

# Is fall the ideal time to tune-up your legacy systems?

GET THE RIGHT SOLUTIONS IN PLACE FOR THE BUSY YEAR AHEAD

IT leaders in healthcare always need to keep their sights set on the horizon. Whether it's to prepare for the resurgence of COVID-19 cases, respond to new administrative demands, or accommodate the continual shift of patient volumes across various parts of the organization.

A recent report from Vizient suggests that hospital outpatient departments and ambulatory surgery centers will be experiencing rapid patient growth, resulting in a patient volume that is 15 million greater by 2029 than it was in 2019. Similar patient volume growth is predicted in physician's offices and clinics. The report also predicted an increased demand for specialist care to treat conditions related to chronic COVID-19.

## **ARE YOUR LEGACY IT SYSTEMS PREPARED FOR THIS FUTURE—FOR 2022 AND BEYOND?**

A legacy system, or technology that could be a candidate for replacement by a more modern solution, often relies on software patches and custom workarounds to continue running. While the implementation or upgrading of a new EHR (or LIS or Revenue Cycle Management solution) can feel like a significant investment, it will likely save you money in the long run by maximizing your efficiencies and growing revenue.

While maintaining older workarounds or outdated solutions can seem to offer short-term budgetary relief, there are often more serious hidden costs and opportunity costs such as:

- Spending money to troubleshoot technology that is becoming obsolete
- Lack of flexibility to address evolving clinical and revenue cycle requirements
- Difficulty interfacing clinical and administrative applications located on different servers
- Risk of data loss and security breaches due to older solutions
- Lack of experienced users and limited training resources
- Failure to take advantage of technical enhancements
- Exacerbated upgrade remediation requirements due to past deviations from "model"

The consequences of these issues can range from a headache to a full-blown compliance crisis. If you're still "making it work" with a legacy system, you may want to think about making some changes now.

In the past, many S&P clients have found fall to be an excellent time to make an upgrade.

## WHY THE FALL?

If your fiscal year just started in July, you could still take a broad view of the year ahead while still having the financial resources to make some investments to take you smoothly through 2022. If you're identifying opportunities to further automate and optimize your solutions in the areas of clinical (EHR), revenue (CDRC), and labs (LIS), right now could be a smart time for an upgrade.

For organizations whose fiscal year begins in January, fall is the perfect time to set your revenue goals and priorities for the coming year and make sure you're where you need to be from a workflow perspective.

S&P Consultants can help you take an unbiased look at the advantages and costs of maintaining your current systems or making some investments—based objectively on your organization's needs (not an eager vendor's sales goals!)

## IS YOUR EHR STILL SERVING YOUR NEEDS?

2020 had more pressing issues for healthcare providers than implementing new EHR solutions. If you postponed system upgrades in the last few years, you're in good company. But continuing to delay upgrades, can leave important productivity gains on the table.

### SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT YOUR LEGACY EHR:

**Are your current solutions meeting the needs of your organization?**

**Which connections, workflows, or supports are sub-par?**

**Are you able to approach “best practices” in your critical operations?**

*If you don't have clear answers, it may be time to explore your options with an objective, unbiased consultant who has seen what works best at organizations facing comparable challenges.*

*S&P can take a holistic view of your solutions and workflows to provide true end-to-end counsel in the form of your people (training/staffing) your processes and your technology. We can help you make the investments that will align with your leadership's priorities while delivering clear value—quickly.*

## THE VALUE OF A THIRD-PARTY EXPERT

When you're dealing with competing priorities for your limited budget, bringing in a consultant can seem like an unnecessary expenditure - what you have is working, so why pay for outside help? The truth is organizations that think this way often end up suffering precisely the kinds of setbacks the consulting services would prevent.

If you're approaching a systems overhaul from a “minimum investment” standpoint, you may be basing your projections on the best-case scenarios presented by the technology vendors themselves. Getting your information from a single perspective can leave big gaps in your knowledge of how your solutions can handle real-world situations.

If you do engage third-party help, make sure you ask them to provide you with the following:

- **An assessment of your existing systems.**  
What are the advantages of your current workflows compared to the code level, you're considering?
- **A “like-for-like” code assessment.**  
Are there code opportunities to adapt or update? This should include a review of your current Cerner Release Notes.

- **Best practice recommendations.**

What are the current industry standards, and how would they benefit your operations? Your consultant should be able to conduct audits to validate your organization's current state assumptions.

- **A thorough operational review.**

How will factors like program management and clinical operations define the scope of the engagement? This step should include advice on change management strategies, and would likely extend into the testing, training, and go-live planning phases.

With over 25 years of experience, S&P Consultants has seen technology implementations across the spectrum, covering virtually every area of strategic EHR, Revenue Cycle, and LIS planning and implementation. Whether it's a narrow scope for a particular project or a broader view that examines your governance, leadership, and change control workflows, we'll provide insights that will serve your organization well.

### **TAKE THE FIRST STEP FOR A FALL "MAKE-OVER" AND REAP THE REWARDS FOR A LONG TIME TO COME**

There's no risk in beginning an honest conversation with a member of our KLAS-recognized team of consultants. At the very least, you'll come away with a clearer idea of where your legacy systems stand—and what's possible (with what investment) should you decide to make any enhancements.

"With an experienced consultant, a client will just get a much broader, much richer, much more robust perspective that allows them to anticipate virtually all of the 'project-killer' pitfalls," said S&P Chief Strategy Officer Zach Johnson. "We know the business drivers. We know the political climate that we're entering. We know your resource capabilities and limitations and we can best align to support you."

If you think the time is right to upgrade your legacy solution, S&P Consultants is ready to help you take a strategic, unbiased look at your EHR needs. To set up a consultation, call 781-428-3497 or fill out our online contact form. We're ready to share our knowledge



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