# 6 tips for Implementing Communication Software in Healthcare

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# *Change often seems impossible until it's done.*

## Introduction:

A successful communication platform deployment can streamline your organisation's communication, drive efficiencies, reduce communication error and improve patient outcomes.

This may sound simple but the reality of getting there can be a different story.

In this article we will dive into some key considerations when choosing and implementing an organisation-wide enterprise communication solution.

# #1
## Gain stakeholder engagement early-on

# #2
## Start with a single use case

**The first step to a successful communication solution roll-out is to ensure buy-in from the key stakeholders. For an organisational-wide communication platform, project sponsors should extend beyond the clinical and administrative users to include influences from the executive team and the IT team.**

> *"Adopt a change management mind-set from the start, and don't exclude key individuals.*
>
> *For example, if the solution involves non-clinical staff and they don't have a seat at the table when the project is getting scoped, then expect real kick-back"*
>
> Luke Fletcher. CEO.

Secondly, executive buy-in is critical. Published literature clearly demonstrates when leaders do not support digital initiatives, they are almost certainly unlikely to succeed[1]. Executives not only act by ensuring adequate resource allocation, but also take up the role of a project supporter, by encouraging adoption through a top-down approach.

A third element of success is to understand clearly the implications of the technology deployment, and to ensure that not only are sufficient resources allocated to the project but that there are well-established support channels in place for the new users.

**Healthcare organisations are reliant on multiple communication channels such as email, fax, paging, MS Teams and secure message delivery services.**

While your longer term goal may be for a more unified communication solution, not all of these can or should be replaced immediately through your enterprise communication platform deployment.

Start with a core use case that solves an immediate pain point in your organisation. This may be secure clinical image sharing, the notification of critical results to after-hours medical staff or the use of a digital clinical handover tool to ensure safe and structured patient handover. The more specific the use case the better. Once embedded usage occurs you can start to deploy the solution across other use cases.

# #3
## Appoint both a clinical champion and an advocate

# #4
## Scalable integration is vital

**Appointing a clinical champion is a key ingredient to a successful strategy[2] . Even then, clinical users (especially doctors) can be overly autonomous and difficult to lead[3].**

One should look to leverage 'middle managers' (such as clinical managers) to act as supporters (ie. advocate) and facilitators of the clinical champions to foster collaboration between champions and end users.

Appointing the right clinical champion is a critical component of successful implementation.

Look for two attributes:

- A clinical user (e.g. doctor or nurse unit manager) who is well respected on the clinical front. Well respected champions can help create trust and a pull factor amongst their clinical peers.

- An innovator ('early adopter') mentality. The individual should be passionate about developing new models of care to improve outcomes.

**A seamless and connected user experience is fundamental to successful implementation. Solutions that offer a great user experience will show faster adoption and embedded usage.**

One important determinant of user-experience is the depth of the integrations. A seamless user experience should mean your users don't need to leave the app to complete their communication task.

Integration functionality should be scoped to ensure the right amount of information and correct fields are mapped to the specific use cases and user groups outlined above.

Choose a solution that delivers enough integration for your primary use case but anticipate your future integration needs. Will you need integration into your Radiology information systems, roster management systems or document storage solutions? Is the application's API ready and optimised to deliver these integrations?

> "*Anticipate your future integration needs. Make sure your communication platform's workflows are sophisticated enough to make the effort of integration worthwhile*"
>
> Luke Fletcher. CEO

Another important aspect is to ensure the communication platform's workflows are sophisticated enough to make the integration meaningful. For instance, patient contextual workflows are likely to be far more relevant to an iEMR integration than simple chat threads.

# #5
## Choose the right vendor

# #6
## Measure your success

**Whether you like it or not, your healthcare organisation will have certain needs that are unique. In implementing a new solution, it is imperative to plan and budget for a certain degree of customisation of the technology solution.**

Working with a vendor that is fast, nimble and responsive to your requests is more likely to deliver the desired outcome than choosing the product with the most exhaustive feature list.

