

## **EHR2**

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Preparing Employees for EHR Changes Is Like Inviting Martha Stewart to Dinner

By Donna DonFrancesco

Implementation of an electronic health record (EHR) will result in many changes within the HIM department and other departments as well. Some jobs will disappear (e.g., loose filing). Other jobs will be created (e.g., scanning of documents). Still other jobs will change (e.g., coding from online charts rather than paper documents). All of these changes will be stressful to employees and their managers. However, with careful thought and preparation, the stress can be minimized and the transitions made more smoothly.

This month, we're talking about ways in which managers can help to prepare their employees for change. The suggestions here can be used for any change, but will be especially helpful in preparing for the changes involved with EHR implementation.

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If you present that question to employees they will typically have two answers that stand out: they want to be included in the process in some way and they have a hunger for information.

But with different personality types and different expectations, how do you meet those needs? One way to tackle it is to understand the different personality types on your team and make sure you are involving them in a way that will energize and include them without causing them further stress. Below are some examples of ways to involve your employees and play to their strengths.

### **For the Extraverts on your team, provide them an opportunity**

- to talk about what is going on
- to have a voice that is heard
- to be involved and have a visible role in the change

**For the Introverts, provide them with:**

- time alone to reflect on what is going on
- written communication and/or one-on-one communication
- time to think about their opinions before brainstorming meetings
- time to assimilate changes before taking action

**For the Thinking types, the change must show that:**

- logic was used in the decision process
- leadership is competent to manage the change
- the change is fair and equitable

**For the Feeling types, the change must show that:**

- the impact on people was recognized
- leadership cares about employees
- values underlie the change
- appreciation and support will be given during the change

If you do nothing else but take the information above and use it to plan your written and oral communication, brainstorming sessions and implementation meetings, you will be well ahead of the game. Too many times we assume that everyone is just like us and we plan our change model and communication plan to fit our needs without realizing that the plan needs to be flexible enough to allow for all types of personalities and expectations.

Think of it like the dinner we talked about preparing for Martha Stewart. Some employees would like to help plan the menu, while others would like to shop for the ingredients, decorate the dining room or cook the meal. Someone else would enjoy giving the toast, but the key is that they are all involved in the planning and preparation. Finally, when they all sit down to enjoy the meal, the entire team feels a sense of accomplishment.

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