

All the Right Moves: How Data Helps Top Performers Take Action — and Get Results

Management guru Peter F. Drucker said: “Checking the results of a decision against its expectations shows executives what their strengths are, where they need to improve, and where they lack knowledge or information.”

The observation – coined by an expert in leadership and management – can be poignantly applied to operating room performance. Certainly, healthcare providers cited in the 2009 OR Benchmarks® Collaborative (ORBC) Top Performer Recognition Program (see lists on page 3) frequently echo the sentiment when they reflect on the performance improvements they have made in their operating rooms.

These top performers have catapulted their operations to new levels by accessing – and then leveraging – data from the ORBC, a vendor-neutral benchmarking service provided by McKesson in partnership with OR Manager Inc. The ORBC provides monthly trend data on 20 key performance indicators including start-time accuracy for the first case of the day and subsequent cases, estimated case-duration accuracy, prime-time utilization, and day of surgery add-on cases. Users enter information and access both internal and national trends through an online dashboard with multiple options for generating and accessing data based upon various factors such as procedure or surgeon.

The service enables operating room managers to measure performance by making comparisons to similar organizations; uncovering insight into performance improvement opportunities through user-friendly, drill-down analysis. It also reports and shares OR performance and operational trends in a three-dimensional fashion to better align goals and outcomes.

A recent study on a sample of 122 subscribers between May 2007 and April 2009 demonstrated that routine access to dynamic, interactive business intelligence contributed to consistent gains in efficiency and effectiveness across subscribers. This gain was evidenced by the average 7.8% increase in first case start-time accuracy accompanied by an average 2.7% increase in subsequent case start accuracy, an average 3.2% increase in scheduling accuracy/estimated case duration accuracy and an average 5% increase in prime time utilization.

Empowering Staff

Melanie Zabeth, clinical manager at **Emory Clinic**, an ambulatory surgery center in Atlanta, attests to the value of leveraging data to improve operations.

“We use the ORBC data for everything,” Zabeth says. “It gives consistent information to make decisions. It makes everything we do very data driven, which is good because surgeons are very data driven. And, the data gives validity to the changes we implement.”

Turning data into knowledge helps the OR team at **St. Joseph’s Health Care-London**, Ontario, zero in on making specific improvements, says **Karla Haist**, data analyst.

“We share the ORBC data with the executive committee every two months to identify areas of opportunity,” she says.

Similarly, **Cookeville (Tenn.) Regional Medical Center** frequently uses ORBC data to help direct performance improvement initiatives, according to **Darla Cline**, clinical manager.

“With ORBC, you can put your money where your mouth is,” Cline says. “With good data, we are able to make changes and develop the processes to operate more efficiently. We are able to work smarter, not harder.”

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Having access to the data – the cold hard facts, per se – also helps operating room managers justify the value of the performance improvement initiatives that they implement. **Christine Cochran**, surgical services program manager at **St. Mary’s General Hospital**, Ontario, for instance, routinely uses ORBC data to illustrate how performance improvement initiatives are producing results.

“ORBC gives us the ability to demonstrate to surgeons and staff that hard work and initiatives on performance programs are paying off,” Cochran says. “Displaying the data from ORBC is a great visual reaffirmation.”

Empowering Comprehensive Change

Although leveraging data in meaningful ways typically helps organizations improve performance on specific metrics, comprehensive transformation is likely to follow as well. Using the ORBC service, for example, has helped **Kaiser Permanente ASC, San Diego**, winner of the ambulatory surgical center award for scheduling accuracy, reinvent its work culture all together.

“Before participating in the OR Benchmarks Collaborative, Kaiser Permanente ASC, San Diego was a place where people

simply worked,” explains **Beverly Roling**, director of perioperative services. “Now, it is a place where there is a real team spirit.”

Staff members have become more aware of how they compare to similar organizations — and, as a result, have become keenly focused on performance.

“[The service] has given us a chance to look outside Kaiser and see what the rest of the world is doing,” she adds. “Because we are a large organization, we tend to look internally. ORBC data gives us a good idea of what we need to improve on and what we are performing well in.”

Perhaps most importantly, though, the focus on performance helps Kaiser shine a light on common goals. This, in turn, rallies the staff around a central mission, making them perform with the grace of a finely tuned championship team.

“Before, it was like herding a bunch of cats,” Roling says. “Prior to using ORBC, everyone did their job — but they did not act as a team. I didn’t realize how much our staff wants to do well until I gave them data that compares them to others. They truly want to see how well they are doing and it gives them a great incentive.”

