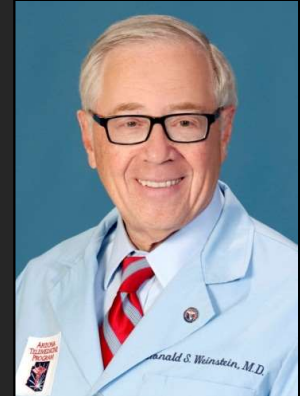# Building a Successful Telemedicine Program

## Ronald S. Weinstein, MD, FCAP, FATA

**Founding Director, Arizona Telemedicine Program**
**Executive Director, T-Health Institute**
**Co-Director, Southwest Telehealth Resource Center**

**Professor, Colleges of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Public Health**
**The University of Arizona**
**Tucson and Phoenix, AZ**

Tucson, AZ

**The University Of Arizona (1996)**

**Arizona Telemedicine Program (1996)**

*
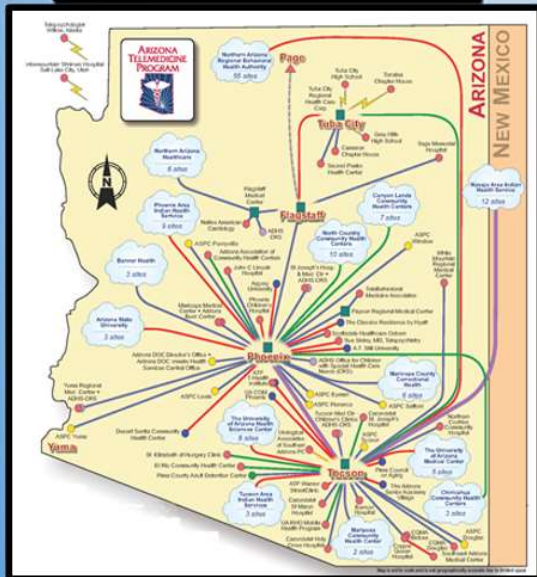
**Arizona Telemedicine Council (1996)**

Phoenix, AZ

**"Arizona Rural Telemedicine Network" (1996)**

**Institute for Advanced Telemedicine & Telehealth "T-Health Institute" (2004)**

**Southwest Telehealth Resource Center (2010)**

**International Telemedicine Division (Japan, China, Panama) (2000)**
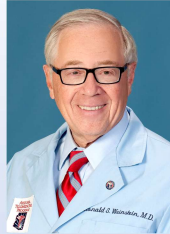
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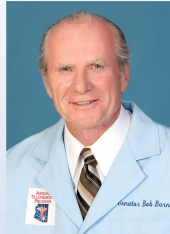# T-HEALTH INSTITUTE (PHOENIX, AZ) -- VIDEO CONFERENCING CENTER

