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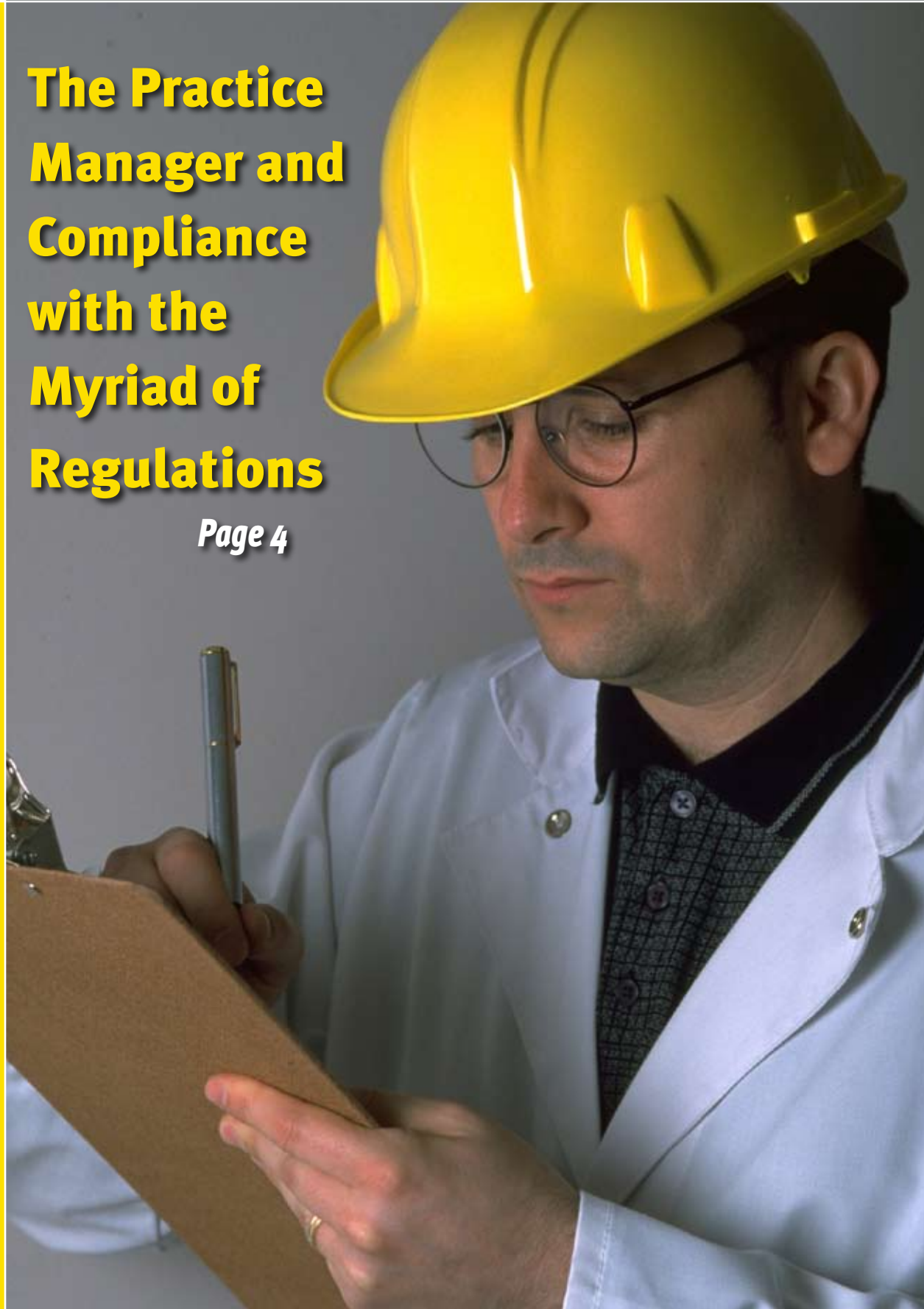
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Often, large healthcare information technology projects are perceived to be successful, yet underachieve in their results and full potential. But in today's economic climate, it is crucial that hospitals, health systems and medical groups capture all possible benefits from each clinical transformation opportunity.

Standish Group's 2006 Chaos Report survey declares that nearly 20 percent of implementations fail, and nearly 50 percent run over time and/or budget. Even worse, according to Gartner Research, more than two-thirds of technology projects either do not achieve their intended benefits or are never evaluated based on performance at all.

The reality is that in order to realize the full potential

of healthcare information technology projects, an organization needs to concentrate their efforts on true value maximization.

