

PROJECT READINESS ASSESSMENT

HOW READY
IS YOUR TEAM
FOR THEIR NEXT PROJECT?



WHITE PAPER | AUGUST 2013

ABSTRACT

Critical business and clinical initiatives have profound an impact on your healthcare organization. How you prepare for them is crucial to your success.

Hospitals, health systems and ambulatory care providers are embarking on more complex projects for clinical transformation, advancing patient safety, increasing margins, and improving administrative efficiency.

With any new project, it is important to take the time and conduct an assessment. Organizations that do not conduct a thorough assessment are not creating the conditions needed for a successful project. Often the perceived current condition is not reality and therefore the entire journey for the project is based on false pretenses.

Project Readiness Assessment Process

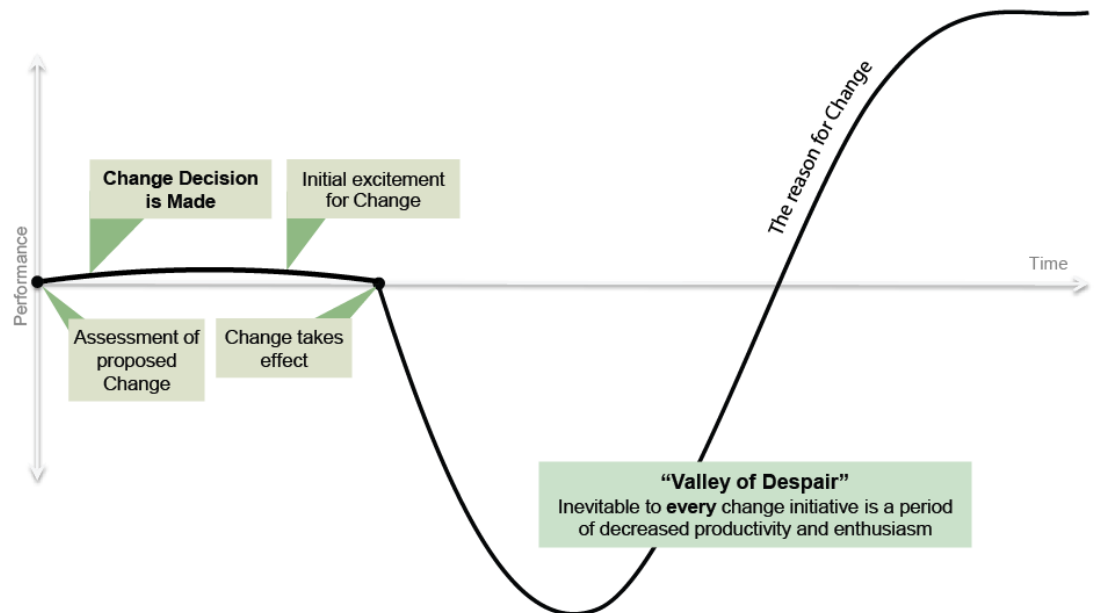
The Project Readiness Evaluation Process is a systematic look at the full spectrum of implementation issues. The evaluation process will examine the potential impact to the organization, people, technology and process — with a deliberate focus on the key success factors for planned implementation.

Organizations can conduct their own assessments; however the results will be swayed by internal politics, organizational perceptions and personal feelings. Having a relatively inexpensive assessment conducted by an unbiased third party accomplishes several important tasks:

1. The assessment is as true a picture of the current state as possible
2. Political and internal biases are mitigated
3. The assessment answers not only how prepared the organization is for the project, but why they are in that particular state of readiness.
4. Minimizes cost over runs and budget creep
5. Reduces project delays
6. Improves communication

Phases of a Change Initiative

The assessment is the first step in any project or change initiative. The diagram below illustrates the typical impact a project has on productivity. Between the assessment and the day the change takes effect, there is usually limited impact on organizational productivity. In some cases it even increases due to the excitement the anticipated changes might have.



Once the change takes effect, productivity drops - temporarily in most cases. As the change is accepted and incorporated into daily life, the benefits become a reality as your organization begins to surpass previous productivity levels.

