



Interim & Fractional Transformation Leadership

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Beyond the Horizon: Accelerating Transformation with a Fractional Leadership Model

Healthcare organizations remain under increasing pressure to deliver transformation—faster, more efficiently, and with measurable results. Whether driven by margin compression, digital disruption, AI enablement, provider constraints, or regulatory complexity, the mandate is clear.

Increasingly, we are seeing healthcare executives consider **interim and fractional leadership models** to bridge this gap—bringing in experienced transformation leaders who can deliver immediate impact without the constraints of traditional hiring models.

Why Traditional Approaches Fall Short

In some cases, organizations that are struggling to execute their transformation agendas rely on a combination of internal leadership and external advisory support. While both are critical, they often leave a gap:

- Internal leaders are stretched across operational priorities
- External advisors may not stay through execution
- Transformation efforts lack sustained ownership and momentum

We see a familiar pattern: strong plans, uneven execution, and delayed value realization.

The Case for Interim and Fractional Leadership

Industry data shows a 310% increase in demand for interim executives since 2020, reflecting a broader shift toward flexible, outcome-driven leadership models. We have helped several clients adopt a different model—deploying **interim or fractional transformation leaders** to drive execution from within. Some advantages of these outsourced options can include:

1. Speed to Impact

Interim leaders are deployed to execute—not observe or advise from a distance. They:

- Step into leadership roles immediately
- Establish governance and execution structures quickly
- Drive early wins to build organizational momentum

This is particularly valuable in time-sensitive initiatives such as cost transformation, M&A integration, or digital enablement.

2. Objective, Independent Perspective

Healthcare organizations are inherently complex and stakeholder-driven. Internal dynamics can slow decision-making or dilute accountability. Interim leaders bring:

- Independence from internal politics
- Willingness to challenge entrenched assumptions
- Clarity in prioritization and decision-making

This objectivity is often the catalyst needed to move transformation forward.

3. Targeted Expertise Without Long-Term Overhead

Transformation requires capabilities that are often:

- Highly specialized
- Not needed permanently

Interim and fractional models allow organizations to:

- Access experienced transformation leaders on demand
- Align expertise to specific phases of transformation
- Avoid long-term fixed costs

4. Stronger Execution Discipline

A consistent challenge in transformation is sustaining execution focus. Interim leaders help address this by:

- Embedding within the organization
- Driving accountability across workstreams
- Maintaining focus on measurable outcomes

They effectively bridge the gap between **strategy and sustained execution**.

5. Capability Building and Knowledge Transfer

Beyond immediate results, interim leaders can play a critical role in strengthening the organization and sustaining the transformation efforts by:

- Mentoring internal leaders and rising talent
- Transferring transformation methodologies and tools
- Building structures that sustain progress after their engagement

6. Reduced Risk in High-Stakes Transformations

Transformation initiatives often fail due to lack of alignment, insufficient execution rigor, or competing priorities. Interim leadership can help de-risk these efforts by:

- Establishing clear governance and accountability
- Driving alignment across executive stakeholders
- Maintaining focus on outcomes and timelines

A Model Built for Today's Healthcare Environment

Healthcare transformation is no longer episodic—it is continuous. Organizations must be able to:

- Adapt quickly to market and regulatory changes
- Execute complex initiatives across multiple domains
- Balance short-term performance with long-term capability building

Utilizing a fractional leadership model can provide a flexible, high-impact approach to meet these demands.

A Closing Perspective

For healthcare executives, the question is no longer whether to transform—but how to do so effectively. Interim and fractional leaders offer a compelling option: **accelerating results today while strengthening the organization for tomorrow.**

How Sunstone Helps

Visit us at www.sunstonemanagementadvisors.com to learn more about how we partner with healthcare payers, providers, and portfolio leadership teams to:

- Architect actionable transformation strategies
- Stand up execution governance and operating systems
- Build leadership alignment and delivery capability
- Ensure financial, operational, and clinical outcomes are realized – and sustained

About the Author



Joe Rolewicz is a Founding Partner of Sunstone Management Advisors, a growth advisory firm focused on helping healthcare and insurance companies identify and unlock their full enterprise value. With over 25 years of experience leading complex transformation initiatives for healthcare and insurance businesses, he leads our Transformation Consulting Practice, leveraging experiences gained from over 50 different clients as well as Senior Manager roles with national consulting practices. He is also the former SVP of Planning and Project Management for a national managed behavioral health organization. Joe received his Bachelor's of Business Administration in Finance from James Madison University and a Master's in Business Administration from Loyola University in Maryland. **Questions or comments?** Feel free to contact Joe directly at jrolewicz@sunstonemanagementadvisors.com or connect with him on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/in/josephmrolewicz