



*Increased facility utilization at a major US health system enhancing annual revenues by \$750,000.*

*Reduced operating room turnaround times to 30 minutes or less for 80% of procedures.*

## **Improving Operating Room Turnaround Time with Collaborative Change Processes**

### **THE CASE**

The regional satellite of our client, a large US Health System has three orthopedic operating rooms (ORs). About 48 surgeries are completed every month in these facilities. It was taking from 45 minutes to an hour, or longer, following a surgery to prepare an operating room for the next procedure. The erratic availability of the rooms caused significant disruption to surgery scheduling, weighing heavily on the patience of surgeons and their support teams, not to mention the impact felt by patients and their families.

### **OUTCOME SUMMARY**

The team's goal of establishing OR turnaround times of 30 minutes or less following 80% of procedures was reached within one month. Currently, turnaround times of 30 minutes or less are met following 86% of all surgical procedures. The increased efficiency in OR utilization translated to a \$750,000 revenue increase in the first year following the implementation of the changes. Team members admitted to heightened morale, renewed attitudes and improvement in their day-to-day caregiving.

## COMPLEXITIES IN THE OR

Surgery departments in the United States generally account for over 60% of the hospital's total revenue. The importance of this revenue may be overlooked due to the focus on the 20-40% of costs created by the surgery department, causing most hospitals to focus on cutting surgery department costs. Cutting costs may minimize resources and supplies available to the department, contributing to existing inefficiencies and complexities. Improving inefficiencies, rather than cutting costs, allows the hospital to work toward achieving four main objectives:

1. Improving patient satisfaction
2. Improving employee satisfaction
3. Maximizing revenue
4. Minimizing cost

In a recent study at a major hospital it was found that surgery schedules were delayed 98% of the time. The 2% on time were merely due to the first surgeries of the day beginning on time. Delays after the first surgeries push back all operations that follow, creating high dissatisfaction with patients and workers. Forcing staff to work extreme hours due to inefficiencies creates staff morale and fatigue issues and can be unsafe for the patient undergoing the surgery. With average OR turnaround times at 45 minutes, the study indicated that reducing turnover times and improving

the scheduling process may allow a hospital to regularly schedule additional short cases without adding staff. These short cases generate substantial incremental margins: By routinely adding a one-hour case every day, a hospital might increase its margin by \$500,000.<sup>1</sup>

## THE CHALLENGE

A team was assembled and established the following goal: Reduce turnaround times in each room to 30 minutes or less for 80% of the surgical procedures.

## THE TEAM

The team was formed to include the following:

- A surgical nurse
- An anesthesiologist
- A surgical technician
- A nurse manager, assistant nurse manager, and nurses
- A manager of surgical instruments support
- A software system coordinator

As is often the case, the assembly of these individuals in the same room where many spoke to each other for the first time was a major advance in improving the situation.

*By routinely adding a one-hour case every day, a hospital might increase its margin by \$500,000.*

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<sup>1</sup> Twin Peaks Group (2011, July 7) The Cost of an OR Minute: Use and Abuse: <http://www.twinpeaksgroup.com>

## TEAM IMPACT

*“So, it makes the most sense that the people who are doing the job and working the process work together to identify the problems and the issues, then collaboratively come up with a workable, feasible, sustainable solution, because they are the ones who deal with it every day.”* ... Manager of Surgical Instrument Support

*“I think it was one of the first times that our department got together like this to do something. It gave us ownership. It was an education process too that we don’t see very often for our staff. So, it was a great feeling when we were done.”* ... Surgical Technician

*“...as a group we identified things that slowed us down. As an example, the case cards didn’t identify all of the equipment needed. There many trips to grab an instrument.”* ... Assistant Nurse Manager

## SOLUTIONS

Working with a team from Orion Advisory, the client team employed the FasTrac™ methodology to springboard them into improvement mode. FasTrac™ is based on the idea that the people who do the work have some of the best ideas on how to improve it (an idea that caught on with broad acceptance in the workplace of the 90’s). Utilizing the valuable insights of the people who most likely understand the problem in minute detail, FasTrac™ is a collaborative approach to problem-solving. A sponsor and team define a problem and its scope. Then, through a process of basic collaborative analysis, ideas for improvement are determined. The team is then responsible for completing the implementation of the solutions. The Operating Room Turnaround Team identified the following solutions:

### **Solution 1**

Realign post-surgical responsibilities for everyone involved to include the surgeons.

