

ASPECTS OF SUSTAINMENT CHECKLIST

Aspect(s) of Sustainment		YES	NO
 Leadership / Membership	If you lose your Physician Champion, will you have a team meeting next month?		
	Are members rotated on and off of the team?		
	Do you have a succession plan within your team?		
	Are roles rotating so that members develop varied levels of experience on the team?		
	Does your team include front line staff that understand the day to day workflow?		
 Data	Are your data metrics defined on paper?		
	Can you locate your data metrics if you lose your analyst?		
	Are your data metrics and results included in committee minutes?		
	Is your data discussed as an agenda item- as a standing item?		
	Is your data part of hardwired workflow and pushed to you on a predetermined time frame?		
 Organizational Commitment	Are your work and results elevated through committee structure to Medical Staff and/or Organizational Leadership?		
	Are the processes you created hardwired into daily work?		
	Is the team expected to discuss actions and results as part of Organizational Process Improvement?		
	Does organizational or unit orientation include your team's work and goals?		
	Are resources available to keep the team up to date on the latest developments?		

For most, these questions may cause a moment of pause; because some component(s) of these may be lacking. Consider these items as you create a sustainment plan. Any items marked “NO” denote areas of opportunity for improvement and the possibility for your project to be left lacking when work focus changes.



Within the Leadership / Membership aspect we consider the unique attributes of those working on the project and how they interact.

Do you possess strong, reliable Clinical leadership? If not, or if they lack passion for the work, the project may suffer. Emotional attachment is a factor shown to increase longevity of work. Passion may be a double edged sword. A team needs passion to drive it forward but it can also cause a team to stagnate if disagreement arises. For this reason, a strong, clearheaded leader is necessary to diffuse disagreement while allowing the healthy discussion of opposing viewpoints. Redundancy of personnel coupled with succession planning ensures consistency of work should any of the team members need to leave the group.

While it is necessary that some members of a team are constant and form the foundation of the work; it is vital to bring in those who do the work downstream. Consider for example, an Antibiotic Stewardship Team in a hospital- it is necessary to have the Infectious Disease Physician and/or Pharmacist along with an infection preventionist. Other members may include staff nurses from various units as well as representatives from environmental services, process improvement, IT and food services. In smaller settings such as physician practices, the physician and perhaps the practice manager may be foundational leaders while others rotate through the various team based efforts. All members serve a function and bring unique skillsets and perspective with them. Those who work downstream from process changes possess a distinct ability to provide insight on sustainment of changes.

Internal positions within the team structure should be rotated to both allay team fatigue and ensure sustainment of work in the face of team member losses. It is also favorable to bring on “fresh eyes” on a regular basis and allow personnel to rotate off. This spreads the knowledge of the project among more staff in the organization and also provides new perspectives (preventing “group think”) on how to best meet the goals of the team. In long term teams, rotations may run 2 years with half of those outside of the foundational core rotating off annually. On shorter projects, staff can rotate on and off every three to six months.



Within the Data aspect we consider the who, what, how, when and where of the data and how it is utilized.

- **Who** – Who runs the data sets? Who reviews the data? Who determines the relevance of the data brought forth?
- **What** – What is being measured? What is the process for getting the latest report of data?
- **How** – How is the report received, reviewed and disseminated? How are the data specifications and results stored?
- **When** – When is data run, received and shared? When is data reported up the organizational chain of command?
- **Where** – Where is the data stored? Where are the specifications found? Where is the data reported?

Variances in data must be monitored. It is best that the analyst who runs the reports be familiar with the available databases to determine the appropriate option for life and consistency of data. Data specifications should be housed so that they can be found by anyone who needs to access the metrics. (Not on a sticky note in a folder in the office of the former analyst on the 5th floor) Committee minutes are the best option for housing the official metrics. This also allows replication of reports should it be needed. Even a slight variation in data specifications can lead to a very different report. Ultimately, once metrics are defined they should be scheduled and pushed to the team as a component of routine IT workflow, rather than the team having to ask for them.

At each meeting there should be a standing agenda item to discuss data, any areas of opportunity and celebrate small successes. The work and results should flow out from the team and up the organizational quality structure to organizational leadership. A representative of the team should be available to accept feedback from leadership. They can provide perspective on the measurement tools created and overall organizational relevance of data. It may be that both an outcome measure coupled with a process measure are preferred within organizational quality structure. The inclusion in organizational metrics ensures longevity of the work.



Within the Organizational Commitment aspect we review the importance of your work to mission, vision, values and goals and how to incorporate the work within organizational structure.

If work is created but not sanctioned and supported by leadership, it lacks the potential to be long lasting. Leadership is responsible for attribution of human resource hours, budget outlays for process changes, testing, new equipment and marketing. If your work is built into the organizational strategic plan or directly supports organizational goals, it has a far greater chance of survival.

Examples of how work is supported by leadership include:

- Having new processes built into standardized work flow.
- Building new responsibilities into job descriptions and evaluations
- Addition of data results as a component of organizational process/performance improvement
- Inclusion of topic specific education in annual competency training
- Inclusion in new staff orientation
- Budgetary allotments for new staff if needed and/or new cost code for completion of the work
- Marketing to the public as a component of ongoing quality work

You may be asked to present the project and results to various committees and boards which serve the community and the organization. The opportunity to share your team's work with the public as a representative of the organization promotes sustainment of the work.