## "e-Classroom-of-the-Future"

# Arizona Telemedicine Program Staff



Ronald Weinstein, MD

Robert "Bob" Burns

Stephen Klotz, MD

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Angelette Holtrust

Chris Martin

Karen Miller

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Pete Yonsetto

**2020**
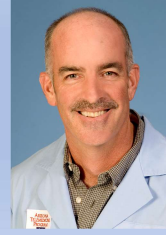
# Where to start?

Assess Your Market & Need → Establish Your Vision → Build Your Financial Plan → Find Your Partner → Do Your Due Diligence → Form Your Partnership & Workflows → Train Your Staff → Market Your Service → Evaluate Your Program
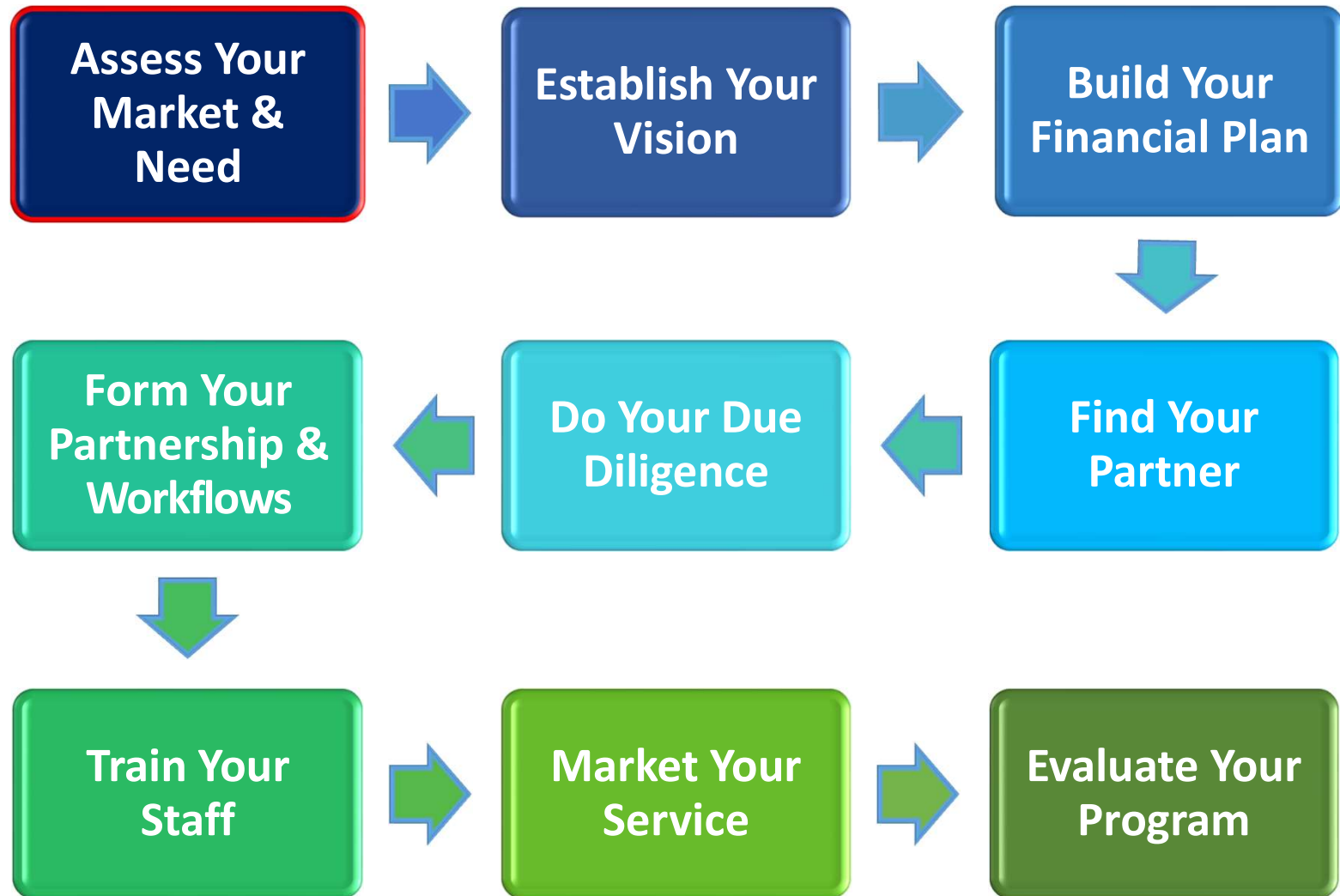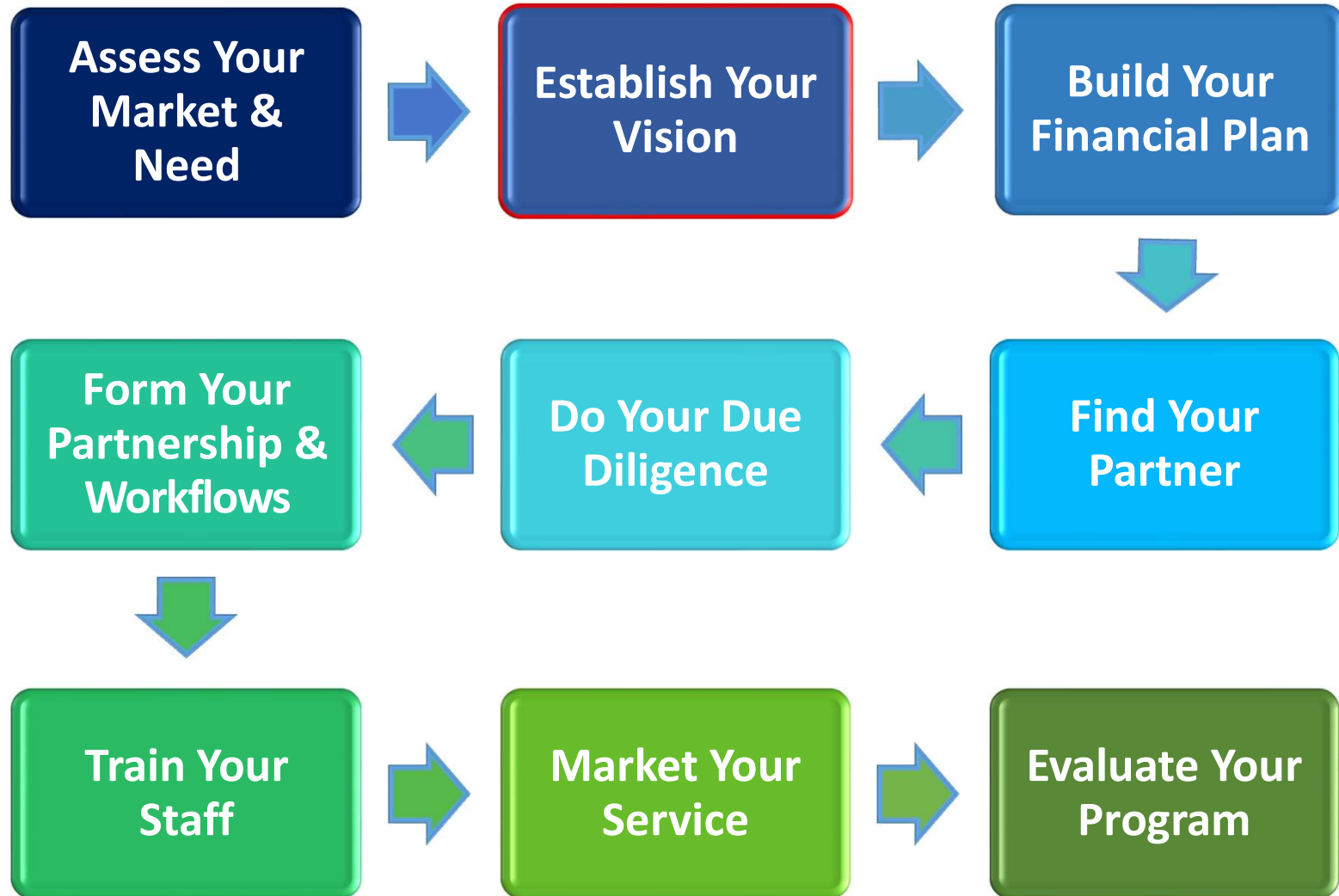
# Assess Your Market & Need

# What Is Needed in Your Community?

- **Look at patient data & outcomes (e.g., # diabetics, # diagnosed with late stage diabetic retinopathy)**
    - **For your community**
    - **For your hospital/system**

- **Look at local physician coverage gaps (e.g., ? no neurologists)**

- **What healthcare services are patients having to travel or be transported for?**

# How Will Telemedicine Tie into Your Practice?

- **Complement/expand your clinical offerings or substitute when your providers are unavailable?**