Here’s how the ORBC service typically comes into play at Kaiser. The data, which is displayed in easy-to-read dashboards, is reviewed at least weekly — and then discussed at staff meetings. Armed with insight from the data, the surgery center team gets to work.

For example, when the team decided to work on turnover times, staff members realized that they needed to go beyond simply trying harder. Instead, they took a very methodical approach to improvement. A member of the financial staff strapped a stop watch to his wrist, immersed himself in the operating room for a few days to time how long it took each staff member to complete every task, from preparing a bed to unwrapping a surgical tray.

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Problem areas and best practices were identified — and, most importantly, all staff members gained insight into what they had to do to improve.

With this approach, the team has been able to improve turnover significantly — the surgery center now performs 10 additional surgeries each day.



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And, while the turnaround has resulted in increased satisfaction and a healthier bottom-line, perhaps what’s most impressive is how it has transformed the work culture at Kaiser Permanente ASC.

“Previously, surgeons did not want to schedule their procedures at the surgery center. With ORBC in place, surgeons like going there and staff members like coming to work. There is a new morale and team spirit,” Roling says.

Empowering Effective Leadership

While ORBC data helps to empower the Kaiser Permanente team, the service is also a lifeline for leaders. Case in point: When **Caroline Kornutik** took over as the director of perioperative services in the operating room at **Saint Barnabas Medical Center**, Livingston, N.J., she quickly realized that ORBC could be her greatest ally.

“I just log into my computer and all the information is right there at my fingertips,” Kornutik says. “The data is all right there in a dashboard so it is easy for me to break it down and turn it into meaningful information. Without this tool, I had to run a report to get the information and it would just take too much time.

“We had piles and piles of data and pages to compile before we could even begin to affect a process change. Being able to present data in a user-friendly format has been huge in implementing new processes.”

With ORBC, Kornutik just clicks her mouse and immediately identifies any problem areas. From there, she drills down and determines exactly what is contributing to the problem — and most importantly, gets to work on a solution.

The information also helps Kornutik work with staff members to identify what exactly needs to be addressed, instead of taking more random shots at performance improvement.

“Nurses tend to go off our gut, so having data to drive conversations is a big improvement,” she observes.

For example, if there is a problem with on-time starts, Kornutik clicks on a bar and immediately realizes if the problem rests with a specific day of the week, specialty or physician.

After identifying the problem, Kornutik rolls up her sleeves and starts to implement a solution.

“Then, I can develop an intervention, put it in place and see if it makes a difference or not,” she says.

The remedy might be something as simple as talking to a handful of doctors who are having trouble with on-time starts.

“Just speaking to them about the problem could be enough to improve performance. It’s sometimes a simple fix, but without the information, the problem would persist,” she says.

With the ORBC service in place, Saint Barnabas has been able to take specific actions that led to improved performance. For example, the academic medical center has improved operating room on-time starts by:

- Implementing staggered start times. Instead of having all

(continued on page 4)