> *"A fast and nimble vendor that gives you direct access to the executive team, and is responsive to your needs will deliver better outcomes than choosing a solution with the longest feature list."*
>
> Luke Fletcher. CEO

Additionally, having line-of-site to the executive team is critical. Having built Foxo from the ground up in collaboration with doctors and having met with multiple healthcare professionals using various IT solutions over the last several years one of the recurring frustrations voiced by these groups is related to lack of access to the right people when issues arise. Accountability of your vendor is key. If you can't get access to the executive team then how can you guarantee accountability?

**Software implementation doesn't mean adoption.**

Define what your goal is prior to implementation. Then define and develop your outcome metrics.

Are you looking at hospital avoidance strategies from residential aged care? Are you looking to reduce the time communication referral loops are closed between clinicians to allow earlier discharge? Is your goal primarily around risk reduction and unsecured use of consumer messaging apps?

Benefits should be defined and measured in relation to:

- patient outcomes
- clinician experience
- patient experience
- cost savings and/or revenue realisation.

In building a business case it is increasingly important to address the financial impact of the technology deployment. Find a vendor that you can work with to measure these outcomes.

# The solution:

Foxo is an enterprise clinical communication platform designed for healthcare. To learn more visit Foxo.com or reach out to us at hello@foxo.com
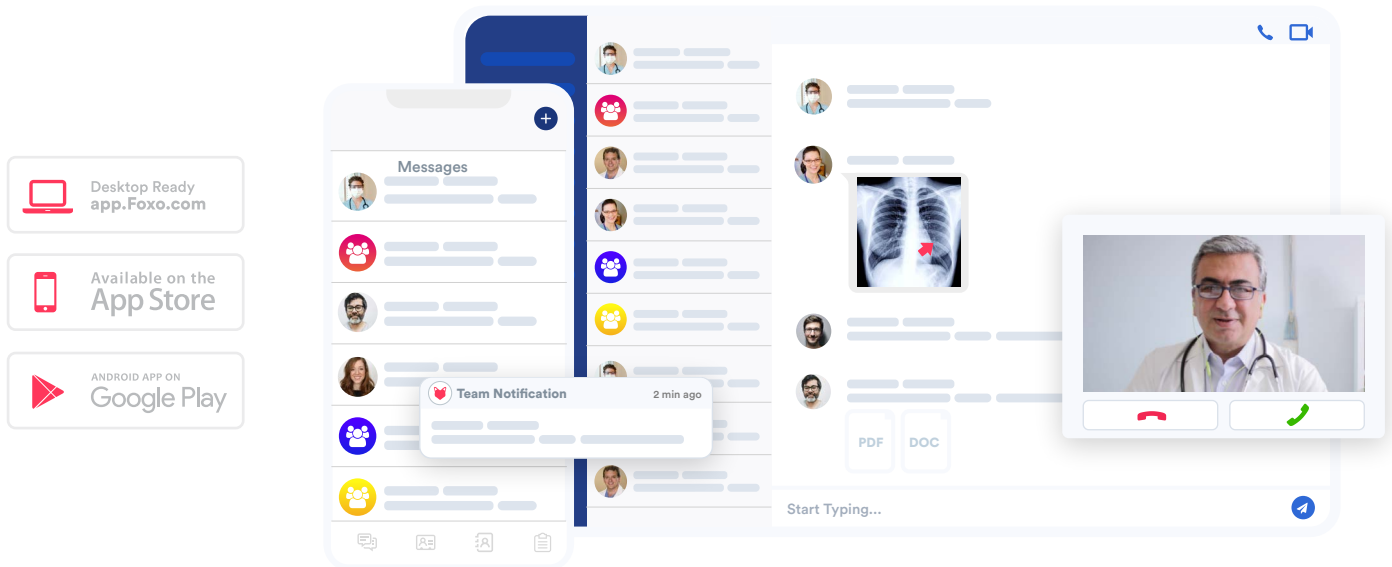


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Our tools help you connect from anywhere to anyone, at any time using our iPhone, Android or desktop app.

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## Compliant
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Our base product is freely available. Invite your extended network for powerful borderless communication.

## Fluid Workflow
Simple yet powerful workflows which enable rapid and real-time clinical collaboration.

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# REFERENCES

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