key problems and potential for solving

them. Identify an interdisciplinary team to develop a proposal for funding.

- **The Persistence:** Test small. Test large.
 - If the technology is a concept or prototype, test on a small scale with small grant dollars first.
 - Revise the prototype and test again on a larger scale. Showing efficacy on a smaller scale makes it easier to get dollars for a larger project.
- **Work with family caregivers and other external professional care teams to lay the groundwork for the “caregiver network” concept depicted in the video.**
- **Brainstorm how to expand and diversify technology-supported care and services without necessarily adding facility-based programs.**

Additional Resources

CAST Website (<http://www.agingtech.org>)

- Clearinghouse – view technology products or pilot projects, share information you have on technologies for aging services
- Resources – find research reports, white papers, web links, conferences
- Imagine Video and Discussion Guide – The discussion guide contains 5 practical ways you can use the video as a tool to advance your services and incorporate technologies.

Comments and Feedback

We want to hear from you! Tell us how you used this tool. How was it helpful? How could it be improved? Contact Rebecca Scritchfield, Director of Programs and Operations, at 202-508-9416 rscratchfield@agingtech.org.