

# EMBRACING THE DIGITAL FUTURE OF CARE



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# INTRODUCTION

## THE EVOLVING CHALLENGES OF MODERN CARE DELIVERY

The care industry provides essential services that millions of people across the globe rely on every single day. It's one of the oldest industries in the world, but it's also an industry going through massive change.

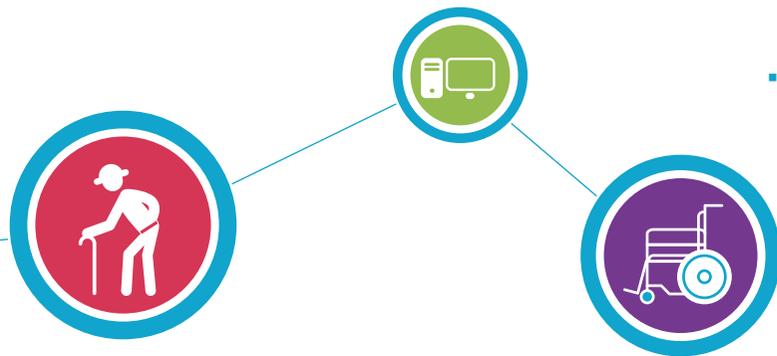
For care companies, every day brings new challenges. Every business's experience will be different, but there are a number of significant issues that are common between a huge number of companies:

- **Shrinking budgets** are making it increasingly difficult to deliver a reliable, high standard of care
- **A growing number of dependants** is putting pressure on companies to serve a greater number of people in less time
- **Changing legislation** regarding how care is delivered is fundamentally changing the way that many routine caregiving tasks must be conducted
- **A lack of basic technology** required to support fast and efficient service delivery

Together, those are all part of one far broader challenge. Quite simply, care companies are under increasing pressure to **do more with less**.

That's not a challenge only being felt by those in care – far from it in fact. Companies across all industries have been tackling the need to do more with less for decades now, and for many, new technology has overwhelmingly provided the solution. Yet, in care, adoption of powerful new technology remains low.

In this paper, we'll look at the reasons why embracing new technology has proven so challenging for care companies, the opportunities they may be missing out on, and what companies can start doing today to overcome their challenges and embrace the data-driven future of care.



# 1

## WHAT'S HOLDING TECH ADOPTION BACK?



Many people within care companies – especially those responsible for IT – understand the benefits of utilising new technology to aid care delivery and management.

But, three huge barriers stand between them and the technology they need to transform their operations:



### 1

#### A LACK OF RESOURCES

With budgets shrinking for care providers across the board, it may seem that additional investment in technology is part of the problem, not the solution.

For many companies, cutting costs is priority number one at the moment, and additional spend – regardless of what it could do in the long term – simply isn't up for discussion.

### 2

#### A CULTURE OF TECHNOLOGICAL INFLEXIBILITY

Very few caregivers see themselves as technological experts. You can't just drop new tools into their hands and expect them to get the most from them immediately.

Making major technological changes takes time, education and ultimately requires the buy-in and support of everyone on the team.

### 3

#### NEW SOLUTIONS DEPEND ON STRONGER CORE IT

If care companies are dependent on aging core IT, those infrastructures aren't always going to be able to support data-hungry modern tech solutions.

Smart devices, collaboration tools and advanced remote monitoring technology all require a strong tech foundation that can support high-speed data transfer, and the generation and management of huge volumes of new data.



## 2

## WHAT ARE CARE PROVIDERS MISSING OUT ON?



Across all industries, digital transformation is often talked about in a very abstract way. We know that it involves changing processes, working patterns and operations by using flexible new technology, but what does that really look like in practice for care companies? And what are the key tech opportunities that they may be missing out on?

There's a whole world of new tools and capabilities out there, and how you apply them to your own operations is up to you. But, there are a handful of major new technology opportunities that almost all care companies may want to consider:

 **Monitoring solutions** can help improve the way carers are managed and allocated. They might take the form of dedicated discrete devices, or apps that run on existing devices. But, whether they're monitoring patient conditions, or where mobile carers are, the end result is always the same – a better ability to ensure the right people are in the right place to deliver the right care at the right time.

 **Communications and collaboration tools** can help carers work as a team and support each other when they are physically detached from one another. They could be something as straightforward as Skype or an instant messaging platform. But, by providing an open and convenient channel for communication, carers can solve common problems much faster.

 **Predictive analytics** can help carers predict future care needs and potential changes in patient and client status by gathering huge volumes of data about client conditions over time. These analytics help improve care planning, anticipate spikes in demand, and ensure that you always have the right resources to serve clients and patients.

 **New devices** can put the right data and information into carers hands when they need it most, and transform the way common care tasks are performed. With a smartphone or tablet in their hands, carers have immediate access to important care information, and can even use apps to interact with clients that may have difficulties with verbal communication.