- **What specialty services?**

- **What hours will telemedicine be offered?**

- **Personnel requirements?**

- **What are service goals? Provider-patient? Provider-provider?**

- **Where are you connecting? Provider office? Telemedicine clinic? Patient home?**

```
Assess Your          →    Establish Your      →    Build Your
Market &                   Vision                   Financial Plan
Need
                                                          ↓
Form Your            ←    Do Your Due         ←    Find Your
Partnership &             Diligence                Partner
Workflows
    ↓
Train Your           →    Market Your         →    Evaluate Your
Staff                     Service                  Program
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# Establish Your Vision

Establish a Vision Aligned with Your Mission

**Establish a Vision of the Delivery Model**

# Establish a Vision Aligned with Your Mission

- **Vision statement: Define the optimal desired future state; provide guidance & inspiration**

    - *"Our vision is to fully incorporate telehealth technologies into our routine practices for the provision of health care in our County."*

# Establish Your Vision

## Reality Testing

# The Physician-Patient Relationship

- **Generally, once a physician affirmatively acts in a patient's case by examining, diagnosing, treating, or agreeing to do so, and the patient accepts, a relationship exists**

- **Must establish an appropriate physician-patient relationship in order to prescribe**

# Know the Legal and Regulatory Landscape

- **All the laws still apply regardless of whether it's in-person or via telemedicine: HIPAA, privacy & security, licensing, anti-kickback, liability, standard of care.**

# Stark & Anti-Kickback Statutes

**Establish Your Vision**

- Stark Law prohibits physicians from referring patients for designated health services to an entity with which the physician has a financial relationship.

- AKS prohibits offering or soliciting anything of value, directly or indirectly, in return for patient referrals.

- Telemedicine may be subject to fraud and abuse laws if the use directly or indirectly generates reimbursement from a federal health program.

- Equipment leases or the provision of free telemedicine equipment to referral sources should be evaluated under fraud and abuse laws.
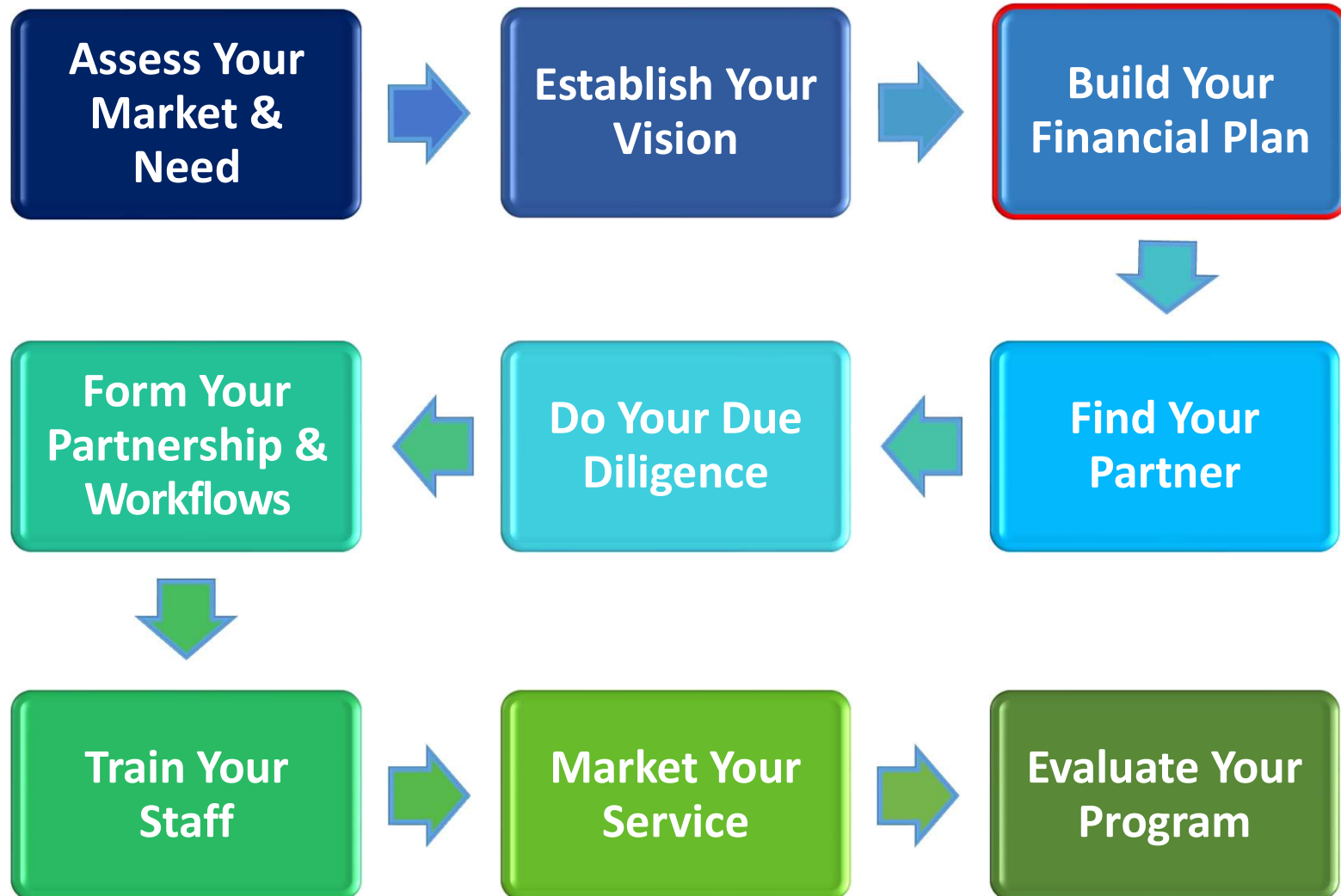
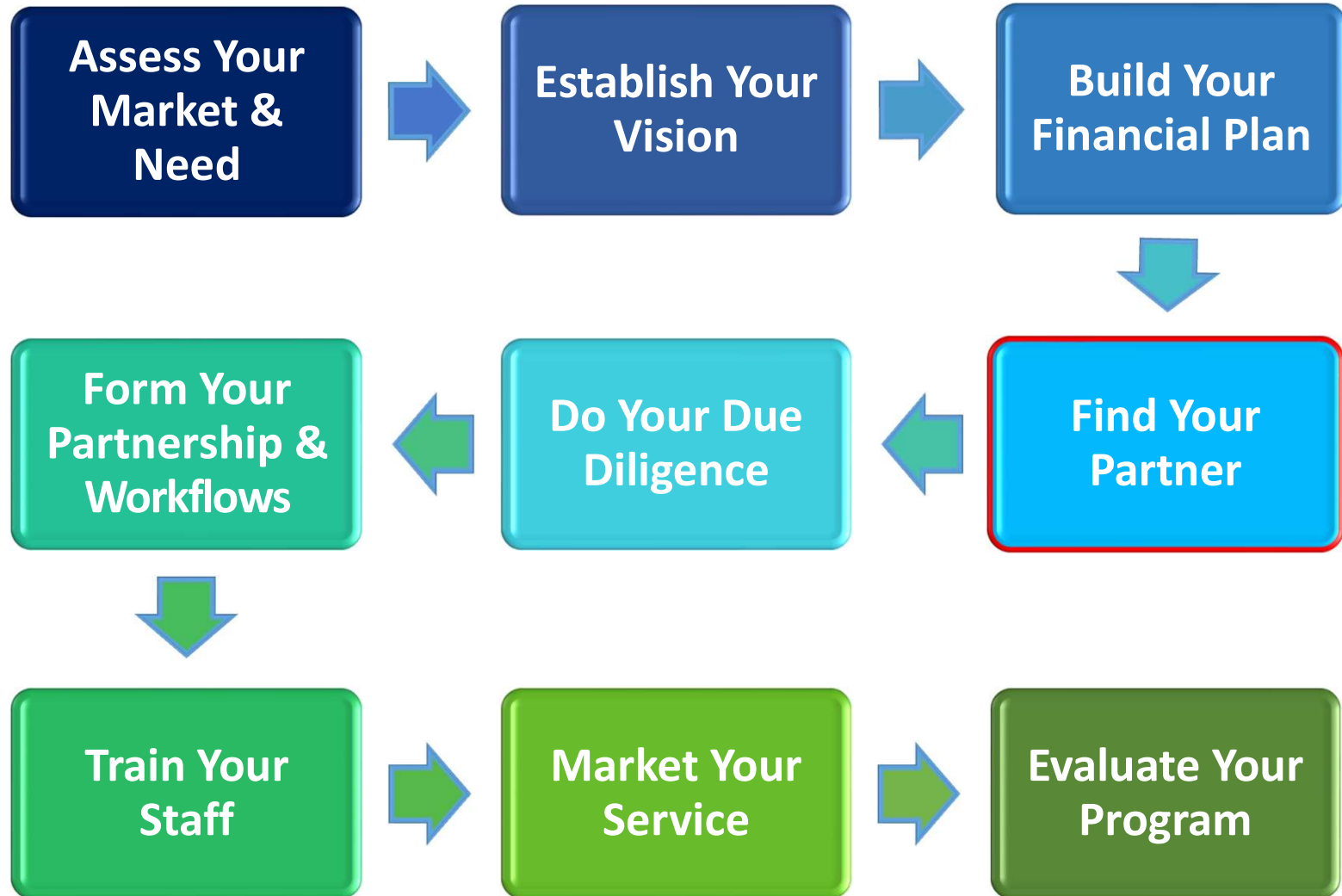# Build Your Financial Plan

# Build Your Financial Plan

- <u>Return on investment</u>
  - Savings
  - Revenue
  - Strategic contribution
  - Penalty avoidance

- <u>Payment for services</u>
  - Subscription
  - Fee-for-service
  - Direct from patient
  - Who will do the billing?

