



Unlock IT Capacity — Without Adding Staff or Capital Expense

By Tamara Pomerantz, MHA, MHS, PgMP

Healthcare IT and Informatics departments face increasing demands but often lack the budget or staffing to expand their teams. However, organizations can unlock IT capacity by optimizing existing resources and processes. By systematically inventorying and organizing workloads, improving governance, and fostering education and communication, teams and workstreams can boost efficiency without requiring additional staff or capital expenses.



Addressing Current Challenges in Healthcare

Healthcare providers must continuously excel under significant financial constraints, rising operational costs, and increased service demands. Additionally, healthcare systems struggle with workforce shortages and budget limitations. Expanding digital capabilities through information technology is essential to lowering costs, increasing access, and reducing pressures on care providers.

These forces make it crucial for IT and Informatics departments to maximize existing resources and find innovative solutions to meet growing needs without additional spending. Optimizing resource capacity helps healthcare organizations navigate these challenges while maintaining high standards of patient care and operational efficiency.

The steps to success involve inventorying and organizing, establishing effective governance, and educating and communicating for sustainment.

Inventory and Organize

Before unlocking resource capacity, organizations must first gain a clear understanding of their current IT landscape. A structured approach to inventorying and organizing current and expected work and resources ensures that existing capacity is maximized, and quality practices are consistently sustained.

This involves reviewing the organization's project portfolio, intake processes, resource allocation processes, and operational processes and tools.



Project Portfolio

Organizations must assess all ongoing and planned projects to determine priorities and resource commitments. A well-documented project portfolio enables leadership to identify conflicts and redundancies, reallocate efforts, and decline low-value requests. By integrating structured portfolio management principles such as those outlined in [*Project Harmony: Orchestrating and Sustainable Portfolio Roadmap*](#) and [*Adapting to Disruption: Recalibrating your Project Portfolio*](#), organizations can ensure IT resources (human and technical) align with strategic and operational priorities.

A centralized project tracking system is key to effective project portfolio management, providing more informed decision-making by improving transparency of all active and planned work as well as organizing critical data, such as resource allocation, change impact, and capacity bandwidth across the organization.

Intake Process

A streamlined and well-documented intake process allows organizations to manage incoming work requests (intake) efficiently. By standardizing how requests are submitted, evaluated, and prioritized, IT and Informatics teams can reduce bottlenecks and ensure that the most critical projects receive attention first.

Further, consistently defining and applying work-type classifications and maintaining a standard change library clarifies what work is pre-authorized versus work requiring governance approval. As outlined in [*Healthcare IT Staffing: The Demand-Talent-Team Triangle*](#) consistent categorization of types of work is essential to IT planning and improvement. Operational consistency enables accurate data capture regarding the type of work being done, therefore improving forecasting of future needs as well as identification of areas that need process optimization.

Resource Allocation

Maximizing IT capacity requires a deep understanding of current resource talent and allocation. Regular assessment of workloads, identifying underutilized skills, and shifting resources accordingly improves efficiency. Resource projection tools such as the [*HIT Support Structure Staffing Calculator*](#) aid in identifying future staffing needs based on intake and strategic planning data. Additionally, [*Organizing IT and Informatics for Today's Healthcare System*](#) highlights the importance of cross-training staff to increase agility and responsiveness to changing demands while empowering and motivating employees.



Operational Process Consistency and Quality

Utilizing vendor-agnostic operational management and service software fosters adoption of processes and enables process consistency. Enterprise systems like [MAKE's TransIT](#) simplify tracking checklists and provide a universal library for creating and managing workflow processes, test scripts, standard changes. Tools like TransIT enhance coordination across teams and workstreams, reducing redundancy and improving service quality.

Simple and effective vendor-agnostic operational management tools encourage consistency and efficiency while easing administrative work. By leveraging these tools, organizations can practice consistently for shared resource management and status reporting, regardless of the project, operational change, or vendor application involved.

Govern

Effective governance ensures that operational and strategic decision-making aligns with organizational objectives while optimizing resources (human and technology). Establishing clear criteria for evaluating initiatives helps maintain consistency and prevents wasted effort.

This requires evaluating for avoiding conflicts with other projects and resource capacity as well as for importance before making decisions.

Informed Decision-Making with Consistently Applied Criteria

Organizations should develop and adhere to a structured decision-making framework that prioritizes and ranks project requests based on strategic and operational impact, evaluation of competing priorities, and feasibility based on resource requirements.

As emphasized in the articles [Right Thing – Right Time – Right Way](#) and [What's in your Operational Governance?](#), consistently applied evaluation criteria by all decision-makers ensures appropriate project selection while preventing over-allocation of resources.

Further, providing a consistent tool and process for evaluating requests creates transparency in how projects are prioritized.





Educate, Communicate, and Sustain

Maximizing IT capacity requires educating and incentivizing stakeholders to adopt and follow operational processes. IT and Informatics departments must transparently communicate with formally documented processes, gather and act on feedback, and highlight the value of structured workflows. By fostering education and communication, organizations ensure process adoption and ongoing process improvement.

Document and Deliver

Clear and comprehensive documentation of processes and practices enable teams to operate efficiently and scale knowledge across workstreams. Standardized documentation of processes eases education, decreases misunderstandings, reduces onboarding time for new team members, and facilitates knowledge sharing. Providing a centralized location for best practice resources such as user-friendly guides and templates ensures employees can quickly access information and engage in correct processes at the right time.

Adoption and Continuous Improvement

Sustained improvement relies on structured feedback mechanisms. Establishing dedicated process workgroups allows teams to quickly identify inefficiencies, propose optimizations, and implement changes iteratively. Encouraging input ensures that improvements align with real-world challenges.



Additionally, sharing stories of how processes have benefited the organization and specific teams or individuals helps employees understand why specific processes exist and the benefits they receive from them, incentivizing adoption.

Regular communication, feedback, and review of processes supports awareness and identification of iterative improvements, avoids putting process over performance, and enables agility and responsiveness to evolving needs.



How MAKE can help

Organizations can unlock IT capacity without expanding staff or capital expenditures by optimizing existing resources. A structured approach to inventorying and organizing workloads, establishing effective governance, and fostering education and communication empowers IT and Informatics teams to work more efficiently.

[MAKE Solutions](#) offers [operational excellence services](#) helping you focus on project portfolio management, operational governance, IT/Informatics department design and structure, and testing management improvements. Our Workshops help you implement efficient and sustainable operational strategies, enabling you to meet increasing demand while maintaining quality and service excellence.

Visit our website at makesolutionsinc.com to learn more about [MAKE's consulting services](#), or contact Tamara Pomerantz, VP Client Operations, Tamara.Pomerantz@makesolutionsinc.com

