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Comments on Measuring Economic Performance by Harold E. Marshall

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What performance measures are important to healthcare executives? Measuring energy efficiencies and air rates in buildings are not the answer. Financial analysis alone in today's healthcare delivery is akin to giving the executive energy readings from the building utility system. Something more has to be provided. Measures that indicate financial, operational, marketing perspectives, capital investment, space and service consumption are understood by executives as long as they are put into a format which can be evaluated against the medical service delivery and business plan of the institution.

Lack of insight into this issue has resulted in today's hospitals having a murky picture of how their current space and capital resources are deployed to meet the needs of the institution in its delivery of service. Utilization of only a few analytical tools in understanding healthcare facility performance is continuing the single-view, lineal system model that has been practised for years. An analytical system for building performance must account for:

- strategic and financial objectives of the owner,
- functional needs of the user,
- building type,
- usage patterns,
- product expense and revenue experienced within the space,
- building regulations,
- zoning codes,
- capital investment objectives, and
- client demographics and marketplace data.

Without these components the spatial decisions and performance measurements are oversimplified.

An executive information system can be developed which integrates the planning, management and performance measuring process for the healthcare executive. Integrated data mapping, businesslike chart displays, modeling "what-if", and interactive report generation is possible with the computer horsepower of today. The key is creativity in application to meaningfully deal with the raw data.

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