**Assess Your Market & Need** → **Establish Your Vision** → **Build Your Financial Plan**

**Form Your Partnership & Workflows** ← **Do Your Due Diligence** ← **Find Your Partner**

**Train Your Staff** → **Market Your Service** → **Evaluate Your Program**

# Find the Right Partner(s)

# TELEMEDICINE APPLICATIONS

# Where to Start?

- Arizona Telemedicine Program (ATP) – Home page

- ATP -- Service Provider Directory

# Questions to Start With

- **Number of years in telehealth business**

- **How strong is your management team?**

- **Where are the located – headquarters, providers, tech support?**

# What Technology Platform Do They Use?

- How strong is their platform?
  - Does it meet standards?
  - FDA-approved devices?
  - HIPAA compliant?
  - Reliable, easy to use?  How many clicks/how much training is required?
  - What is the failure rate?
  - Interoperability?
  - Connections to EHRs? PACS?  Does it work with your EHR and your PACS? Costs to integrate?
- Or, will they use whatever platform you provide?
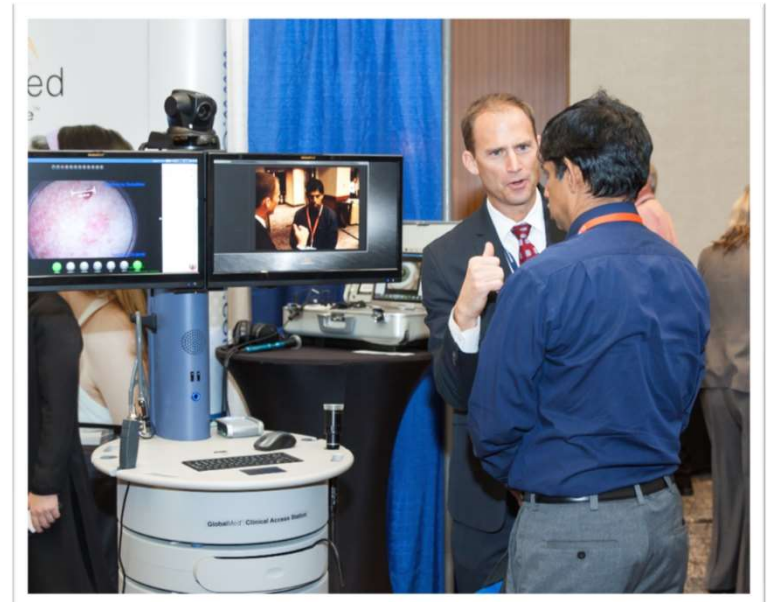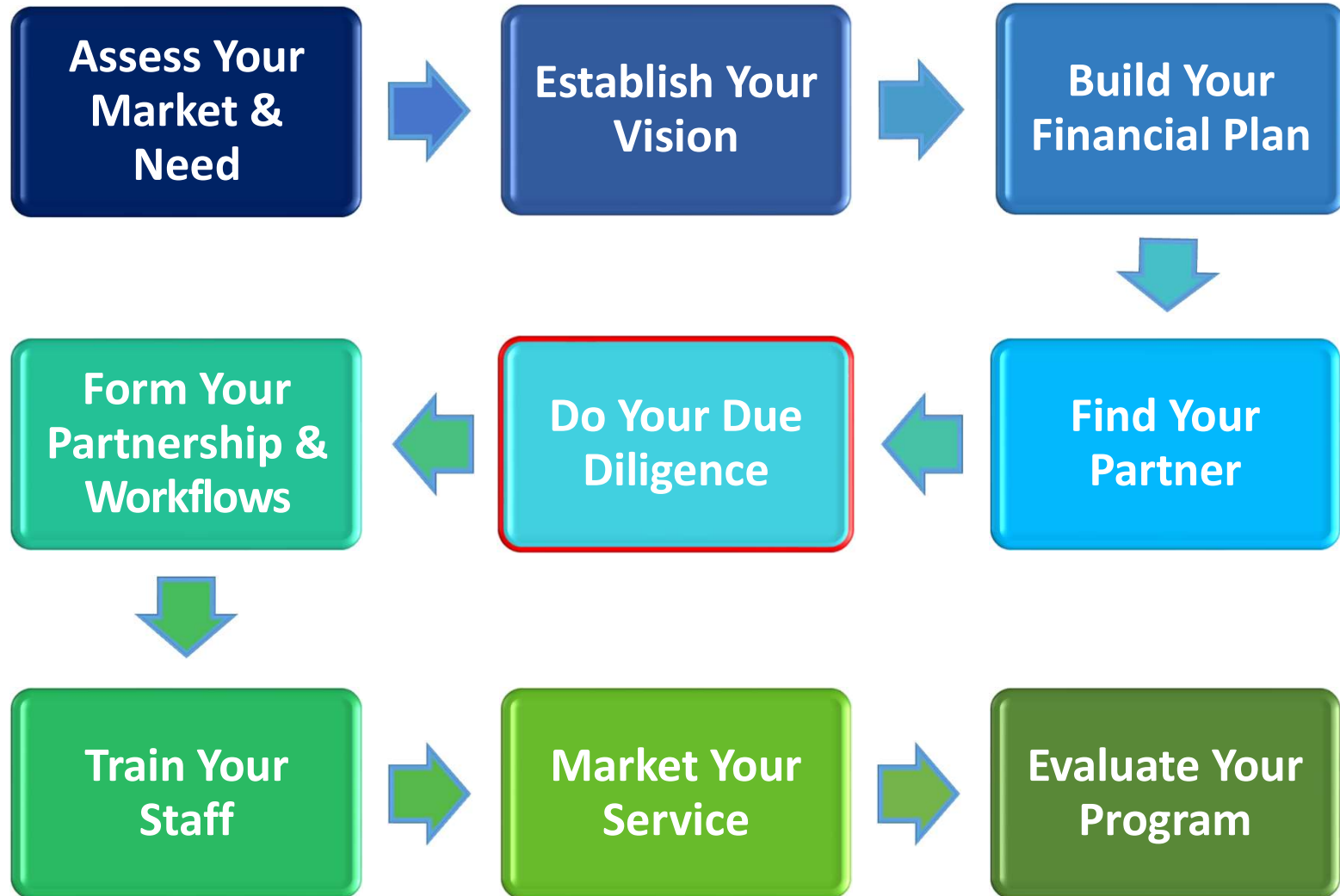
# Due Diligence, Documentation & Your Contract

# Due Diligence: References

**Do Your Due Diligence**

- Request a customer list/references and contact them
  - Are you happy with this company?
  - What have they provided to you?
  - What have your challenges been with this company?

- Find and interview customers not given as references
  - Search the web
  - Go to trade shows & conferences
  - Look for user groups

# The Contract


Do Your Due Diligence

