

Insights

Leadership Engagement Bootcamp: Exercise 2: Visualize and Align Aims

This is one of a series of posts based on the [“Engaging Senior Leadership in Your Quality Improvement \(QI\) Work”](#) webinar.

[Learning leaders' styles](#) is a great first step towards engaging them in quality improvement (QI) efforts. The next two steps -- establishing a vision and aligning aims with the organization -- are important both to securing leadership buy-in and to the work's ultimate success. Undertaking these actions early on allows for more substantive conversations about QI plans and opportunities that can foster interest at every level of the organization.

Visualizing a Plan and Goal

QI starts with an aim, a proposal to adjust current operations, which needs to be ambitious and have positive, long- and short-term implications for the organization as whole. Achieving these effects means beginning with the end in mind rather than defining the end game in later stages. A specific goal, as well as clear benchmarks throughout the QI effort, also helps define scope and plans for spread during implementation.

Once a vision is established, it should be vetted with a diverse group of stakeholders. People who will be affected by the change, staff members, strategic partners, potential participants and others can provide feedback to reduce potential challenges. After these stakeholders agree on a specific vision, it can be shared with a wider group and leaders to generate interest.

Align Aim with Strategic Priorities

Because leaders maintain the vision of the organization as a whole, they're in the best position to determine whether a particular QI effort would lead current strategies and objectives to success. So, it's important that the aim aligns with organizational goals so its earns leadership's engagement. There are three areas to focus on when aligning your QI effort with an organization's strategic plan:

- High-quality customer experience – Administrators and senior leaders are tasked with delivering exceptional experiences to the people served by an organization, such as patients for a hospital or communities for a state health agency. A QI effort must ultimately benefit these customers.

- Employee recruitment and retention – To engage leaders, a QI effort should improve operations to boost satisfaction among the staff and enhance the organization's reputation within its sector to aid in recruitment.
- Bottom line – QI is an investment, in hard costs and staff time, so it must be cost-effective and have a measurable impact on long-term savings or revenue.

As plans are developed and aims are aligned, these steps will enable you to gain the attention and interest among organizational leaders. From there, additional steps can be taken to [maintain their engagement](#) through the life of a QI initiative.