



Complete RTLS  
Services + Solutions  
for Healthcare

**Don't Ignore Broken Windows -  
Protect Your Technology Investment**

The background image shows a large window on a brick building. The window is shattered, with several large pieces of glass missing and jagged edges remaining. The sky and clouds are visible through the broken panes. A white semi-transparent banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the main headline in bold black text. Green foliage is visible in the foreground at the bottom of the image.

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**Whitepaper**

*In 1960, social psychologists christened the “The Broken Window Theory,” which sought to explain why neighborhoods left unmaintained often showed signs of accelerated deterioration. The signs of neglect in these areas, such as broken windows, led residents to withdraw from public life and thereby reduced the efficacy of informal social control, leaving the area open for serious criminal conduct. The Broken Window Theory has inspired police departments in New York and other major cities to crack down on the small things--keeping on top of broken windows, graffiti, and other small infractions has reduced the rate of more substantial crimes.*

Examples of the Broken Window Syndrome are all around us – at home, at work, and in our communities. Perhaps personal homes are the easiest example to understand. Regardless of the type of personal abode, you must maintain your property to increase, or even just preserve, the financial value of your investment. If little things go unaddressed, the big stuff follows. Interestingly, it is not much different with the technology investments made by hospitals.

This often happens with hospitals that have implemented Real-Time Location Systems for asset tracking, patient flow, temperature monitoring, or other use cases, in that they often have to be remind of the importance of not falling into the “broken window” trap.

Three of the most critical “broken windows” to watch for are listed below. If these areas are not monitored, more substantial problems will arise, and outcomes will fall well short of original expectations.

# Broken Window #1:

## Unclear Ownership

If a project doesn't have a clearly specified owner, it is unrealistic to expect that it will remain in its original state. Successful technology projects start with a defined Project Manager (PM), but that role is very different from "owning" a technology initiative. The owner determines the vision of the initiative and allocates resources to be expended on a project. The Project Manager is responsible for making the project work with the resources at their disposal, but they don't OWN the project. To be successful, the PM of the project needs to know who owns the project, what the desired outcomes are, and how the project will be measured to determine success or failure. Without that it's very easy for a project to wither. The Project Owner is responsible for making those decisions. Someone needs to have ultimate accountability and be able to call the shots. So ask: "Do I know..."

- Who/What department approves the initial budget and any change orders?
- Who/What department approves any positions to support an initiative?
- Who/What department determines priorities?
- Who/What department decides on the future of the initiative?

Without clear ownership, decisions are often delayed, and the emphasis on getting results falls through the cracks.

## Broken Window #2:

### Undefined Roles and Responsibilities

Nothing gets done if desired expectations and responsibilities are not clearly defined. Without this specification, people will naturally assume that “it’s someone else’s job”. When this happens, things don’t get done, and with RTLS infrastructures, when things don’t get done, the system stops working and ultimately fails.

Define a clear Operational Process and create a RACI chart (or something similar) to be sure everyone knows exactly what is expected. This step is very important to ensure smooth day-to-day operations.

Here are just a few examples of responsibilities that require specific appointments:

- Restarting server in case of decrease in system performance
- Replacing batteries in RTLS tags and badges
- Retrieving equipment when alerted of need
- Training new staff
- Applying system upgrades and updates
- Cleaning reusable badges after patient use
- Attaching RTLS tags to newly commissioned equipment
- Running reports for the various levels of users, including the executive team

After reviewing the detailed collection of RTLS operational tasks, assign someone the task of addressing them. If a list of operational tasks can’t confidently be created, reach out for help before it’s too late. Don’t miss or skip a step that proves to be critical to the overall health of the system.

## Broken Window #3: Lack of Proactive Monitoring and Immediate Action

Similar to protecting a house, technology investments also need to be protected. Perform a periodic evaluation of how the system is being used, including what rules and notifications are being used and monitoring battery life in tags and badges.

But as is well known, knowing there is an issue does not mean the issue will be resolved. Someone needs to do something, and generally, that something needs to be done immediately. Delaying only makes the problem worse and if ignored for too long can cause failures and tremendous expense.

Think of a small water drip under a sink... not a big deal if fixed on day 1, but after a year, the entire rotted floor may have to be replaced. The sooner issues are acted on, the faster optimum value of the system will be realized.

More and more healthcare systems are finding that maintaining an RTLS system is too specialized to address with their own staff so they decide to outsource the duties to a managed services company. Infinite Leap offers this assistance through Real-Time Technologies Managed Services, which provide consistent RTLS system operations, ongoing management, and predictable results, all combined with lower costs than what can generally be delivered by internal hospital staff.

*The "broken windows" can quickly lead to the deterioration of the RTLS system. To keep the system reliable, healthcare organizations need to identify and execute against all required operational tasks.*

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