- Ensure they have appropriate medical malpractice insurance, liability insurance

- Who will own the data? What data? Who will have rights to retain copies of the data? To license it, to sell it? For how long?

- Who will be responsible for continuity of care?

- Consider annually renewable contract

- Cover expansion

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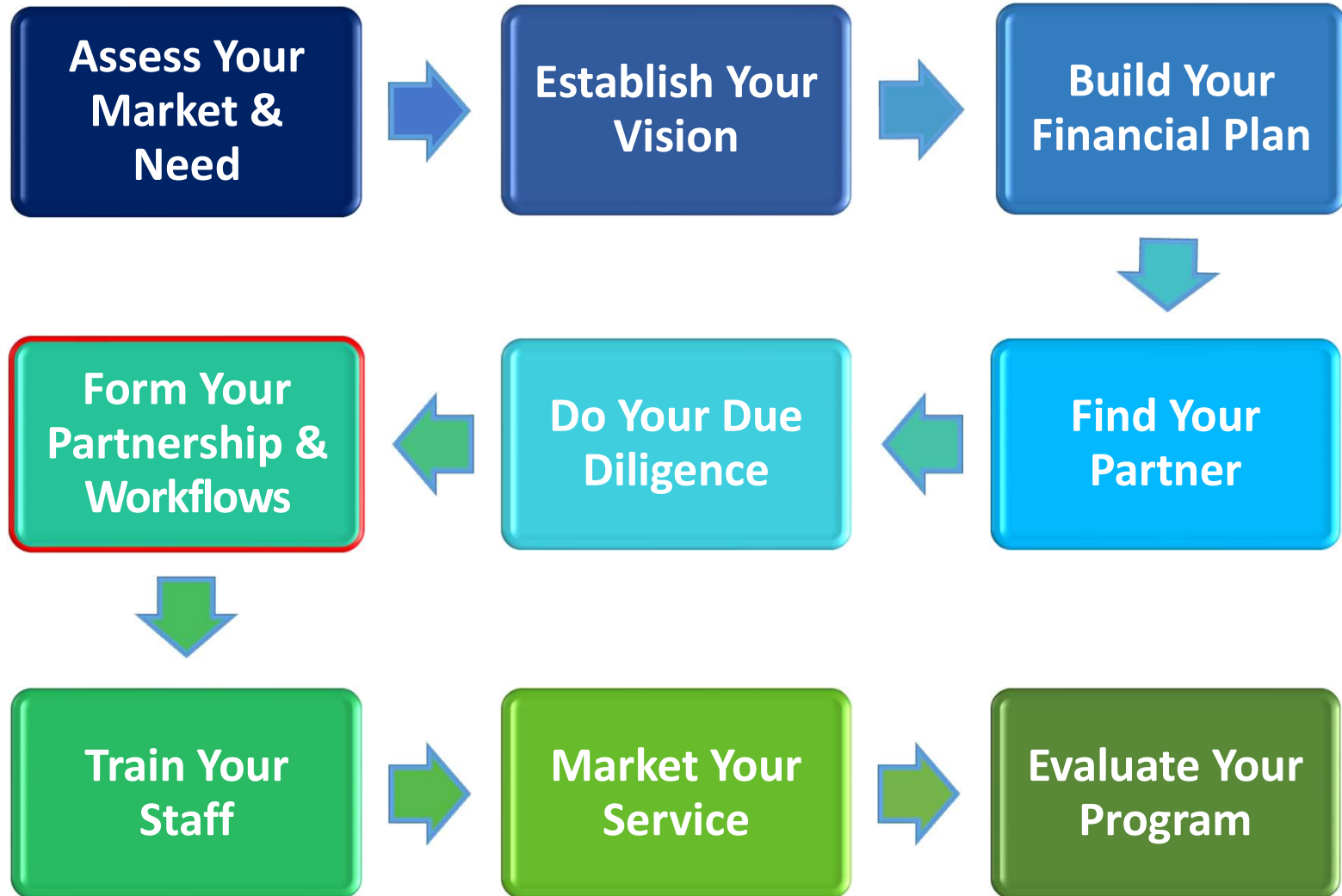
# Form Your Partnership & Integrate Telemedicine into Your Workflows

# Form a Partnership

- Telemedicine service programs are not one-sided, turnkey programs

- Requires effort on both sides:

  - putting together a program and educating the user ends (client org staff, health care provider org staff, and patients)

  - integrating workflows

- <u>Collaborate</u> with partner on what program will look like; form unity of vision for what you are trying to accomplish

# Recognize You Are Changing the Status Quo

- Identify and leverage the proponents/champions: CMO, CNO tend to be important sponsors

- Identify and embrace the outliers: Reach out, make them part of the process, hear and address their concerns
  - e.g., "Big Brother": eICU does not mean you are being watched 24/7; just that trends are being identified that need your attention
  - e.g., Will I have to become a technical expert?
  - e.g., Will my patients receive care as good as in person?

# Standards and Guidelines

- ATA Practice Guidelines:
