
Investing in New Technology: When, Why and How?



Faced with abundance of technologies on the market, healthcare leaders should weigh their adoption decisions carefully. There are five steps that can help in decision-making.

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In his article for Harvard Business Review, Jon Glaser warns health leaders against the temptations of any new technology “considered in a vacuum, without regard to the bigger picture”. While a technology might be beneficial for a healthcare organisation, it might also be not, being instead a “waste of money and time”.

Moreover, even if a technology is proven and looks very promising, an organisation might not be ready to implement it because the necessary organisational or cultural change is yet to happen for the tech implementation to be successful.

Glaser shares a five-step framework that should help decision-makers avoid falling for “shiny objects” and instead make the digital transformation effective.

Step 1. Focus on the transformation, not the digital. Any digital technology is only a tool used to reach organisational goals. Having the latter in place is a prerequisite for any transformative technology implementation to be sustainable.

Step 2. Understand why a particular technology may be an important tool. Again based on its goals, an organisation should be able to comprehend the core potential contribution of any technology to realisation of those goals. It should also assess its potential uses because “[a] truly potent technology will spread beyond its initial application”. In addition, any possible limitation might have unpredictable devastating effects, hence these limitation must also be carefully weighed.

Here, a decision-maker should keep in mind that state-of-the-art technology is not always the optimal solution. It can be that a standard, mature technology would be enough to serve the organisational goals.

Step 3. Choose suppliers wisely. When sifting through the market offers, Glaser’s advice is: “ Ignore buzzwords: disruptive, solution, platform, ecosystem, cloud.” The focus should be, again, on the technology’s specific capabilities applied to the organisation’s needs. Checking for references and assessing the vendor’s viability during the full contract term is essential, as well as looking into any potential regulatory requirements.

Step 4. Engage in iterative learning. Implementation of a new technology always requires certain change and may expose the gaps that exist in the organisation’s workflow. It is therefore important to “[t]ake a [change-management] step or two and then assess. Then take another step or two and reassess”.

Step 5. Sustain the digital transformation. This is much easier to ensure if a transformation-friendly environment exists in the organisation. There should be a responsible person or unit that would keep up to date with technological developments and ensure “a sustained, multi-year

focus on understanding and implementing digital technologies”.

In conclusion, Glaser reminds of the three realities of sustained digital transformation, namely the continuity of transformation and of technology innovation, as well as the omnipresence of shiny objects. Without “a clear sense of what it wants from technology and why”, an organisation will always be vulnerable to the dangers of “technology seduction”.

Source: [Harvard Business Review](#)

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