

**4 Key Elements to Successfully  
Implement Policy and Procedure  
Management Software**



# 4 KEY ELEMENTS TO SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

## Policy & Procedure Management: It's a Business Imperative for Healthcare Organizations

As a busy hospital executive, you recognize that you and your staff are constantly being asked to do more with less. We have all heard the statistics on how the upcoming labor shortage and the Affordable Healthcare Act have changed the way we do business. If you're not feeling the crunch of decreased reimbursements and incentives to keep patients out of hospitals, it will come far too soon. With all these changes, new rules and regulations ensuring that your policies and procedures are current and accessible has never been more important. You have to be in a constant state of readiness for surveys and audits.

While many healthcare organizations have made a transition from binders full of policies, others are still working to achieve that goal. Others might be using a file sharing system that really provides no tracking or insight into the most

recent version, last update or whether the right people have approved the policy. When you don't have a clear strategic approach to policy management or a software platform to help you manage approvals, then audits, and surveys with the Joint Commission often become crises situations.

Tackling the long overdue task of ensuring your policies and procedures are current, approved by the appropriate staff members, and accessible to your staff can be overwhelming. It's a careful balance between healthcare professionals like you to ensure policies don't remain static and revising them too frequently, which can lead to non-compliance.

The purpose of this guide is to help you create a clear path forward for implementing a new Policy and Procedure Management Software System and avoid the common mistakes we've seen organizations make.





# INTRO TO THE 4 ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS: PLAN THE WORK AND WORK YOUR PLAN

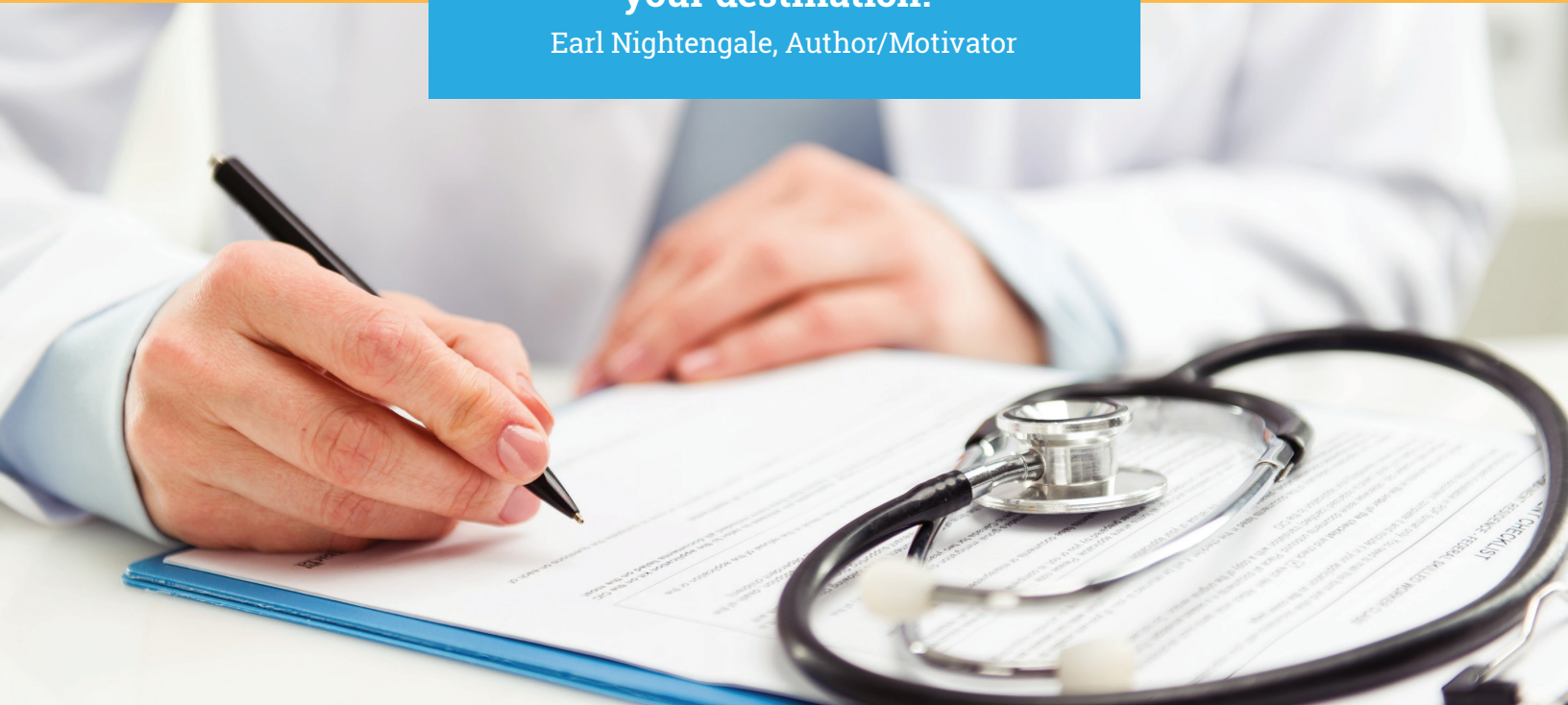
With any organizational initiative, especially one that has strategic business implications and directly impacts survey results for your facility, it's important to identify the key elements that will ensure your success. At PolicyStat, we've helped literally hundreds of organizations navigate the change to a new system. Through our experience and recent interviews with healthcare executives like you, we've identified four essential elements for successfully implementing a new policy and procedure management system. We like to tell our clients, they are not just implementing a new system, but they are also going to make

