Spread Planner

In his keynote address at the 1996 National Forum on Quality Improvement in Health Care, Don Berwick, MD, President and CEO of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, focused on the issue of dissemination of "best known" practices in health care. He pointed out the large gap that exists between available knowledge and the use of that knowledge in practice. The work of Everett Rogers[1] and others, as well as the experience of many organizations within and outside health care, suggest that effective dissemination of new systems occurs when several elements are present in an organization. These include strong executive and day-to-day leadership, widely available information for potential users about how to implement the new system, a communication campaign with a strong message about the benefits of the new system, data on desired outcomes as the new system is implemented, and identification and training of key messengers who can explain the new systems to others.

This Spread Planner provides some guidance to develop a spread plan and move the effort forward. The first section contains questions that you may find useful in beginning to plan for spread: Leadership for Spread and Set-Up for Spread. The second section includes additional issues that we encourage you to consider as your initial spread work unfolds.

[1] Rogers EM. *The Diffusion of Innovations, 4th edition*. New York: The Free Press; 1995.

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Leadership for Spread

- Is improvement in this area a key strategic initiative within the organization?

Improvement is a strategic initiative:	Circle: Yes No Unsure
If "No" establish top-level commitment before proceeding.	
If "Unsure" how can this be clarified?	
Actions:	

- Is there an executive(s) who is responsible for the spread?

Who:	
Is this person passionate about the change?	Circle: Yes No Unsure
Is success in spreading this improvement part of his/her goals/performance evaluation?	Circle: Yes No Unsure
Actions:	

- Is there a person or team who will manage the day-to-day spread activities?

Who:	
Does this person or team have sufficient time specifically dedicated to spreading this improvement?	Circle: Yes No Unsure
Actions:	

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- Are the goals and incentives for the organization aligned with the new system?

What organizational goals relate to: _____

Are the goals sufficiently aligned with major organizational goals to motivate leaders and new adopters? Circle: Yes No Unsure

Actions: _____

Set-Up for Spread

- What is the target population (e.g., which facilities, units, etc.)?

Target facilities, units, etc. _____

- Is there a successful pilot site that has implemented the new system?

Successful site(s) : _____

How do you know the site is successful? (Be sure to review tests of change and results from pilot site.)

Are the elements of the new system packaged in a way that facilitates adoption in other sites? If not, what needs to be done?

Potential role of pilot site(s) in spreading to new sites: _____

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- Who are the key groups who make the adoption decision in the target population (e.g. Surgeons, Primary Care Physicians, Nurse Managers, Schedulers)?

Target Groups: _____

- What is your initial strategy to reach all sites? (Include a brief statement of 1 to 3 concise sentences.) Considerations include:
  - Will certain components of the change be spread to all sites or will all the components be spread to certain sites?
  - What is the relationship of units to the pilot sites?
  - Where do champions exist or where can they be readily developed?
    - At the leadership level?
    - At the grass-roots level?

Initial Strategy: _____

- What are your plans to establish two-way communication between those leading spread and the pilot sites?
  - Are there existing venues you can use?
  - What new communication venues need to be created?
  - Who is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of two-way communication?

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Initial Strategy: _____

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- What is the initial strategy for reward and recognition of participation and progress?

Initial Strategy: _____

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- Where resources are available?

Initial Strategy: _____

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Strengthening the Social System

- Who are the key messengers that will explain the new system to the target population?
  - How will you identify them?
  - What will you do to help them?
  - What technology will you use to help them?
  - How will you continue your relationship with them?
  - How will you provide feedback?

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Initial Strategy: _____

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- Can "communities of practice" (people with similar positions and responsibilities, e.g., physicians, nurses, technicians, clerks, etc.) be established to facilitate discussions among peers? Are these communities needed for your spread work?
  - How will you provide a time and place for people to interact?
  - What will motivate them to form communities of practice?
  - How will you encourage communication and feedback among the group?
  - How can you support them?
  - What technology will you use to help them?

Initial Strategy: _____

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- What are the concerns of the front-line staff in the target population? How will these concerns be addressed?
  - How will you educate them about specific changes?
  - What will you do to enable them to see the big picture?
  - What technology will you use to help them?

Initial Strategy: _____

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- What tools or methods did the successful pilot sites use that can make it easier for the new teams to make the changes?
  - How will you transfer those tools, methods, and knowledge to the other teams?
    - How will you share documents?
    - How will you encourage new teams to hear from pilot site teams?
    - How will you enable an "all teach, all learn" environment?
    - How will you encourage pilot site teams to learn from new teams?

Initial Strategy: _____

- How will the leadership stay involved and connected to the front-line teams?

Initial Strategy: _____

Other Key Considerations for Successful Spread

Developing the Communication Plan

- How will awareness of the initiative be communicated?
  - Have the benefits been documented?
  - Is comparative data available?
  - What channels will be used to raise awareness in the target population?

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- How will technical knowledge be communicated?
  - Have the potential changes and the ongoing learning been documented in a succinct format?
  - What face-to-face interactions are planned?
  - How will successful sites be involved to supply technical support?
- How will key measures be communicated to leadership?
- How will assessment of progress and results be communicated back to the pilot units?

Initial Strategy: _____

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Developing the Measurement and Feedback System

- How will outcomes be measured?
- How will the rate of spread be monitored?
- Who will be responsible for collecting, plotting, and sharing the data?
- What information/reports will be used to monitor and refine the spread strategy?
- How will measures and analyses be fed back to the pilot units to support and encourage further progress?
- How will pilot units be rewarded and recognized for participation and progress?

Initial Strategy: _____

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