

Overcoming Automation Fears: A Proposal for a Rural Community Hospital

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Background: Alice Peck Day Memorial Hospital

- Community hospital in a small New Hampshire city with:
 - 24 bed inpatient unit
 - Vibrant outpatient clinic
 - Lifecare community offering independent and assisted living care to approximately 180 residents
 - Approximately 700 employees
- Member of Dartmouth Health, northern New England's largest health system and New Hampshire's largest employer
- Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center (425 bed academic Level 1 trauma and tertiary care medical center) is located four miles away

Challenge: Overcoming technology gaps

- Healthcare is perceived and is practiced with an eye toward risk aversion. ([Why Healthcare Leaders Must Take Risks and Not Have Regrets | Healthcare Innovation \(hcinnovationgroup.com\)](https://www.hcinnovationgroup.com))
- While it is difficult to prove something that doesn't happen, it is reasonable to suspect that:
 - Healthcare's risk adverse culture may lead to a slow adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools compared to other industries
 - Upper Valley employees and job seekers may be less trustful of technological applications towards employment decisions due to:
 - Relatively low access to broadband Internet ([Some digital divides between rural, urban, suburban America persist | Pew Research Center](#))
 - Relatively late adoption of the Internet compared with urban areas
 - Older worker demographic in New Hampshire (2nd oldest state) and Vermont (3rd oldest state) ([State Population by Characteristics: 2020-2022 \(census.gov\)](#))

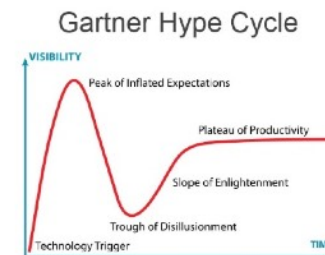
HR's role in technology adoption

- Human Resources stands in the gap between the employer and the applicant
- By nature, Operations and IT are focused on internal improvement. To successfully implement improved technology options, HR must focus on:
 - Operational excellence for HR functions
 - Internal and external end user interface and training
- As such, HR can play a key role in the communication and adoption of new technology



Proposal: Making the new familiar

- Assumptions:
 - We will use the following change adoption measures to guide our proposal:
 - Gartner hype cycle: [Gartner Hype Cycle Research Methodology | Gartner](#)
 - Scott and Jaffe change model: [Scott and Jaffe Change Model | LaptrinhX](#)
 - How do we affect positive change on the resistors?
- Methodology:
 - Measure current status:
 - Develop survey for current employees and a sampling of recent applicants to determine current comfort level and acceptance of AI
 - Measure current application technology usage (website, Indeed, paper)
 - Measure current technology availability in catchment area (broadband access)
 - Measure future status after interventions:
 - Three measures listed above with normalization for assumed increase in broadband/computer access over time



Proposed Interventions

- Focus: Operational transition
- Transition from current technology platform to a new technology platform with small disruption to the applicant's current interface experience
- Incorporate HR users at all levels of HR team into the design and implementation of new technology
- Compliance reviews for states of operation
- Develop technical expertise for incorporation of meaningful data ("garbage in, garbage out")
- Language matters: consider using terminology that excludes "artificial intelligence/AI" to the end user ("algorithms"), which may be more socially acceptable

Proposed Interventions

- Focus: Internal Audience

Timing focused during the “explore” stage (Scott and Jaffe) or “slope of enlightenment” (Gartner Hype Cycle)

- Resume writing classes: How to write resumes that are friendly to the technology
- “Walk in our shoes”: Develop opportunities for employees to watch talent acquisition work in a sandbox environment
- Guest presenters: Case studies of successful implementations

Proposed Interventions

- Focus: External Audience
- Hold classes on the screening process and the use of algorithmic technology
- Broaden demonstration offerings at local high schools and colleges/universities in the use of algorithmic technology
- Meet people where they are! Provide demonstrations at:
 - Farmers markets
 - Country fairs
 - Town meeting day
 - Race tracks
 - Senior centers
 - Departments of Labor (NH/VT)

Stakeholders

- Internal:
 - Information Technology
 - HR staff
 - Health system SME's
 - Formal and informal organizational leaders
 - Broad employee audience
- External:
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Schools and colleges/universities
 - HRIS vendors
 - Departments of Labor (NH/VT)



Timeline for implementation (PDSA)