policies and procedures much easier to manage in the process. You have to recognize that in the center of all this change is staff behavior. These four elements will help you navigate change and create a roadmap to your success.

- ▶ Essential Element #1: Understand the Importance of Engaged Executive Sponsors
- ▶ Essential Element #2: Get Cross Departmental Buy-in
- ▶ Essential Element #3: Avoid the IT Kiss of Death
- ▶ Essential Element #4: Key Roles / Responsibility During Implementation

**"All you need is the plan, the road map, and the courage to press on to your destination."**

Earl Nightengale, Author/Motivator



## Essential Element #1: Understand the Importance of Engaged Executive Sponsors

Whether you're updating your policy and procedure management software or moving from paper, one of the most underestimated factors in your success will be your executive team's support of your decisions. One reason for support is that software is only one component of a great policy and procedure management system. Yes, it is an integral part, but at the end of the day it's the behavior of individuals within an organization that will determine whether your implementation is successful.

We all know leadership is often seen as an intangible skill. We also know that policies and procedures aren't your staff's favorite thing to deal with. In fact, in an organization where your people already feel stretched thin, policies and procedures can be the first thing that gets put on the back burner.

**Executive sponsorship and support is an essential element for three reasons:**

1. Policies and procedures cover different departments. In many hospitals, department heads have their own way of doing things. Executive sponsors can help department heads understand the value of aligning departmental priorities with the strategic priorities of the organization.
2. The expense for new software platforms often comes out of the overall IT budget. Executive sponsors can help IT team members see how investments will increase efficiency and reduce duplicative efforts across the organization.
3. A study published by the Project Management Institute noted that 81% of organizations who were highly effective at managing strategic initiatives had engaged executive sponsors.

The third point above deserves a bit more attention. Change, in a way, is often difficult for people and we tend to resist it. When there is not a clear vision and reason for change, staff members will quickly fall into old habits. Highly engaged executive sponsors can communicate the outcomes of the change. In this case, they include saving time by reducing redundant efforts and improving efficiencies by making it easy for key department heads to weigh-in on policy and procedure approvals at the most appropriate time.

It's also important to map out key times for executive engagement. Often as healthcare organizations implement policy and procedure software, there is a tendency to have a one and done mentality. Meaning, one organizational training or one major event will be all we need to make the change stick.

At PolicyStat, you'll get an experienced implementation consultant that will help you identify key milestones during implementation and that will provide perspective on when to ensure your executives are highly engaged. This leads to our next essential element.

## Essential Element #2: Get Cross Departmental Buy-in

To get the greatest benefit of a new policy and procedure management software, you're going to need cross departmental buy-in if you want to create a standardized system. Each department head is likely going to have a perspective on why a particular template for policies and procedures is the best. When you get a cross departmental team involved early it can help increase the likelihood that standard templates get adopted sooner rather than later.



