

Insights

6 Tips for Encouraging Pilot Sites to Collect Data

Engaging pilot sites to test out change ideas and collect data is one of the best ways to learn how to make change at a local level. Pilot sites can test ideas and assist with planning and implementing a project “on the ground” with individuals in a project’s target audience.

The most effective pilot sites are ones that know what is expected of them and agree to it up front. One typical responsibility is to collect and report data on the small tests of change they are conducting and on overall project measures. If pilot sites are challenged around collecting data to drive their improvement efforts, here are six tips to support them.

1. **Education:** Provide training on the importance of data used for the purposes of improvement not judgement, which can help to encourage transparency and decrease fears and a sense of vulnerability around reporting. It’s also important to help pilot team members to understand their data and run charts and how that information can inform and improve their work, especially when they are just beginning.
2. **Value:** Reassure teams that the time spent to collect and report data will produce tremendous feedback that will inform the overall project about how best to improve systems, organizations, processes and more. Be sure to demonstrate the benefit that peers gain from the pilot site’s participation.
3. **Buy In:** Remind teams to use their data to gain buy in from their stakeholders. Equipping early adopters and champions with data helps to spread energy and enthusiasm about the work. Also, demonstrating the success of their small tests of change at team or leadership meetings, on bulletin boards or newsletters, will help to involve others in the work who may be slow to support the project.
4. **Resources:** Connect the pilot sites to the resources made available by the larger project. This will support pilot sites to feel part of the larger initiative, provide comfort that their efforts are not in isolation, and give them more perspective of their role in reaching the project aim.
5. **Connection:** Maximize communication by providing continuous support using face-to-face meetings, virtual conference calls and collaboration within an online community space. This can help to encourage all participants to remain engaged, even those that may be constrained by resources, time and distance. Also sharing project-wide results can help solidify the role the pilot site has in these outcomes.

6. **Acknowledgement:** Celebrate any wins including collecting any data entry, sharing data with new team members, running rapid cycle tests, etc.

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