Value maximization combines the basic principles of project management, process improvement and elements of change management, but takes it all one step further with a more comprehensive and systematic framework for success. Value maximization is not only being on time and under budget, but achieving true clinical transformation.

With a value maximization methodology, customizing project activities to maximize benefits becomes clear. The concept owes its existence to the fact that applied technology, by itself, doesn't typically produce all the advantages one reads

about in journals and marketing materials. To capture the full potential, an organization must enhance the operations and workflow that surround any given technology solution. Users need to first embrace the change. Ultimately, the system must enhance clinical and financial outcomes. Value maximization is about getting the most possible benefit out of any given opportunity.

1. Define the outcome
The first step in achieving value maximization is to define the outcomes that will indicate the organization has realized its desired benefits. Understanding the target metrics and what the end result should look like can provide focus and direction for the structure of the project and steps that need to be taken to achieve the desired outcome. Defining goals and metrics is

not a new concept for most organizations, but building on the foundation and applying them to direct project work activity may be.

2. Link process, functionality and adoption
The second step in the value maximization process includes a three-part sequence for determining the right focus and the approach to work activities.

It's all about the process. All value is generated through process performance. It is important to determine how processes must change to reach the desired benefits the end-users seek. This type of analysis requires evaluating current-state processes against future-state processes, to help uncover the right workflow. To develop a clear process path to success, the project team must make a

Capturing the Full Potential of Success with 'Value Maximization'

By Greencastle Consulting

concerted effort at this stage to think through where change in work processes is needed, to what extent and how to do it. If little effort is made at this point, the organization may not realize the true potential benefits in the end.

What's a process without functionality?

Once the process road map has been laid out, the organization then should define its functionality approach, analyzing whether the available technologies and systems can achieve what the process requires. Here, hospitals, health systems and medical practices benefit from a strong relationship with their vendors. As an outside organization, IT vendors do not assume the position of ownership and organizational momentum. Rather, vendors rely on the users to be well organized and have specific expectations, which dramatically help in linking technology functionalities with process improvements. This gives the vendor a solid foundation and prevents wasted time, energy and dollars spent on capabilities that, while nice

to have, do not add value to the framework for process enhancement.

It takes the right team to get there.

Change management principles are not inherent in change itself. Teams and project leaders must communicate with and involve end users to carefully understand requirements and build a product that brings enough benefit to overcome any possible resistance to change. A major key to change is engaging the right teams — those who understand the vision, the value and the path to get there. It may take several iterations, but they will help the organization determine what is feasible and acceptable for people to embrace. Coupled with well-known management tactics such as sponsorship, focus groups can help reinforce the necessity of the project and establish the right energy needed to carry the project through to successful completion.

3. Assign work activities

This final phase is the traditional project management task of breaking down and

assigning the work. Because it's rooted in a foundation of value objectives, an organization can be sure they're structuring and scheduling work activities accurately.

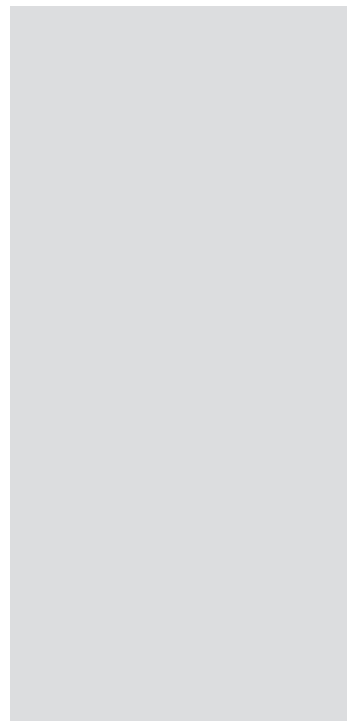
Value maximization may not guarantee success. But should the unforeseen happen, an organization that follows this approach will find itself in a much better position to re-evaluate, adjust and recover.

Thriving in healthcare

The value maximization process is particularly appropriate and needed in healthcare. Seemingly common sense, the overall process should not be taken lightly. Often, healthcare organizations choose a certain company's technology and assume their goals and promises will be met; however, many organizations have received unsatisfactory results. The software is in place, yet the users do not understand and use the program to its full potential.

Opening eyes past the mere basic functionalities of the technology is a necessity.

The combined efforts of end



users and company leaders result in enhanced outcomes and benefits and broaden the range of project ownership. Healthcare organizations do not have the capacity to make investments that will not deliver the value-added benefits, and with the utilization of value maximization, they do not have to. ■