Many times departments can operate as silos. Department heads or other key personnel within a department are most likely to know where the most current versions of policies reside and help you get your hands on them during implementation. At PolicyStat, one of the biggest obstacles we've seen to implementing policies and procedures in a timely fashion is an organization's lack of ability to gather the necessary data effectively. Department heads working alongside your executive sponsors and you as the overall project manager can drastically reduce the time it takes to get policies and procedures into the new platform.

## Essential Element #3: Avoid the IT Kiss of Death

As we noted earlier, the investment you're making in policy and procedure management software often gets allocated to the IT budget. Allocation of IT resources both money and people, are one of the most sought after assets in the organization. When it comes to implementing a software, IT is going to be looking at how much time they will have to devote to the project organizationally.

A solution like PolicyStat is going to greatly reduce the amount of time IT has to be involved versus other platforms that encompass the entire gambit of Governance, Risk and Compliance. When you're looking at alternative platforms, one of the key things your IT team will want to know is how much time it is going to take for them to implement the system. PolicyStat Policy and Procedure Management Software is a true software-as-a service platform, which means you won't need to worry about hosting. In addition, you'll benefit from the fact that you can allow staff to simply search and find your current policies without the extra time of logging in.

**A POINT SOLUTION LIKE POLICYSTAT IS GOING TO GREATLY REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF TIME IT HAS TO BE INVOLVED VERSUS OTHER PLATFORMS THAT ENCOMPASS THE ENTIRE GAMBIT OF GOVERNANCE, RISK AND COMPLIANCE.**

Another key factor for IT is going to be the security. Many IT professionals live by the adage, "inspect what you expect." You'll want to ensure the platform provider you select uses at a minimum the same 256 bit SSL technology used by financial institutions and that there are redundant servers in place to back up your information every hour. Knowing that your data is secure, and making it accessible will give your IT team the comfort they need to make the best decision possible for your organization. Now that you're starting to build momentum with your executives sponsors engaged, department head buy-in and IT supporting the project, you're ready to focus on the fourth essential element of a successful policy and procedure management software implementation.



## Essential Element #4: Key Roles / Responsibility During Implementation

Strong project management is critical to your success, and that means ensuring that you've defined the roles and responsibilities that will ensure success as you implement your new policy & procedure software. Behaviors and habits change over time. One thing you'll need to remember is that success doesn't come overnight. Success happens through continuous reinforcement and recasting of the vision alongside clear views of what is going to happen next and when will ensure your success.

Here is an overview of the key roles that you'll need to consider:

- **Project Manager** – You'll need a champion for the platform you choose. Someone that can galvanize the organization and work to gain alignment and support throughout the process.
- **Administrative support** – In every department there is usually someone who makes things happen and can 'crack' the proverbial whip to ensure you're getting current policies and procedures pulled together for consolidation. This person will hold colleagues accountable to deadlines and act as your right-hand throughout the process. Many times this person is the administrative support for a department head.
- **IT champion** – This person will make sure you're compliant with the IT requirements. Typically a great software platform will have clearly defined requirements that are easy to understand. The best platforms like PolicyStat will require relatively little IT involvement.
- **Executive sponsor** – This person will cast the vision over and over again helping people understand the positive outcomes and reasons why you're making this investment. It's easy for people to forget why you're doing this all in the first place. It all comes back to getting the right information in the right people's hands so they can make the best decisions possible when it comes to providing better patient care.
- **Relentlessly supportive software staff** – Today people often purchase software based on features and functionality alone and then find out going through an implementation alone can be quite overwhelming. Before you make a decision on a platform, make sure to talk to the staff and find out exactly how they will support you along the way. Great customer support is part of the ante, but it's often overlooked at many software as a service providers. At PolicyStat, we've been told it's one of the things that we excel at providing.

There you have them, the four key elements to successfully implementing your new policy and procedure management software-as-a-service.

## A Few Final Thoughts

Through our experience, we've seen great software implementations and incredibly successful outcomes. The best we've seen include the four elements mentioned in this guide. As you consider the platform that is right for you, we encourage you to use this guide as a tool to help you make the best decision possible.

**WANT TO LEARN MORE? GIVE US A CALL AT 317-644-1296 OR REQUEST A DEMO.**