### **Solution 2**

Identify the needs and preferences of each surgeon using the facilities. This involved interviewing each surgeon and listing their preferences on cards that could be referenced when the operating rooms were being prepped.

### **Solution 3**

Create systems using available technology to inform surgeons of the status of the OR to ensure their timely arrival.

### **Solution 4**

Embark on an effort to enlist all Operating Room personnel, including surgeons into the spirit and work of the team.

**RESULTS**

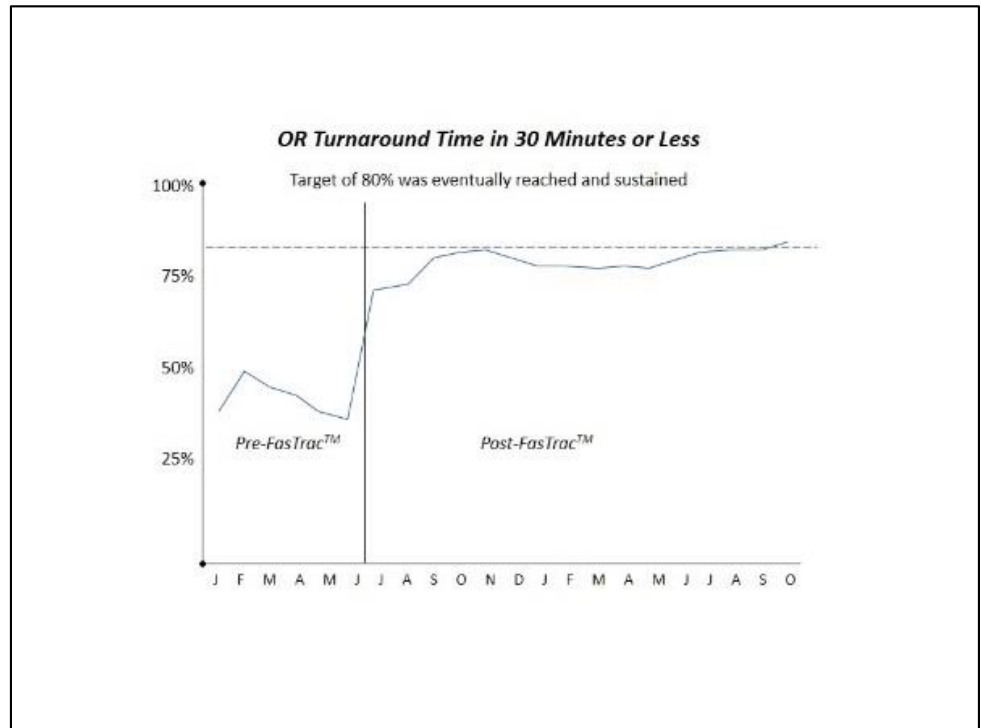
The team’s goal of establishing OR turnaround times of 30 minutes or less following 80% of procedures was reached within a month.

- Currently, turnaround times of 30 minutes or less are met following 86% of all procedures.

The positive impact of improvement this team experienced was profound. Interestingly, and importantly the process to achieve improvement was stated as relevant to the team’s overall success, with team members attributing it to

**ORION ADVISORY, LLC**

Orion Advisory, LLC has extensive experience working on cross-departmental processes to enable great transformation, while also solving immediate problems. We specialize in partnering with healthcare administrative and clinical leaders and their teams to create local ownership and accountability that empowers them to get things done. We equip our clients with the tools and capability to deliver on their goals and align the culture of the organization around common purpose.



- The increased efficiency in OR utilization translated to a \$750,000 revenue increase in the first year following the implementation of the changes.

heightened morale, renewed attitudes and improvement in their day-to-day caregiving.

Results for this team included qualitative gains, such as personal development, new behaviors amongst peers and by physicians.