Valley of Despair

The depth and length of the Valley of Despair is the product of all the previous phases. Missteps in the earlier phases will cause:

- Project Delay
- Unnecessary productivity loss
- Staff Frustration
- Project Failure
- Increased Project Costs

85% OF PROJECTS NEVER LEAVE THE VALLEY OF DESPAIR

Most of these can be mitigated with a thorough readiness assessment that includes actions which shorten the time and decrease the depth of the Valley:

The **Right Focus**

- Asking the right questions
- Well organized project plan

Using the **Right Team**

- Involving all impacted staff and stakeholders
- Strong executive leadership

Maintaining the **Right Energy**

- Build momentum with quick wins
- Keep a brisk pace

Working on the **Right Workflow**

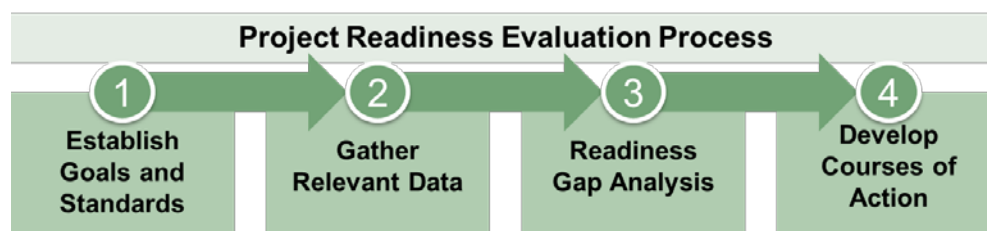
- Start with the end in mind
- Designed to impact identified goals

Having Clear goals that have the **Right Impact**

- Setting proper project expectations

Conducting an Assessment

The execution of a great assessment drives the project to success. A great assessment has four distinct phases:



1. **Establish Goals and Standards:** Answers critical questions related to the purpose of the project. In some cases, the organization seeks to identify change risks; others are preparing an action plan for the program; while others still are in the process of gathering resources and setting the conditions for the program.
2. **Gather Relevant Data:** Determines a realistic current state of readiness. The data collection methods are customized to obtain relevant information from the appropriate group. Surveys will gather general information from a broad audience. Interviews and focus groups distinguish administrative and business stakeholders by process interests. The process observations are concerned with determining baseline process performance in the current state that will assist in prioritizing change management during the program. Taken together, the data collection, focus group sessions and observations will provide insights about readiness in terms of the key success factors for effective implementation.
1. **Readiness Gap Assessment:** Defines the gap between steps 1 and 2. A version of a readiness score sheet will identify specific opportunities and requirements to execute the project, change the work processes and have the output of the project take hold in the organization. It should document all information from the analysis for future reference and review during implementation or future projects.
2. **Develop Courses of Action:** Based on the goals and step 3, courses of action are developed that reach the intended goal. Leadership will be able to make intelligent decisions

when choosing between the presented courses of action.
Once the course of action is chosen, the specific work activities can begin.

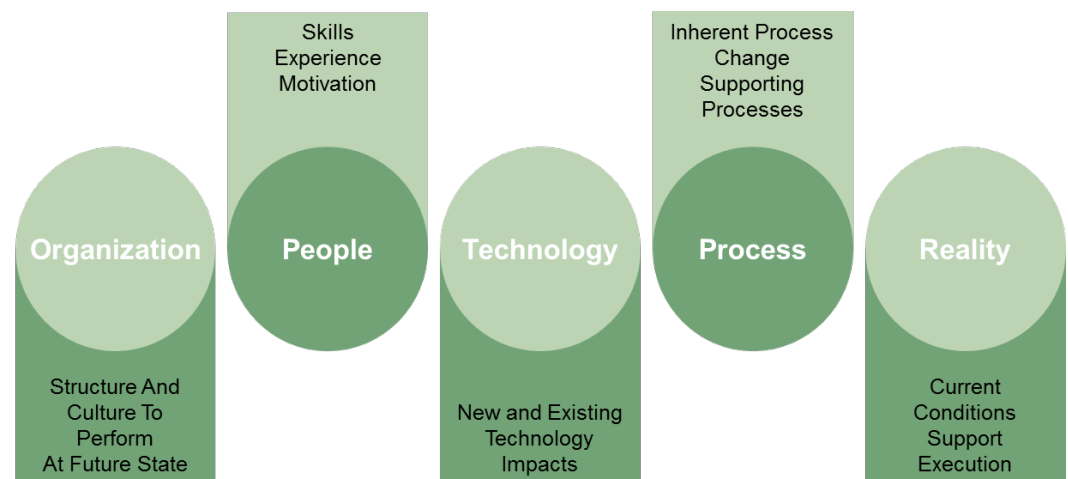
Going Deeper: Most third party project readiness assessments focus only on the project management aspect of the initiative. For today's complex projects it is necessary to have a **model that captures all the critical dimensions of effective change — with nothing left to chance.**

