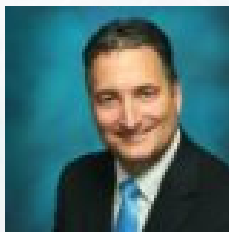




**Before you sign on the line for
your EHR,**

Let's Talk Strategy

Print this off for future reference (kind of wordy)



**Keith Justus
Nexus Practice IT Services**



IT Strategy Enigma

- When your practice is thinking of upgrading technology, where do you begin; especially moving to EHR?
- How big is your “Gap”?
 - **Some of you are still on paper systems**
 - **Some are on green screen dumb-terminal solutions**
 - **Some have PC’s that are not networked**
 - **Some have PC’s without a central server (peer-to-peer)**
 - **Some have old servers no longer supported**
 - **Some have servers with no hardware warranties**
 - **Some have a Small Business Server (limited growth)**
 - **Some have servers that meet your needs today**
 - **Some have too many servers (expensive to maintain)**
- Regardless of your “Gap”, moving to EHR is an excellent *Compelling Event* to re-evaluate your entire IT strategy. Technology solutions have come a long way!



Let's set some expectations...

- This presentation is not going to tell you exactly what to do for your business.
- The intention is for you to have additional knowledge to “ask the questions” of your IT vendor.
- The concepts shared with you today are VERY REAL. They are not *bleeding-edge* and are in production across the state in many practices.
- In the past, these strategies for smaller businesses were not affordable – technology has changed everything. NOW is your time!



Let's make some assumptions...

- You have been to a seminar and evaluated some EHR packages.
- Or, you have seen various demonstrations of solutions and are close to picking one.
- Maybe, you have a quote in hand and just need the “push” off the fence to purchase.
- Maybe, you are just getting started in the process and still have the “OMG” look on your face.

In any case, we're glad you took the time to listen in on some advice for your business.



The EHR Vendor Sales Process...

- I don't mean this in a negative way, but don't be fooled by an EHR vendor's concern for your *overall IT strategy*. They are software companies.
- They do very well at selling an IT strategy that "fits" their software solution.
- Very few will actually, and truly, consider your entire business needs.
- If you are purchasing your EHR solution, and hosting it on your own hardware, their recommended strategy **WILL BE** limited to their solution.
- Most vendors do not want the responsibility of the rest of your IT needs.



The EHR Vendor Sales Process...

So, what options might you see from an EHR vendor proposal?

- Buy the server platform and upgrade your PCs and possibly your network
- Maybe the vendor has a Hosted option
- Maybe the solution is an actual Application Service Provider (ASP) model or (SAAS)
- Purchase the software and YOU have it hosted somewhere else – Managed Services Provider (MSP)

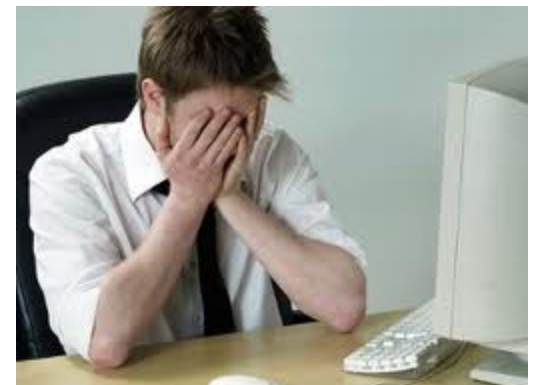
The EHR Vendor Sales Process...

EACH one of those options presents a different plan for your overall IT strategy.

It's no wonder everyone is confused! **You need to have a professional IT company, that specializes in Medical, review your quotes for you.** I'll share some recent examples.

As we present each of these strategies, the concepts gradually become more complex in “geek-speak” and technology.

Before we look at each of them, you will see an overall concept emerging within all the strategies. This will be “Thin-computing”, (if supported by the vendor), so let's start there





How about a few recent examples...

Ophthalmology practice was pressured into a quick sale for EHR, because of very attractive pricing and incentives.

- **Not a practice strategy at all – narrow focused on EHR only**
- **Did not address any other solution for the practice**
- **Not an efficient use of technology – PCs & Multiple Servers**
- **No plans for how this was going to be supported**

Community health center was pressured into a quick sale for EHR, because of very attractive pricing and incentives.

- **Way too much hardware was purchased**
- **Wrong network equipment configured – no failover for hosted solution**
- **Narrow focused on their EHR solution only**
- **No email, no file/print services, no ISP/Phone/Fax thought leadership**

IT Strategy 101 – Thin Computing...

Thin-computing – what is it?

- Think of it as the old dumb-terminal world, only it's now in the Windows world.
- Managing and maintaining PCs can be VERY expensive to a practice.
- We have clients with 40 users and only 1 PC!
- Appliance - No moving parts, no hard drive, no software, no viruses





IT Strategy 101...

Thin-computing – Why?

- **The advantage is in “Strategy” and long-term cost savings – not necessarily upfront cost.**
- Imagine needing to upgrade your EHR software and going to a single source(server) instead of all your PCs.
- Imagine not needing to purchase antivirus software and worrying about virus outbreaks, spyware, and failing hard drives on your PCs.



