

Lessons from Jazz-An Improvisation Model for Change Management Strategy for Computerized Physician Order Entry (CPOE)

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Abstract

We can learn lessons from jazz improvisation to guide our change management practices for implementation of CPOE.

Keywords:

Jazz, Improvisation, Change management, CPOE

Background

There are certain lessons from jazz improvisation that can inform healthcare managers when planning for CPOE. These are the following principles that are gleaned from jazz:

Anticipation of the future and of change in the present. The nature of jazz performance means that performers are sensitive to subtle changes in direction and adjust their performances in line with such changes. Implementers of CPOE have to sense the direction of the impact on that system on physicians and nurses.

Continual adjustment of the environment. CPOE implementation tend to be for at least two years. Jazz performers adjust their performance to their environment. Perceptions of physicians change throughout the implementation process. These changes need to be viewed as opportunities for improvement rather than as constraints.

Constant negotiation is central to making physicians feel comfortable with the adoption and use of CPOE. It also underlines the tacit and emotional involvement of physicians in the planning and design.

Staying flexible under uncertainty. The jazz-based improvisation approach differs from traditional change management strategies. The orchestrated approach does not succeed when uncertain conditions undermine the ability of healthcare managers to foresee the consequences of their system implementation.

Shared views and valuing the skills of co-performers. Implementing CPOE is a shared enterprise among disparate groups in the hospital-physicians, pharmacists, nurses and healthcare management. Observation of a jazz band reveals considerable eye contact, exchange of smiles and gestures, and a willingness to allow certain key performers to take center stage to demonstrate their particular skills. It is important in the planning for CPOE that we give key people like certain physicians their input and consideration.

Types of Jazz-based Improvisational Change. Orlikowski has described three types of improvisational change-anticipated change, emergent change and opportunistic change [1]. **Anticipated change** is when healthcare managers embark on CPOE with some grasp of how they expect events to unfold. **Emergent change** is when practices and actions arise spontaneously from the ground level –user defined innovation. Physicians have to define their approach to the creation of order sets in their particular specialty. These order sets should also blend with evidence-based guidelines. This requires an emergent change approach. In jazz, individual performers use elements of new material and weave this into earlier compositions. **Opportunistic change** are activities that are not anticipated but are introduced later in the change process. Opportunistic change also recognizes unforeseen capabilities when they emerge. New treatments and research can change the order set development process. Cardiologists can change their drug orders when a new anti-arrhythmic or anti-hypertensive drug appears.

Encouraging flexibility in the Readiness Assessment.

Readiness assessments for CPOE create a baseline for measuring success. They act as the initial engagement of key physician stakeholders and identify risks for mitigation relative to change management. The readiness assessments focus on leadership capacity, recent change initiatives success or challenges, organizational communication, and the readiness of key stakeholders to accept the proposed solution.

Methods

Our jazz lessons were derived from structured interviews with key management that are planning for CPOE at several hospitals in the US. We have also conducted extensive observational research at these key hospital sites. We have interviewed key physician executives as well in our approach. The next stage is to create a guide for conducting focus groups with key stakeholders including physicians, pharmacists and nurses.

Conclusion

The unique and changing dynamics of the hospital environment require continual reappraisal and critical thinking. This critical thinking can draw on the lessons from jazz improvisation and performance. We can learn this lesson

from Louis Armstrong to “never the play the same song twice”.

References

[1]Orlikowski W. Improvising Organizational Transformation Over Time: A Situated Change Perspective Information Systems Research, 1996 Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 63-92

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