  - Multiple specialties including telepathology, teleICU, telemental health, teledermatology, telerehabilitation, home telehealth, diabetic retinopathy
  - Also primary and urgent care, telepresenting, and core operational guidelines
  - Remote healthcare data management
  - others

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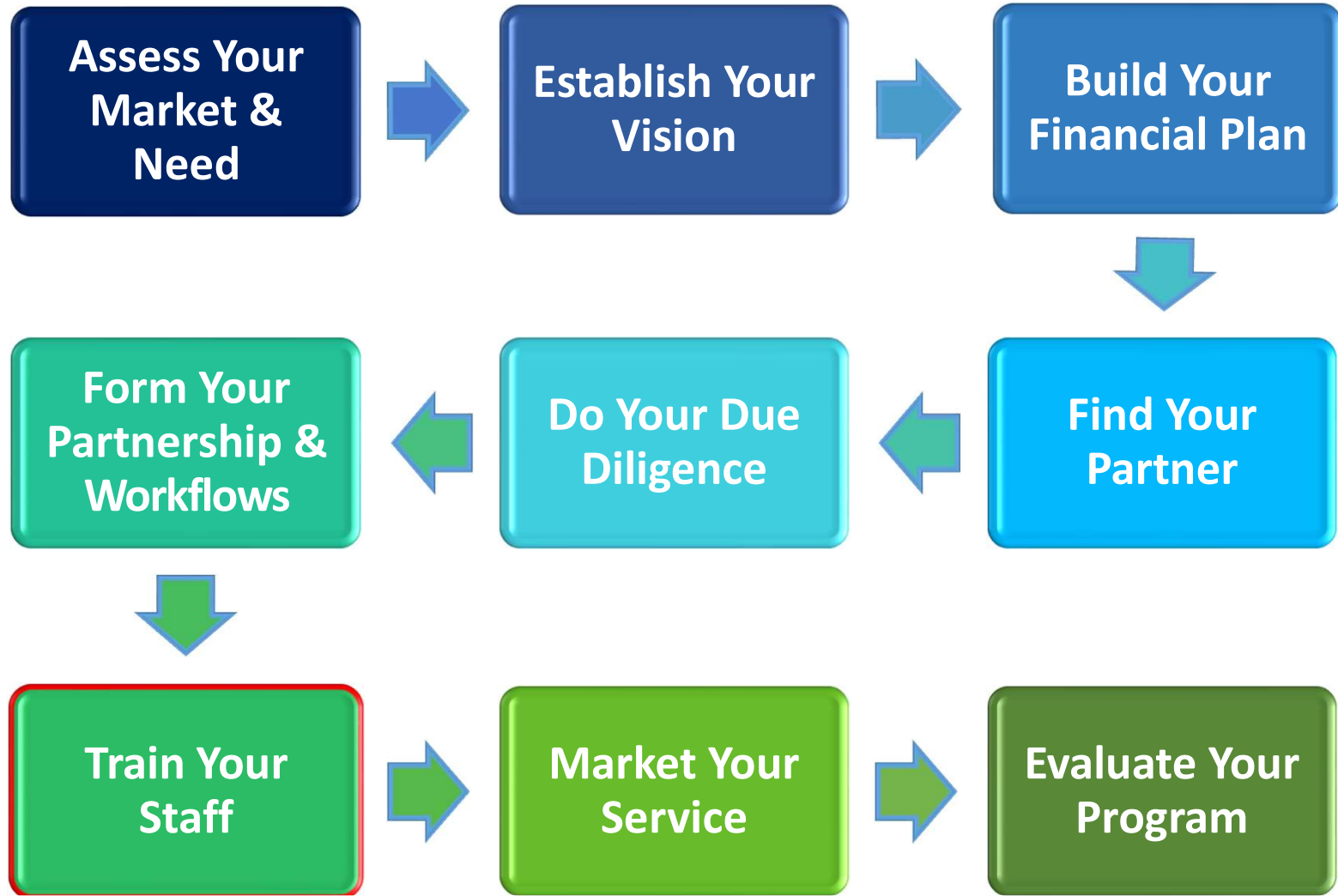
# Train Your Providers & Staff

# Train Your Providers & Staff

**Train Your Staff**

- **Telemedicine is an integrated component of your institution or practice and should be part of the normal position expectations**

- **Determine who needs to be trained (usually everyone)**

- **Determine content &extent of training needed for each position involved**

- **Determine how to provide the training & how often (for new users as well as refresher training)**

- **Evaluate training results**

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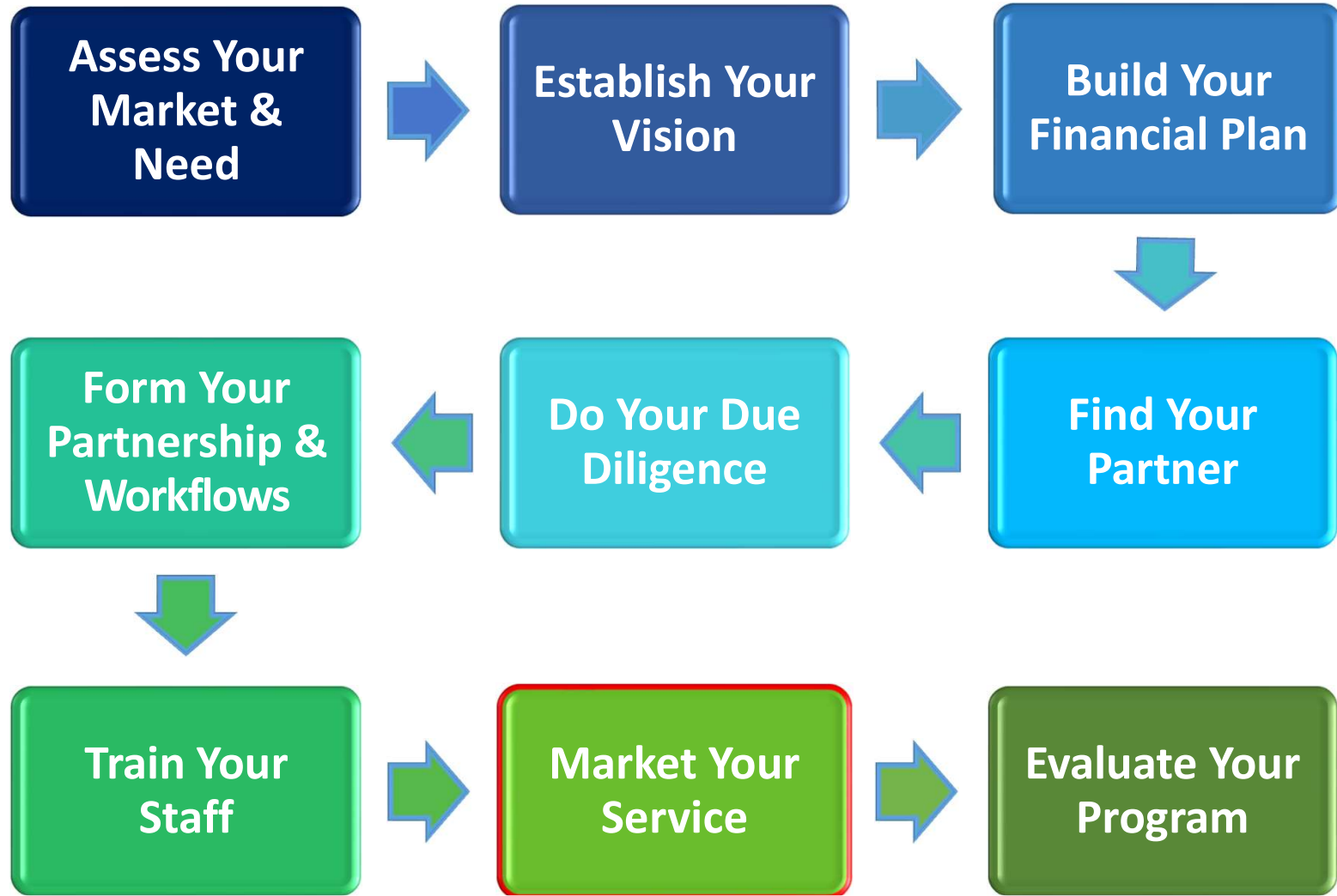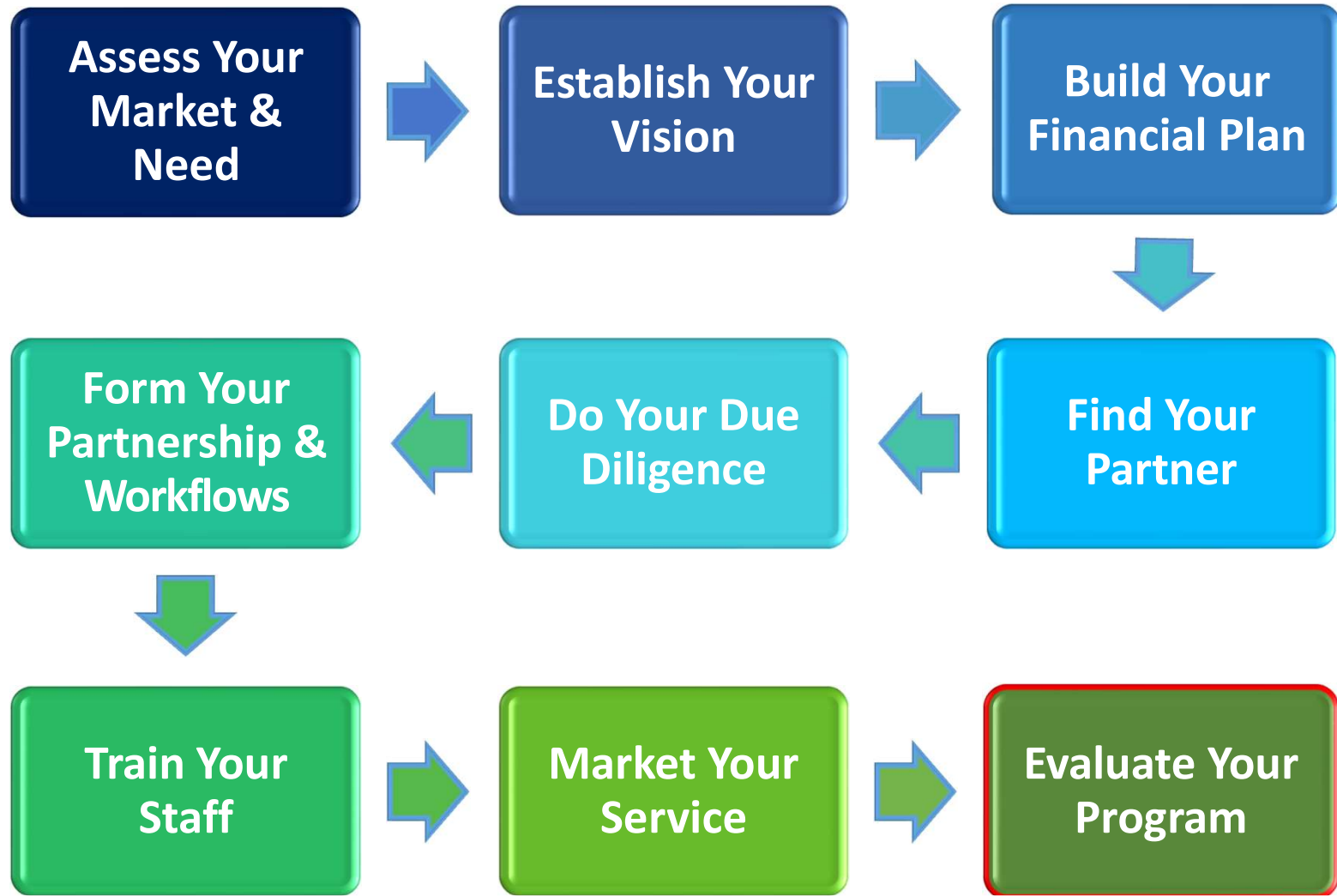
# Market Your Service

# Marketing Internally

- **Let people & stakeholders know what your results are**
    - **Consult numbers**
    - **Patient outcomes**
    - **Patient satisfaction**
    - **Staff satisfaction**
- **This is a team process; be transparent**
- **Invite input/suggestions**
- **Tell them in more than one way (meetings, website, emails, etc.)**

# Marketing Externally

- **Let your community know there is a new service available**