IT Strategy 101...

Thin-computing – strategies?

- SAAS models are perfect for thin-computing – appliance comes with embedded Windows and a browser to access the ASP
- Hosted EHR solutions too
- Even if you buy your EHR, and it's web-based
- **The GOOD NEWS** – you don't need to throw your old PCs away to replace them with thin appliances. Just about any PC can be “thinned down” to *act* as an appliance.
- **Keep your PCs until they physically fail!** Those “boat anchors” and “door stops” can stay around longer.
- **Strategy - Go Thin...Go Thin...Go Thin...**



ASP, Hosted EHR, Web-based...

- Convert your PC's to thin-computing
- Have a spare in the closet in case a PC fails
- If you already have a server locally for File/Print and your PM system – you have some options (gradually move into it)
 - Terminal Server to provide users a full-desktop (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook Email)
- You can have a File/Terminal Server hosted by a Managed Services Provider (MSP)
- There are advantages to using a server for domain security and data centralization



Purchase Decision...

Do we buy our hardware platform and host it locally or do we have the solution hosted at an MSP?

- Many times, this decision really boils down to a *personal preference* of the physicians.
- The tipping point is usually with multi-location practices. These practices lean towards Hosting at an MSP, otherwise YOU end up being your own data center for the other locations. What is your Risk Tolerance?
- We'll talk more about an MSP option later.



Purchase Your Own Hardware...

- Purchasing an EHR can be as small as a single server and pretty easy to build a strategy around it; especially if the solution is browser-based.
- Other times, you may have an existing PM solution you want to keep, and possibly other servers for email and file/print services.
- This is the time to evaluate the age and capacity of your existing boxes.

Consider a concept called “Virtualization”.

- Imagine a few “physical” servers running several “logical” virtual servers within them.
- Again, in the past this strategy for smaller businesses was not affordable – technology has changed everything.

IT Strategy 201 – Virtualization...

Virtualization offers many benefits:

- Reducing hardware capital investments
- Less hardware to maintain and warranty
- Excellent capability to expand capacity for logical servers when needed (disk, memory, proc)
- Ability to create logical servers for testing new releases of software
- Ability for P2V (Physical to Virtual)
 - meaning we can “image” a physical server and reload it on a virtual instance
 - consolidate older servers



EHR Database



Terminal Server



Test Server



File/Print/Image Server



IT Strategy 201 – Virtualization...

Virtualization is what Data Centers do today, and now you can afford to do it in your own businesses.

There is even free versions of virtualization software. Think about this:

- You load free virtualization software on your new server for EHR
- Then install your operating system and EHR solution
- 3-5 years later you go to upgrade your server and we simply “move” your virtual instance to the new machine
- Better yet, you can move that image to a data center if you decide you want it Hosted somewhere. Use somebody else’s hardware instead of buying



IT Strategy 301 – Hosting...

We have periodically mentioned the MSP strategy, but haven't really talked about it yet.

- MSPs are different than ASPs
- An MSP will not only host your EMR, but your *entire* business IT needs
- Your users are presented with a **Full Desktop**
 - EMR/PM
 - Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook
 - Email
 - Accounting
 - 3rd Party interfaces (labs, hospitals, pre-auth, etc...)
 - Dictation solutions
 - Secured File Shares and Printing
 - Web site hosting



IT Strategy 301 – Hosting...

Remember, if you are a multi-location practice and decide to purchase your hardware, YOU become *your own data center*. This is why many practices are moving towards Hosting.

- What is your risk tolerance to be a single point of failure for all of your locations?
- Do you have all the redundancies a professional data center provides?
- Can you make the investment for the proper facilities, redundancies, and security?



IT Strategy 301 – Hosting...

What else do you need to know about Hosting with an MSP...

- Utilizes Thin-computing for performance
- Keep all Microsoft licensing current
- Unbiased towards any PM/EHR solution
- Unbiased towards ISP providers – connectivity
- Utilize *virtualization* software – flexibility
- Provide “Testing” environments for upgrades
- Recurring monthly fee to use their environment – compare it to purchasing and maintaining it yourself (look at the *total* cost)




What do you do next...

- Talk to your IT vendor and see what their experience level is with these strategies.
- Sorry to tell you, but the *Indispensible-Man* model no longer works for EHR – Don't Take The Risk!
 - **You need a reputable vendor with experience and capacity to handle your needs**
 - **You need reliability – increasing IT dependency**
- Many IT vendors don't like these strategies (fear, inexperience, reduction in services fees, higher investments themselves, etc...)



What do you do next...

- Determine your “Gap” or ask for help
- Remember your EHR vendor is narrow focused – they know this and will recommend IT vendors
- Use these strategies to help you decide what is best for your business – business dictates what is the right IT solution, not the other way around
- Use your resources (OMGMA and associations)
- Use Preferred Partners from your associations
- Get proposals (view-points) to help you decide



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Thank you for your time...

Q & A