Better Hunt for a Better HIMS!

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Intoduction

Today's healthcare is an important part of our society & for a healthcare provider to offer their services in an effective and efficient manner, is very challenging. In multi speciality hospitals, for that matter even a single specialty hospital/clinic lots of patients keep rolling every day and it's really difficult to maintain records of all patients manually. Given the complex business scenario today, even a Hospital has to have a good system to ensure all the relevant KPIs are tracked with ease. To facilitate this activity and also to manage hospital administration digitally, a smart Hospital Information Management System (HIMS) assumes significance.

A good HIMS also provides the financial and operational metrics for the top management apart from clinical insights and like an ERP for a manufacturing or process industry, a good HIMS has to scale that level of services horizons. Therefore it is imperative that every Hospital Administrator/CIO uses a good evaluation method to choose a good HIMS. This article helps them in that process.

Problem

A well implemented HIMS helps to automate and streamline clinical and administrative workflows and in turn improve outcomes. However, an inefficient HIMS not only hinders the smooth flow of processes, it also adds on to the cost and the existing workload of the hospital. Work duplication, increased chances of errors, increased costs, additional staff, and loss of data are some of the outcomes of a disorganized HIMS. Besides, the ease of use across all departments in adopting a good HIMS is very critical.

A hospital is said to be resourceful only if all the employees of the hospital are being efficient or trained to use such HIMS platform. To make the employees efficient, an effective and a user friendly HIMS is an important tool.

Since the market is also flooded with many HIMS service providers, it's a challenge for the CIO of the hospitals to pick up the the right one, given their internal strengths and requirements. Every HIMS will have its own architecture and to choose the one that fits the hospital's work flow is quite difficult.

Solution

The troublesome task of selecting a good HIMS can be made easier and reliable by carefully considering the below given points:

- **Choosing an integrated system** with a complete suite of modules that fits every functional dimension of the hospital or department level needs is better than choosing more than one system to address the requirements of all users/departments in the hospital.

- **Data Integrity & Security** – The patient details and the hospital policies are highly confidential and the HIMS must be HIPAA compliant in order to ensure that the data is encrypted and secured reliably. This ensures that the hacking threat is completely avoided.

- **Open Protocols** - The system should be capable of getting integrated to multiple 3rd party systems as and when required. For example, HL7 compliance is a better choice as it is a set of international standards for the transfer of clinical & administrative data between HIMS and other heterogeneous software applications/systems used by various healthcare providers.

- **Multi-Tenant Web Access, Cloud & Mobile Ready** - The system should not only be web based but should be capable of supporting multiple instances of the application across different geo regions for accessing the patient clinical records anywhere within the hospital environment. This also calls for readiness of the system in a private cloud set up. Considering the speed at which technology is touching all spheres, a well optimized Mobile Ready responsive system is the only option to go with.

- **Customizations Flexibility** – Every hospital's existing functionalities develop with time and the hospital's work flow changes with this development. In such cases, the HIMS provider must be capable of delivering the enhancement in the existing system in such a way that it fits the growing scope of work also. With the ideas and requirements varying from hospital to hospital, the customizations are an important aspect which needs to be considered.

- **Parallel Run** – While changing from an existing HIMS to a new one is a challenge as the entire patient records have to be migrated without any loss of data, it is also a challenge for the end users to quickly adapt to the new one. To ease the situation, it is suggested that the parallel run happens in the hospital premises with the presence of good number of human resources from the system provider for a suitable period of time. The end users can use their existing system and also learn the new one simultaneously with the support of the system providers.

- **Support Services -** Though the end users are trained during the implementation period, there could still be chances of the end users facing trouble with the system either because of the user mistakes or because of the minor bugs in the system. In both these cases, the system provider with a dedicated team needs to take up the responsibility to ensure that the issues are resolved at the earliest as it is a hospital environment where immediate actions are more preferable.

- **Reporting Capabilities –** For the top level management of the hospital to take effective business related decisions, the system should be capable of measuring the NABH indicators and must provide various reports on various transactions going within the hospital.

- **Existing Client Endorsements –** What the users have to say about product is a very important aspect to be considered. Also, it is better to go with a company which gives more importance to the user feedbacks and uses them to improvise their product.

- **Knowledge Drain –** Knowledge gained by the employees is reflected in the organization's performance. As the knowledge in any field improves with time, any firm which has higher employee retention is expected to deliver its best efforts in the solutions they offer to the clients.

- **Sustained Innovation –** To meet the changing market needs, sustained innovations are very crucial. The two key factors that help in the sustained product development are the knowledge pool of the employees and the user feedbacks. And hence, any organization with these two criteria fulfilled is a better choice to go with.

For More Information,

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