Each element of the project needs to be assessed from three key perspectives: process improvement, organizational change, and project management.

Conducting an Great Assessment

When projects are assessed from a project management, process improvement and change management perspective issues that are overlooked in a regular assessment are identified.

A great assessment evaluates the six key areas of complex projects:



Five Dimensions of Complex Projects

Great Assessment Key Success Factors

There are specific factors of the assessment that contribute to project success. When potential change initiatives are assessed from a change management, process improvement and project management point of view, the clearest possible current state is observed.

Change Management Success Factors

- Vision of the future is clear
- Effective communication of the impending change
- Need and urgency for change is understood
- Momentum is created
- Common operating picture is created
- Metrics are identified

- Engage and involve stakeholders and team

Project Management Success Factors

- Project sponsorship is identified
- Individual project metrics are identified
- Alignment with business objectives
- Resources allocated
- Project managers are capable
- Project managers are held accountable

Process Improvement Success Factors

- Requirements are gathered
- Process mapping
- Process metrics are clear
- Cross functional, systems thinking is incorporated
- Incremental changes with quick wins
- Organization owns process improvement

Great Assessment Deliverables

The results of a great assessment realistic, clear and include:

- Quantitative readiness scoring of all the areas that are critical for exceptional project execution.
- A comprehensive model that bundles the major dimensions of critical change using best practices in systems thinking, process improvement, risk management and implementation.
- Multiple courses of action
- Estimated resource requirements
- Estimated activity timeline
- A range of alternatives to measurably improve readiness.
- Great PREP will save money and improve outcomes.
- Increasing resource availability and stakeholder buy-in.

Conclusion

The best time to prepare for change is before the project begins. The average project readiness evaluation process takes only four to eight weeks to identify any prerequisite activities needed to assure readiness for exceptional project execution. Additionally, the cost of an expert external assessment is a fraction of the total project costs.

The assessment will allow key stakeholders to define their requirements and close important gaps before the significant work and investment begin. Your organization will capture issues and opportunities to ensure that:

- You develop the right solution.
- People will use that solution.
- You are ready to execute the project.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Celwyn Evans is a founding partner at Greencastle Associates Consulting. Celwyn retired from the US Army with over 20 years of total military service. Throughout his military career he leveraged data and intelligence sources to lead small specialized units and large staff planning at the task force level. Since starting Greencastle in 1997, he has led countless successful projects for leading healthcare organizations nationwide. His ability to intertwine the best practices of change management, project management and process improvement into a single cohesive strategy has been instrumental to Greencastle's ability to help clients succeed.

Celwyn Evans, Founding Partner
(610) 640-9958 ext. 222 | evansc@greencastleconsulting.com

Learn more at: WWW.GREENCASTLECONSULTING.COM



About Greencastle Associates Consulting

Greencastle Consulting is a healthcare consulting firm that is unique in its approach to critical healthcare projects. At Greencastle, the best practices of change management, process improvement and project management are intertwined with Greencastle's 5 Rights of Implementation Methodology to create their Value Management Implementation Methodology. Using Value Management as the foundational approach to each project has allowed Greencastle's clients to successfully meet the challenges of an ever-changing healthcare landscape. Founded on a strong military background, Greencastle has been providing metric-driven results to healthcare organizations in the Delaware Valley since 1997.