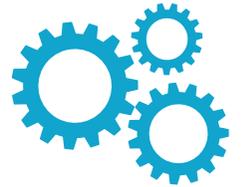
 **New tools** often made available through those smart devices can help to digitise manual recording and patient monitoring processes. There is a huge amount of paperwork to manage in care, and by digitising the collection and verification of important information, carers can spend more time doing what they do best – looking after people.





## 3

## WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BUILD A FLEXIBLE TECH CULTURE IN CARE?



The impact that new technology can have on care companies, the efficiency of their operations and the lives of patients and clients is clear. But what needs to be done to navigate around the barriers standing between care companies and powerful digital transformation?

**Here are four changes that you can start making today to help you move towards the faster, smarter, data-driven future of care:**



### 1 BUILD A WORKFORCE THAT'S FLEXIBLE TO TECH CHANGE



The foundation of successful digital enablement and transformation is a workforce that's flexible and receptive to change. Your people cannot be married to "the way things are". To help improve attitudes to change and build a workforce that's able to adapt and make the most of new technology quickly, you need to:

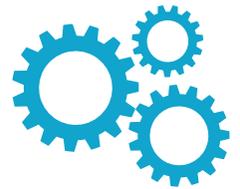
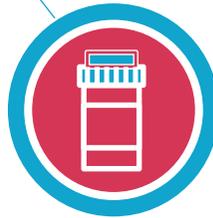
- Demonstrate the personal value of new technology to your people and make it clear how it's going to make their working lives better
- Offer education to help those inexperienced with technology get up to speed and learn what it can do for them
- Consider the opinions of your workforce when planning new technologies to use – they know which processes need modernising better than anyone else

### 2 ANALYSE THE ROI OF TECH INVESTMENTS BEFORE YOU ALLOCATE BUDGET TO THEM



It's hard to make a strong case for any investment when you can't see the potential returns it could yield. With cost-cutting so high on so many care companies' agendas, detailed ROI forecasting is the key to getting transformational technology initiatives approved. Focus analysis on the areas that matter most, like:

- How the tech will help to improve efficiency and drive down operational costs
- How long the investment will take to return value for the organisation
- How it will enable the company to cut costs proactively, instead of fighting fires as budgets shrink



### 3 REMEMBER THAT CARE COMPANIES ARE STILL A BUSINESS FIRST



Tied into the previous point, care companies also need to remember that they are a business first when developing a technology strategy. There are numerous ways that tech can improve the lives of people who depend on care, but not every one will translate into major yield or efficiency gains for the people that provide care.

To ensure your tech decisions make business sense, you need to look at how they can:

- Solve critical process or service delivery bottlenecks
- Take pressure off carers and enable them to serve more people in less time
- Help you serve a broader range of clients and patients

### 4 BUILD FLEXIBLE PROCESSES THAT CAN CHANGE ALONGSIDE NEW TECH



Flexible tech works best in flexible businesses – and flexible businesses are powered by flexible processes. If you're willing to make big changes when they're needed, your company and the people within it will be prepared when significant technology shifts come.

Help to build a culture of change and flexibility by:

- Putting data at the core of your operations and acting on insight instead of intuition
- Constantly learning from your people and empowering them to solve their own issues
- Exploring the wealth of data available to you and finding out where changes really need to happen



# CONCLUSION

## MOVING TOWARDS SMARTER, FASTER AND STRONGER CARE



For care companies, it all comes down to one key challenge – driving technological change when you're up against limited budgets and a culture of inflexibility.

Overcoming that hurdle won't be easy, but the best way to do it is by focusing on the value that new technology will deliver for everyone. Change is a process that everyone needs to be involved in, and by following these steps, you can give yourself the best chance possible at driving powerful technological change for your business, your carers, and the people that depend on you:

- 1** Start by analysing your processes and operations to understand where things need to improve most. Ensure you get a complete picture by looking at data and talking to people at all levels of the organisation.
- 2** Then, take a look at the technology available to you, see how other companies are utilising new tools, and start considering how the new solutions available can help solve the problems you've identified.
- 3** Once you've chosen your tech and decided which problems it needs to solve, you need to prove that value to key decision-makers. Analyse potential returns and focus in on how your proposed project will help save costs.
- 4** Start preparing your people for change. Let them know what's coming, listen to their concerns, and start educating them long before the change is rolled out to ensure widespread adoption.
- 5** Gather usage data and analyse it to demonstrate the value your new tech has delivered. Then, refer back to that data to help you build a strong case for future necessary tech investments.

As with any transformation journey, your first steps can often be the hardest. But, by following these steps, analysing and communicating the value of new technology investments and identifying the most compelling use cases for new tools, you can get any tech project off to the right start.

It can be a long journey, and it starts with understanding data, analysing your needs and understanding how data could be better gathered and utilised across your company.



020 8783 2700 | [info@caci.co.uk](mailto:info@caci.co.uk) | [www.caci.co.uk](http://www.caci.co.uk) | [@CACI\\_Cygnun](https://twitter.com/CACI_Cygnun)

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