2009 ORBC Top Performers

Best Overall Performer, Ambulatory Surgical Center

*GMH Outpatient Surgery
– United States*

*Mt. Sinai Hospital
– Toronto, Canada*

Best Overall Performer, Academic Hospital

*Saint Barnabas Medical Center
– United States*

*Kingston General Hospital
– Canada*

Best Overall Performer, Non-Academic Hospital

*Kaiser Permanente Woodland
Hills Medical Center
– United States*

*Riverside Healthcare Facilities
– Canada*

Honorable Mention Overall Performer

*The Ottawa Hospital
Corporation – General Eye
Institute*

The Hospital for Sick Children

*Lennox and Addington
County General Hospital*

*Lake of the Woods
District Hospital*

*Surgicenter of Greater
Milwaukee*

Emory Clinic

Carle Foundation Hospital

Hospital of Saint Raphael

*Cookeville Regional
Medical Center*

2009 ORBC Top Performers Category Winners

Canada – Ambulatory Surgical Center	Scheduling Accuracy	The Ottawa Hospital Corp – General Eye Institute
Canada – Ambulatory Surgical Center	Start Time Accuracy	St. Joseph's Health Care – London – Cataract
Canada – Ambulatory Surgical Center	Case Time Effectiveness	Mt. Sinai Hospital – Toronto – Outpatient
Canada – Ambulatory Surgical Center	Turnover	Mt. Sinai Hospital – Toronto – Outpatient
Canada – Ambulatory Surgical Center	Utilization	Trillium Health Centre – West Toronto
Canada – Academic Hospital	Scheduling Accuracy	Kingston General Hospital
Canada – Academic Hospital	Start Time Accuracy	St. Joseph's Health Care – London
Canada – Academic Hospital	Case Time Effectiveness	Sunnybrook – Holland Orthopaedic and Arthritic Centre
Canada – Academic Hospital	Turnover	University Health Network – Princess Margaret
Canada – Academic Hospital	Utilization	Mt. Sinai Hospital – Toronto
Canada – Non-Academic Hospital	Scheduling Accuracy	Trillium Health Centre – Mississauga
Canada – Non-Academic Hospital	Start Time Accuracy	St Mary General Hospital
Canada – Non-Academic Hospital	Case Time Effectiveness	Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance – Clinton Public Hospital
Canada – Non-Academic Hospital	Turnover	Trillium Health Centre – Cardiac Services
Canada – Non-Academic Hospital	Utilization	St. Thomas Elgin General
US – Ambulatory Surgical Center	Scheduling Accuracy	KP San Diego ASC
US – Ambulatory Surgical Center	Start Time Accuracy	GMH Outpatient Surgery
US – Ambulatory Surgical Center	Case Time Effectiveness	Surgicenter of Greater Milwaukee
US – Ambulatory Surgical Center	Turnover	Loma Linda ECOR
US – Ambulatory Surgical Center	Utilization	Emory Clinic
US – Academic Hospital	Scheduling Accuracy	Saint Barnabas Medical Center
US – Academic Hospital	Start Time Accuracy	Jewish Hospital
US – Academic Hospital	Case Time Effectiveness	Danbury Hospital
US – Academic Hospital	Turnover	Brigham and Women's Hospital
US – Academic Hospital	Utilization	Loma Linda University MCO
US – Non-Academic Hospital	Scheduling Accuracy	KP Woodland Hills Medical Center
US – Non-Academic Hospital	Scheduling Accuracy	St. Joseph Medical Center – Orange
US – Non-Academic Hospital	Start Time Accuracy	Longmont United Hospital
US – Non-Academic Hospital	Case Time Effectiveness	St. Jude Medical Center
US – Non-Academic Hospital	Turnover	Petaluma Valley Hospital
US – Non-Academic Hospital	Utilization	KP Woodland Hills Medical Center



SAINT BARNABAS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Saint Barnabas Medical Center

Pictured are members of the Saint Barnabas Medical Center Perioperative Services Team (R to L): Cynthia Thompson, OR Scheduling Manager; Jean Inzirillo, RN, BSN, CNOR; Lynette Pearson, RN, CNOR; Irma Dumapit, RN, BSN; Denise Nesfield Limes, RN, MSN, CNOR; Caroline Kornituk, RN, MSN/ED, CNO, Director of Perioperative Services

(continued from page 2)

operating rooms kick off the day at 7:30 a.m., each operating room starts at a distinct time, say 7, 7:30 or 8 a.m.

- Making sure all patient charts are in a state of readiness prior to the beginning of each surgery.
- Scheduling surgery times according to each individual doctor's history. Because the ORBC data reveals exactly how long it typically takes each surgeon to complete specific types of surgeries, the operating room team can allot the exact amount of time needed for each procedure, thereby eliminating bottlenecks down the road.

"If a surgeon says he can do a hysterectomy in 1.5 hours and we look in the database and know that his average time is 2 hours, then we won't let him schedule it for less than that," Kornituk explains. "We have the data to know exactly how much time to schedule to keep everything on track throughout the day."

By implementing these interventions, Saint Barnabas has improved on-time starts significantly. In a recent month, on-time starts went from 53% to 68.5%.

Such results illustrate just what Peter Drucker referred to when he spoke of measuring against an expectation to determine strengths and areas of improvement. As the healthcare organizations recognized in the ORBC program clearly illustrate, it is possible to use data to continually evaluate strengths and weaknesses — and then take the action required to elevate performance to the next level.

About the Top Performer Recognition Program

The Top Performer Recognition Program is an annual awards program highlighting organizations that have used ORBC data to achieve significant results. The program honors member hospitals that exemplify the transformational value actionable data can bring to the OR. By recognizing the accomplishments of these hospitals, the ORBC can share with member organizations best practices and proven strategies for improving OR utilization.

Join the ORBC Today

If you are looking to leverage benchmarking to help improve your OR performance, then sign up for the OR Benchmarks Collaborative today at our Web site (www.orbenchmarking.com) and complete the Intent to Purchase form.

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