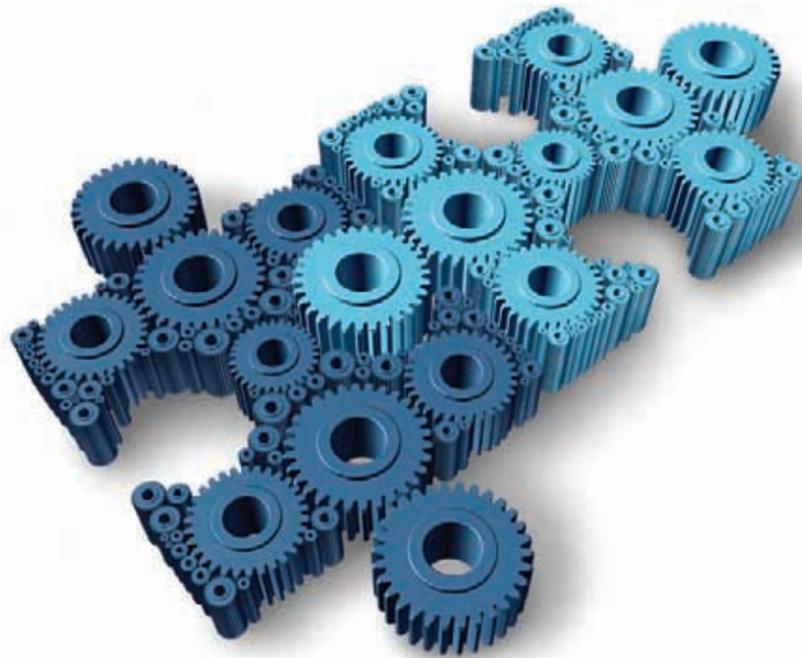


Efficiency: IS IT ALL IT IS CRACKED UP TO BE?

by Henri Nuber



Chiropractic technology, whether software, computerized adjusting, therapeutic devices, or thermography, is often sold based on a clinical premise, compliance promise, or new patient expectation. But in reality, one should more closely consider the impact on your practice's efficiency.

In general when we discuss efficiency we're talking about how we apply our use of time, effort or cost in terms of completing a task. Further it is usually considered in accomplishing that task with reduced waste, expense, or unnecessary effort.

According to HealthIT.gov, the Federal Government's "everything about electronic health records" website, there are six primary efficiency benefits to be gained with the proper use of technology.

1. Quick, easy access to charts helps your staff increase efficiencies. No more searching for charts. No more embarrassing "can't find a chart" situations. When your staff saves time, they can better focus on serving your patients.

2. Improved access to information means patient records are available to appropriate staff anytime they need it, even simultaneously. Improved access creates even more

staff and doctor efficiency, and less wasted time.

3. Enhanced patient care and satisfaction when your scheduling, patient notes, automatic coding, and billing are integrated. So patient satisfaction is enhanced, staff stress is reduced, and the clinic runs more efficiently overall.

4. Reduced work redundancy and old-fashioned paper handling tasks such as filling out forms and billing processing are natural outcomes of available technology. Not counting greater satisfaction and less overtime for staff and doctor.

5. No more difficulties in reading and deciphering handwritten notes means reduced errors, and less time spent guessing what notes mean.

6. Improved electronic sharing of information, a crucial issue as new guidelines take root, allows doctors to work seamlessly with other health care providers as well as more likely to stay out of the way of HIPAA problems. And don't forget the reduced time in finding and copying records when necessary.

Technology Efficiency Dependent On Your Needs

Doctors today have two major choices when it comes to chiropractic management software or electronic health records. They

can choose to use a server-based system or they can choose to move to the cloud.

If efficiency is a key component of your decision, realize that whether you choose a cloud or server-based system, every situation is unique. You need to truly understand your patients, your clinic, and your needs before choosing which way to go.

Is Printing Really Necessary?

Another key component of mastering technology efficiency opportunities comes in when not to print. It is habit for many of us to simply print everything. But in the world of efficiency, printing may not be an efficient way to do things.

Printing reduces the cost efficiency of your practice, considering the cost of paper, ink, and staff time spent filing and handling. Doctors tell us that it is a habit that is hard to break, and they are surprised when they take a closer look at how many times things are printed that are never read, left in the printer, or completely unnecessary printing.

Efficient practices set policies and procedures in terms of when to print and when not to print. Even going as far as making sure new employees understand how to follow the guidelines. One doctor found that they could save quite a bit of money by using his clinic's

duplex printing option.

Three Things You Can Do To Increase Practice Efficiency

It may seem difficult to increase practice efficiencies, but it doesn't have to be. Here are three things you can do.

1. **Survey your patients.** It doesn't have to be in-depth, or even costly, but by properly listening you can find out what their current perceptions about the technology efficiency of your clinic are, and what their desired expectations may be. For example, in a 2012 Pew Survey 31% of web searches were being done via smart phone. Would your

be spent, and how much time you may be spending on not so important activities.

3. **With this information in hand, brainstorm with your staff** as to whether or you can improve in any areas. You can also use this information to have your software provider work with you to show, teach, or train you and your staff as to how their software may help improve your office efficiency.

In Conclusion

Efficiency can be a differentiator in your clinic's success while the lack of efficiency can be a major negative factor. The fact is that technology

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patients appreciate the ability to check in via a smart phone? Or even receive communications?

2. **Conduct a time efficiency audit for you and your staff.** Don't misinterpret the word audit, it's not that bad. Try this process. Commit one day for you and your staff to track your activities. Set a stopwatch to either 15 or 30 minutes depending on how closely you want to track your activities. Then every time the watch goes off, take one second to record what you were doing at that time.

After the end of the day, go through and group the activities listed so that they are all placed with similar activities. Then take this list and rate each activity as urgent, kind of urgent, or not so urgent. Now take the same list and rank the activities, from one to whatever number you have, as to their importance, with one being the most important activity.

When completed you will have a priority audit showing which activities are most important and urgent, where your time ought to

can greatly improve your efficiencies. Maximize how technology can help improve your efficiencies and you stand to benefit in six key areas:

1. Increase operational organizational efficiencies
2. Reduce unnecessary costs
3. Enhance patient care outcomes
4. Keep yourself ahead of the competition
5. Increase income
6. Excite staff about coming to work each day and give yourself more time at home on nights and weekends

Differentiate your practice and its efficiency with up-to-date technology. The impact on you and your staff's work experience as well as the appointment experience for your patients will make it worth the time and effort involved.

About The Author — Henri Nuber is the publisher of DC Products Review.

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