    - **Press release**

    - **PSA**

    - **Website and web content marketing (SEO)**

    - **Blog with email updates/sign-up**

    - **Letter to patients**

    - **Success stories**

    - **Social media**

- **Cite partner experience & successes**

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# Evaluate Your Program

# Evaluation: How to Start

- View transition on a relative basis:

  - Have we improved?

  - In what ways?

  - To what extent?

- Use measurable, objective data – choose metrics in advance

- What are you concerned with?

# What to Measure

- Patient-centered outcomes (e.g., clinical markers, reduced hospital stays)

- Provider-centered outcomes (e.g., diagnostic accuracy, efficiency & efficacy)

- Business outcomes (e.g., increased profits, reduced travel costs)

- Technical outcomes (e.g., faster network, more reliable communications, redundancy, better peripheral technology)

- Program outcomes (e.g., more sites added to network, number of consults, is the program growing?)

**Evaluate Your Program**

# Evaluation Resources

- Southwest Telehealth Resource Center Online Learning Module: [Evaluation](#)

- [Telehealth Resource Centers Toolkits](#)

# TELEMEDICINE AND TELEHEALTH INNOVATIONS

Questions!

Ronald S. Weinstein, M.D.

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ARIZONA TELEMEDICINE PROGRAM

SOUTHWEST TELEHEALTH RESOURCE CENTER TRC